



D E S T I N Y



D E S T I N Y[®]



GRIMOIRE

VOLUME I
From the Light





CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

1.0: GUARDIANS AND THE LIGHT

1.1: RACES AND CLASSES

1.2: A GUARDIAN'S POWER

2.0: A QUEST FOR BALANCE

2.1: PUSHING BACK THE FALLEN

2.2: RECLAIMING THE MOON

2.3: THE VEX THREAT

2.4: BREAKING THROUGH THE CABAL

2.5: CROTA'S END

2.6: THE REBELLION OF WOLVES

2.7: THE TAKEN KING

2.8: IRON LORDS



3.0: ALLIES OF THE TRAVELER

3.1: TOWER ALLIES

3.2: THE AWOKEN

3.3: IRON LORDS

3.4: IMPARTIAL ALLIES

3.5: LEGENDS AND MYSTERIES

4.0: A GUARDIAN'S ARMORY

4.1: A HAIL OF BULLETS

4.2: USING FINESSE

4.3: BRUTE FORCE

4.4: VEHICLES AND CURRENCY



5.0: PROVING GROUNDS

5.1: CRUCIBLE ARENAS

5.2: CRUCIBLE FRAGMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD

Destiny was released in September 2014 to a very eager crowd after a year long 'hype-train'. The game seemed promising, combining Bungie's refined first-person shooter mechanics with an MMO like RPG and bringing it all together with an engaging story in a massive futuristic world. Unfortunately upon release Destiny didn't live up to the hype that preceeded it. The story was incomplete and hard to follow, being stretched out in multiple DLC and the game was much shorter with play time extended through excessive grinding. Despite these problems the Destiny community was massive and many players instantly connected with the strong gameplay and enjoyed working with friends to conquer the end-game raids.

The story took a back seat, with the majority of the details and background lore relegated to the Grimoire, a set of unlockable cards that could be accessed on Bungie's website for further reading. This was a frustrating experience and many players were not bothered to go through the extra steps to read it. It is dissapointing to think that so many players are yet to experience the story and lore that makes up this universe, many of the stories and characters are an interesting read if you can piece it together.

My goal for these Grimoire books was to bring Destiny's Lore from the online cards to a much more accessible and easy to read format. I am not the first to come up with this idea and there are a few Redditors who have achieved similar books. But my goal was more than that, it was to put the stories together in a more cohesive format and combine them with some of the best imagery from the Destiny Universe.

I do not own any of the images, logo's, names or stories in these books and all are property of Bungie and Activision. Many images were taken in game, some by me, others by fellow redditors, I have also used concept art direct from Bungie as well as a few artworks from the Destiny community, credit for these belong to their owners. I mearly compiled it all together.

I hope this brings the Destiny lore to many fellow Guardians.

~Cubic Eclipse (Nathan)

INTRODUCTION

My name is Syla, I am a Warlock Scholar, ordered by the vanguard to catalogue and preserve as many records from the vaults in the City. The moment the Red Legion appeared in orbit it was clear that the City was under threat, that our lives and history could be wiped from existence. The vanguard leaders made a decree that we must preserve as much as we could, from golden age recordings to data and fragments gathered by the many guardians who have fought for the Traveller over many years.

I have managed to gather all the information that wasn't already destroyed by the initial strikes. These pages will hold that information, a physical tome, like those of ancient history. I have backups of course but if the data becomes corrupted or I can no longer power the data cores then these volumes will be the only complete... can I say complete? I feel like we have already lost so much. Alas, they will be the only compiled record of events.

I have ordered the information into intuitive categories as best as I can and have supplemented my own notes where needed. This first volume details our history, the heroes of the City and guardians who protect it, The second volume covers all the horrors of the darkness as well as data on our solar system as it stands.

The City burns, the Traveller's light is gone and the tower has fallen. I have had to flee from the confines of the city, there are Cabal everywhere. I will await for new instructions from the vanguard and protect these precious grimoires. The future is uncertain, and my survival isn't guaranteed, I only hope that if I do not survive, these grimoires will, that they will be passed from survivor to survivor sharing our history, our knowledge of the enemy.

One day these words may fall into the hands of a new vanguard or a new hero and our precious city can be rebuilt, the darkness pushed back and our light returned.

If you read these grimoires please share them with as many people, spread the stories of our defenders and our heroes, past and present and may the Light find you all in the dark.

~Syla, Warlock Scholar





1.0

GUARDIANS AND THE LIGHT



GUARDIANS

"Legends are carved across history by the brave."

Guardians are warriors forged in the Traveler's Light, a final hope in a universe falling into Darkness.

Chosen from the dead by the Traveler's Ghosts, Guardians are those rare few able to wield the Light as a weapon. For centuries they have defended the City. But that defense cannot hold forever.

Now, with the Darkness rising again, the time has come to retake our lost worlds. The Guardians who lead the way will save humanity - and become legend.

~Guardians

<transmission 7484e_8 / Saladin Forge / tower actual / rebinding>

... to answer your question, when it came time to reach out, to find a Guardian to take on this mission, there was only one choice.

- They stood against the Vex in the Black Garden, and grounded that place to Mars.
- They went against the Hive in the dark below, working with Eris Morn to undermine Crota, the Hive God.
- The Reefborn made use of the Guardian in their search for the criminal Skolas, as I understand.
- And, of course, it was the Guardian that led the assault on the Taken King's Dreadnaught.

All of the after-action reports I've shown you about the Taken War, the calm state of the system... we have this Guardian to thank.

I've attached more details, if you want to read evaluations from the Vanguard. Just skim Cayde's. He's... not very biased, here.

~The Guardian

1.1 RACES AND CLASSES

HUMANS

"This was our world, our solar system. We were here first. And no matter what the darkness brings, we will be here at the dawn."

Humans are survivors, tough and resilient, descended from those who built a Golden Age only to see it ripped away. Now, after an age of retreat and desperate struggle, they fight to take back their solar system and claim a new future.

There are those who believe the Traveler chose Earth for a reason. Now it is humanity's obligation to prove itself worthy of the Traveler's faith.

~Human



From the diaries of Commander Jacob Hardy, pilot, Ares One

The mission is a go. Crew of three: Mihaylova, Qiao, myself. Immediate departure at the next Hohmann window to Mars. The MREs and return ships will chase us out.

How do I feel? I said at the press conference I felt privileged. Historians will read this diary, but it won't take their insight to tell the world that I'm terrified. It's the human reaction.

What I wish I could convey is the - the exhilaration. That's the biggest thing. I'm not a spiritual man, but I've always believed there's something transcendent about spaceflight. Something pure. We go out there because we can. Because it's who we are.

Now we go because we have to. Because the unknown came to us. In fourteen months we'll be face to face with it, and by the time we arrive, it should be active again - just like it was active on Jupiter, and Mercury, and Venus.

I wonder what happens if it doesn't stop at Mars. I wonder if it'll leave us there in the sand, and come to Earth, and do here what it's done everywhere else.

I hate that we're carrying weapons. I understand the necessity. But I hold to my belief: there's something beautiful out there.

It's up to us to reach it.

~Ghost Fragment: Human

From the diaries of Commander Jacob Hardy, pilot, Ares One

Everybody asks about the words.

The truth is I'm not much of a poet. Ares One didn't leave us with bandwidth for anything except blunt competence. We came in perilously hot, trying to select a landing site through the chaos of thickening atmosphere and turbulence that bloomed off the target. A twenty minute round-trip lightspeed delay to Earth meant we could only count on ourselves.

When the number three engine went diagnostic during the second course correction, I thought we might go catastrophic.

But Qiao brought us in. Mihaylova brought us in. I just flew the ship.

The Ares One excursion vehicle was built for thin winds and icy dust. We came down into a storm: the breath of God, a ripple of change rolling down off the artifact. We aborted on three sites and finally I took us into powered hover and brought us down on reflexes and instinct.

Then we ran the checklists, suited up, and left the vehicle.

There was a script, and it's true, I botched it. I got my boots down and I made the most famous gaffe in human history. Said the first thing that came to mind: a warning to the others.

"We're walking into a rising wind."

I didn't mean to say anything immortal. I just thought it'd be useful to know.

~Ghost Fragment: Human 2

*From the diaries of Commander Jacob Hardy,
pilot, Ares One*

The hike from Ares One.

You've watched it. Everything was recorded. I think you can get it in full immersion, now, and fly around like a hummingbird. I'll add what I can.

The route was planned. We all went together - the CEV and Ares One itself had enough automation to go home alone in the event of crew loss. Whatever we'd find at the artifact, it needed the human element.

We carried rifles. They made us heavier and slower and probably less safe. I think the argument about the rifles can be left for another time. What's important is -

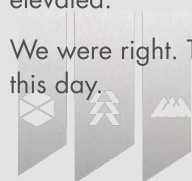
It turned out well. Look at me. Look at us! You're talking to a ninety-year-old man. A ninety-year-old who's never been sharper. I'm miles ahead of every cognitive benchmark.

What's happened to me is good. What's happened to all of us is good. When we crested that rise and made visual contact with the artifact I don't think any one of us dared dream that it would end this well.

We went to Mars at the cutting edge of human civilization. And it wasn't our weapons that won the day.

It was our ship. Our training. Our camaraderie. Our belief that if we just reached out to the universe, not to grasp for profit or security but with an open hand, we would be elevated.

We were right. That makes me so happy. To this day.



~Ghost Fragment: Humans 3

*From the diaries of Commander Jacob Hardy,
pilot, Ares One*

Three human beings stood on a high ridge and saw the shape of the future. Saw rain strike a millennia-old desert. Felt the air sweeten with oxygen and warm water and the beginnings of life.

I am sometimes asked if I felt something die. The end of the era of human self-sufficiency.

I don't know how to answer that question. I do know that I was changed. Nobody could experience that kind of wonder and remain unchanged. The decades since have proven that to me.

I knew I'd never fly another mission like that. I recognized the need for a new love. That's why I threw my fresh cognitive skills into understanding the Traveler. How can one entity so quickly and utterly remake an entire world? Fifty years later, I'm conversant in high mathematics, particularly topological thoughts and the slippery irreality of Light. I'm involved in a project to study the Traveler's terraforming actions right now.

But I still enjoy the interviews. I like going back to that mission.

It makes me unspeakably happy to see how well it all turned out. And it makes me happy to remember I was there.

~Ghost Fragment: Human 4

Hope

Hope. And standing with strangers.

That's what I remember. Hope churning beneath my skin, assuring me there was a place besides this place. A realm that would nurture us, not kill us. The Earth was ruin. Chaos and madness and death. We were standing on the Earth. Where I am now. But why am I still here? It was my turn to leave. I remember. I was waiting with others like me, and the ships would soon take us away.

But to where? Where was this hope?

I must have known. There had to be a name, coordinates. Except all of that is forgotten. Other than my absolute conviction in salvation, nothing remains.

The Traveler.

I remember that now.

Which was...

What?

I don't know. Something has stolen my words, the imagery. But I still remember what it promised us...

The universe.

Yes.

Creation held in our hands.

But I was here for a reason.

And what would I surrender, just for the faint chance to remember what that good reason was.

~Ghost Fragment: Humans 5



AWOKEN

"The others sing this song of Light and Dark. We, together, have transcended such unimaginative limitations."

It is said that the Awoken were born in the Collapse, descended from those who tried to flee its wrath. Something happened to them out on the edge of the deep black, and they were forever changed.

Today many Awoken live in the distant Reef, aloof and mysterious. But others returned to Earth, where their descendants now fight for the City.

Earthborn Awoken who venture out to the Reef, hoping to learn its secrets, find no special welcome from the reclusive Queen.

~Awoken

Reports from a derelict vessel boarded in the first known voyage to the Reef

Eleven hundred meter length.

Active gravity generation.

Residual heat. Fast neutron scatter.

Designation code: CORRUPTED

Date of commissioning: Unknown

Origin point: Unknown

Presumed to have collided/merged with one-kilometer comet: assessment based on depth of hydrocarbon crust covering the hull, water content of soil, atmosphere of oxygen and carbon dioxide with isotopic ratios placing the comet in the Oort population.

Low-light foliage grown from terrestrial stocks, mirrors focusing starlight into growth chambers...resident fauna...five insect species, plus rats descended from uncertain ancestors.

Surface heavily wooded until recently, unknown event triggering firestorm...seventy percent of world forest consumed, atmosphere laced with smoke and particulates...free oxygen in short supply.

No distress calls noted. No evidence of crew or passengers on exterior.

Interior scans inconclusive.

Cleared to attempt approach.

~Ghost Fragment: Awoken

I was nothingness. If I existed before, I existed as possibility, as potential, stretched thin across the aether. And maybe there was a body that looked like my body, complete with a soul that could be confused for someone rather like me. What I am now was not yet real. And then I was born, and the universe was free to begin.

Others were present at my birth.

A great ceremony had just begun. Because newborns are selfish beasts, I assumed I was the object of attention.

I didn't notice the singing until the singers fell silent. And then She appeared.

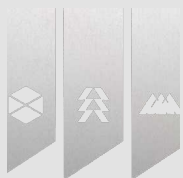
She was above me. Ethereal and handsome and elegant. I assumed my face was like her face and that odd idea gave me strength enough to smile.

"Secrets," she said. "Creation is built on secrets and the encryptions that keep those secrets safe."

I made my first sound. It meant nothing but she understood it as a question.

"We are a beautiful creation," she said. "And we must keep ourselves very safe."

~Ghost Fragment: Awoken 2



Fear.

Fear. That's the only vivid memory left in me. It's the moment when my fear was so thick and urgent that I gave up breathing. I stopped pretending to think. How I remained on my feet was a mystery, because the terror was bearing down on me, like a mountain about to crush my soul.

But I have to ask, "What was terrifying me?"

Darkness ruled the sky. The world around us had shattered, and it seemed vanishingly unlikely that we would outlive this one awful day. Yet the fear didn't come from the surrounding mayhem and despair. The source was inside my skin. I was utterly terrified of my own awful nature.

And which part scared me?

Inside me was an essence woven from beyond. Was I Awoken before this?

She was still in my head. I could hear her song growing fainter.

Gone?

Not yet.

A new crippling terror was taking over.

I was focused entirely on my fear. But I had to make an effort.

And it occurred to me then that nothing in the universe was more dangerous than human hubris.

I still had this Other within? But the human side was what mattered: Weak and foolhardy, sure to fail in the next moment.

That's why I was afraid.

Then someone spoke.

Maybe it was me. I don't remember.

I was trying to focus, and a new thought took me: My soul lay between those two entities. And that's how I am still: The boundary, the seam.

The friction.

And that's when the fear began to fade.

~Ghost Fragment: Awoken 3



EXO

"Ask yourself: what threatened your Golden Age ancestors so much that they constructed the Exos to defend themselves?"

Built for a long-forgotten struggle, Exos are self-aware war machines so advanced that nothing short of a Ghost can understand their inner functions. They remain ciphers, even to themselves: their origins and purpose lost to time.

Whoever built the Exos fashioned them in humanity's image, gifting them with diversity of mind and body. Many of the City's Exo citizens live and work alongside their organic brethren. But others fight again, re-forged in the Light of the Traveler to serve as Guardians.

~Exo



- which in the end is just a matter of substrate chauvinism. It doesn't matter if the system thinks with flesh or superconductor or topological braids in doped metallic hydrogen, as long as the logic is the same. And our logic is the same. Yours and mine.

If I am a machine then so are you. If you are not a machine then neither am I. Exo minds are human. It is incontrovertible.

You understand? I'm going to take that slack-jawed stare as understanding.

Now here's the real question. Why are Exo minds human? What's the design imperative? Why does a war machine - yes, absolutely, I am a war machine, built by human hands; and you are a survival machine built by the engine of evolution. Don't interrupt me.

Why does a war machine have emotions? Why should a war machine have awareness? These are not useful traits on the battlefield. Don't flatter yourself. They are not useful. So why should the Exo mind mimic the human architecture so closely?

You know what I smell on you? I smell the stink of anthropocentrism. I think you think that there's only one way to think. That's why the Exo mind is so human, you presume. Because all higher thought converges.

My friend, you should meet the Vex. There is nothing human in them.

Now. This is what I believe happened, back in the time before any Exo can remember. It explains everything.

I think someone wanted to live forever.

~Ghost Fragment: Exo

Hi. Thanks for your interest. I'm recording this for posterity.

Warlock thanatonauts die and come back with insight. I'm going to attempt the same process to get at buried memories. Specifically, I'm going to fire a charged particle beam into my head and see what comes out. We Exos have been around a very long time. I want to

know what's in there.

My Ghost is standing by to repair me.

Okay. Three two one

STAG echo six SWORD sierra nine SERPENT

We are falling into the world. Everyone is on fire. There's a ship above us but it's coming apart just like a flower, alloy and fusion flash, pierced through and through -

The voice says Atmospheric interface. Trajectory nominal. Rabid two three you are outside the window. (I think I am the voice)

I can see the whole earth below me and the sky we are falling out of is black without stars.

Ghost, shoot me again.

RAPID four RAMPART four RATCHET tango eight zero

We are on the ice. This is elsewhere and elsewhen. There is a mighty aurora and it is reflected in the ice so I walk between two fires although the one below is cracked and full of corpses. I have and am a weapon.

Up in the sky there is a hole in Jupiter and it tears at me when I look at it. It tears at me. It is hungry. Maybe the hole is not in Jupiter but in me.

CROWN castle candor cobalt coral

Ghost bring me back.

serrate sulfur ANATHEMA amber actual aspen

Ghost bring me back now.

~Ghost Fragment: Exo 2

Shame

Shame. Did I ever suffer exhaustion? Someone asked the question. Or maybe I asked it of myself. Then it looked at me. This moment was real. I told it what every Exo knows: "What can't touch you has no strength over you. And there's no place for fatigue to latch onto me."

But shame is a different affliction.

I'm a soldier. I was forged by other hands and forced into the role of warrior. According to my scars, I fought and fought. Besides bits and flashes, every battle has been forgotten. But I have this clear, awful sense that others died. In my unit, every soldier was killed except for me. Yet despite a thousand chances to be shredded and scrapped, here I stood, no weapon in my hands, making fists out of habit but with nothing to hit.

I'd fought to save the Earth. That was my sense of things. But our world was collapsing around us, and every soul was doomed. Even cockroaches and microbes would die. And being an expert in the art of losing battles, I saw no ending to this battle but another loss.

And I was ashamed.

The shame took hold of me. It shook me. Shame stole my mass and my resolve. Suddenly I felt like a feather, like a breath, like any small nothing ready to be lost in the first breeze.

But in the midst of that despair, a fresh thought took hold.

I was cursed.

And do you know what a curse is?

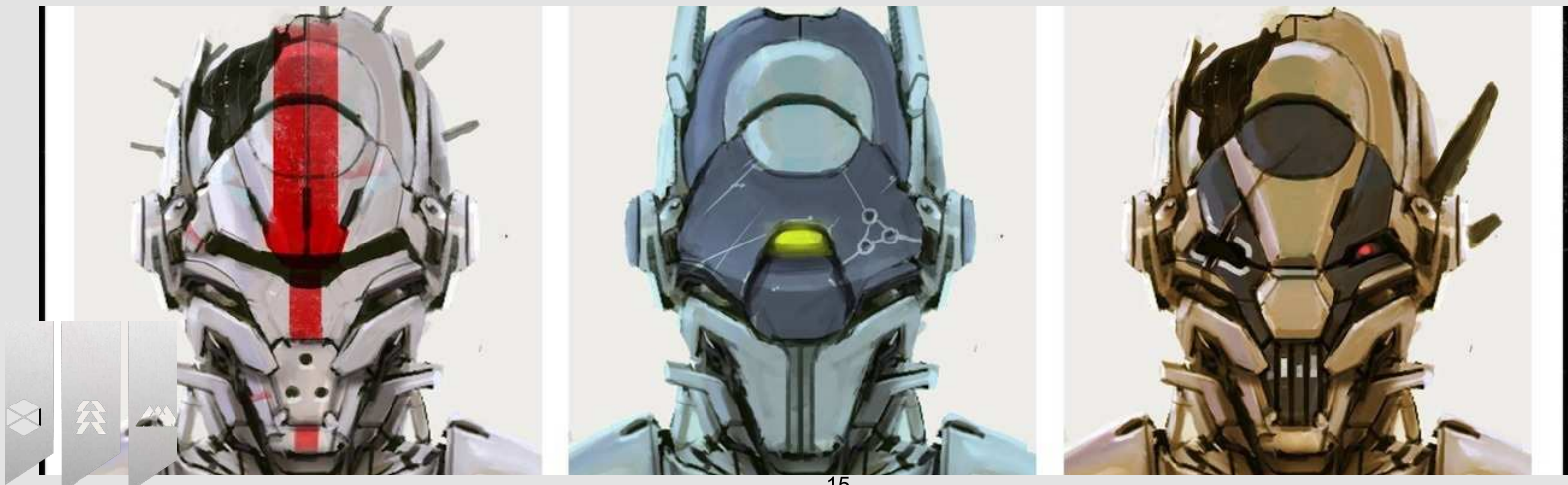
It is stubborn. A curse delivered by the gods will hold you when everything else has given up on you. And it was obvious that survival was my eternal curse. A thousand battles and how many were won? Judging by the evidence, none. And that's why the shame was chewing at my ceramic guts. But despite the horrific losses, I had endured.

Closing my eyes, I forced my fists to open.

"This isn't over," I said. To this enemy, to myself. To the wind threatening to carry me away.

"This war isn't done with me."

~Ghost Fragment: Exo 3



T I T A N

"Strive for honor. Stand for hope."

Titans are warriors - heroic defenders of the Light, channeling the gifts of the Traveler to wage war on the Darkness. Steadfast and sure, Titans face any challenge head-on, blunt force instruments of the Traveler's will.

~Titan



/ Tighten that strap.
/ Eh?
/ The gardbrace is loose. Could slip.
/ Huh.
/ It's new?
/ Agema. Type 1.
/ How's it hold up? I tried using Agema at the Gap, remember? It didn't - well, what's this?
/ A Ghost!
/ Yes. Light be with you.
/ Excuse me, little Ghost - Tubach, pass me my helmet - thank you. Little Ghost, what are you doing here?
/ It's just looking around.
/ Where's your Guardian?
/ I don't think it has one.
/ Well, any servant of the Light is welcome among us. We are Holborn's Host, and I'm Holborn. The City's hand on Mars.
/ Tubach.
/ That's Tubach, my second. One of the finest Titans of the City. Now see here, little Ghost, on my shoulder? That's the mark of Holborn's Host. Record it. The twelve-pointed star. One for each of the - oh well, off it goes! It doesn't look well.
/ We should get moving.
/ A Ghost without a Guardian. I remember when I was risen, you know. When I woke in that wreckage, to see my Ghost hovering there, its light in my eyes, like an angel. And it said -
/ This story again.
/ Disrespectful youngster.

/ Youngster? I could be older than you, Tibon!
/ True. The gardbrace is fine now. Stop worrying at it. Will you take the Jigoku?
/ Thought I'd take the long rifle. Bayle has the Jigoku.
/ Good. That Ghost - what do you think is wrong with it? It's echoing something ancient, an Old Earth language. You know what that Ghost reminds me of, flitting about over there?
/ I don't.
/ The time Ghosts from Jagi's Host came back without them. Remember - they got in that fight at some point east of the Caspian? Seven Ghosts, damn near silent, buzzing with some sort of corruption. Drifting back to the Tower, one by one. Scared the Speaker well enough.
/ I remember. A long time ago. Jagi tells the story differently.
/ Well. We all grow old. In our way. Little Ghost! Come back here!
/ It's not going to make it, wherever it's going.
/ I want to talk to it. Little Ghost!
/ Lyssa and Bayle are probably there already.
/ Cabal move slowly. We've got time.
/ But the Warlocks have had a vision.
/ Yes. That new one, what's her name. Ingora?
/ Ikora.
/ She's always been hasty. I've faced these Cabal before. I know 'em like I know my own armor.
/ Message from Lyssa. "At the Dust Palace, now. All quiet."
/ See? All quiet. Why not come with us, little Ghost? We are looking for the old Warmind here, and the one who guards it.

~Ghost Fragment: Titan



H U N T E R

"Our old worlds have grown feral - rabid beasts with teeth of rust and ruin. But such beasts are meant to be tamed. Or broken."

Hunters stalk the wilderness beyond the City, harnessing the Light to reclaim the secrets of our lost worlds. They are daring scouts and stealthy killers, expert with knives and precision weapons. Hunters blaze their own trails and write their own laws.

~Hunter



She leaves the Sparrow and climbs a long way across spars of volcano rock and between vents of blue fire. Down below the Ishtar ruins spark with skirmish light but the guns seem as distant and brief as the constant starfall and the brooding crater high above. She is alone on the rock. She goes on with her head down so as to fight the sense that she is going to fall up off the world and burn like an inverse meteor.

The message that brought her to this place had no sign but she could hear Cayde in it. Draksis in the Cinders it said. Is it true?

And also: Remember your promise.

At dawn she finds a sentry and kills it with her knife. Its throat bleeds gas. She takes its post and lays out her bullets one by one on the rock as if to make a count of all the years she has been waiting. Her rifle is near as long as she is tall. She lies down by her bullets and uses them to kill the other sentries one by one until at last they understand the thunder and the Shanks rise up angry from the Cinders below to seek her out.

She leaves the rifle and walks across the naked obsidian into the swarm firing from the hip as she goes, each kick of the old revolver a word, Draksis, Draksis, Kell of Winter, Kell of hate, lord of the kingdom of her vendetta. Her jaw aches. She used to imagine biting out his throat with armored teeth.

The stone smokes around her where the arc fire lashes it and the shrapnel guns throw up leaves of obsidian like glass butterflies. She shoots her bandoliers dry and a team of Vandals in glassy stealth leap up to rush her with knives but she raises her hand and burns them down with the golden gun, laughing, crying out Draksis, Draksis, I am come!

She kills them all and takes the next ridge, high above the Cinders. She can see the blue-green pools and the cave mouths where the Vex lights dance. And there among them, gowned in smoke and ash, is the long shark shape of a Ketch, a Wintership, the Kell's ship, come down to nest.

She could go down there now and finish this. But she made a promise.

A Captain jumps her. She throws two knives into his armor and then staves his chest in with her own Ghost, wrapped up in her fist like a stone.

"Tell the Vanguard," she says to her Ether-spattered fist. "Tell them Draksis is here."

Her Ghost looks up at her in silence. When she makes no move to go down the cliff towards the ship it blinks once, in its own way, and makes a soft sound, like a sigh, like relief.

~Ghost Fragment: Hunter



*"We have found new ways to weaponize curiosity.
Pathways into the darkness."*

Warrior-scholars of the Light, Warlocks devote themselves to understanding the Traveler and its power. A Warlock's mind is an arsenal of deadly secrets, balanced between godhood and madness. On the battlefield, those secrets can shatter reality itself.

~Warlock

W A R L O C K



Why did I set her on the trail?

You try and try and try to explain, but no one ever understands. No one who's not a Warlock. Who hasn't spent a dozen years scouring the ruins for one string of symbols, one clean code, one black talon. Titans just make a hmphing noise, if they've stayed awake. Hunters clean their nails with their knives and look at you like you've grown a third eye.

But when you've spent your life searching through arcana for ancient power, you have the urge to reach out and educate others. Especially if you've had one too many.

Nah, she's not my type at all. We've played dice, cards, war games, you know, the usual stuff. I'd never tried to show off before. I don't know what came over me.

I had a broken vertebrae in my pocket that I'd borrowed from - yes, borrowed, I was going to put it back - what do you think you are, my conscience? It was a fossil, that means mineral replacement, a rock, basically. They can survive a few hours in my pocket. Do shut up.

The Cryptarchs weren't going to miss it. Everyone knows the Ahamkaras were hunted to extinction. There's nothing to be afraid of anymore.

Think of how mysterious this system is, I said. How much life sprang up when the Traveler came. Like the Ahamkara. Do you know the legends? The dragon that made promises? And I pulled out the fossil with a flourish -

She pulled out her knife and started to pick the dirt from her nails. That set me off.

You could never have brought down one of these, I said. Ever. Not the greatest Hunter, not the brawniest Titan.

Her eyes narrowed. She said, Oh? Is that so? And I saw right then that she wasn't going to pass on the challenge.

I've murdered a Guardian, I thought. She's going to die. It'll be my fault. And

I looked at the piece of spine in my hand and wondered - why did I say that? What moved me to such pride?

~Ghost Fragment: Warlock



My name is Eriana-3, disciple of the Praxic Warlocks, marked by the Cormorant Seal. We came here under one banner, united in a host of thousands, to claim the Moon. But the battle goes against us. I have taken a prisoner and this is the record of its interrogation. If I transgress in your eyes I ask for your forgiveness.

[sound of current or discharge]

/Eriana. It responds to pain.

It responds to the Light. Hurt it again. Monster, heed me. Who is your master with the sword?

[static event]

I can hear it. In my head. The swordbearer's name is CROTA. Record that.

/Should I burn it again?

No. I think you're only feeding it. I will touch its mind. Ghost - help.

They call you Wizard. You must be ancient. I think you value power very much. Will you still be powerful without this piece of your mind?

Tell me how to kill Crota.

[static event]

It showed me the battle. It showed me Wei Ning dead on Crota's blade. It showed me how Crota killed a Guardian with a screaming knife hammered out of his own Ghost.

So I will take a piece of its mind, and ask again.

Tell me how to kill Crota.

[static event]

Incredible. Where? Where is his throne? Where is the twilight world under the dead star eye?

/Eriana there's word from the company in Mare Imbrium. Crota is upon them. Half a hundred dead. They need us.

Tell me where! Tell me how! TELL ME!

[static event]

/Eriana what did it say -

It showed me how it did this, just exactly this, to an Awoken man, the knives arranged by its will, like little silver ships, like Ghosts -

It laughed at me. It said we were the same.

/Crota marches with a thousand Knights and they say the sky above Mare Imbrium has turned into green fire. They are dying in numbers I cannot bear to repeat. He kills them one by one with a sword that eats their Light. Eriana, we have to do something -

Kill the Wizard. Scatter the ash. It has nothing but lies to offer.

Get your Sparrows. We have Light and fury. That will be enough.

~Ghost Fragment: Warlock 2

1.2 A GUARDIAN'S POWER



GUARDIAN ABILITIES

"There is a Light in you from which no Darkness can hide."

Only Guardians have the gift of the Traveler's Light - the ability to channel its energies to project vast power into the world. Even without a firearm, a Guardian is a radiant engine of destruction.

While these abilities rise from within, Guardians master their power in different ways. Titans understand the Light as a force to hone through practice and strict discipline. Hunters roam and explore in order to learn, using dangerous methods to survive the wilds. And Warlocks study the Light and its inner mechanisms, confronting unfathomable mysteries in the search for transcendent might.

~Guardian abilities

From Lord Saladin's Induction Speech

Nothing born is born strong.

I know I began weak, the same as you. I don't care if you're an Exo, staring at that number and wondering where you've come from. Or a Human hungry to understand the ancient world that left you for dead. Or an Awoken reborn in the very essence of what your people hide from. Together, we're the pointed end of a long stick of happenstance. Change one ripple in an ancient ocean and we would never have been granted the Light within us, or the good Ghosts that want to help us.

Humble origins.

Every world begins as a big pebble lost among trillions of pebbles. Every worthy sun was once cold hydrogen spread thin across the vacuum. Even the universe, this cosmic garden that surrounds us and awes us...this monument to Creation was once the size of an apple seed. And everything that's splendid and great stands at the end of incalculable chance and mayhem.

Yes, you have talents. Enormous, wondrous powers. But you should put the smirk away. Do you know what a Guardian is? Not yet. Your name is another pebble. You are a cold apple seed.

But you will grow.

~Ghost Fragment: Abilities

TITAN ABILITIES

Striker

"At close quarters a fist is better than any gun."

Striker Titans charge into close combat, armored in Light and wielding fistfuls of thunder.

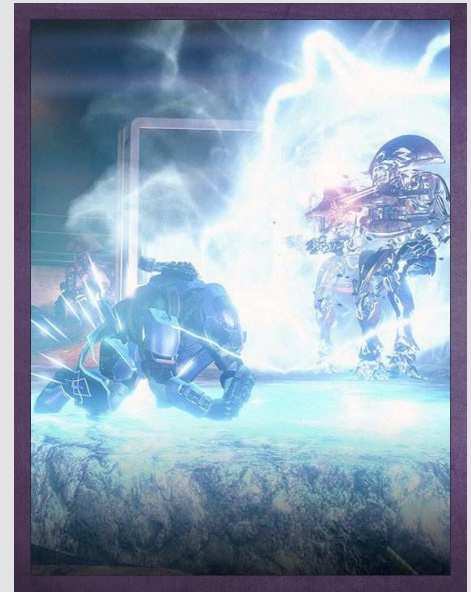
Striker tactics depend on shock and disciplined aggression. They must awe and scatter the enemy, or risk being overwhelmed. Fellow Guardians prize their ability to draw fire as they shatter the enemy line.

~Striker

Fists of Havok

Leap forward and smash the ground, obliterating everything nearby. You will be a thunderbolt - but use your fury carefully. If there are survivors, you will surely draw their wrath.

~Fists of Havok



Defender

"The wall against which the Darkness breaks."

Defender Titans are immovable anchors, trained to absorb punishment and control the flow of battle.

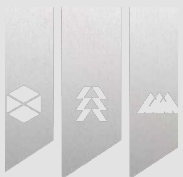
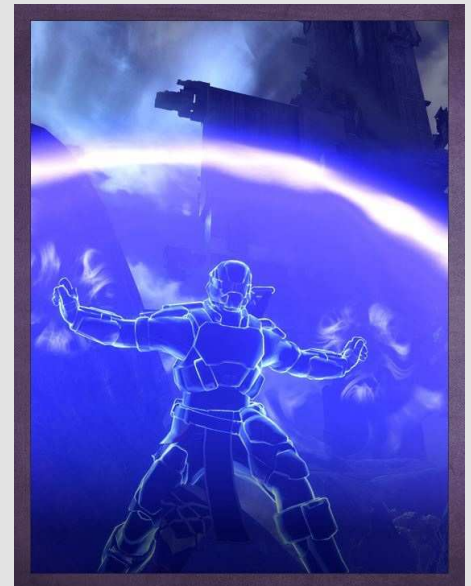
Armed with unflinching conviction and an armory of Void techniques, Defenders block the enemy's movements, shrug off their fiercest weapons, and rally fellow Guardians to strike back.

~Defender

Ward of Dawn

Open a pocket in the universe, an impregnable fortress for you and your allies. The mighty Ward allows Guardians to hold key points and gather their strength in the face of overwhelming opposition.

~Ward of Dawn



Sunbreaker

"Forge the fury of undying suns."

Some Titan orders predate the City, born of a darker time, when Light was an untamed weapon. The Sunbreakers brought honor to the wild, never seeking the safety of the City. Bound by an oath, they live as mercenaries, seeking battles and alliances beyond the Walls. Now the Light of their fire has at last found rank among the City.

Wield the Hammer of Sol with honor, Titan, it is a thing of legend, both past and future.

~Sunbreaker

Hammer of Sol

Forge your Light into a raging inferno of Solar energy, and pull forth a blazing hammer from the fire. Cloaked in flames, launch your hammer at enemies from afar, releasing a devastating eruption of Solar fire on impact. You burn with the intensity of stars, and no shadow is safe from your Light.

~Hammer of Sol



Sunbreaker's Challenge

"What the forge does to your Light must be respected, and feared. That path is not for everyone. The Sunbreakers take the oath very seriously. I'm not trying to talk you out of anything. I'm just making sure you know the stakes. That forge breaks the brittle. And it bends the weak. But the strong, the strong walk away steeled and tempered. Unbreakable." - Lord Shaxx

~Sunbreaker's Challenge



HUNTER ABILITIES

Gunslinger

"A lone wolf who lives for the perfect shot."

In the end, doesn't it all come down to you and your gun?

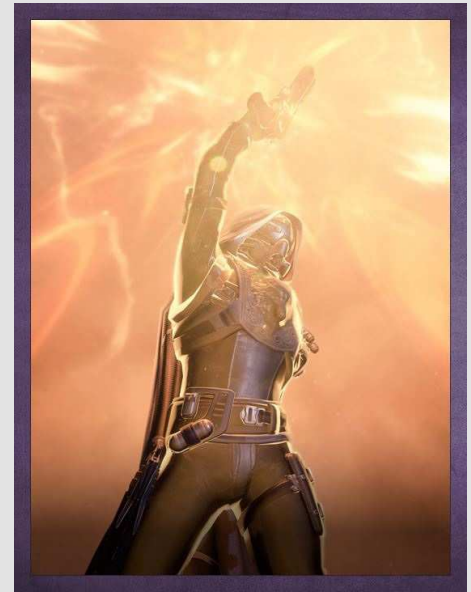
Don't see much else to say about it. That's just truth.

~Gunslinger

Golden Gun

Draw a hand cannon burning with Solar Light and loaded with three rounds of sunfire. Aim steady and keep your wits about you. You are a Gunslinger, and this is what you live for.

~Golden Gun



Bladedancer

"Beautiful lethality, relentless style."

There's something to be said for the blade. A knife won't jam. A knife won't run dry. A knife is very, very quiet.

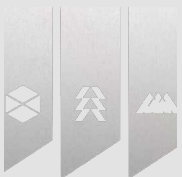
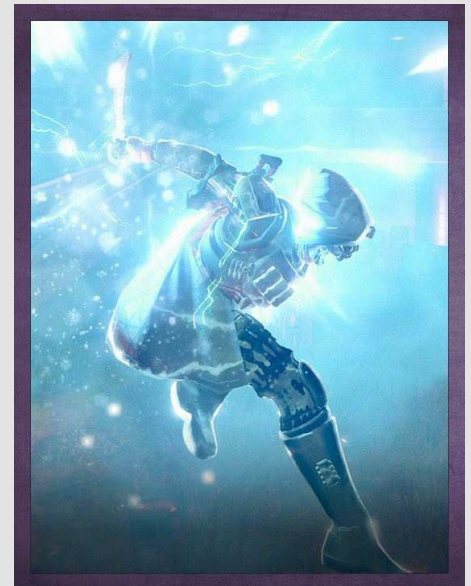
Leave the noise and fire to others. There's work to be done, out there in the dark - monsters that deserve death, delivered quickly, silently, and without mercy.

~Blade Dancer

Arc Blade

Set aside your weapons and lose yourself in the blade trance. Arc Light galvanizes your armor and hastens your movements, and when your knife finds a target it discharges a snap of annihilating current. For as long as the trance lasts, you are the very shadow of death.

~Arc Blade



Nightstalker

"Draw from the Void. Light the way."

A lone hunter stalks the night, firing arrows into the Darkness. There is no hiding, no escape. In the distance, the beast falters, tethered to the void. The killing blow comes without hesitation, without mercy.

There's truth in the edge of Light, and beneath that truth a deeper truth, hidden from all but a few.

That truth is this: monsters need not fear the night.

Do not hunt the monster. Become the monster.

~Nightstalker

Shadow Shot

Summon the power of the Void to draw back and launch a precision long-range projectile that reaches out and snares enemies with slowing, draining tethers of Void Light. Shadowshot lets a Hunter's dead-eye precision carve a path to new battles.

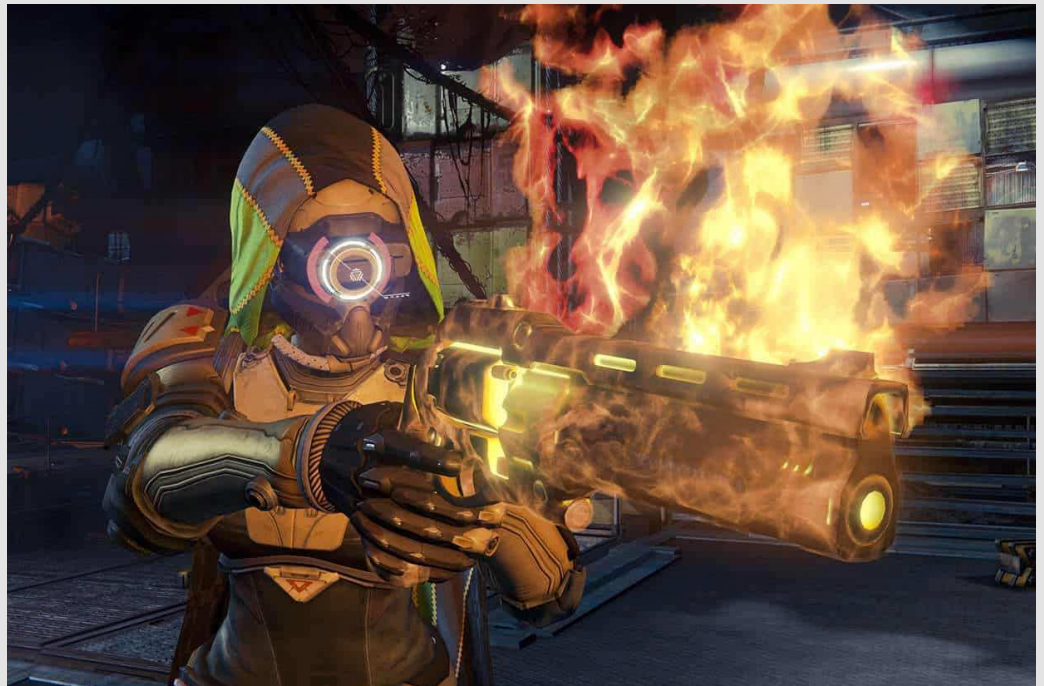
~Shadow Shot



Nightstalker's Trail

"Picking it up is the easy part, Hunter. Putting it down again, well, you'll find that it's addictive, that power. This weapon is something special. Your light gets twisted. Changed. You find the power to punch through and borrow something from the other side. The Void opens up a hole, and draws from the deep. Go ahead. Carry it a while, Hunter. You'll feel how heavy it can get."- Cayde-6

~The Nightstalker's Trail



WARLOCK ABILITIES

Voidwalker

"Those who have stared into the Void are not bound by the laws of space and time."

The Traveler came out of the void that surrounds all things. Thus we know that the void is full of power. Thus we enter the void without fear.

Small minds will call your abilities blasphemous. They will compare you to the abominable Wizards of the Hive.

But you will not be held back. Gifted with the Traveler's Light, armed with the secret physics of a lost age, you will tear reality asunder.

You will fear nothing, and nothing will not fear you.

~Voidwalker

Sunsinger

"There are flames that even the Darkness cannot extinguish."

These are dark times. Humanity stands on the brink of extinction. We will carry fire into that darkness - a beacon to guide the way, and a pyre to consume our great enemy.

The Light saved us from death and forged us into weapons. We seek to understand it, to embrace it, to consume and be consumed by it. We hope to become radiant.

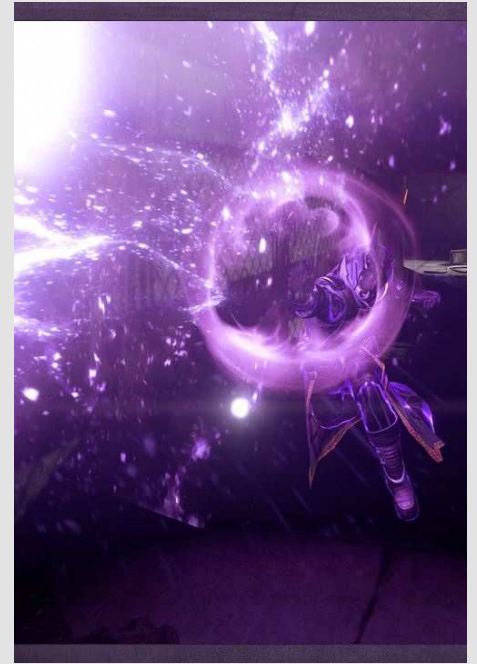
Our fellow Guardians need our power. Our civilization needs our strength.

~Sunsinger

Nova Bomb

Channel the Traveler's Light into a bolt of energy with the power of a collapsing star. The devastating Nova Bomb scours the battlefield with ethereal fire - but be careful in its use. It takes precious moments to summon, and it must be aimed precisely to avoid obstacles.

~Nova Bomb



Radiance

Open yourself to the Light. Glimpse, for a few rapturous moments, the truth beyond the powers you wield. A Warlock in a state of Radiance threatens to slip beyond the bonds of the material, shrugging off physical harm, channeling a torrent of abilities. Some may learn to elevate nearby Guardians, gifting them with power. Others, entranced by the Ghosts' power to reach beyond death, may learn to pluck themselves out of nothingness like the phoenix of ancient myth.

~Radiance



Stormcaller

"Harmony within, hurricane without."

Meditate. Focus. Draw the static from within. The Arc is inside all life.

You must feel it take hold, let it flow through, but not consume you. You are a conduit. Between sky and earth. Electricity and matter. Life and death.

You are a weapon.

~Stormcaller

Stormtrance

Focus your Light to call forth a powerful Arc storm, and siphon it, channeling lightning through your fingertips to send it surging between your targets. A Warlock in Stormtrance is exercising such unbreakable focus that the Arc energy they summon draws them off the ground, the air humming and crackling around them. Like lightning you bend your path forward through the air, striking down anything too slow escape the storm.

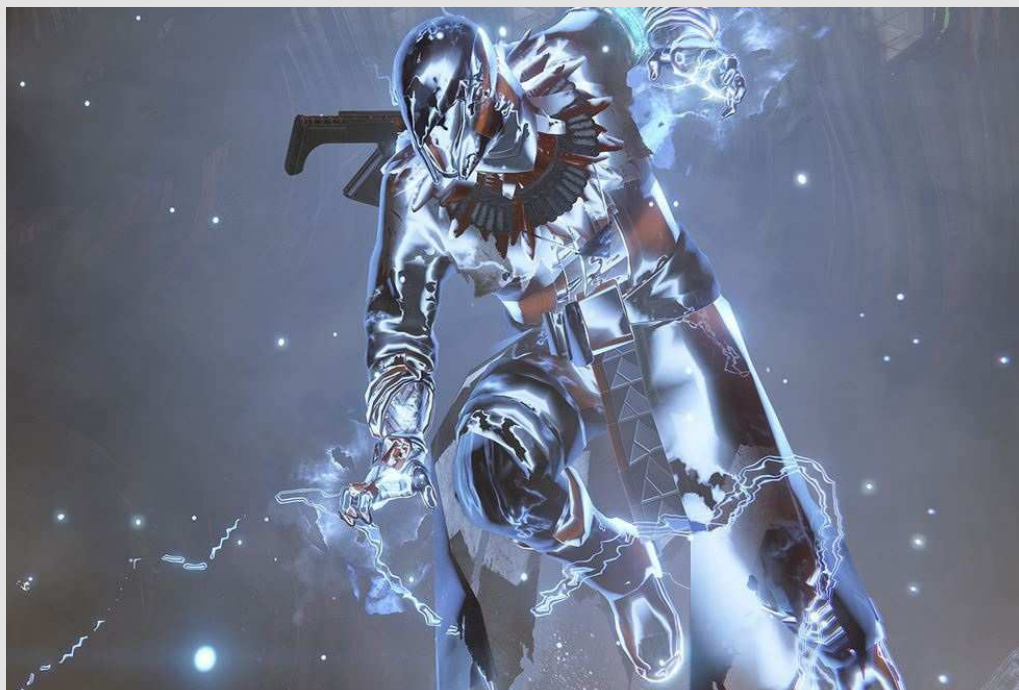
~Stormtrance

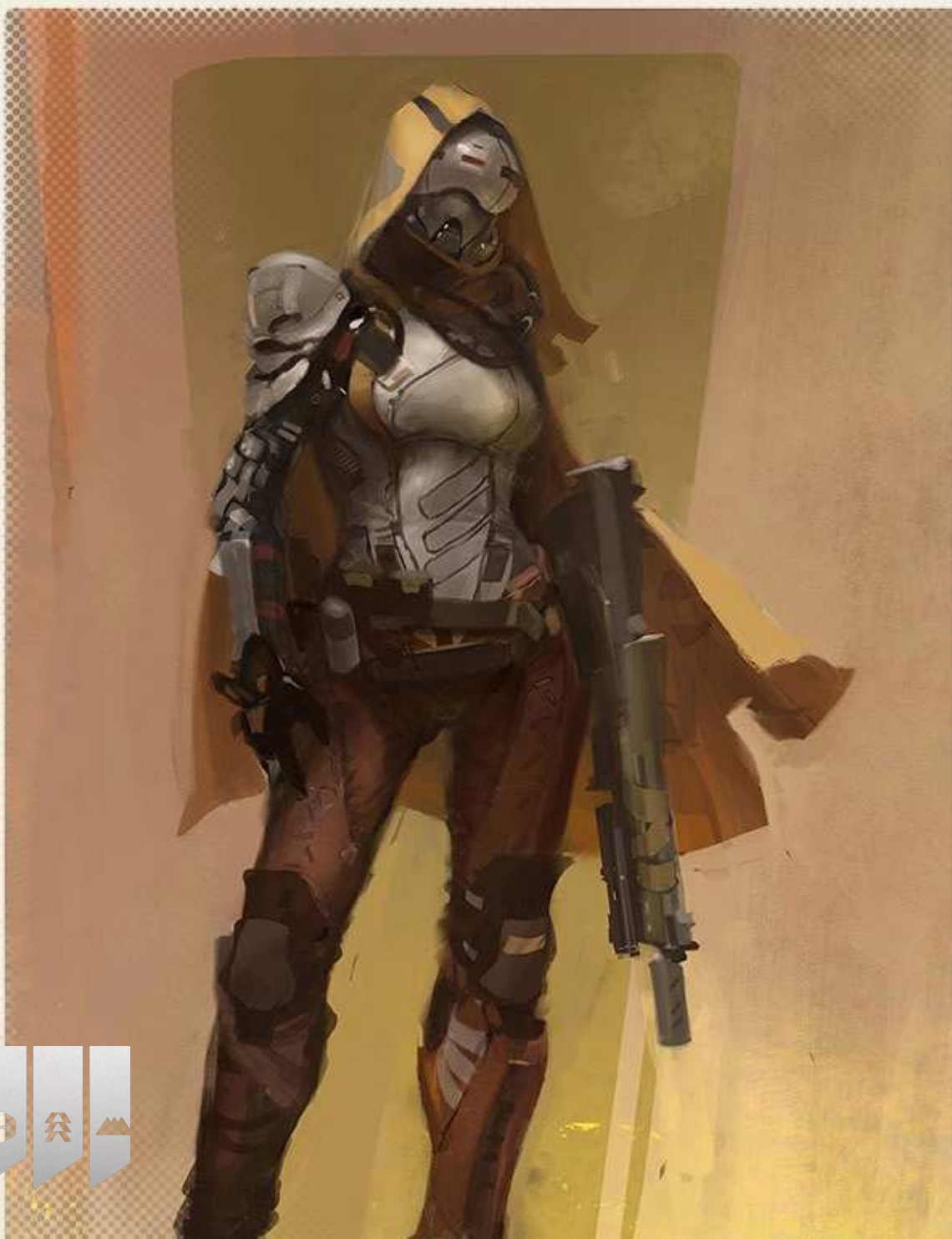


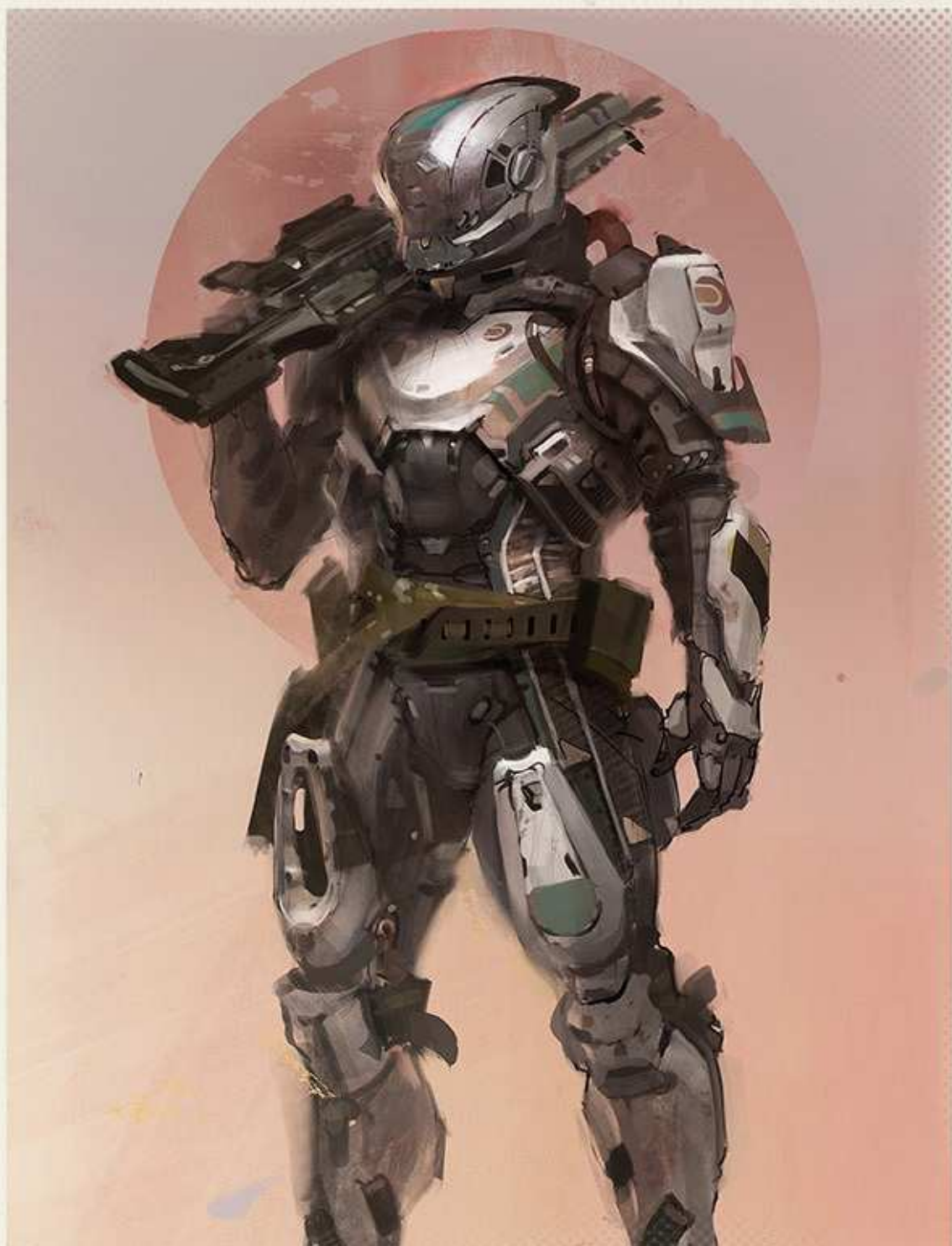
Stormcaller's Path

"Yours will be a difficult path— jagged, like lightning itself. It is only the few who have the power to call down the storm. I've not often seen this talent from one so young. I always knew that you were different from the others, but I never understood my unease. I'm afraid there is little left I can teach you." - Ikora Rey

~The Stormcaller's Path









2.0

A QUEST FOR BALANCE



2.1 PUSHING BACK THE FALLEN

You are a Guardian. You choose your own path.

Before you lie the worlds of our broken past, overrun by nature, claimed by Darkness and alien intent. There are secrets to uncover, alliances to forge, and implacable foes to vanquish.

What will your legend say?

~Story activity introduction

And so you rise again. Who you were before or how you ended up at the wall of an Old Russian spaceport is a story for another time. You have been chosen by the Traveler as one of our Guardians, gifted with the power to wield its Light in the coming battles of a timeless war. Trust this Ghost. It will guide you on your path.

~A Guardian Rises

"We make it out of the Cosmodrome with a ship, and it turns out to not have a warp drive. Typical. Zavala will know what to do. I hope."
—Ghost

"There's a chance we find a warp drive just lying around. Then again, I spent years searching for a Guardian to work with...so, I'm not exactly a good luck charm." —Ghost

"Taking down an Archon is no easy task. With the master of the Fallen servitors gone, the House of Devils will scramble to protect their Prime Servitor. And securing an NLS Drive will let you join the fight beyond Earth. Mind the Speaker's wise words. I believe he speaks for the Traveler." - Commander Zavala

~Restoration

"We've got the warp drive. And killed an Archon. I'm willing to bet even Zavala will crack a smile at that." —Ghost

~ Author's Note: This section of the grimoire detail the recent successes made by many brave guardians in the defence of the light, they are a mix of directives from the vanguard to the guardians and narration from the ghosts who guided the guardians actions, thus most appear written to the guardians themselves. I will endeavour to make notes when I can. ~

"The Fallen have controlled the Cosmodrome for years. If they're shifting troops around, it means we're dealing with something new. Finally! You know how long I spent looking for you?" —Ghost

"We always feared the Hive would rise again, harbingers of the Darkness to come. Their presence on Earth demands that we strike their strongholds on the Moon, the last place we faced them. A lot of Guardians never come back, especially the new. Are you new? Oh. Well! I'm sure you'll make it." - Cayde-6

~The Dark Within

"They say the Warminds were a legend, even in their own time. Now we know Rasputin lives. Your discovery is priceless, Guardian. Nothing in the Cosmodrome is more important." - Ikora Rey

~The Warmind

"The Hive, and an AI Warmind. Zavala will just raise an eyebrow and talk about the dream of the City. But between you and me, I'm impressed." —Ghost

"Ikora heads up a group called 'the Hidden.' They're a 'crack group of intelligence agents.' In other words, spies. I'm just glad she's on our side." —Ghost

"Dead Orbit has a pretty simple philosophy: we're all doomed. According to them, getting out of the system is the only way to survive. No surprise they'd want to find a way to connect with Rasputin and the colonial arrays." —Ghost

"The Terrestrial Array was Dead Orbit's hope to reconnect to the lost colonies of our inner system. You succeeded where they failed. Though Rasputin seized control of the Array, that only strengthens our resolve to break the old Warmind's firewalls and enlist its help in the wars to come. We must reach Rasputin, and make our case." - Commander Zavala

~The Last Array

"Rasputin isn't as cuddly and personable as I am. In fact, I have no idea what his motives are. He locked us out of the arrays. But why?" —Ghost

"Zavala may be a bit single-minded, but he's the best thing to happen to the City in years. The Vanguard would be nothing without him." —Ghost

The Fallen regard the Servitors as gods, but I've had a chance to scan them. I'm not impressed. They're just hyper-advanced frames! I'll be happy to see this Fallen 'deity' put on the scrap pile." —Ghost

"The Fallen will continue to claw at the walls of our City, unless we strike them down. Beneath the ruins of the Cosmodrome, in the shadow of an old colony ship, we've located the House of Devils' Lair - and the High Servitor feeding them their strength. We must destroy this machine god...and send their souls screaming back to hell." - Commander Zavala

~The Devils Lair

"You did it. The Devils' Servitor is dead. If I could high-five you, I would. So...just imagine it, I suppose. And we should get moving. Zavala will be pleased. To say the least. " —Ghost

~Author's Summary: The guardians that were found near Old Russia's cosmodrome were quickly put to work by the vanguard. They were sent back into the cosmodrome to quell the Fallen house of Devils which had been slowly rising in power there.

After taking out a high level Archon, multiple fireteams were dispersed to investigate key fallen strongholds, during these investigations the Guardians made contact with a golden age Warmind called Rasputin and awoke a dormant Hive cell hiding in the ruins of the cosmodrome. Upon the discovery of Rasputin the vanguard ordered a guardian fireteam to connect Rasputin to the old Array systems in the cosmodrome.

The Array was activated and reconnected the vanguard with the colonies in the inner system, creating the possibility of sending guardians to nearby worlds. At the same time as the array was activated Rasputin took over control of the array.

Meanwhile another Fireteam was dispatched to eliminate the Fallen's High Servitor Sepiks Prime, they were successful and the Fallen house of Devils was scattered from the cosmodrome, protecting the city from the major threat.

With the Fallen scattered and the array activated it was time to send Guardians back to the Moon to stop the Hive threat at its source. ~



2.2 RECLAIMING THE MOON

"The Hive on Earth. If you think the Fallen are bad...well. We need to alert the Speaker. He'll know what to do." —Ghost

"We left the Moon to keep the Hive in check. If the Speaker has lifted Lunar Interdiction... well. He knows things we don't, right?" - Ghost

"Your foray into the Hive fortress marks the beginning of our next battle against an ancient foe. After centuries of silence, they have turned their will against Earth. We must be ready for this war." - The Speaker

~The Dark Beyond

"Hopefully the scout's Ghost will have something we can use. The Speaker will be able to point us in the right direction. He has to. The idea that the Hive are plotting something makes my shell shiver." — Ghost

"People always seem surprised when they hear that Ghosts can die. Everything dies. I bet that scout's Ghost would have been proud to know his last memories could lead us to the World's Grave." —Ghost

"At long last we have a chance to learn the Hive's ultimate goals. The Cryptarchs are in a frenzy, working day and night to decipher what you stole from the World's Grave." - Ikora Rey

~The World's Grave

"The Grave makes it clear: the Hive are actually reaching out to the Traveler. They're doing some sort of ritual, some kind of remote associative energy transference. It's bad. We have to tell the Speaker. Now." —Ghost

"Like the Speaker said, everything is connected within the Light. Now that I know to look for it, and from the data we gathered, I'll be able to pinpoint it, to find the ritual they're performing. We have to stop them, Guardian." —Ghost

"Your discovery is perhaps the greatest of our time. If the Hive were able to infect the Traveler through this long-lost shard of its battered shell, Ulan-Tan's theory may be true - all Light remains connected, across space and time. We cannot let our enemies use this power against us." - Ikora Rey

~Chamber of Night

"It's done! The shard of the Traveler has been returned! I'm...well, I'm grateful, Guardian. Let's go give the Speaker the good news." — Ghost

"Though Osiris has vanished, his prophecies and parables offer undeniable insight. Even in his time among the Vanguard he spoke with fear of the King named Oryx. His Eyes still hunt for the Shrines. If Osiris lives, he will know that you struck a blow against one." - Master Rahool

~Shrine of Oryx

"Something dark stirs in the depths of the Hellmouth. We can feel it. A Hive abomination bred for unthinkable evil. We must pierce the veil of their Summoning Pits and destroy this creature...before the Hive unleash it upon us all." - Ikora Rey

~The Summoning Pits

~Author's Summary:

Upon hearing of the Hive cell found in the cosmodrome the Mysterious Speaker lifted the interdiction on travel to the Moon allowing guardian fireteams to be dispersed to the surface. The main goal was to find out what the Hive was up to and to stop them before they could mount a full invasion of Earth.

Fireteams were directed to an old Lunar outpost called Archer's Line. This led to the discovery of an entrance to the Temple of Crota where a guardian scout was found dead and missing his ghost. The Hive were alerted and the ghost was found, stripped of all its light.

The data on the dead ghost revealed the location of a Hive information centre called the world's grave. The fireteam was sent to extract the Hive plans.

It was revealed that the Hive were reaching out to the Traveller, consuming its light and weakening it.

Multiple fireteams were enlisted by the vanguard to stop the link. It was discovered that the Hive were using a broken shard of the Traveller to siphon off its light, the shard was rescued and reunited with the Traveller.

Meanwhile a separate fireteam discovered a shrine that seemed to be communicating with something outside the System, it was secured and the communication link severed.

Now that the Traveller was safe, Guardians were sent to fight back the Hive on the moon, a fireteam was sent to stop the summoning of giant war ogres deep under the moon's surface. ~



2.3 THE VEX THREAT

"It's not every day you get a transmission from a mysterious Exo who claims to know us and wants us to go to Venus and...things are getting weird, aren't they?" —Ghost

"The Ishtar Collective studied the Vex with all the instruments and power of the Golden Age. And we must understand the Vex if we are to survive. There are tales of the Black Garden and the Darkness that lives at its heart. If this is where the Vex are born, then finding it is of the utmost importance." ~ The Speaker

~A Stranger's Call

"The Stranger didn't ask for much, did she? The City and the Reef have always had a strained relationship. Let's hope the Queen's in a good mood. And knows where this Black Garden is." - Ghost

"So, the Queen seemed nice enough, right? Her brother, though ... anyway. We need a Gatelord and I have no idea how to find one. The Ishtar Collective is going to be our best place to start gathering information." - Ghost

"The Vex have us all worried. Terrible things are stirring beneath Venus, but what you've discovered gives us hope that we can stop them. Just be careful when you make deals with the Awoken, would you? The Queen always collects." ~ Cayde-6

~Ishtar Collective

"These files are amazing. At least, I think they are. I'm confident that Master Rahool can decrypt them. Just don't expect a lot of friendly small talk." - Ghost

"These files make it clear what we need to do. Now we just need to do it. You know. Kill a Gatelord. Back before the Collapse they paid people for their service. Think it'd work if we asked the Speaker for a raise?" - Ghost



"While defeat of any champion of the Dark is cause for celebration, be leery of the promises of the Queen. The Awoken play both sides of this battle, and a debt to her is potentially ruinous. But if it gets you into the Black Garden, you have the City's full support." ~ The Speaker
~Eye of a Gate Lord

The Vex continue to impress me. And depress me. Is it wrong to think that cybernetic life and organic life can get along without everybody wanting to murder each other?" —Ghost

"The Cryptarchs are overjoyed, Guardian. An entire hidden Archive full of Vex research. Even chronicles of the legendary Vault of Glass. Perhaps this will finally help us crack its riddles." - Master Rahool
~The Archive

"I will admit to a very personal satisfaction at the death of Draksis. He hurt my City and he hurt my friends. Few Guardians have ever assaulted a Kell in the throne room of his own Ketch. The entire Tower is abuzz at the chance to explore this downed Wintership, but more important, we've removed another Fallen nightmare from our worlds. We thank you, Guardian." - Commander Zavala

~Scourge of Winter

"Far below the Ishtar Academy, the Vex have set something in motion, a world-eating machine transforming Venus into another link in their intergalactic chain. This Nexus must be stopped and the Mind that controls it, destroyed." - Ikora Rey

~The Nexus

"Those Fallen in the Ishtar Sink on Venus...story is they raided the Prison of Elders in the Reef. Got an Archon Priest. The Queen's bounty is high so we know it's powerful. We need to hunt this thing down before they fully restore its soul." - Cayde-6

~Winter's Run

~Author's Summary:

After the mysterious transmission from the unknown Exo, the Vanguard sent fireteams to Venus to assess the situation with the Vex and wheather they poed an immediate threat.

Multiple fireteams came into contact with the Exo stranger while on Venus, some claimed she had spoken of time travel and of existing in the future, other teams talked of a warning. The information most clear from the reports was that some Vex threat was growing in a place called the Black Garden.

The Exo had suggested that guardians would find their answers with the Awoken in the Reef.

After seeking counsel with the Queen of the Reef, Mara Sov, a fireteam returned to Venus seeking a vex Gatelord. After digging around in the Ishtar Collectives data banks, the loocation of a Gatelord was found.

The Gatelord was slain by a group of Fireteams and the lead team was sent back to the Reef to speak again with the Queen.

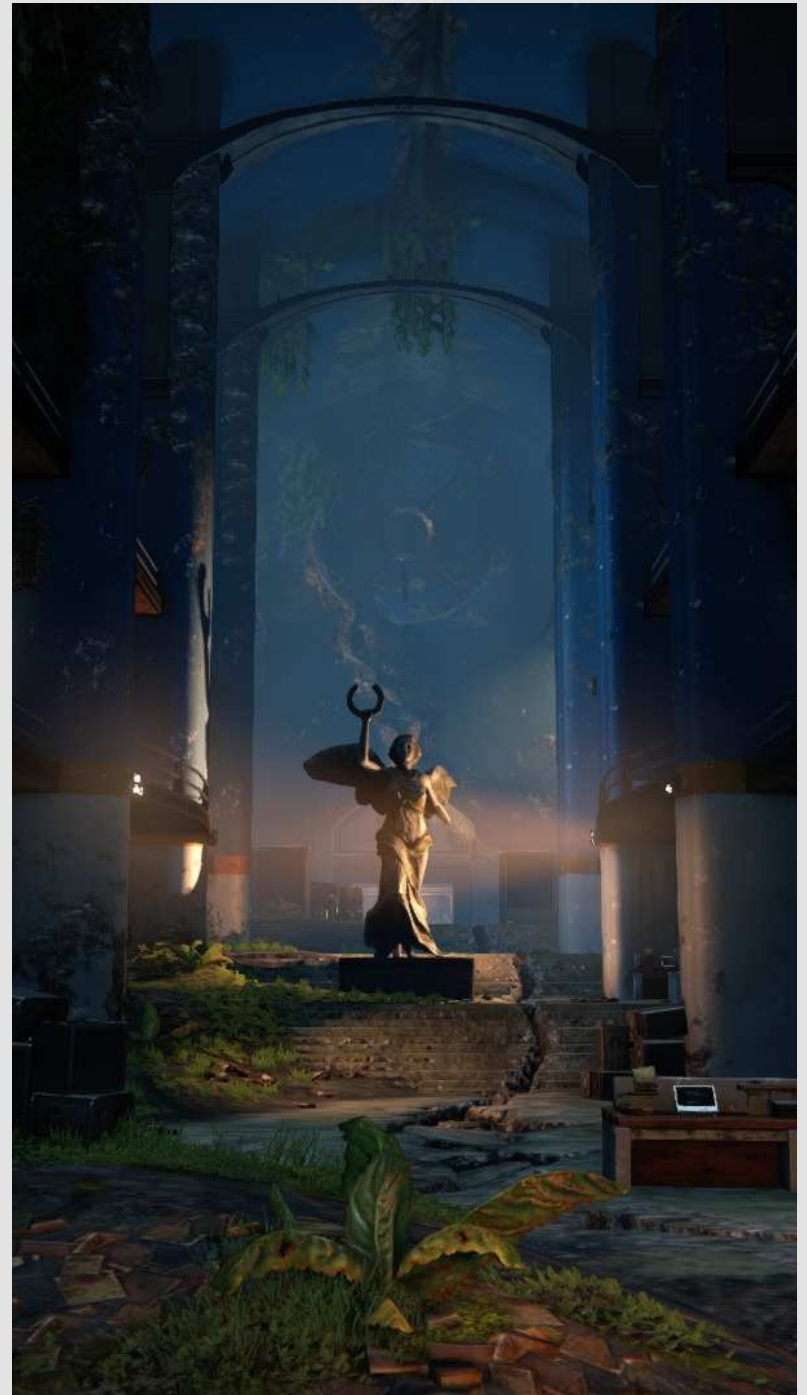
Meanwhile, other fireteams were working for the Vanguard on Venus.

One team delved into the Ishtar Archives to gather all the research that survived on the vex. Another team pushed further below the Ishtar Acedemy to stop a Vex mind from converting Venus into a machine world.

The Fallen House of Winter were also active on Venus and multiple Fireteams were dispatched to remove their Kell and stop the revival of an Archon Priest. Both fireteams were successful and the House of Winter was left in Disarray.

After speaking again with the Queen and proving themselves worthy, the Fireteam that slew the Gatelord were given the location of the Black Garden...

It was time to head to Mars. ~



2.4 BREAKING THROUGH THE CABAL

"How can she stand that guy? At least we know where to go. The Cabal have kept the Exclusion Zone locked down for years now. Breaking through will be a challenge. But then, cracking tough challenges is what you do." - Ghost

"Breaking the Exclusion Zone brings us one step closer to the Garden - and it gives us access to Freehold, a triumph of Golden Age civilization. But I must warn you again of the Awoken's tactics. They see us all as playthings in some cosmic joke." - The Speaker

~The Exclusion Zone

"This is starting to feel like a shell game. Get the eye, find the gate ... now what? Ikora's Hidden make her the Vanguard's expert on the Vex. She'll know what to do." - Ghost

"The energy of a Vex spire on Mars. A tall order, just by itself. But our best bet is a Vex spire in the middle of a Cabal camp? That's ... well, honestly, that's not the weirdest thing we've had to do. Let's get it done." - Ghost

"No one's ever penetrated the Blind Legion perimeter and made it into that Warbase. Until now. I'm going to tell everyone you took out an admiral and seized the Spire, and they won't believe me, and then I will win so very many bets. Speaking of, I have a thousand Glimmer down on your death in the Black Garden. Nothing personal!" - Cayde-6

~The Garden's Spire

"The Eye's charged up, but I'm only guessing we did this right. Better check in with Ikora." - Ghost

"We got the Eye. We found the Gate. We charged the Eye. And Ikora gave us her blessing. For what that's worth. Nothing left but to face the Darkness at the heart of the Garden. I'm with you, Guardian. All the way down." - Ghost

"At last, the Heart of the Garden has been destroyed, its stranglehold on the Traveler released. Our Light brightens. But the power of the Vex is not broken. Look into the Vault, Guardian, for it is said to hold powers the Progeny were meant to bring forth." - The Speaker

~The Black Garden

"I wish I could walk the halls of Clovis Bray. Losing their machines to Rasputin is unfortunate, but we still have access to so much we thought we'd lost. This is the dawn of a new era for us." - Master Rahool

~The Buried City

"Of all the tactics we have to use against the Vex, shutting down their gates may be the most effective. You may have saved Freehold from being overrun. I sense a pattern here - a connection between this Vex outbreak, the Black Garden, and the Vault of Glass...I need to know more." - Ikora Rey

~A Rising Tide

"The Dust Palace is lost to us again. Back in Cabal hands. Word is they've let Psion Flayers out of their cages, to dig around in the Central AI's Cortex. Which means they really want what's buried in there. If Rasputin was protecting it, it's valuable. We've got to flush those Flayers out." - Cayde-6

~The Dust Palace

"Whether we wanted it or not, we've stepped into a war with the Cabal on Mars. So let's get to taking out their command, one by one. Valus Ta'aurc. From what I can gather he commands the Siege Dancers from an Imperial Land Tank outside of Rubicon. He's well protected, but with the right team, we can punch through those defenses, take this beast out, and break their grip on Freehold." - Commander Zavala

~Cerberus Vae III

~Author's Summary:

The Queen of the Awoken had revealed that the entrance to the black garden resided on Mars, inside the Cabal exclusion zone. A single fireteam was dispatched to break through the exclusion zone and set up an operation area for further fireteams.

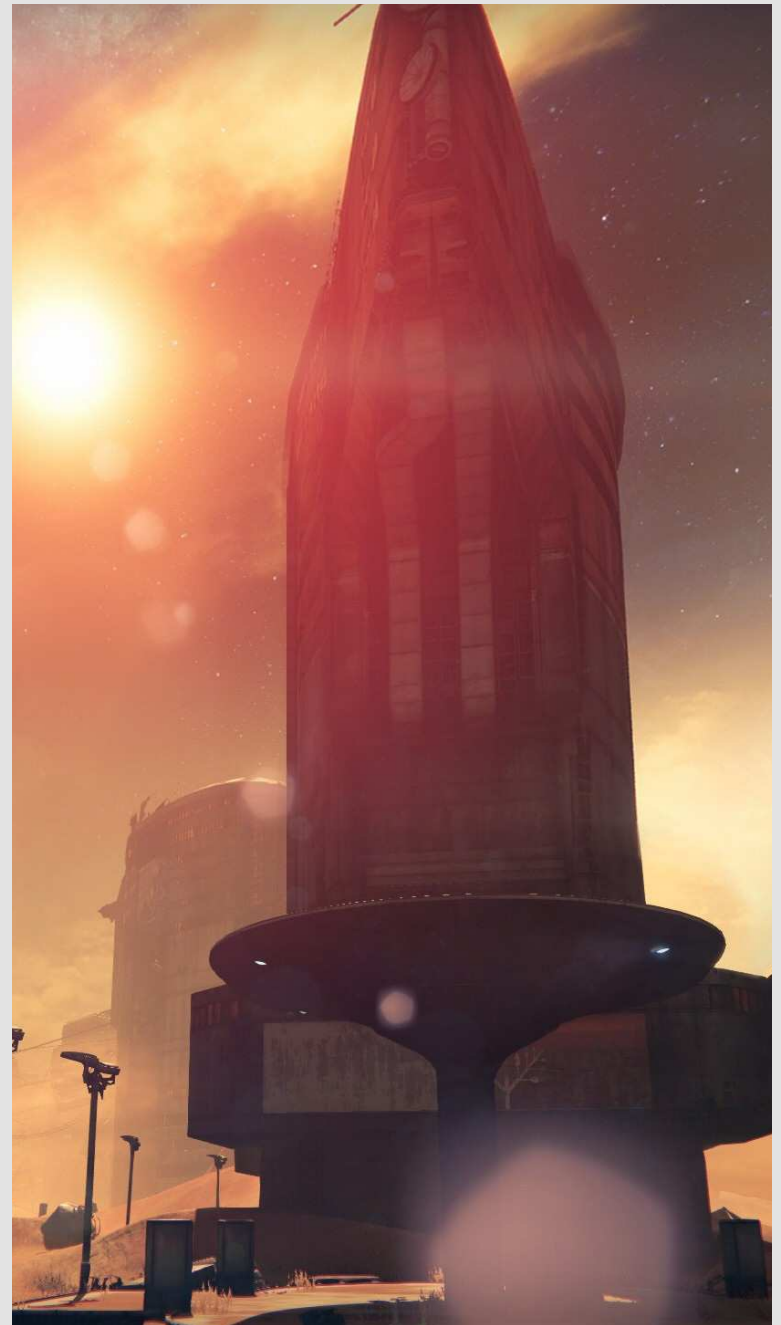
Guardians started landing on Mars once a foothold was gained in the exclusion zone and multiple fireteams pushed deep into the Cabal military installations to charge the eye of the Gatelord using Vex technology.

With the eye charged, a fireteam was sent into the Vex gate that led to the Black Garden, Once inside they fought through the labyrinthine garden. At the centre they found the Vex worshipping a mysterious core, possibly a physical form of the Darkness itself. Before they could destroy this darkness they had to eliminate the Vex Progyny, three massive constructs that awoke to protect the heart of the garden. With the darkness destroyed and the Vex stopped on Mars, the system was deemed safe from destruction... for now.

There was still plenty to do and the Vanguard sent fireteams into Freehold the Golden age city.

Some were sent to clear the Clovis Bray facilities and gather information on golden age tech there, Another was sent into the old subterranean transit system to shut down Vex gates.

Multiple fireteams were sent in the direction of a massive Cabal land tank to take down Valus Ta'aurc, commander of the Siege Dancers. A final team was sent to the top of the Clovis Bray buildings where Psion Flayers were attempting to access the inert Warmind's core.~



2.5 CROTA'S END

"Eris Morn has a reputation ... strange, driven, even disturbing. But she's been right more times than she's been wrong. Taking down a Hive champion like the Fist can only be good for the City." - Ghost

"Crota, and the Hive, are the closest things to pure Darkness we've ever seen. The Hive...they eat Light, Guardian. If that's not evil, I don't know what is." —Ghost

"The shattered one once referred to Crota as the god holding domain in a threshold between our world and theirs. He said he deciphered the means by which the Hive call to him. From all that I've seen, I now know he was right.

"I watched as Crota's soul rose from the abyss, his sword cracking the Moon's surface with every stroke, and countless Guardians, losing their light to his wrath.

"We tried once to hunt him, gave up all we were to challenge the ones that bow in his name, hoping to deny him his power. One by one, we failed. But I've kept watch, seeking vengeance for all I've lost.

"What we faced on the Moon now looks to take the Earth. And none will survive if they succeed. First Crota's sworn Blades will rise. Then every disciple who haunts these worlds in Crota's name will seek to overrun the Earth. If they raise Crota here, we could lose everything. Go to the Cosmodrome and meet this invasion head on. Find the Fist leading the charge and break him, then the others, or Crota will claim the Earth for his king, and all Light beware." - Eris Morn

~Rise of Crota

"The Fist of Crota. Sardon, he's called. If he's leading the Hive to wake Crota's soul, it may be the most dangerous thing we've faced. You know, today." - Ghost

"It's a good news/bad news thing, I think. The Hive aren't overburdened with powerful champions on Earth. On the other hand,

the loss of Sardon might um... antagonize the brood." - Ghost

"The Hive know the power of Rasputin, they've fought him on many fronts. But this attack seemed targeted. There was some kind of purpose in this, one that I can't seem to follow. You stopped them from tearing apart this arm of the Warmind, but perhaps Omnigul found what she sought. It's not like her to run from a feast of Light.

"I'll continue to monitor the Warmind's efforts, but be careful of its motives. Not every ally shares our goals. Rasputin might have survived the Collapse, but at what cost to the rest of us?" -Eris Morn

~Seige of the Warmind

"It's hard to imagine Rasputin bending a knee to a dark god. But then, Hive magic is capable of some pretty incredible things. If Omnigul wants into Rasputin's vault, I don't think he'll be able to stop her." - Ghost

"I see Rasputin as something of a kindred soul. I mean, if I were an insane Russian-speaking, xenophobic hermit we'd be like brothers." - Ghost

"Thanks to you the Wakers of Crota failed to summon their master here; my efforts to warn you were not in vain.

"But beyond the threshold at the pit of the Hellmouth, Crota still lives. And his disciples will continue to haunt the Earth, seeking the power to raise him again, and again, until Earth is carved in his name. But—there is a way, spoken by the shattered one, to enter the dark where he sleeps.

"Perhaps you can succeed where we could not. Gather a force worthy of the Light and enter that abyss, only there can we truly see to Crota's end." - Eris Morn

~The Wakening

"Hive magic is completely beyond me. I can track the energy transfer. But where it comes from ... where it goes? If anyone can create a crystal matrix that binds a monster's soul in place, it would be the Hive." - Ghost

"The matrix destroyed, the ritual disrupted ... where do you think Hive gods go when they die?" - Ghost

"They are all here, on Earth, I can feel them. His Eyes, who watch our worlds for him; the Hand whose grasp on Earth must be unbound; the Heart who ceases at nothing to bring Crota back. And Omnigul, his vile Will, the keeper of the worms, the mother of his spawn.

"Find them, defeat them all—as long as even one of these monsters walks the Earth, the threat of Crota will never fade." - Eris Morn
~Disciples of Crota

"Omnigul is old. I have records on her dating back before we left the moon. She's powerful. Deadly. And, of course, a fantastic singer. Let's pay her a visit." - Ghost

"Omnigul is the last of Crota's generals. She is the architect of her master's waking. She'll spawn countless armies to feed his will. As long as she lives... the threat of Crota's return will always haunt this world. Track her down, and exterminate every Hive that stands in your way." - Eris Morn

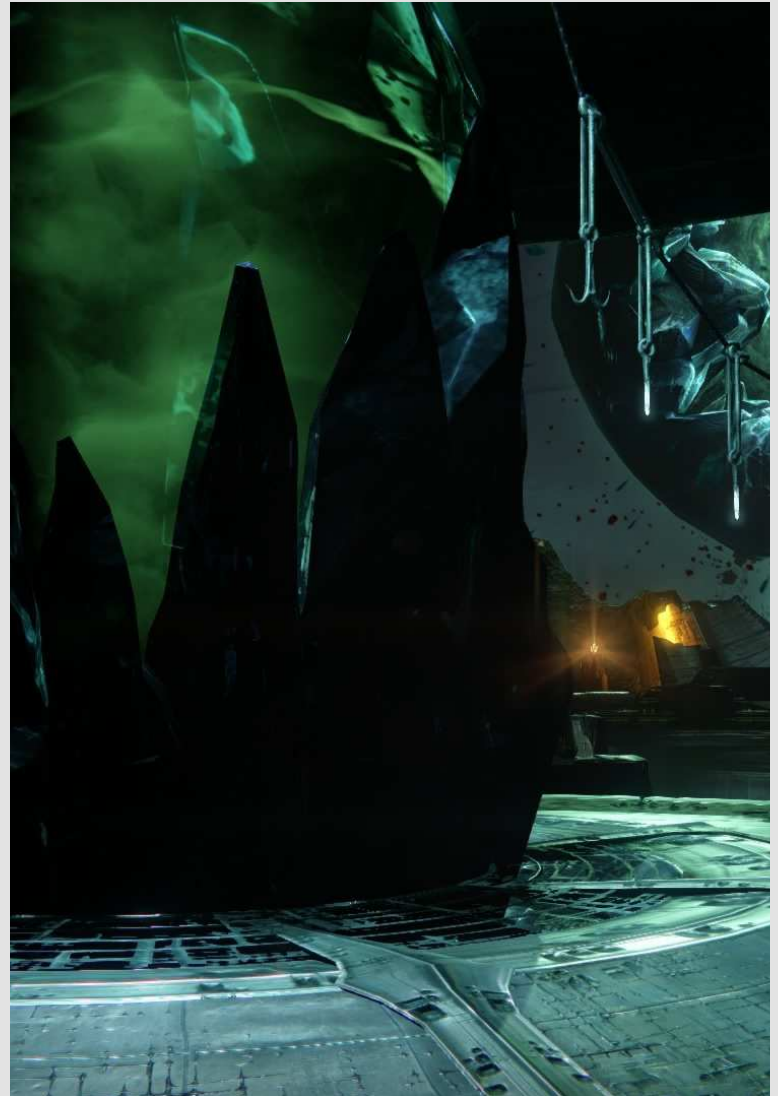
~Will of Crota

"The Hive pantheon only begins with Crota, the shattered one said he is but a child among their gods. Even now, I can hear the Hive calling to them, and to Crota's maker, Oryx.

"I can lead you to their most unholy rites, and there we can taint their faith and sully their offerings. But be warned, what we dabble in now could bring us to a very fortunate but challenging future." - Eris Morn
~Urn of Sacrifice

"Crota's soul banished. Check. Omnigul dead. Check. Eris doesn't seem like the smiling type, but if anything will get her to crack a grin, this will." - Ghost

"The Black Garden may not stay among us for long. Something has begun to repair the schism torn by its destruction. Vex now flood the Garden channels to protect it. We must stop the weavers before they seal the Garden and begin to summon back its heart." - Ikora Rey
~The Undying Mind



2.6 THE REBELLION OF WOLVES

Variks: My Queen, my Kell. It is Skolas they say.

Petra: That's impossible. My Lady, you assured us all that Skolas would never be seen again.

Queen: Has it been confirmed?

Variks: What does it matter? They always fear him—dead or alive. If not this Skolas then another Kell. It is why the Queenbreakers rise, and the Prison breached. No one will call you Kell when a true heir makes a claim.

Queen: Petra, report to my brother for any intel from the Crows. Variks, see to your channels. Find the one who calls himself Skolas.

Variks: Yes, of course, my Queen, my Kell.

Petra: Your Grace, I will not relent until it is done.

Queen: I know. That's why I've called you back.

~The Hunt for Skolas

"Petra Venj ... Venj ... ah, here. Looks like she was an important member of the Awoken military during the Reef Wars. She was sidelined by the Queen after some kind of field op gone wrong. She seems smart! I like her!" - Ghost

"Why do you think the Houses are named the way they are? House Winter. Maybe it's geographic? House Kings, some kind of global ruling sect? Strange to think about how these terms have survived, their context completely removed." - Ghost

Queen: So it is no lie, it is Skolas?

Petra Venj: Yes, my lady. A Guardian got eyes on him in the Ishtar Sink, I used Ghost telemetry to confirm. Same pelt. Same awful voice.

We drove him from Winter's Lair. How did he—

Queen: And you would have me consider this a success? What of Winter itself? Your report is unclear...

Petra: You are correct, my lady. I would not call our mission a success. Skolas managed to win over—well, a substantial number of Winter soldiers have taken up the Wolf banner. He calls himself Kell of Kells now. [silence]

Petra: We found him once, we can do it again. I have a plan in place. As soon as the Guardian returns—

Queen: Then go. Continue the hunt. Petra, you must not fail.

Petra: I will not, my lady.

~A Kell Rising

"The House of Wolves and the Awoken tore the Reef apart trying to get a tactical advantage. All the while, we were desperately trying to hold the Walls against the Devils, Kings, and Winter. It was one of the darkest chapters in the City's history." —Zavala

"A rogue Kell. Fascinating. With the exception of the House of Exile, the Fallen usually try their best to stay out of each others' way. That's why the system is parcelled up so neatly. Winter on Venus, Exiles on the Moon, Kings and Devils keeping to their own areas of the Cosmodrome. Now, there's an entire House bent on taking ground from the others." - Ghost

Petra paces back and forth before the console. At the controls, Variks efficiently moves through a decryption sequence. Four arms interweave as his claws dance across the interface. She shakes her head. His cybernetic arms whine—almost imperceptibly, tiny high pitched noises as the servos manipulate the limbs.

Petra: Well?

~The Silent Fang

Variks: No sign of Skolas, but the Silent Fang. He has unleashed the Fang. They hunt the Devils. On Earth.

Petra: The Fang on Earth. Devils. And Kings? Nice work, Variks.

Variks: Pleasure is all mine.

~Gone to Ground

"That Variks seems ... well, a little unusual. But he's certainly the friendliest Fallen I've ever met. If he says he can crack their comms, I believe him." - Ghost

"Just so you know, I could crack these communication links if I wanted to. I could! It would just take ... a lot, lot longer than it will for Variks." - Ghost

"Silent Fang. Trained assassins, sheathed in technology of old. Once my people were capable of many things, great things. Now we use simple optics, toys for hatchlings, as weapons of war." - Variks

Queen: Ha! I had not thought it would be so easy, my brother. The Silent Fang brought low.

Uldren: I do not see why this is funny. This Guardian may have dealt with them on Earth, but my Crows say we still have much to fear. More of the Fang survive, nearly every one of them made it out alive.

Queen: I find no humor in any of this, brother.

The Queen rises and descends to the bottom of the stair, turning in place to take in the chamber.

Queen: So empty, now. No Wolves to sit at my feet. My guards—

[silence]

Queen: Talk to Petra. Set more bounties, hunt down any of the Fang your Crows can track. They may have escaped the Prison of Elders, but they will not escape my Wrath.

"The Silent Fang? Yes. Yes, I remember them. The Fang made a number of attacks against the City during the days of the Reef Wars. They'd take to terror tactics, slipping invisibly through with cargo and going on a rampage in a crowded residential area." —Zavala

"The Fang used to do hit-and-run attacks against civilian targets during the worst days of the Reef Wars. I'm not sure, but I think that's what made Variks turn against Skolas. Assassins unleashed on miners, on teachers. That's a long way to fall." - Petra

Variks stares up through the shielding surrounding the Vestian Outpost. The thin filament of energy almost imperceptible, keeping in the heat and atmosphere within the confines of the hollowed out ketch hull. His mandibles idly opened and closed as he contemplated the view.

Variks (to himself): Goes after Winter. Devils, Kings. Seeks power. Kings deny him. Kell of Kings hides well. Perhaps he will take back the Great Machine. Perhaps I chose the wrong side. It is not too late—

Petra (over comm): Variks, Crows are reporting Skolas is back in the Ishtar Sink. They're all over the Vex networks.

Variks: Yes. Right away.

~The Ruling House

"I spent a long time in the wilderness outside the Walls. I've mentioned it before. Red-marked House of Devils Fallen always tracking my movements. The entire time I was out there, I think I saw one member of the House of Kings. Just sitting on a wall, scanning the horizon. Never even gave me a second glance." - Ghost

"House of Kings. Name comes from the old world, from before the Whirlwind. Most Houses carry their name for pride. Kings carry their name because ... is what they are." - Variks

"I continue to be impressed by Variks. When the Queen first introduced us, I thought we'd have ... trouble. Now I have a hard time imagining running ops without him." - Petra Venj

Petra: So— any other Fallen houses hiding he'll try to convert?

Variks: He may seek to gather the Exiles, but they will not follow. They follow none, no Kell, no Archon.

Petra: What about this House of Rain, the Prophecy you keep quoting?

Variks: House Rain lost in Whirlwind. No survivors, but I keep their prophecies. You think many claim to be Kell of Kells, but none have. House Judgment closest thing to peace the Fallen ever know.

Petra: Heh. Maybe you are the Kell of Kells.

Variks (distracted by screen): Looks like Skolas returns to Venus.

Petra: I'll find the Guardian.

~Kell of Kells

The more we learn about this Skolas, the less I like this. I figured him for a zealot, a prophet. But he's headed back to Venus. There are ... a lot of bad things on Venus." - Ghost

Uldren: Nearly the whole fleet, your Grace. Back in the Ishtar Sink.

Queen: He fails at his little prophecy, so he'll look to rule from Simiksfel, now that Draksis is gone—

Uldren: I thought the same thing, but my Crows say he's not there. We've found more of his Guard leading parties into the Vault of Glass.

Queen: Interesting.

[silence]

Queen: Tell Petra I have changed my mind. Skolas is to be brought in alive.

~Wolves Gambit

"My people once had great technology. Great ships, fine weapons.

Grav-lifts. Now other races enter system, use tech stolen from Fallen long ago. Humiliating. Just humiliating." - Variks

"A Fallen House with the technology of the Vault of Glass. If you like quite literally anything about the world we live in, we have to stop Skolas. You see what they've done to the Cosmodrome. Imagine what they'd do to the past!" - Ghost

A bellow erupts from the barred grate at her feet. Bony fingers claw at the bars, their sharp points just inches from her toes.

Prince Uldren chuckles. At the edge of the room the Techeuns circle, their implants glowing faintly blue in the shadows.

"He's been... amusing... since Petra bring him," Variks injects, practically purring with glee. "He say 'Kell of Kells,' over and over. And other such nonsense."

Skolas bellows again. Variks strikes Skolas' grasping fingers with his staff.

The Queen's expression remains mild. She looks down her nose at the glowing eyes burning in the shadows beneath the grate.

Skolas falls abruptly silent. Then a low, soft growl—almost like a whine—echoes from the cell below. Variks' mechanical hands click as he snaps them together in surprise.

"What's he—" begins Uldren.

Variks interrupts with a burst of guttural clicks directed at the grate.

The Queen does not react. "What did he say?"

"He says..." Variks hisses under his breath. "He makes no sense, my Queen. He speaks of...Light-Snuffer. Dark-binder."

The Queen aims her eyes at Skolas, her expression unchanged. "I see."

"He will not say more—"

"He does not need to." She turns toward the door.

"My Queen—what of this one?" says Uldren. "He awaits your sentence."

"You would not sentence a rabid dog, or a Hive Thrall, or a bomb. The Queen's justice is wasted on one such as it." She paused. "Variks."

"Yes, Your Grace..."

"Skolas is yours. Let the children of Light have their play with him."

"Ahhh...you are might and justice, my Queen, my Kell."

The Techeuns gather at the door as the Queen approaches it. Prince Uldren holds it open with a small bow, and the Queen touches his shoulder as she passes. "Send a Crow to Mercury. And another to our new friend in the Tower."

~Queen's ransom

"I've never seen temporo-spatial claudication at that scale before! We have to go see Master Rahool after we get back to the Tower. That Master Ives makes me nervous." - Ghost

"Guardian, you are incredibly impressive. Remember this day. This is the day Petra Venj vowed we'd be working together again. Just no more Fallen, all right? Variks is about all I can stand right now." - Petra

"The Wolves have sent a mercenary to Luna. Taniks, the Scarred. He would steal from the Hive all they know. Would align the Fallen with the shadows. You will stop him... but he will rejoice in your interference. Embraces conflict does Taniks. Revels in the trophies he collects from all he defeats. End his games." - Variks, the Loyal
~Shadow Thief

Variks the Loyal remembers an ancient time, and an ancient name: the House of Judgment, when grudges and status fights were worked out in a safe place. When the berserk and the vengeance-crazed were kept somewhere harmless, and there were fewer rivals to plot around.

The old Fallen ways align perfectly with the Queen's agenda. With the House of Wolves in disarray, the Queen needs muscle in the Reef. Guardians go where the treasure and the glory are, and an arena of champions is a wonderful place to earn both. Guardians in the Reef deter threats to the Queen and give the Awoken a chance to learn about their power and subvert their loyalty to the Traveler. And if, as the Queen worries, the Nine are scheming against her, then she needs a good excuse to clear out some of the most dangerous prizes in the Prison of Elders.

And the Prison of Elders is full of dangerous prizes. The Awoken have captured titanically dangerous specimens from everywhere in the inner solar system. These monstrous champions want to smash Guardian bone and Guardian alloy—and given the chance, they'll kill Guardians, rend their Ghosts, and snuff them out forever. Walk into the arena with a Fireteam you trust. And beware: the agents of the Nine are active in the Reef, and their curiosity is as limitless as it is inscrutable.

Risk death. Win glory and signs of Her Majesty's favor. But always remember that you are being watched, and tested.

~Prison of Elders



2.7 THE TAKEN KING

"The signal from Phobos is incredibly powerful. It might be a distress call. But then, we've never heard the Cabal send out a distress call before. Approach the base with caution, Guardian." —Zavala

"The Awoken died for us. They gave their lives to save the system, to stop Oryx's fleet at the outer planets. We must honor their sacrifice. We must face the Taken King without fear. Queen Mara has given us a gift. We must not waste it." - Eris Morn

~The Coming War

"Sure, it's a gamble. If my old cache isn't there, we'll figure something else out. Just...uh. Just hope it's there. Ain't nobody feeling lucky today." —Cayde-6

"It's been a pain in the rump keeping Ikora, Zavala, and Eris in the dark. But I think it's worth it. That Guardian found the stealth drive just where I thought it would be, even took out some kind of powerful Taken construct. This plan's going even better than I expected! What could go wrong?" - Cayde-6

~Cayde's Stash

So I said to myself, I said: 'Cayde, you need a Guardian brave and crazy enough to set up a landing zone on the Dreadnaught.' Guess who's name was the first to mind?" —Cayde-6

"...and so that's the situation. With Cayde's help the Guardian has established a beachhead on the Dreadnaught. I'm caught in the impossible position of wanting to reward and punish them both. If you have any guidance in this matter, it would be appreciated. I'll file another report this evening. For now I need to go have another conversation with Eris Morn before she rends Cayde limb from limb." - Commander Zavala, transmission to Traveler's Observatory

~The Dreadnaught

"I think Cayde asks us to do stuff for the entertainment factor. He's on the council, so I guess he has our best interests at heart? Still, hard not

to hear him smirking when he's on the comms." —Ghost

"The Vanguard held a closed-door session while you were in transit. I'm going to read the notes later so I can relive all the 'Cayde snickers' and 'Eris glowers' notations." —Cayde-6

"The Cabal signals on the Dreadnaught are extremely complex. Their legions are planning several operations. I've instructed the Hidden to monitor their communications. Hopefully we can stay ahead of their plans." —Ikora

"The discovery of the ruptures and their connection to Ascendant Hive is a breakthrough. Eris Morn is working with Cayde-6 to form a plan to address this, and I believe they will see this through... assuming they don't kill each other. In the meantime, the Hidden are investigating the activities of the Cabal. The loss of their commander, Primus Ta'aun to Oryx is worrisome. More intelligence is required." - Ikora Rey

~Enemy of my Enemy

"So we get to Oryx by becoming an ascended Hive. I feel like our adventures are sometimes a list of stuff I never wanted to know about and now wish I didn't." —Ghost

"The fabric of our world puckers and tears around the Dreadnaught. The seams of this fabric are the ruptures, cracks that allow Oryx to walk as he wills. Toland can be our guide. Even in death." —Eris Morn

"The Guardian has the crystal. I was quite prepared to accompany them into Crota's realm, but Cayde insists on this Rasputin insanity. You must speak with him. He is reckless, rude, and has no respect for knowledge hard-earned. He is also nowhere near as funny as he thinks he is." - Eris Morn

~Lost to Light



"Let's never do that again, okay?" —Ghost

"I think we all know what the real problem is. Eris doesn't think Cayde is funny. It all stems from that." —Ghost

"Rasputin isn't an ally. You hear me, blood? You find yourself thinking that, you shut it down. He may not be against us, but he doesn't care if you live, if the City lives, if the Traveler lives. Trust me. He told me himself." —Tevis Larsen

"A Guardian breaking into the Warmind's bunker does nothing for our efforts to make true contact with Rasputin. I've tasked several of my agents with unraveling his response. However, the Guardian is now prepared for the assault on Crota's realm. Just a warning, many thanatonauts are standing by, anxious to learn if this works." - Ikora Rey

~The Promethean Code

"I do not fear death. I have already met her and walk again in the Light. I know she and I will meet again in time. Rather, I fear what she leaves behind. Loss is like the Darkness. It corrupts." —Toland's Journal

"You know, I give her a lot of guff. But there aren't five Warlocks in the Tower that coulda done what Eris did today, getting the Guardian out like that. Damn good work, and now they're all ready to take on the King. Just remember, Eris' creepy and condescending manner makes her all kinds of unpleasant to deal with. I don't want to make this collaboration thing a habit." - Cayde-6

~Last Rites

"He has retreated to where he is safe, to where he is powerful. He awaits the slayer of Crota, the one who slew his son." —Eris Morn

"...and so, the King has been slain. Driven out of our world. Eris and Ikora have already begun planning a way to assault the Ascendant realm and end the threat of Oryx once and for all. The Guardian will lead that fireteam, no doubt, once they have a chance to stop and breath. In the meantime, we're leveraging all available Hidden and

Awoken intelligence assets to understand the threat of the Taken army left behind. The other members of the Vanguard have begun drawing up assault plans, and I have full faith and confidence we'll see this threat put to rest as well." - Commander Zavala, transmission to Traveler's Observatory

~Regicide

"I will never forget those I left behind. But now, with the whispers finally silent, perhaps I can have a moment just to close my eyes." - Eris Morn

"Someday I'm gonna get out of this place. Do another tour of the system, probably shoot some people. And now I have a pretty great story to tell as I go." - Cayde-6

"When I told the Speaker of what you had done, he was quiet for a moment. Then he said, 'A great shadow has been lifted from our realm.' I believe that to be his way of saying he is proud of all you have accomplished." - Zavala

"...just have a hard time believing you take anything seriously. Placing the patrol beacons was supposed to be a careful, meticulous process. I expected it to take the better part of a week. I don't mind you delegating the task, but you should have collaborated to make sure they were triangulated perfectly. Do you have any idea how long it took to deploy the beacon network on the Cosmodrome?... " - Transcript excerpt of 2-hour long meeting between Zavala and Cayde-6

~Dread Patrol

"To answer your question, yes. We can confirm the signal was received. I've enclosed our best guess for the targeted area of space. It's problematic, because our tightest footprint still encompasses several light-years worth of systems. It is worth noting, for what it's worth, that whoever received their signal lies within that sphere. All available deep-space assets have been alerted, and will continue to monitor the situation as best we can." - Arach Jalaal, report to Zavala and the Speaker

~Outbound Signal

"...and we've managed to uncover a few more references to this Praedyth as a result. We're using what the Collective had in their Vault to help our efforts. Meanwhile, the Guardian's work across Venus appear to be working. Without the Echo, Taken activity is in decline. I have full faith the area can be swept clear of the creatures." - *Ikora Rey, after-action report to Zavala*

~Taken War: Venus

"Yep, yep. All thanks to me. I know, we thought we had a good thing with that coven of Wizards, but it took a real field commander to see how easily intelligence can be misread. Now that the Guardian's cleared out the Echo at King's Watch, I think the old Cosmodrome's going to be just fine." - *Cayde-6, after-action report to Zavala*

~Taken War: Earth

"Without further analysis it is hard to tell what impact, if any, this war on the Taken will have. The Echo destroyed by the Guardian on Phobos will certainly slow their advance. Now that we know of access to the Black Garden in the old tunnels beneath Freehold station, we'll ensure those areas are regularly patrolled and locked down. At the end of the day it is simply too soon to fully appreciate the stain Oryx has left on our system." - *Zavala, after-action report to the Speaker*

~Taken War: Mars

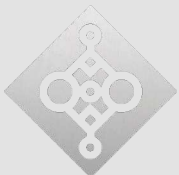
"We have confirmed it among our number within the Hidden. I have asked Ikora's Warlocks to reach out, and they sense nothing. The Orb is quiet. On the Moon, his shrine is dark and cold. It is true: the Taken King is dead. The Hive's dark god, and his foul son, have been purged from the universe. She was right, scholar. Queen Mara was right. It is all down to the Guardians now. Let us hope they are up to the tasks ahead of them." - *Eris Morn, undisclosed report to Osiris*

~The Road to King's Fall

"Another Prime, destroyed. Once sources of life, Light. Hope. Now a sign of decay. Machines as gods.

Conspire with Kells. Conspire to kill, to conquer, to control.

This will not end. There will always be new Kell. There will always be new Prime, yes?



Skolas was savage. Skolas was cruel. Skolas was ... right. Only Kell of Kells can end the slaughter. Only Kell of Kells can unite the Houses.

Petra has given House Judgement a great gift. Variks now speaks for Crows. Crows fly on black wings, find what House Judgment needs found.

House Judgement and the Reef are allies. Petra is a friend. The Crows will do as Petra needs. But they will also search for Variks, yes? They will find that which is lost.

The Crows will find the Kell of Kells. Then Banners will rise as one. And Elikśni will stand together. Forever."

~Wolves of Mars

*Oryx ascends from the nether world,
The knights like hot stone
The beasts like scarred bone
Walk at his side.
Who walked in front of him? His daughters, with the truth between them
Who walked at his side? His Priest of Worms, whose tribute tasted like an egg
Who walked behind him? Golgoth, who festered
Who walked within him? The satiated Worm — it was hungry, but it was fed
They preceded him.
These ones surrounded Oryx
They were beings who know no rest or doubt
Who eat nor shed any flesh,
Who drink no clear poison,
Who take away the weakness from the weak,
Whose violence is tithed to Oryx, so that he may devour without being devoured*

Are you following this? Would it help if I etched a few notes on the margins? I didn't shuck my mortal form and smuggle this nightmare arcana back to the waking world for the benefit of that masked hypocrite's drooling loyal orthodox.

Whoever finds this, I hope you're sharp. I hope you read closely.

Oryx depends on His Court. Oryx depends on His Shrines. Do you see why?

Punish that dependence.

~Court of Oryx

"You've seen the same reports I have, and more," Petra said. "I'm not stupid. I know the Crows whisper secrets to you that you don't pass along to the rest of us."

"Variks is loyal to Reef," the scribe of House Judgment protested. "Helps Petra. Honors vows made to his Kell."

"I'm not doubting your loyalty. I'm stating a fact. And the facts are that..." She sighed. "That we can't keep fighting this war. Not alone. The Techeuns are in mourning. We've made some advances, but it's not enough."

"Petra wants to avenge her Queen, yes?"

"Petra wants every Taken in the galaxy dead! We will spill every drop of whatever it is they call blood, burn the Dreadnaught, salt the ground..." Petra stopped. Her shoulders slumped in defeat. "But we can't do it alone. And I won't go begging."

"We have lost our Queen," she continued. "Our prince is missing. Our numbers are few. But we still have our pride. We still have that much."

"Make Guardians want to help," Variks said.

"How?"

"Guardians desire many things," Variks said. "Glory. Honor. Treasure. Open the vaults again. Show them gifts we give to the worthy. They will come, and we will not have to ask."

~Challenge of the Elders

"We've picked up a high-gain transmission. Origin point is somewhere along the coast, near the Cosmodrome... Get in there,

assess the threat, and aid Rasputin. A threat to the Warmind is a threat to the City as well." - *Commander Zavala*

~Fallen S.A.B.E.R

"Some creatures of the Hive strain against the Will of Oryx. Alak-Hul the Darkblade is one such. Long ago he fomented rebellion against the King, and attempted to take his mantle. Alak-Hul failed, and now awaits the 'mercy' of the Hive. Given the chance, the Darkblade will step in to take Oryx's crown. We must not allow another Prince to rise." - *Eris Morn*

~Sunless Cell

"Funny story for you. Remember that Centurion Oryx 'took' right after you landed on the Dreadaught? Then the Centurion and that Taken Ogre tried to stop you from killing the King? Heh. Didn't work. So the Centurion's bond-brothers are pretty angry they lost their commander. They're leading a team to blow the Dreadnaught's core. The core goes, and most of the system goes with it. You're gonna make sure that doesn't happen" - *Cayde-6*

~Shield Brothers

"The Vex still mourn the loss of the Nexus Mind. But for the Vex, time is relative. In one moment, a construct is lost. In the next, it is reborn. When a powerful part of the network is lost, the Restorative Mind is summoned. It has begun creating a bridge through time. A bridge that, if it is not destroyed, will see the Nexus Mind reborn." - *Ikora Rey*

~Echo Chamber

"The Taken King is dead. Yet still his armies writhe and claw at our worlds. Even as you led the assault on the Dreadnaught, a powerful Taken warbeast fled for the safety of the Shrine to Oryx. The would-be Prince Malok works to perfect a dark sorcery. He must be destroyed." - *Eris Morn*

~The Blighted Chalice



Where are you going? No, wait, listen.

I was right, at first. In the ever-expanding Blighted-place, even Light must obey the sword-logic. Even you Guardians, you best and brightest of the dying dawn, you drew blood in honor of the Taken King. The Warpriest did his duty, and you did yours. Oryx was challenged, yes, but challenged in the way of the Hive, which is to say that challenge is worship — is challenge — is power. Sword-logic. You played your part well.

You were not supposed to touch the Light.

How did you find your way into the King's Cellars? How did you even recognize that benighted draught for what it was? Do you not know that the Hive pursue Light precisely for the purpose of devouring it with slavering jaws and slick greedy gulping throats? How did you take (or rather, un-Take) the Blighted Light that Oryx gathered to offer in sacrifice to Akka, and ignite it so that it burned and burned the Darkness?

It was barely Light anymore. But you took it. And when you took it, you did not keep it. You set it free.

You fools! You *disastrous, bumbling squanderers*! It's not right! Who now shall be First Navigator, Lord of Shapes, harrowed god, Taken King? Not you! You might have been Kings and Queens of the Deep! But you have toppled Oryx and you have not replaced him!

There must be a strongest one. It is the architecture of these spaces.

Why are you leaving?

~The Kings Fall



2.8 IRON LORDS

"I will not surrender that mountain to scavengers and thieves. What is there must be preserved." —Lord Saladin

"Felwinter Peak is in friendly hands once more. The Guardian and Lord Saladin have driven the Fallen forces back and reclaimed the Iron Temple.

"I find myself reflecting on the cyclical nature of existence. Life, death, rebirth. The Iron Temple was once a place of Light. Then the Iron Lords were lost, and Saladin turned it into a memorial. Now it will be reborn, much like that curious servitor." Tyra Karn

~King of the Mountain

"Best-case scenario is that we chase down Sepiks, fix the sensors, and clear out the Fallen. I never bet on the best-case scenario." —Shiro-4

"The Cosmodrome is a nexus point. Too many things have happened there to be mere coincidence. Now we add one more piece to that puzzle: SIVA.

"Saladin did not hide all knowledge of SIVA as completely as he wished. I have found several references to that technology over the years, and obviously our enemies have as well. I believe SIVA was once a tool for the Warminds... What terrible things will the Fallen do with it?" Tyra Karn

~The Walls Come Down

"Thank you for saving the Iron Temple, Guardian. It was my home for many years. Memories and regrets still linger there." —Lord Saladin

"All who see these flames will know that we are here to fight the Darkness." —Lord Saladin

"Tyra, our archivist, has asked to speak to you. She calls herself an observer of history. I say she collects secrets. But what she knows might be of use." —Lord Saladin

"Come see me, Guardian. We've got work to do." —Shiro-4

"Shiro thinks all we need to do is defeat the Fallen. He has no concept of how dangerous SIVA can be." —Lord Saladin

"The Splicers are using SIVA to reshape not only themselves, but also the Plaguelands. They are experimenting. Learning how to manipulate SIVA through terrible inquiries. But there is still time. The Fallen's understanding of SIVA is not yet complete.

"SIVA was created as a promise to the future, but it is also a threat. It is up to the Guardian to face that threat, and complete the final mission of the Iron Lords." Tyra Karn

~The Plaguelands

"Centuries of regret and grief. It's no wonder Lord Saladin is taking this personally. I hope Tyra has something that will help us finish this." —Ghost

"Clovis Bray brought the most brilliant scientists of the Golden Age to Mars. Some of them were quite mad." —Tyra Karn

"The Vanguard has known for some time that the Fallen were exploring the Cosmodrome for lost technology. Now we know that they were digging for one treasure in particular – SIVA. The data from Clovis Bray was their map.

"Now those same prototype files will be the Guardian's key to victory. Shiro and I are already working on a defense that will protect Saladin's 'Young Wolf' in the final battle." Tyra Karn

~Download Complete

"One way or another, my long vigil is almost at its end... and I have you to thank for this." —Lord Saladin

"I did everything I could to lock SIVA away. If it had a will, I would



say it wanted to be found." —Lord Saladin

The Young Wolf has stopped the flow of SIVA to the Devil Splicers, ended the torment of the Iron Lords, and lifted centuries of grief and regret from Saladin's shoulders. My old friend is a changed man.

"Centuries ago, I thought the story of the Iron Lords was finished. I see now that it was waiting for the next chapter." Tyra Karn

~The Iron Tomb

"Enjoy your victory. Then prepare for the battles to come." —Shiro-4

"The flame is relit in you, Guardian. And the Iron Lords live again." —Tyra Karn

The things that possessed us, that called themselves *Magnificence, Brilliance, Splendor, Fortitude, and Glory*, have decomposed and passed into memory. The Owl Sector, who watch over us with spread wings, are at rest again. While the gifts of Clovis Bray's research were many and valuable, Dr. Shirazi's notes describe terrible things. That they only enhanced our cognition is fortunate. But they were also unstoppable. What will we do when something more harmful touches us? —Ikora Rey

~Transmission

"This commission is a commemoration! They deserve something dependable. These men and women did not survive the Gap so that you could make art!" Victor Lomar, from a transcript of the Project Heimdall development log

The refurbished Gjallarhorn carried into battle by the newest Iron Lord is a melding of new and old. The time-tested Crux and Lomar design combined flawlessly with Shiro's modified SIVA tech. The result: a peerless weapon that embodies beauty in destruction and delivery.

~Beauty in Destruction

The Archon's Forge is an ancient Fallen rite of passage, twisted to utilize the Devil Splicers' latest discovery.

Fallen seek to improve their station within the Splicers' quickly-evolving caste by making offerings of dormant SIVA to the Forge. Their worth is then tested in a trial-by-combat.

The offering's quality—fused, enhanced, perfected—determines the severity of the challenge and, in turn, the level of augmentation the petitioner will be granted should they survive.

That a Guardian would dare challenge the Forge with offerings of their own is an affront the Splicers will not take lightly.

~Archon's Forge

The Devil Splicer's Machine Priests have established ritual sites for the study, worship, and proliferation of SIVA throughout the Plaguelands. It is unclear if these rituals have a specific purpose, or if they are simply another form of experimentation in the Devil Splicers' continuing efforts to understand and control SIVA.

Interfering with a Splicer ritual could bring about an aggressive response, especially if the Priest's act of worship is ended swiftly and without mercy.

~Quarantine

"The Splicers' High Priest has crews pushing further underground in the Plaguelands. Looks like a large-scale mobilization against a Hive nest."

"An army of Hive controlled by the Splicers would be the end of Old Russia."

"Could be the end of everything. The Devils are evolving. Neutralize them before this goes any further, Guardian." Shiro-4 and Ghost

~The Wretched Eye

*"The House of Devils marked you as Public Enemy Number One after you trashed their Prime Servitor, but—Your old friend, Sepiks Prime, is back, and apparently better than ever, thanks to the Devil Splicers and SIVA."*Shiro-4

~Sepiks Perfected

"You'd think the fact you took out their High Priest would slow the Splicers down. No such luck."

*"I'm tracking reports of Fallen Splicers spotted in and around the Hellmouth. Intel suggests they're hunting Ogres. Get down there and make sure they don't snatch up any more fodder for their twisted experiments."*Shiro-4

~The Abomination Heist

"Remember Omnigul? Hive general with the lovely voice? She's back."

"Vanguard scouts report she's undone her death."

"" 'Undone her death?' You make it sound like she pulled her knitting apart."

"Eris would tell you not to make light of this."

"That's why she's not here."

"There's no telling what else might follow, Guardian. Destroy Omnigul and any lingering threats." Cayde-6 and Ikora Rey

~Will of Crota: Revisited

"Variks has brought unsettling news. The Devil Splicers have used SIVA to resurrect an old foe: Taniks the Scarred has become Taniks Perfected."

*"Taniks's crew has joined the Splicers. They're using SIVA to reanimate his body and overtake his territory. Lord Saladin says you were indispensable in Old Russia, Guardian. We thought you should be the one to handle this."*Commander Zavala and Ikora Rey

~The Shadow Thief: Revisited

"The Vex have restarted their world-eating machine in a bid to restore their Nexus. In time, Venus will be consumed—"

"And listen to this! Scouts report that the Vex have upgraded the Nexus Mind with tech from the Vault of Glass."

"Do you need something, Cayde?"

"No! Just here to support my favorite Guardian."

"I'm sure. Let's take that Nexus Mind apart." Ikora Rey and Cayde-6
~The Nexus: revisited

\\INTERCEPTED FALLEN SIGNAL

Fellow Houses. Fellow Elikśni. We have found the means to apotheosis, to become machines.

SIVA can make you strong, but we can show you how to wield it, to free yourself from the bonds of Ether. Find us in the wasteland and bring us an offering of SIVA.

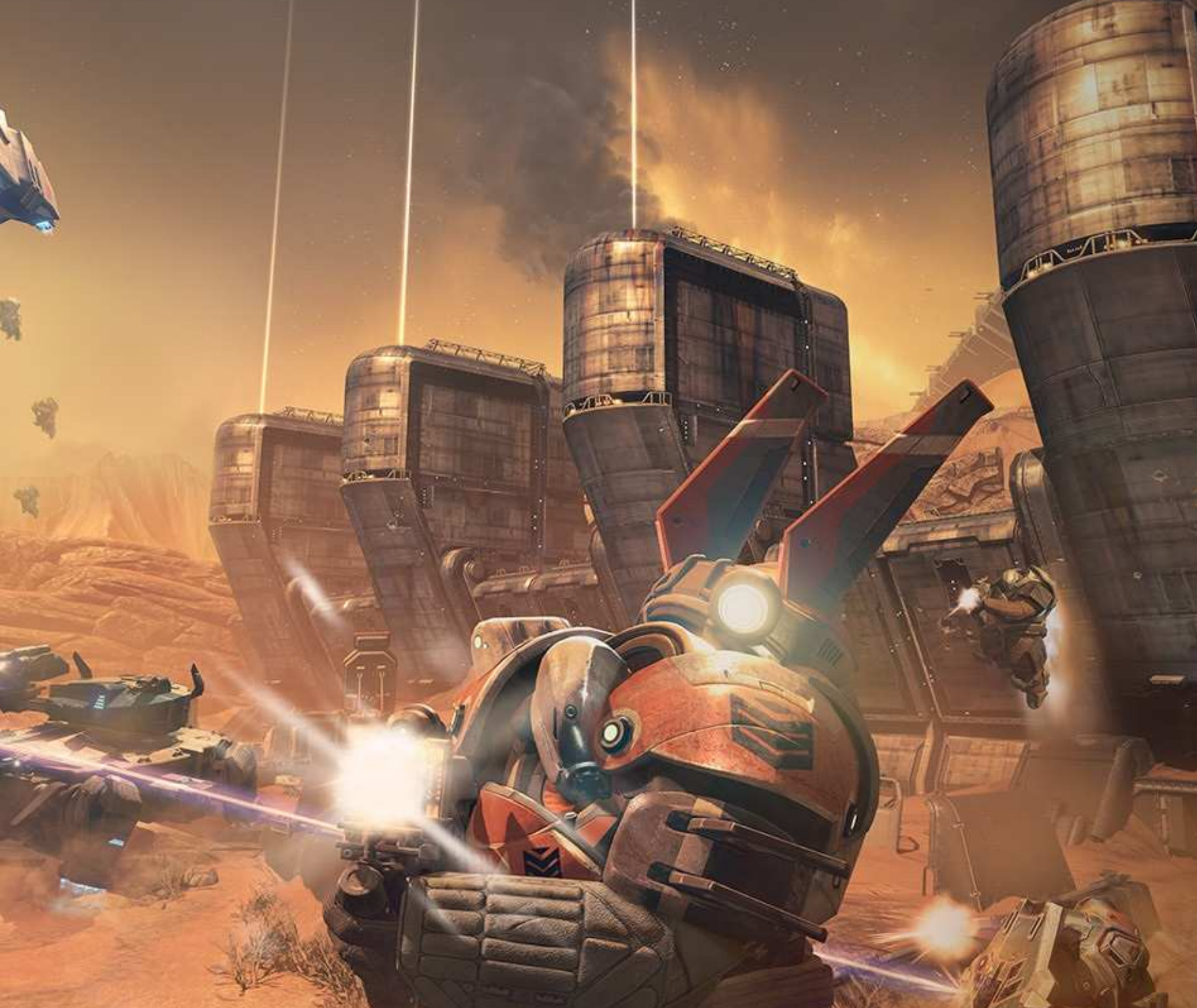
In return, we will bring you to our chamber of perfection.

And we will free you.

~Wrath of the Machine











3.0

ALLIES OF THE TRAVELLER

THE TRAVELER

Everything changed with the coming of the Traveler. It gave us gifts that transformed the solar system and the nature of human life. It ushered in the Golden Age, a time of miracles. But it never shared its deepest secrets. Where did the Traveler come from? Why did it offer us so much? Did it know it was being hunted across the stars? And why, when the Darkness came, did it choose to stay and fight for us? Now the Traveler hangs, silent, above humanity's final sanctuary. It may be healing. It may be dying. It gave everything it had to save us. And now its power lies with us, its Guardians.

~The Traveler

Dreams of Alpha Lupi

You have lived as invisibly as possible, flicking from solar system to solar system, making grand plans, overseeing the culturing of civilizations, before leaving in a blink. But you have no recollection of ever wanting worship or even thanks from those blessed by you.

But memory is heavy now.

It feels like lead and neutronium and electroweak matter fashioned into a moon-sized ball that you must carry as you move.

Now, your flight is rapid, your vast mind infected with such dread and toxic doubt that you find yourself afraid of the simple act of thought.

And it is your children you must turn to now, in time of need.

~Ghost Fragment: Traveler

Dreams of Alpha Lupi

The knife had a million blades.

And you were giant, powerful and swift. But the knife pinned you. Cut your godly flesh away.

Very little was left, you are sure, because you feel insignificant now. The hard slick heart of your soul: That is what remains. A body small as a river stone, and just as simple. You picture yourself as a piece of indigestible grit, a nameless nothing hiding among other nameless stones. Perhaps you glitter like a gem, yes. Pride makes you hope so. If only you could see yourself. But you have no eyes. Not the dimmest sense survives. What lives is memory, and what slim portion of these thoughts can you trust?

The knife stole much more than your body.

~Ghost Fragment: Traveler 3



Dreams of Alpha Lupi

This has been such a long chase. This will be the place you will fight.
Fight and win.

But do you really know why you go where you go, and where this
journey is taking you?

The chase leads you where you need to be, you believe.

Unless...you are being pushed.

~Ghost Fragment: Traveler 2



3.1 TOWER ALLIES

The Speaker

There has always been a Speaker, an anonymous high priest with a mysterious and powerful connection to the Traveler and its Ghosts. In all the centuries of the City's history, the Speaker's great work has never changed - to guide new Guardians, heal the Traveler, and raise our crippled protector from its slumber.

~The Speaker



Agent of the Nine *Xûr*

Xûr sells objects of legendary power. He accepts his own currency, in service of his own enigmatic goals - or those of equally cryptic masters. Mysterious, too, is the nature of his presence in the Tower. Does he have some arrangement with the Vanguard or the Speaker? Are there those among the Guardian elite who understand Xûr's nature and ultimate purpose? Or have all efforts to control his comings and goings simply failed?

~Agent of the Nine





THE VANGUARD

COMMANDER ZAVALA

Commander Zavala

"Bashō knew. We struggle after." - undated battle notes

Zavala has never shied from hard decisions. His life bends under the double weight of honor and duty, each act of service more exhausting, each victory more costly. Zavala continues anyway. He has never had time for anything softer than iron.

~Titan Vanguard







IKORA REY

Ikora Rey

Ikora Rey's second life has been long and colorful. As an iconoclastic new Guardian, she made a reputation in the Crucible and in the halls of Warlock scholarship as an outspoken, unrelenting opponent with no patience for dogma or etiquette.

That reputation became a burden, and Ikora chose to travel alone, flying reconnaissance across the worlds of the inner solar system. Shot down again and again, she and her Ghost survived against all odds, apparently preferring the wilderness to the company of her fellow Guardians.

When Ikora finally returned to the City to rest, her hard-won knowledge and seasoned temperament commanded the respect of her fellow Warlocks. She now serves in the Vanguard as a mentor and leader, carrying the memory of her wandering days as a link to rising Guardians.

~Warlock Vanguard



CAYDE-6



Cayde-6

Cayde-6 was a daring Hunter with a fast ship, a quick gun hand, and an eye on the legendary Vault of Glass. Of course he couldn't say no to a challenge - not even the notorious Vanguard Dare.

He lost the bet, to his immense regret. Now, following in the footsteps of his fallen friend Andal Brask, it is Cayde's turn to oversee his far-flung brethren as the Hunter Vanguard in the Tower. He works dutifully, but longs for a chance to get back into the fight.

~Hunter Vanguard





> REMOTE VANGUARD DATABASE TEXT-ONLY SEARCH INITIALIZED.
> WELCOME, USER "ACEOFHEARTS".
> PLEASE ENTER SEARCH QUERY.

?> news about cayde

> THERE ARE 4 NEW ARTICLES SINCE YOUR LAST SEARCH 26 HOURS, 33 MINUTES AGO.

?> thats way too low

> SORRY, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND "thats way too low".

?> whos more popular than cayde

> SORRY, I DIDN~XXX

?> whos more popular than cayde-6

> SORR ~XXX

?> first article about cayde

> THE FIRST CITY NEWS ARTICLE ABOUT 'CAYDE' WAS 126 YEARS 11 MONT~XXX

?> 126 years ago????? im way older than that

> MAJOR EVENTS OF 126 YEARS AGO:
> SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS MADE IN FACTION ACCORDS.
RELATED: BRASK, A.
> TRAVELER TRUE ORIGIN AND PURP~XXX

> MINOR EVENTS OF 126 YEARS AGO:
> FIRST 25-MATCH CRUCIBLE WINNING STREAK RECORDED.
RELATED: REY, I.
> CENTAUR PLANETOID "7066 NESSUS" RE-ENTERS SYSTEM AFTER UNEXPLAINED DELAY. RELAT~XXX

?> did we get invaded by horse people

> SORRY, I D~XXX

?> did horse people ever exist

> THERE ARE NO KNOWN ENCOUNTERS WITH QUADRUPED LIFE FORMS CAPABLE OF SPACE FLIGHT. SOME EARLY SIGHTINGS OF FALLEN RAIDING PARTIES MISTAKENLY IDENTIFIED THEIR METHODS OF RAPID LOCOMOTION AS EQUINE.

?> did fallen ever ride horses

> NO.

?> what were we talking about

> LAST 50 SEARCHES ACROSS ALL DEVICES, CHRONOLOGICAL:
> "banshie real name" "banshie-44 real name" "scout rifle locker default password" "traveler giant eyeball" "giant eyeball planet" "giant eyeball aliens" "giant alien eyeballs" "delete image history" "how do i delete images" "accidentally set giant alien eyeball as terminal background" "how much do new terminals cost" "vanguard discount for new ter~XXX

?> traveler

> OVER 50,000,000 RESULTS FOUND. PLEASE NARROW SEARCH CRITERIA.

?> traveler eyeball

> OVER 70,000,000 RESULTS FOUND. PLE~XXX

?> where did the traveler come from

> OVER 10,000,000 RESULTS F~XXX

?> traveler googly eyes terminal background

> PLEASE CONNECT TO A DEVICE WITH AN IMAGE DISPLAY TO VIEW THESE RESULTS.

?> traveler road trip snacks

> SINCE THE TRAVELER'S FINAL EXODUS FROM IO PRIOR TO THE COLLAPSE, ECHO MESA HAS BEEN A POPULAR PILGRIMAGE DESTINATION FOR GUARDIANS. AS THE TRAVELER'S TRANSFORMATION OF THE JOVIAN MOON WAS INCOMPLETE, IO'S CLIMATE AND GEOGRAPHY DO NOT SUPPORT AGRICULTURE IN THE CONVENTIONAL SENSE. VANGUARD COMMANDER ZAVALA THEREFORE RECOMM~XXX

?> zavalas snacks

> ALL RESULTS TAGGED WITH THE FOLLOWING RELATED SEARCH QUERIES REQUIRE TWO-THIRDS VANGUARD AUTHORIZATION FOR DISCLOSURE:

> "ZAVALA SNACKS" "ZAVALA ACTION SNACKS" "TITAN VITAMINS" "EDIBLE ZAVALA" "ZAVALA ACTION VITAMINS" "VANGUARD VITAMINS"

?> what????????

> ALL RESULTS TAGGED W~XXX

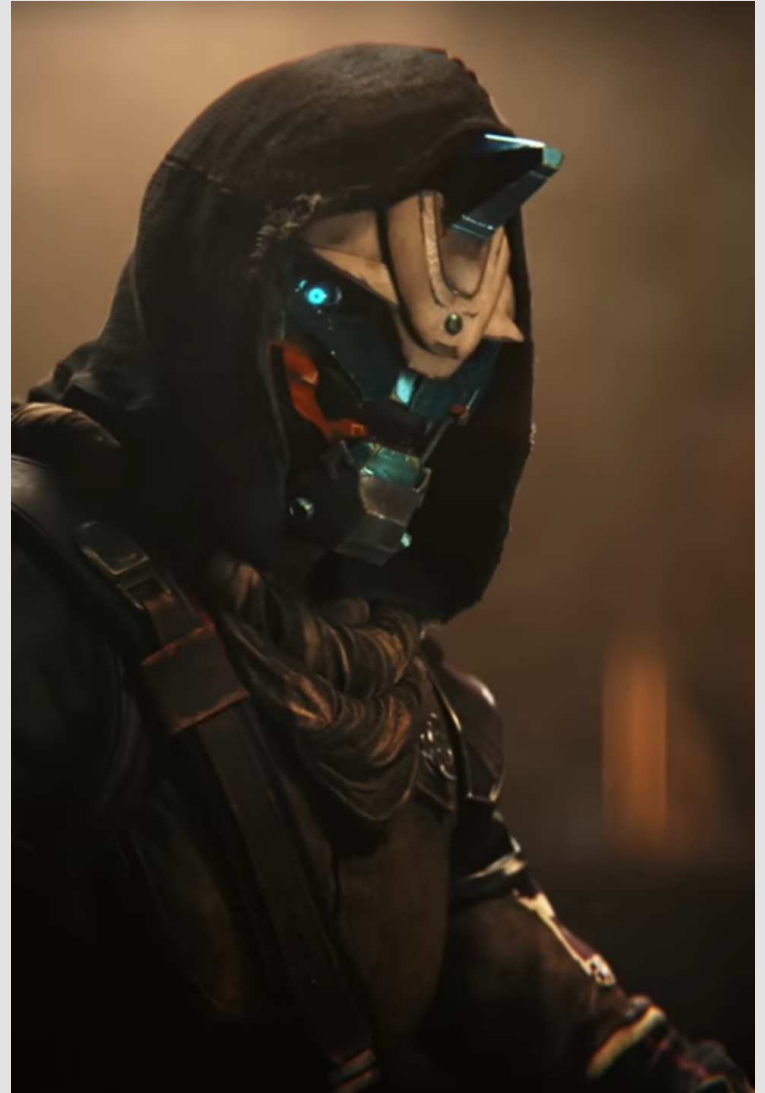
?> ikora current location

> WARLOCK VANGUARD IKORA REY IS CURRENTLY IN THE UNDERWATCH. WOULD Y~XXX

> logout

> THANK YOU FOR USING THE VANGUARD TEXT-ONLY DATABASE, USER "ACEOFHEARTS". BE BRAVE.

~Ghost Fragment: Cayde-6



CRUCIBLE HANDLERS

LORD SHAXX

Lord Shaxx

Lord Shaxx is one of the heroes of the Battle of the Twilight Gap, having led the counterattack that pushed the Fallen from the City walls. Fearing that another full-scale assault would be more than the City could repel, Shaxx chose to stay in the City to mentor Guardians in the Crucible.

One day Shaxx vows to return to the war beyond the City, but only after he is confident the fires of the Crucible have forged a new generation of warriors.

~Crucible Handler



I beat you fair," Cayde said. "Don't ever—"

He raised his hand high to wag a finger under Shaxx's nose.

"—try to outrace my Golden Guns."

Two children ran by in a blur, laughing.

Shaxx shook his head slowly. "It was a tactical error. Won't happen again."

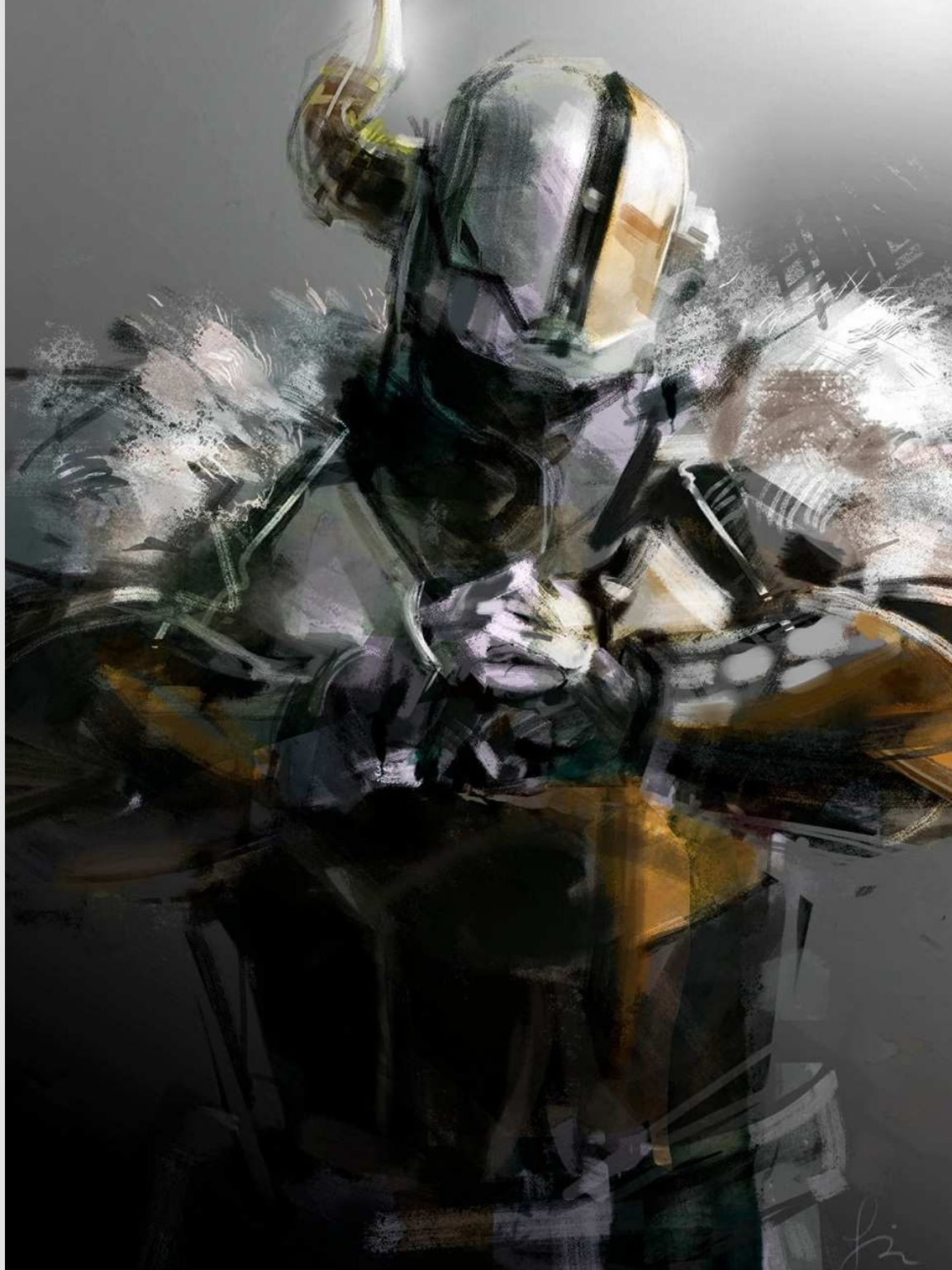
"Next time doesn't matter. You lost today, and today you owe me."

The Titan stared down at the Hunter, but said nothing, his hands clenched in fists. Cayde ignored the posturing and turned to face a desolate field of dirt and large rocks. A writhing mob of children spread across it, clusters of them barreling into each other as they bellowed and screamed. A much smaller number of elders waded in the chaotic sea of miniature people.

"What is this? What's happening?" Shaxx demanded.

"This City has children. Children who must stay within designated safe zones." The two Guardians watched as a boy climbed the largest rock on the field, about four feet in the air, and howled at the sky. "Of course they're gonna go a little stir-crazy. Parents bring them out to this—you'd think it would have a name—this field every month, and they have at it. Better they hit each other than climb the walls."

Shaxx stared at them.



"So. You're going to pick two," Cayde said.

Shaxx looked down at him. "Pick two what?"

"Two of the little brats. You'll pick a team of two, and you're going to train them in this... sport they play here. It's some kind of tournament. You know all about those."

Shaxx surveyed the field.

"This is ridiculous," he concluded.

"That's not the last time you're going to say that today, but you've made your bed. Get comfy."

"I can pay you Glimmer. Two Crucible matches' worth. Why waste my time on children?"

A child sped past and waved at Cayde as Shaxx spoke. Cayde responded with an upward thumb.

"I like bugging you. Plus, you'd be surprised what goes on out here that only these little miscreants know about."

Beneath the helmet, Shaxx stared holes into the Exo's face.

"They run very fast. Listen, I know you're going to be you, but try to keep them intact. I make sure a Guardian they know comes to visit them once in a while. You weren't the kids' first choice, or even their tenth, but you were the only one I could get leverage on this week."

Shaxx stood motionless, but his fury engulfed

the air like a flame. Cayde turned to leave, his cloak billowing in the wind behind him. "I'm going to make so many Crucible bets while you're gone."

"You wouldn't dare," Shaxx began, but Cayde was already lost in a departing crowd of adults.

Shaxx let out a breath, then scanned the field again, past child after squirming child. He quickly discerned the two on the field with the best athletic potential. Two human girls, snarling as they swung branches at each other, seemingly impervious to pain. He walked past them, through the crowd, and several elders paused just briefly enough in their youth wrangling to let their jaws hang. Lord Shaxx navigated the unruly sea with grace, and headed toward a lone tree in a corner of the field. An Awoken girl and a human boy sat huddled below it.

As Shaxx's shadow eclipsed them, they looked up at him with the same brightness in their eyes. "What are your names?" he demanded. "Runa," said the Awoken with some disdain. She returned the blank stare of Shaxx's faceplate. "My name is Lonwabo," recited the human, more like a question than a statement.

"You look bored, Runa," Shaxx observed. "And you look worried, Lonwabo." He pointed at the boy, who scooted back, startled.

"As far as I'm concerned that makes both of you more intelligent than all these other dregs," said the Titan. "You're with me. I need the rules of engagement." Shaxx stared at

them, and they stared back. "Someone talk to me."

They both spoke at once, and Shaxx listened in silence as they talked over each other to explain the game: Teams of two launch orb projectiles at each other, and players struck are eliminated. If both players on a team are eliminated, the team is out of the tournament, and their chance to play on the field is over.

"What do you call this drill? Skirmish? Supremacy?" Shaxx demanded.

"Dodge ball," said Runa.

"We'll work on the name. Follow my instructions, and I will lead you to victory."

Shaxx waved one of the adults over.

"Lord—Lord Shaxx?" said the Exo male.

"Shaxx is fine." Only Guardians owed him respect. "Find my team a match. Sooner the better."

Shaxx brought Lonwabo and Runa to the field, and kneeled. His hands engulfed their shoulders like a pair of descending moons. "My friends. Should you be killed, others lesser than you will take your place. Don't fight for yourself. Fight for those poor fools."

Lonwabo opened his mouth as if to speak, but hiccupped instead.

Shaxx turned them both around to face the sun and the other team across the field. He kneeled so low that his face was level with

theirs. The three stared at the opposition: two human boys, eyes glaring, fists balled in determination. Their elder stood behind them, her eyes wide as she recognized Lord Shaxx.

Runa yawned and rubbed her face, trying to clear the sleep from it.

Shaxx whispered to his new charges. "Crush them."

~Ghost Fragment: Lord Shaxx

The morning turned to noon as the sky darkened with dodgeballs and filled with the battle cries of children.

When it was over, Lonwabo had tears in his eyes, but he tried his best to stand straight. Runa had a bloody knee, and stared wordlessly at the winning team: the two snarling girls from earlier in the morning. The girls lifted an unrefined mass of plasteel, a makeshift trophy, over their heads, and they roared.

Shaxx stared up at the Traveler. It sat, buoyed by a mantle of clouds against a blue sky. It didn't seem to notice him.

"Tell me what you've learned," Shaxx said to Runa and Lonwabo, his faceplate fixed skyward.

They did, and spoke for a continuous three minutes. Shaxx nodded, slowly.

"So you're not mad?" asked Lonwabo. His face brightened.

"You've gained more from this than the victors," he replied. The three of them looked

on as the two girls smashed the plasteel cluster into the dirt, and to the horror of all the other children, it shattered. Runa's eyes narrowed ever so slightly, a dodgeball gripped in her hands. Shaxx continued: "Victory is key to survival. You need it. Need to fight for it. But it teaches nothing."

"Does that mean, in a way, we won?" asked Lonwabo.

"No," Shaxx looked down at him. "No, you were annihilated."

"Oh," said Lonwabo.

Runa continued to stare at the shattered trophy, and the winning team. She slowly turned the dodgeball in her hand.

"Let this loss drive you," Shaxx said to both of them. "But the game is over. Your focus should be on what's to come."

Lonwabo stared down at his hands. "I think...I think I'm going to read a book," he said, surprising himself as he uttered the words.

"We all make our own choices," said Shaxx.

Runa said nothing as Cayde strode up out of a shadow in the afternoon sun. "Everything good?" the Hunter asked Shaxx.

"Do I look like I care?"

"Come on, buddy. The bet's fulfilled. You don't have to pout. Just remember not to challenge a Hunter with Golden Guns."

"I can and I will. Rematch. End of day."

"You're on. I hope you're ready to babysit 'til the next Dawning—"

Runa's ball struck Cayde in the neck: a stealth attack taught to her earlier in the morning. He yelped, more surprised than hurt.

"Who did that? Who did that, and how?" the Hunter demanded loudly, as the ball bounced away. The ball didn't respond. Runa, Lonwabo, and several other children smiled.

"Shaxx. What have you been telling them?"

Shaxx stared silently down at the Exo Hunter until Cayde blinked. "I, uh, found my Sparrow," Cayde said, to deflect. "I can give us a lift back to the Tower."

As the other children and their elders dispersed, Runa watched Cayde's Sparrow as it carried the two Guardians off towards the gleaming Tower in the distance.

She gave a Titan's salute as they disappeared from view.

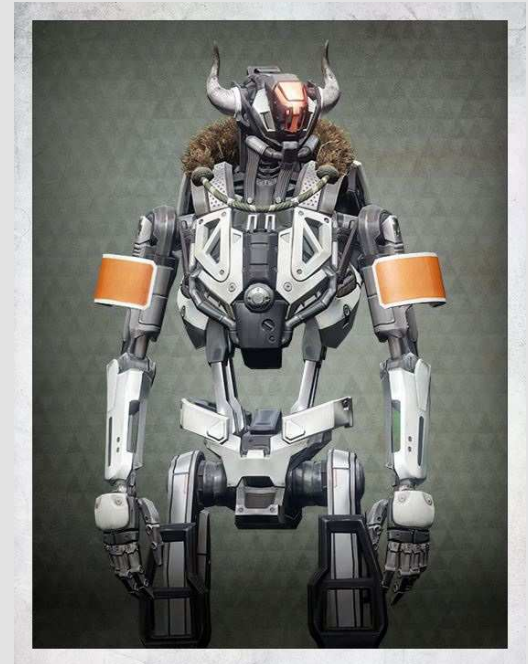
~Ghost Fragment: Lord Shaxx 2

Arcite 99-40

"No discounts, big shot."

Arcite 99-40 is the last of Lord Shaxx's personal combat frames. When he chose to remain in the City to oversee the Crucible, Shaxx had Arcite's combat systems deactivated and rebooted with the Tower's more civil vendor protocols.

Arcite's memory banks still remember the battles he has seen. This knowledge makes Arcite uniquely qualified to equip Guardians for combat. His outward disdain for untested Guardians is a combination of learned behavior - a byproduct of years in service to Lord Shaxx - and personal experience. His systems may have been reprogrammed, but the love for combat still pulses within his circuitry.
~Crucible Quartermaster



THE CRYPTARCHS

Master Rahool

Master Rahool's insatiable curiosity drove him to the Tower, where, as resident crypto-archaeologist, he can work directly with Guardians returning from the frontier. He decrypts matter engrams as a free service, and when he builds trust with a particular Guardian, he is happy to offer rare engrams for sale - although the scarcity of these artifacts forces him to ask for Glimmer in compensation.

Rahool's true love is history. He treats each new find as a chance to understand the glory of the Golden Age or the terrible truth of the Collapse. Listen carefully to his murmurings: he may be the first to understand.

~Cryptarch



Master Ives

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT FOR ARRIVING GUARDIANS:

PLEASE NOTE: The Tower Cryptography operates under many false beliefs.

By the Queen's mercy, the Reef Cryptography will educate you on the true nature of encryption, if you so desire.

In ancient times, Earthlings thought there were three states of matter. We now know there to be four: solid, liquid, gas and engram. Of these, the engram is the purest state of matter.

The role of the Cryptarchy is to encrypt and safeguard civilization's informational infrastructure, not to decrypt anything and everything for any lowdown scavenger who happens upon an engram.

~Master Ives, Cryptarch



Tyra Karn

Tyra considers herself an observer of history rather than a participant.

In the time of the Iron Lords, Tyra was the keeper of their stories. Later, she helped found the Cryptarch order, but withdrew from its day-to-day operation to concentrate on her studies. Tyra has dedicated decades sorting through recovered artifacts, documents, and Ghost discoveries in hopes of bringing out the undeniable truths of our past.

With the rise of SIVA, Lord Saladin has convinced his old friend to return to the Iron Temple.

~Tyra Karn

Tess Everis

Tess earned her place in the Tower working as a troubleshooter - a fixer with a solution to any kind of problem. Her connections go everywhere. It is difficult to make her speak about her monographs in abstract algebra, or the string of peculiar jobs she's worked, but a word in her ear can open doors in surprising places.

~Special Orders/Everse



Eva Levante

Eva Levante provided services to the Tower long before she actually took a place in it. Guardians would call for her work again and again, looking for marks of distinction, both new and old, and she began to craft emblems and shaders for the bold and discerning. These days she has set up shop in the Tower, taking quiet pride in the Guardians who train, fight, and fall under her signs.

~Guardian Outfitter



Banshee-44

Few merchants of the Tower serve as vital a function as Banshee-44. His knowledge of weapons is encyclopedic - but don't ask him where it comes from. Banshee's mind and body have absorbed incredible punishment over the ages. He grapples with fragments of memory, the shrapnel of ancient ordeals that return to haunt him.

~Gunsmith



Amanda Holliday

Born on the road, daughter of pilgrims, Holliday grew up fixing and scavenging - maintaining the vehicles that saved her family from the wilderness. Her talent for engineering and her familiarity with Golden Age relics made her a leader among the Tower's Shipwrights.

The terrors of Holliday's childhood galvanized her. She knows and respects the dangers that press against the City's walls, and her drive to rebuild the City's aerospace capabilities is driven as much by pragmatism as by her love of flight.

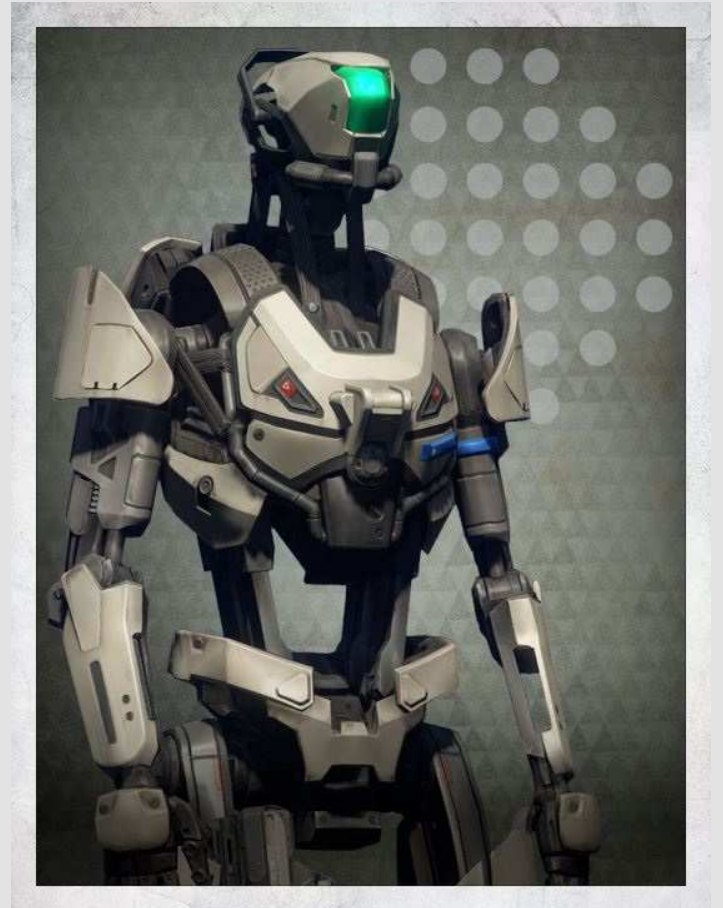
~Shipwright



FRAMES

Frames are simple automata built in the City. Although not equipped with true general sentience, they are nevertheless useful for cleaning, maintenance, and service tasks. Frames do have the ability to learn, and many develop quirks of personality and behavior over long lifespans.

~Frames



Roni 55-30

As trustworthy as frames come, Roni 55-30 was designed to smooth troubled waters. Cayde has spent long hours trying to evoke any hint of frustration in his distant machine cousin, but Roni remains exquisitely composed.

~Vanguard Quartermaster



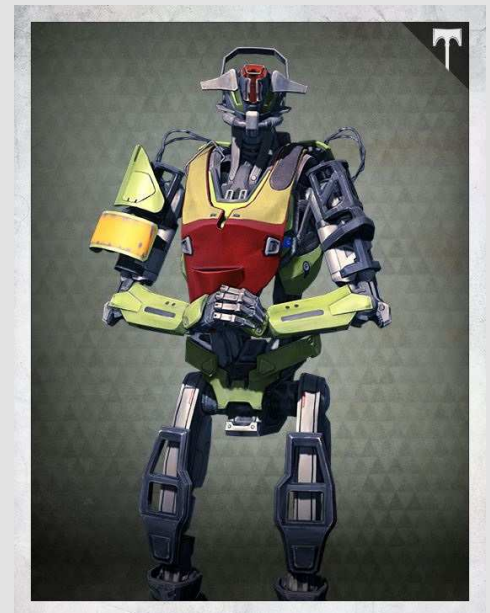
When not handing packages to Guardians braving the frigid air surrounding Felwinter Peak, Gabi 55-30 cleans up after the wolves, refills the cauldrons' reservoirs, and tends to the temple's herb garden. Because of its remote location, the Iron Temple is ideal for testing the Frame Mechanics' latest code changes to prevent Gabi from having another "incident".

~Gabi 55-30



When not setting out sides of deer for the Iron Temple's wolves or putting down copious amounts of rock salt, Micha 99-40 is tasked with handing out bounties to passing guardians. The Frame Mechanics now refer to him as "Lefty", due to his habit of getting too close to the wolves while feeding them.

~Micha 99-40



Xander 99-40

There are many threats beyond the City's walls. To help track and eliminate these dangers, the Vanguard has initiated a bounty system to reward Guardians who take the fight to the City's enemies. Lord Shaxx, not to be outdone, lays out his own bounties for performance in the Crucible.

Xander 99-40, a recent product of the City's foundries, tracks every Guardian's progress and dispenses rewards.

~Bounty tracker



Kadi 55-30

Stationed in the Tower Plaza, Kadi 55-30 welcomes Guardians home from the frontier, delivers urgent messages, and tracks lost items.

Kadi has adopted a colloquial repartee with the Guardians who frequent the Tower. Whether this is the function of intricate sub-programming or a learned behavior is unknown.

~Postmaster

CITY FACTIONS

DEAD ORBIT

"The Traveler is not our only salvation. Another future lies out among the light of other stars."

Dead Orbit's theology has developed from mere fatalism into an obsession with worlds beyond Earth. Now their focus is on the building of a starfaring fleet, cobbled together from the ashes of our past and the spoils of war.

~Dead Orbit

Arach Jalaal

Jalaal is a man driven by the ghost of a dead future. Critics accuse Dead Orbit of nihilistic fatalism - and Jalaal would be the first to agree that Earth is lost, the City a fatal trap.

The Arachs have no time for sentiment. Only an alien miracle prevented human extinction during the Collapse. Jalaal dreams of a diaspora to come - humanity ascendant, scattered across the stars, too far-flung for any single threat to reach.

Jalaal's utilitarian practicality drives him to bend laws and break rules in the name of Dead Orbit's great project. When the ultimate goal is human survival, any sacrifice can be justified.

~Dead Orbit Rep



RECORD 978-ECLIPSE-4165

lo? Hello? Are you...oh, please, let it be alive. Wake up little Ghost, wake up. Just please give me some sign that you're listening.

All right. I don't need...I know you're listening. Why would you be out here if you weren't here to...It's a miracle I found you out here. On this thing.

I didn't know the Traveler sent its Ghosts out this far from home.

Poor little lost thing. Please wake up.

I am an Arach of Dead Orbit. I am the last of the crew of the Sophia. And this place is...it doesn't have a name. We called it A-113.

How long have you been here, little Ghost? Why did you come?

Listen. We came here on behalf of the Fleet. We were scavengers. Sixty-one days ago a Dead Orbit scout detected an unknown presence in stationary orbit about Ceres. 133 west. Looked Golden Age, by the signatures. Human. A small station. No prior records. We -

I suppose we should have disclosed it to the Tower, but we didn't. I didn't. That was my call. We wanted it for ourselves, whatever it was. For the Fleet. If we'd told the Tower, maybe they might have sent a Guardian not of our making instead...Doesn't matter now, does it, little one?

If I ramble it's because I haven't slept in seven days.

Seven point five days ago; that was when the Sophia dropped into the Belt. They saw us at once. We dropped and the alarms went off and that was the end, that was the end right then, but they let us go on for another seven-point-five days, didn't they? The alarms. Hostile

scan detected. An Awoken ship had us in its sights, just a couple hundred kilometers away. Like it had been waiting for us. It could have wiped us out of space right then but instead it crippled our engines and our comms and then for days it played with us, like a cat, we limped half-way round the Belt and it was always there...

We abandoned the Sophia one-point-five days ago. We jumped ship for A-113.

I don't know what else to call it. I don't know what it was built for. There are these things, like keyholes. The rangefinders say they go on for thousands of kilometers. The others went inside and found - well, some of them are still screaming about the eye. All the other voices that come back are more terrible.

There's salvage here but it'll never come home, none of it. None of it except maybe you, little Ghost.

Wake up.

Wake up. Go home. Tell them to strike A-113 from the records. Tell them to forget the Sophia, and the mission, and her crew.

END RECORD

~Ghost Fragment: Dead Orbit

NEW MONARCHY

"Hope will be born from the collective triumphs of the king in us all."

The New Monarchy rose from the ashes of the Faction Wars with a simple, inclusive guiding tenet: "Together we will rise."

Leery of the fragile state of the City's politics, the New Monarchy maintains a watchful eye on the Speaker, the Consensus, and the Vanguard, seeking the leadership that will properly reign over the City and return our civilization to its Golden Age splendor. If that leadership cannot be found, then it must be created.

~New Monarchy

Executor Hideo

An upstanding citizen, Hideo was once known for his lavish gifts to children and the elderly. Since he moved from plasteel manufacturing to the New Monarchy, he has been less forthcoming about his business and less free with his funds. But as one of the public faces of the Monarchy, he speaks with genuine passion and conviction about the possibilities of a united future.

~New Monarchy Rep



The Seven Tenets of the New Monarchy

1. To secure our walls against the enemy without.
2. To secure the rights and liberties of every upstanding citizen.
3. To sponsor the sciences of the City, and to salvage the ruins beyond, so that our Golden Age might be reborn.
4. To support the Guardian Orders by leading the City in technological innovation.
5. To support the natural harmony of the City, and to actively dissuade any group or individual that might disrupt that harmony.
6. To hold all individuals, compacts, and alliances to the highest standards of productivity and right behavior.
7. To, by vote of the Consensus, abolish the Consensus, and transfer ultimate power, in order that the rights and liberties of all citizens be secured, to a single sovereign of unimpeachable character.

~Ghost Fragment: New Monarchy



FUTURE WAR CULT

"There is no future but now. No truth but war."

While the origins of the Future War Cult are greatly debated, their mark has been found on ancient chambers and encampments throughout the system, dating them back to the late Golden Age. Though their secrets are vast, they have proven indispensable in our struggle against the Darkness, earning them power and respect in the City Consensus and among Guardians.

~Future War Cult

Lakshmi-2

There is nothing Lakshmi-2 likes more than secrets. Her origins are unknown; her appearance in the City was abrupt. She courts select Guardians for initiation into the higher mysteries of the Future War Cult, espousing a brutal philosophy of endless struggle.

Those who can tolerate Lakshmi's mocking hints and bloody-minded philosophy find her surprisingly good company. She seems to take genuine joy in her work, as if the secrets she guards have taught her to treasure every moment.

~Future War Cult Rep



RECORD 343-CHASM-7887

Subject twenty-two. Admitted to the Inner Circle at 24:00. A promising postulant - I regret to say he performed poorly. He was administered the standard medication but refused to enter the Device.

Aren't people unpredictable? I suppose there'd be no point if they weren't, would there?

He knows to keep silent.

END RECORD

RECORD 343-CHASM-7888

Subject twenty-three entered the Device at 11:00. A clever girl from the Core District; an artist, before she joined the War Cult.

At 11:03 she reported a sensation of floating. At 11:06, a sensation of lights within the darkness of the Device. Between 11:06 and 11:32 she reported these lights variously as white, golden, and blood-red. At 11:32 she reported a sensation of someone taking her hand; a stranger, but also herself. Twelve subjects have reported similar experiences. At 11:33 she reported the sensation we have called "The Opening Of The Veil." The Device recorded temporal displacement of her consciousness to the order of six degrees. At seven she began screaming. Brainscans near-death. Removed from the Device at 11:34.

She believes without question that the Device granted her a vision of the future, and that it was one of utter Darkness. She thanked me for this enlightenment. She says it will make her stronger.

Little Ghost, there in the corner of the Sanctum - I see you blinking. Are you listening? Are y -

END RECORD

RECORD 343-CHASM-7889

the Device at 12:22 and immediately the Device reported displacement of his consciousness. Visions of war and the City in flames. Subject twenty-nine worked the supply channels on the Slip before he joined the War Cult. By 12:27 he was babbling and by
END RECORD

RECORD 343-CHASM-7890

We have applied certain refinements to the Device. Novarro found records of a prototype of the Device at a Golden Age laboratory in Tibet, and Hari's team retrieved what was left of it. We are the first to see it operational in who knows how long. Too many subjects come back damaged. Mad. We are grasping at straws. What do you think, little Ghost?
END RECORD

RECORD 343-CHASM-7891

Forty-seven human subjects; eleven report timelines in which the Darkness has already prevailed, thirteen report timelines in which the City has fallen. Twenty-three babbled madness. Hopeless. Trapped.

No wonder the Device was abandoned. The human mind is too weak for it. Too weak to look into the Future, or to understand what it sees.

What the situation calls for, little Ghost, is a better sort of witness.

We found you in pieces in Siberia, and repaired you as well as we could.

What do you say? Are you well enough to travel?

END RECORD

~Ghost Fragment: Future War Cult

ALLIES AT THE TEMPLE

LORD SALADIN

Lord Saladin

A hero to the City and a legend in his own right, Saladin Forge led the City's defense during the Battle for the Twilight Gap. His protégés, Commander Zavala and Lord Shaxx, now lead the Tower's Vanguard and the Crucible, respectively. Saladin remains close to Zavala, though his relationship with Shaxx has been strained since the Twilight Gap.

The Iron Banner seeks great champions to lead the fight against the Darkness. It was born to honor the Iron Lords and their efforts in the earliest days of the City.

~Iron Banner Rep



Vanguard Scout

Shiro-4 is one of the Vanguard's most trusted scouts. Tasked with tracking and eliminating Fallen threats, Shiro has traditionally spent most of his time making runs between Earth, Luna and Venus—gathering intel and engaging in hit-and-run attacks on active Fallen crews.

Free of the burden of leadership that ties his mentor, Cayde-6, to the Tower, Shiro willingly aids the Vanguard whenever his skills are requested. This selflessness—combined with his talents for tracking, weapons-crafting, and combat—makes Shiro an invaluable extension of the Vanguard's will beyond the City.

~Shiro-4



In the tales of the Iron Lords, Lady Efrideet was one of the most prominent characters. She once threw Saladin like a javelin into a Fallen Walker—a City favorite retold for centuries. How she met her end is less clear, but the tales agreed that Efrideet had long ago died her final death.

Until she returned.

Now Efrideet serves as the new Iron Banner representative while Lord Saladin devotes his attention to the SIVA Crisis. She urges Guardians to see the Banner tournament as a chance to strengthen their Light, for fighting and for more metaphysical purposes. The Vanguard are also intrigued by Efrideet's accounts of a nonmilitary Guardian community in the deep system, but Efrideet, though happy to talk about the group's pacifist philosophies, refuses to disclose the settlement's location at present.

~Lady Efrideet

ERIS MORN

Eris Morn

Eris Morn is the sole survivor of an ill-fated raid on the Hive's lunar fortress. It was Eris and a rag-tag Fireteam who, after the first charge to take back the Moon, sacrificed everything to return in search of the one the Hive call Crota.

Robbed of her Ghost, Eris remained lost among the darkest shadows of the Hellmouth for countless cycles. Despite all odds she endured, using the very dark she battled to emerge a changed warrior—driven, some would say obsessed. The Speaker and Commander Zavala find her compulsions a sickness, convinced she has been fully seduced by the shadows.

Though her warnings of Crota and his power are often dismissed as madness, Eris returns to the shadows time and time again, operating as one of Ikora Rey's Hidden—a clandestine group of Guardians tasked with silently infiltrating enemy strongholds and gathering vital intel for the Warlocks.

~Crota's Bane





The Tower's med bay was still. Guardians might operate across the system at all hours but even in the heart of the Last City, there is sometimes... quiet.

The Awoken man lay upon the bed like a broken thing. Machines monitored his every twitch, every aspect of his physical status. The steady, quiet blip of his heartbeat was the dominant sound in the room.

A small transplex window sat in one wall of the room. Hovering there, eerily still, was a Ghost. Its single eye reflected against the inside of the window, a steady red glow.

In the corner of the room sat a chair. Cheap, vinyl-covered, this chair could have been a relic from the Golden Age itself. And, suddenly, it creaked.

Because, in the stillness, there was another measured source of breathing in the room.

Eris Morn settled back into the chair, allowing the dark wisps of power she'd summoned to effortlessly flow from her back into the night. The green emanations from her shroud were stark against the dimness.

Almost as an afterthought, the Ghost turned from regarding the window. For a moment, three eyes stared at one, before it turned back to its watch.

Her face implacable, Eris regarded the Awoken in the bed.

His name was Asher Mir.

Irrascible. Annoying. Cantankerous. She'd even seen Ikora Rey become... exasperated in his presence. Her lips quirked, very slightly, upwards. A kindred spirit, if she'd ever had one.

Her smile died as her gaze slid to his side. His Warlock garb had been stripped from his body, and she could see his pale blue chest as it rose and fell in the bed. His arm. His arm was gone.

In its place was a thing. The point where mechanicals knit with flesh was ghastly to behold, but the design was unmistakable to any Guardian who'd been in the field: Asher Mir's arm was that of a Vex construct.

Her eyes flicked to the ghost at the window. It too, was transformed. The unmistakable outline of Vex technology encrusting and penetrating the small warden's shell. That red, staring eye...

She stood, and stepped to the side of the bed.

Her voice was gentle, quiet, but its timbre filled the still air of the room.

"I am leaving, my old friend."

The man in the bed did not stir.

"Soon I will take my leave of this"—she put her hands up, to take in the med bay, the City, the Tower, Earth—"lie."

She placed a gloved hand on the back of his blue, flesh-and-bone hand. "I wish we could have spoken, you and I, one last time. But my story here is done. I have avenged those I lost. I must find..."

She stopped, and beneath the gauze on her face all three eyes closed. For a moment she allowed herself to feel the dark tears that flowed, unending, down her face. The eyes reopened, and her strength blazed in the darkness.

"I must find a new path through the night. The Hive are vast, and ancient. A power from far beyond our realm. If we are ever truly to face them, ever truly to put an end to their hate, I must step beyond the safety of the City."

She lifted her head and looked beyond the window to the horizon. To the grand sweep of the Walls, the edge of humanity's reach.

"Be safe, Gensym Scribe. A storm is coming. And I will not be at your side when it finds its way to our shores."

With those words, and a gathered locus of power, she was gone.

The room returned to stillness. The blip of the Awoken man's heart echoed from the machines. And the Ghost stared into the night, its red eye never blinking.

~Ghost Fragment: Eris Morn



3.2 THE AWOKEN



THE QUEEN

"I am noble too, oh Lord of Wolves. Starlight was my mother; and my father was the dark."

The Queen of the Awoken is as much an enigma as the Reef she rules. It is said that she won her crown through ruthlessness, and that she stands as master of the Fallen House of Wolves in place of their defeated Kell.

The City's rise spells an end to the Reef's age of isolation. The Queen will surely look to this new era as an opportunity. And the City, in turn, must look to her. The Reefborn Awoken have spent long ages out on the edge of everything, and they may know secrets of terrible weight - the Queen most of all.

~The Queen



For a while the only lights were the eyes of the Witches tending to the cell. The drone of the soul machines echoed through the prison. Gas billowed and ebbed into the shadows.

She entered. They scurried to their points around her, the method of their arrangement precise. "The Archon Priest has been retired, my Queen," said the Witch to her right.

Far from throne and audience she moved without theater. "Any word of Kaliks Prime?"

"We still sense something among the Anankes." This voice came from behind her. She did not turn to acknowledge it.

For the span of a brief silence she moved between the sealed cells of the Wolf nobility with her Witches in constellation around her.

"More of your brother's Crows have entered the Cauldrons of Rhea." The Witch directly before her spoke with a dry buzz. "The Nine do not approve."

She stopped a moment to study the sealed face of a cell. The cloud of her breath mingled with the slow exhalation of cryonics. "Send them one of our prizes. Something to commemorate our mutual victory."

"And which of your prisoners would you gift?"

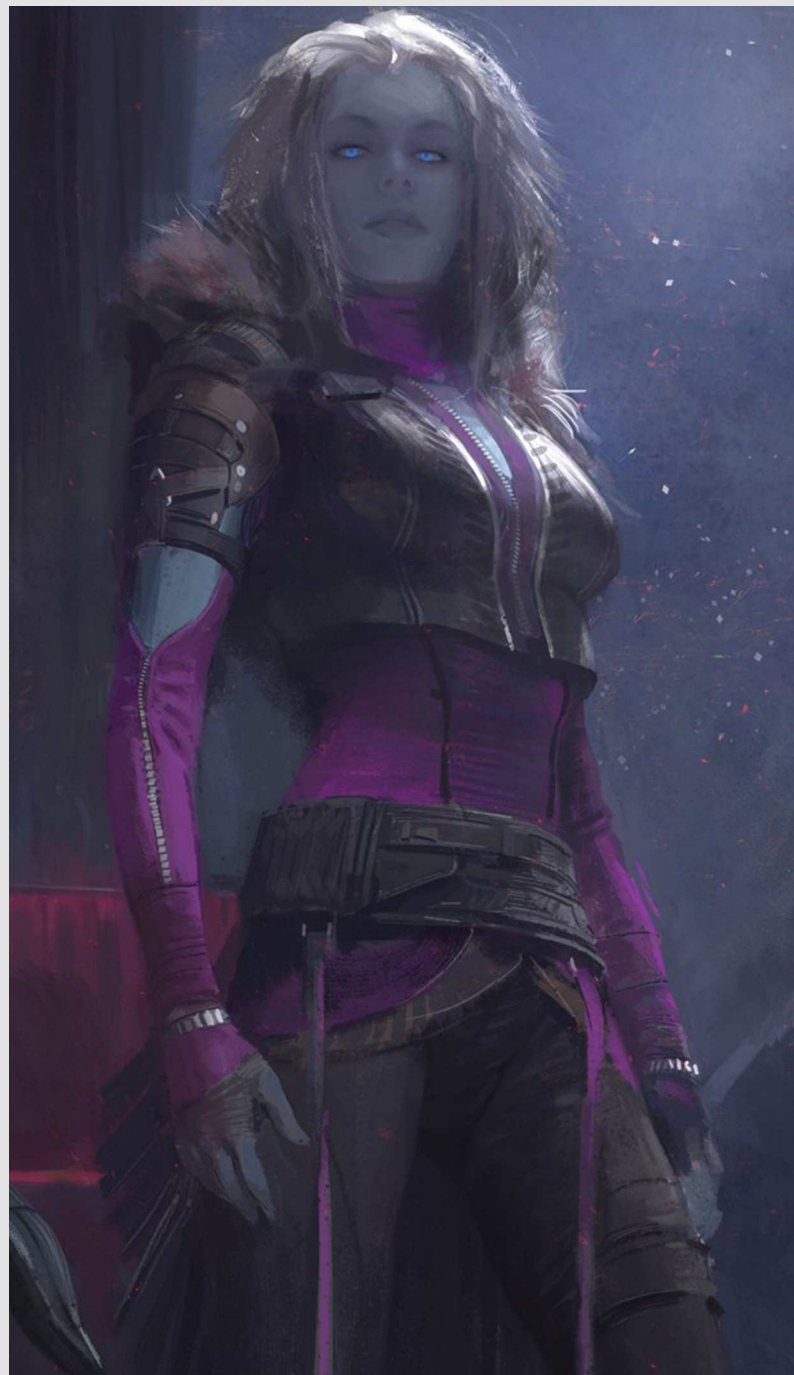
If she paused to think it was only for an instant. "Send them Skolas."

"A lovely gesture."

"Mm." She cocked her head as if listening for a frozen heartbeat.

"And remind them this: the Crows are mine."

~Ghost Fragment: The Queen



"You don't have one."

The Hunter came to a halt in front of the throne, raised her covered face to meet the Prince's gaze.

"No," she agreed. "My next death will be my last."

"I know the feeling," the Prince said dryly.

The Queen kept her expression carefully distant. She sat reclined in her throne, legs crossed, surveying the two figures at the base of the steps. Beside her, where the Wolves' Guard used to stand, Techeuns Shuro and Sedia hovered instead, their jewel-like augments gently humming. To her right and just before stood the Prince, facing forward but his body half-turned back toward her.

"Your Grace," said the man before her at the foot of the stairs. His voice was soft but strong. When he spoke the Hunter started to turn her head toward him, then flinched as if someone had shone a bright light into her eyes.

"Thank you for your gracious welcome," he said.

The Queen inclined her head slightly.

"Before we begin," spoke out the Hunter. "I will say this." She paused, her head tilted up to the throne. The Queen waved her hand in assent.

The Hunter's pale lips tightened slightly, then resumed their usual stony mien. "Your Grace," she said. Shuro and Sedia shifted, a sudden rustling and whispering. The Queen raised one finger to silence them. Uldren's eyes narrowed, but he said nothing. "I am not here for you."

The Queen stared at the Hunter, her expression studiously unchanged.



"I have no wish to play politics. I have no grievance with the City, not anymore. I have no grand hopes to end the war, for long have I known I will not see its end. I am here for one battle, and one alone, because it is a battle we must all fight, together or separately. So I will warn the defenders, together or separately. I will do anything—" her low voice shook with passion— "to end Oryx."

A silence rang out in the room. The Hunter kept her head raised, her ambiguous gaze directed at the shadows in the throne where the Queen reclined. Then a small smile curved the Queen's lips. "Well said." She straightened, and leaned slightly forward so the room's light fell on her face.

"So let us end him."

~Ghost Fragment: The Queen 2



PRINCE ALDREN



"I will not sacrifice my birthright for the promise of security."

As the Queen's confidant, spymaster, and deadliest enforcer, her brother wields enormous power, particularly for a male born in the Reef's matriarchal society. Recent reports suggest he may differ from the Queen on key matters of strategy - but it remains to be seen whether this gap is a source of conflict, or part of the reason the Queen values him so highly.

~The Queen's Brother

The machine had wings and feathers, sleek and black as its body. But the feathers were eyes, too, sharp and delicate, and ears that pricked at every sound. The young prince considered the machine, considered its purpose, and his own. And then he called to it.

"I have a task for you."

Obedience was woven into its workings, and so it stopped. "Master of Crows?"

"Mind the Black Garden's gate. Follow anyone who passes through."

"In the name of your sister," the machine vowed. And it went to find its warp capsule, just as another came in. But this one flew skittishly, as if to evade its master.

The prince caught it from the air. "You avoid me?"

"I am tasked by the Queen."

"But you serve me." He let it tremble in displeasure for a moment. "Tell me your news."

The machine flicked its wings. The prince stroked them flat with slow assured motions. "Tell me your news," he said again. "What's the harm?"

"The Heart is growing stronger," the crow said. "The Vex transformation has begun, and the Progeny are stirring."

The prince considered this in silence for a moment and then he wrapped the crow up in

his fist and folded its wings around it so that it could not move or fly. He did all this swiftly, and with purpose.

Carrying the machine, he went to see his sister.

She was alone with her Fallen guards, sitting before a window into infinity. Her eyes did not leave the universe; but sensing her brother she said "Yes. What is it?"

"There's news to share," he said, and offered the crow in his fist. "And I think I have earned the right to share it."

~Ghost Fragment: The Queen's Brother

"Do not fear, brother. This was the only choice I had."

The sound of her voice ripped him from sleep. He jumped up; his ship was still contained in its protective sphere. He tried to retract the shield, but it was locked to its initiation time. He couldn't remember activating it. Then he remembered the battle. That blast.

What that ship fired was ancient, not bound to anything the Origin Libraries even sought to describe.

He tried to calm down. He thought of her, searching for her pull. He couldn't find it, but he was not calm. She always told him she would always be there behind the calm.

All he could hear were echoes of that sound.

It began as soon as they hit the ring plane, ringing in the old glimmer of his long-buried self. Before she showed him who he was—in the before and the after.

The Techeuns should've known what the Dreadnaught could do. Must've known. Did they not feel what he felt? Hear what he heard? And that damn Ketch, it wasn't protected. They had to know that. All to deploy the Harbingers. They barely got a foothold before the weapon was fired. He thought of Petra and how overwhelmed she must be, forced to hold her post, and watch her people perish.

He tried to calm himself again, forcing long breaths. He realized where he was: Mars. Athabasca. The Candor Isles. He hadn't been here in so long, not since he found the Black Garden.

The countdown to the shield's deactivation pulsed. He tried again, to home in on her, to find if she truly gave herself for this battle. He felt close to something, a hum of starlight, then shield deactivation broke his focus.

He climbed out and saw the damage to his ship, and the truths of the armada's devastation sunk in.

He turned in despair to find hundreds of his Crow drones, deployed on Mars long ago, circling his ship, waiting.

"Welcome back, Master." The one closest to him spoke first, and the others followed, a wave of salutations echoed throughout the dry sea.

And with that hope returned.

"Begin repairs on the ship immediately. Something has gone missing and you will help me find it."

~Aftermath

VARIKS THE LOYAL

They call me betrayer. They do not think I hear the words.
"Bug." "Insect." "Fallen."

I hear. House of Judgment always hears. No choice. Has to.
To keep Houses together. Had to.

First, the Great Machine. Then, sky fell away. Whirlwind
ripped away the past. All honor lost, all hope. Judgment not
enough. Cannot keep Wolves from Kings, Scar from Winter.
Fell to fighting. Fell to hate.

Judgment gone. Others slaughtered, slain. Death and
docking. "Keep Eliknsi together," lost to pride and rage.

Traveled with the many houses before Wolves. We move,
across the dark. Follow the Light. Advise Kells, worshiped
Primes. House Judgment must survive, yes?

Found the Light. Too bright in Darkness to hide. House
Winter, attack. House Devils, plot. House Kings, plan. House
Wolves circle. House Judgment... wait.

Now at war. Fight for system, control the belt. Wolves Kell
dead, dying.

Skolas wins control of House Wolves. Attack, attack, attack.
Place of learning, place of healing, put to the burn. Then
Siege of Pallas. Year of cruelty. Held the line to rescue
butchers, murderers, Servitor. Ends with Wolf fleet scattered.

New tactics. Detonations. Blasts in civilian areas. Take the
fight to them, he said. Cannot abide the hate. Uprising, they
called it. Uprising on Cybele.

Reach out to Crows, to Queen. Cybele attack stopped. Skolas
captured. Ended House of Wolves with words.

Paladins find me hiding, cowering. Nowhere else to go. No
one else to be. I become Variks, the Loyal. House Judgment
envoy to Queen of Awoken.

No choice. House Judgment must survive. Yes?

~Variks the Loyal



PETRA VENJ

To My Lady Mara Sov, Queen of the Awoken

My letter is a plea, my lady. A simple one. Please let me come home.

It has been years now since my appointment as your Emissary. Once, I was proud to call myself a Corsair in your service. My sisters and I were the sharp edge of your will, cutting across the stars in protection of the Reef.

It was your service that kept me from sorrow after Amethyst was razed. The loss of my sisters, my whole life, as our station burned... it took something from me.

By your will, it was given back to me.

Promoting me to the Corsairs, allowing me to strike back at the Wolves. Letting my fury find purchase in defense, in support, and in glorious battle. I know, as I'm sure you did, that without focus my heart would have grown toxic.



It was my pride in my position that sustained me through the Hildean Campaign. That led me to victory in battle against Veliniks, the "Forgotten Kell", the last hope for the unchained Wolves. I know now that it was my willful pride that brought me low.

My lady, I offer again the only explanation I can: I did not know the Guardians would act as they did. All I had known, all I had ever known, were the ways of the Awoken.

The Wolves were entrenched in that valley. The approaches were blocked, all sight lines covered. An assault on their position was madness. We would have spent precious Awoken lives. For nothing. I saw the Guardians, knew they were on the move, but I assumed they saw the situation as we did. That it was folly to call in the Crows.

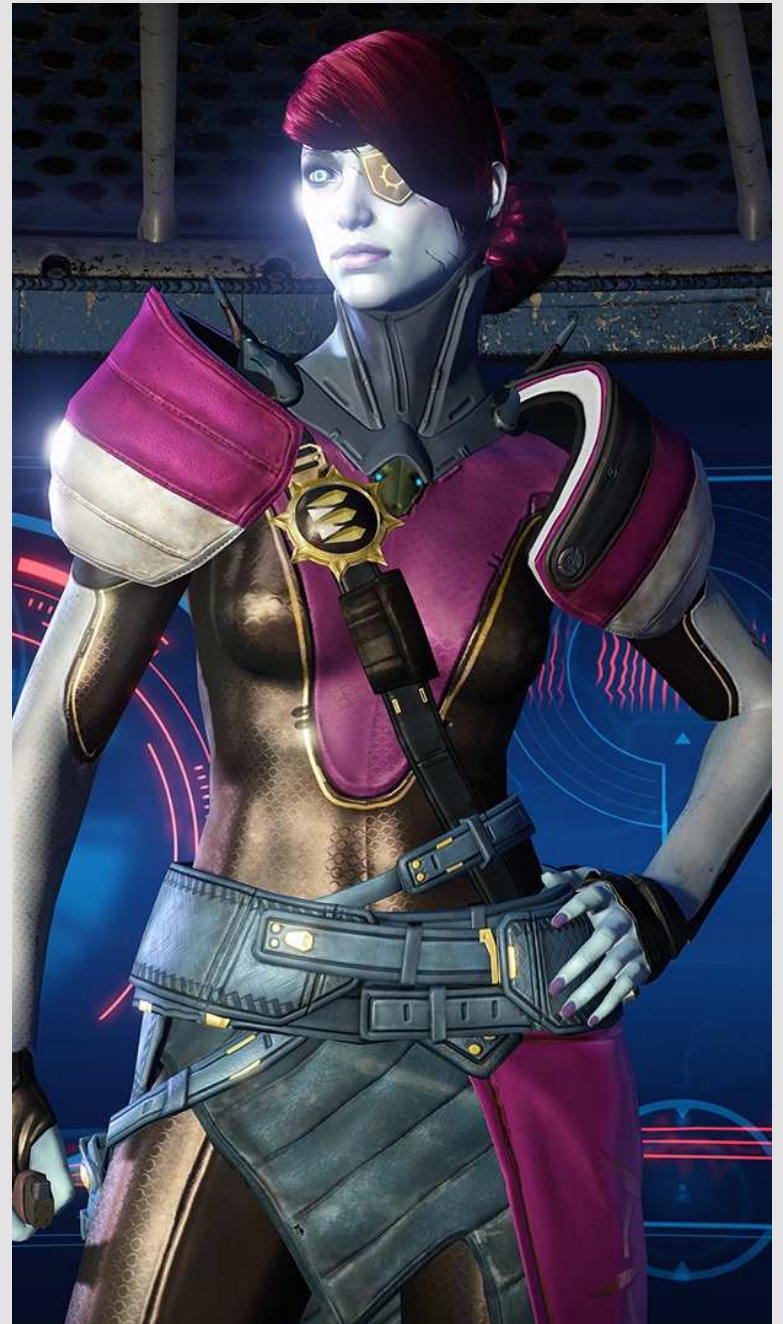
Prince Uldren's fighter wing did a masterful job. The blast was pinpoint precise. The blasts tore apart the Wolves, and the Guardians, and their Ghosts. Three strike teams of Guardians, gone in an instant, on my order. The City's anger, the Speaker's condemnation—all earned. All fair.

But it has been years since the Reef Wars. The City, these— people. They are not like us. They do not understand their place in the world. And do not listen when I speak it.

Please, allow me to return home to my people.

To serve you once again.

~Petra Venj



REEF FRAMES & THE ROYAL GUARD

Many of the Reef's oldest Frames were salvaged from cargo ships that washed up on the Reef hundreds of years ago. In the City, Frames are equipped with a basic learning capacity, able to mimic behavioral and personality quirks. Not so in the Reef. There, Frames are seen as computers with robotic appendages—no more, no less. The Reef Cryptarchy is careful to back up and encrypt all data stored on Frames, and to wipe the Frames' processors on a regular basis.

~Reef Frames



In all military matters, the Queen's commands are carried out by her seven Paladins. Four command the Royal Armada, including the Corsairs and the Vestian Guard: Abra Zire, Kamala Rior, Hallam Fen and Leona Bryl. Two command the Royal Army, including the Reef's battle stations and military installations: Pavel Nolg and Devi Cassl.

The seventh Paladin commands the Royal Awoken Guard, whose primary task is to safeguard the Queen in any and all matters. This includes threats not only to her person, but to the Reef as a whole. As such, the Royal Awoken Guard work closely with the Queen's brother, Master of Crows, Prince Uldren Sov, and every Guard member is trained in espionage and diplomacy as well as in firearms and hand-to-hand combat.

~The Royal Awoken Guard

THE COVEN

On the Eve of War

The chamber was dark. The seven of them were rarely in a room together anymore, but this was the eve of their greatest journey, a plan that overcame death and spanned universes.

They were all connected in trance, communing as the ancients did. Speaking would tip their hand to the Harbinger Minds they kept here, trophies from an ageless war, and weapons in the right hands.



"Oryx could kill her, if she holds on too long." Sedia offered through the silence, fearing what was to come.

"We took an oath long ago, obedience even in the face of defeat." Nascia despised fear.

"Only a defeat here, now. Not there, then." Illyn wandered between the two sides of three. The amulet around her neck marked Illyn as the covenant's mother, granting her visions beyond the veil, places only the Queen could go.

"So we hope." Kalli had long sought the power of the amulet, but Techeuns are taught not to desire.

"Our Queen awaits." Lissyl attempted to end the challenges. There was little time and a war to fight.

"So now the decision is nigh. The Harbingers, which to prepare?" Shuro was determined to see this all through. Excitement was taught to be kept at bay.

"We cannot send them all." Portia reminded.

"All but one, the oldest. It stays with us. Sedia, Kalli, Shuro, take the children, tell her they are to be planted into a dead thing to have children of their own." A plan hid behind Illyn's eyes, but Techeuns do not share their eyes with others.

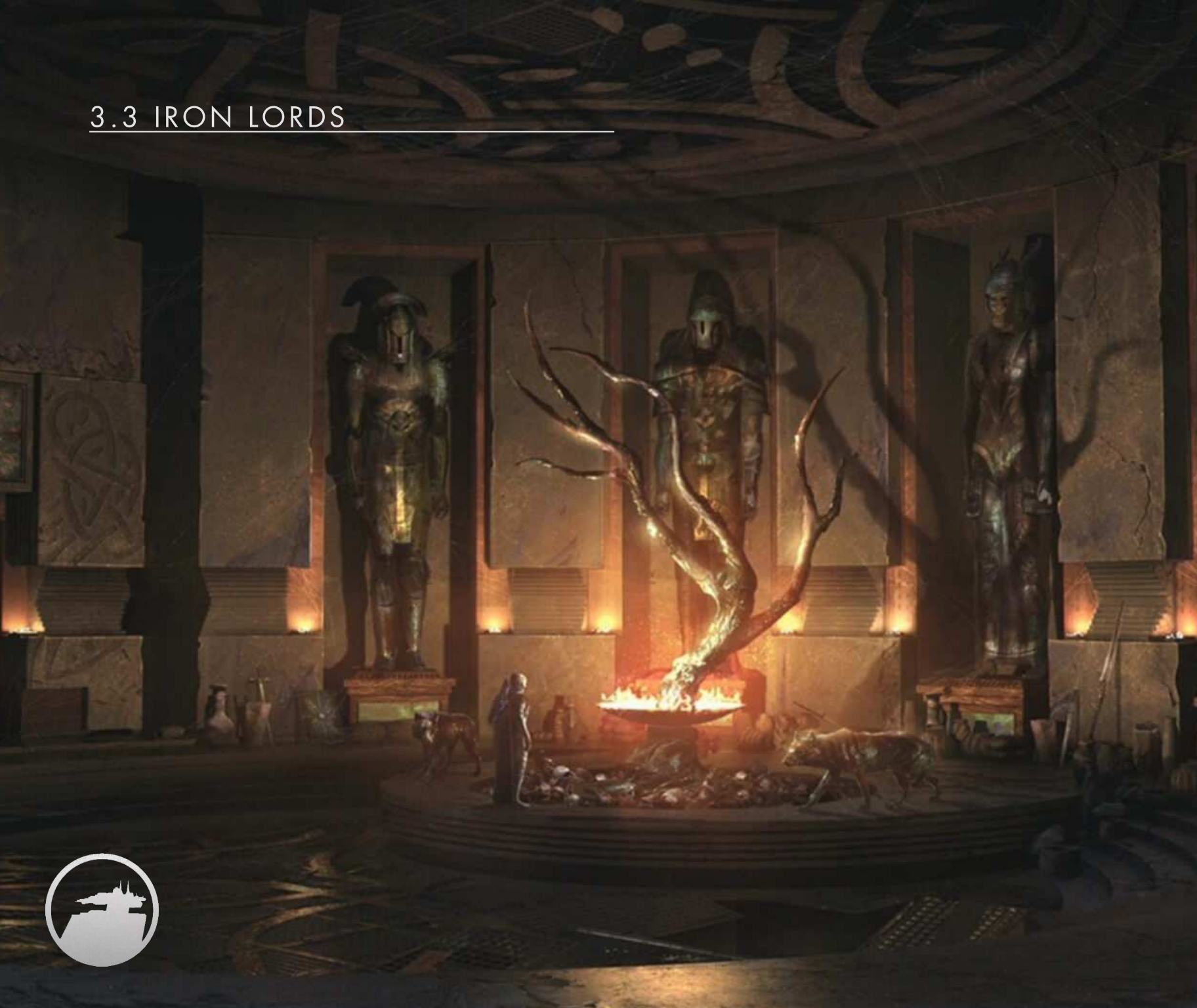
"What if they are not wise enough for the Dreadnaught?"

Illyn turned back to the source.

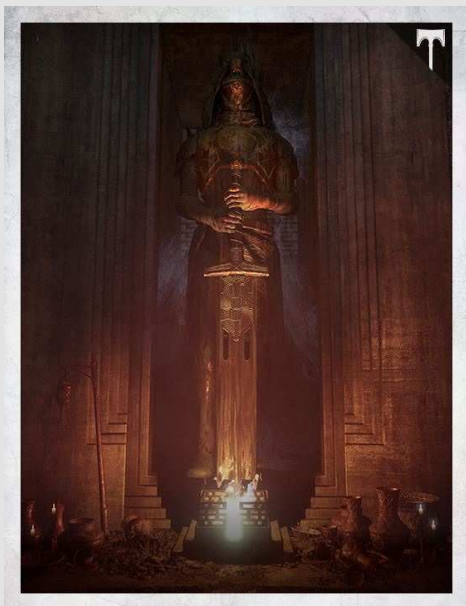
"Sedia, do you not have faith in our Queen?"

~The Covenant

3.3 IRON LORDS



LORD GHELEON



Gheleon wears three knives. Their names are Swiftling, Occam, Quietus. They did much of the work at Black Lona, in silence and at speed.

Between the roots of the ash tree that covers his den, Gheleon has stacked the Fallen bones collected from that one-night operation. The scavenged pieces of an Ahamkara, several jumbled coyote skeletons, and a fossil mastodon skull are mixed in with them. The bones are scorched and battered from the various grenades, bullets, and hammers he's taken to them. He keeps extensive notes on these stress tests in a tattered notebook with "Field Armor Experiments" scrawled on its cover. So far, though, he hasn't tried his knives on these materials. Between bones, in the joints and gaps, certainly, but not on them.

Gheleon flips Swiftling and catches it by the haft. He throws it, a single smooth motion, and it shatters a Fallen tibia.

He flips Occam and throws it. The knife clatters off an Ahamkara vertebra.

He flips Quietus and—

"Shanks and pikes, Efrideet!"

"Ooh, that's the last yip it's yipped," she says, picking up the coyote jaw that Quietus impaled. "Helmet, would you say?"

"Too brittle. Etherbone's better. Flexes."

The others follow her in, wrinkling their noses. Usually they avoid his dim and earth-smelling den. Their presence suggests that Felwinter is doing something unpleasant, probably involving screams.

"Bone?" Saladin says. "Not carbon bronze? Not plasteel?"

"Bone's always available as a last resort. Nothing else is."

"This is doomsday thinking," Jolder says, kicking aside fragments of bone. "We have your back. Our plate is strong. When'll you need scavenged armor?"

"If all of you were cut down around me, your Light drained past return, and my own armor was shredded. F'r instance."

There is a long silence.

"You always know what to say to make us feel better," Efrideet says.

"I could hide under your bodies until the threat left. Then I'd make a helmet from all your skulls and a breastplate from your ribs and gloves from your finger bones wrapped around mine."

There is a longer silence.

~Lord Gheleon

LORD RADEGAST

Radegast strode through the ashes. A cloud hung in his wake as he made his way to the top of the rise. Scars marred his armor, and his sidearm lay in the dust. He didn't need it, now. The battle was over.

This had been a mining outpost, once. A few buildings and a transport. Nestled amid a small forest, it had been like a precious jewel set atop the dull crown of the wildlands.

Now there was almost nothing left. The warrior began to walk slowly down into the valley. He pulled his helm from his head and let it drop with a muted thud into the ash. Of the forest, only stumps remained. Of the small village there was no trace; the buildings reduced to splinters. Here and there you could see dull gray signs of inhabitation.

At the bottom of the valley, Radegast came to the source of the ash, death, and violence. The Light-bearers were laid out in a row, simple cloth covering their armored and robed forms. There were five of them, and they had been lined up beneath the melted girders of the settlement's great hall.

These warlords had terrorized this part of the wilds for years. Hundreds had died at their hands.

Radegast turned as his companions crossed the valley floor to join him. They had been policing the dead, finding a fitting end for the settlers and miners of the outpost. Jolder came with a steady glide, energy and fire. Saladin, calm

and slow, the weight of the dead on his shoulders. In formation behind them stepped Perun, her boots barely leaving a trace as she walked. They gathered before him.

"Never again." He intoned the words quietly. The others stood as battle-scarred statues.

"We ride against despots and warlords. We hide in these enclaves, hoping that other Light-bearers will not find us. We fear each other." He shook his head, his fists clenched.

"And we should not. We are stronger, together. We are mighty, together. All we have to fear is... this." He pointed down at the dead warlords. "Giving in. Allowing the power of the Light to blind us to what we truly are."

It was Perun, of course, who asked the question. "What are we?" No judgment. No reproach.

Still, Radegast could feel their doubt. He turned upwards, and his eyes settled on the massive span that supported the hall. His eyes shone as he turned back to his fellows.

"We will be what the people need us to be. We will be guardians. We will be protectors. We will hold the last of us together."

His voice rang out across the still valley. "Our days of hiding are ended. Say it now, each of you. Who among the other bearers do you trust? Who can be counted on to ride with us?"

"Bretomart," said Jolder.

"Deidris," said Perun.

"I trust only you, Radegast," said Saladin, and their leader scowled in response.

"What are you saying? What are we?" Perun asked again.

Radegast smiled. "We will gather those you trust. We will not wait for this"—he gestured around him—"to force our hand. We will ride against those that would use the Light against our own. Humanity must have protectors. Like the knights of old." Around them, the dust swirled in the air. Shafts of sunlight coalesced in long slanted bars as the sun dipped towards the horizon.

"Are you with me? Will you stand with me—as Iron Lords?"

In the waning light, their answers rang like thunder on the air.

~Lord Radegast



LADY PERUN

Perun stood at the top of a sloping, narrow path cut into a steep plateau. It was not yet dawn, and the valley below her was foggy and dark.

"Maybe he's not coming." This from a thin woman at Perun's side, the mayor of the crumbling silvery ruins on the plateau behind them. "We didn't want you wolves here. Lord Segoth knows that."

In answer, Perun pointed into the valley. A red light had appeared.

The mayor let out a wail. "Segoth will kill us all. Or worse, he'll leave us to the Fallen."

Perun shook her head. "Not gonna happen."

The mayor looked at Perun and the two Titans standing on her other side. Then she turned and ran back into the village.

The red lights were larger; already the faint, choppy whine of repaired Pikes filled their ears.

"Nine of them," said Saladin.

"Nine, nine hundred, they still gotta come up the pass three at a time." She cracked her knuckles. "Easy pickins."

Radegast looked at her. "The north and south roads are undefended. If they change course —"

"They won't."

"How do you know?"

"It's about making people afraid— of Segoth, and of us. Seeing his goons coming a ways off, knowing he's coming for blood... the dread is part of the punishment. Anyway, he doesn't expect we'll still be here. So he takes the west road, 'cause it's the most visible, and the most direct."

Radegast frowned. "Then it's time to show Segoth that his tyranny will end."

"Not just Segoth," said Perun. She jerked a thumb toward the ruins behind her. Watchful faces poked out of windows and around tarps. "We gotta show them."

The three of them picked up large, rough-hewn metal shields. Behind their shields, each held a worn rifle, wrapped with cloth and chain mail.

The Pike-riders' faces were now visible through early morning gloom. A man in long red robes pulled his Pike ahead as they screeched to a halt.

"Well, well," said Segoth. "The Iron Wolves."

"Cease your insults," Saladin barked.

Perun shot him a surprised look. "That's an insult? I kinda like 'Wolves.'"

"Begone, wolves," Segoth sneered. "These people are mine."

"Wrong," Radegast retorted. "You abuse the powers the Traveler has entrusted us."

Segoth smiled, and shrugged.

"Shields up!" Perun shouted.

A hail of bullets slammed into their shields. Perun, Radegast, and Saladin slid backwards on the dusty path. But they dug in their heels, and the shields held.

"Return fire!"

Trapped in the narrow path, Segoth and his warriors fell one by one.

Perun, Radegast, and Saladin reloaded and then Segoth was up again, his glowing Ghost at his shoulder. He fired wildly, and a bullet struck Radegast in the head.

"Got him!" Perun shouted as Radegast collapsed.

"Covering you!" Saladin returned.

Perun, Radegast, and Saladin died many more times than any one of Segoth's men. But any time one of them fell, another would cover them until they staggered to their feet again. The shield wall held. The three gave no ground.

Finally, his robes singed and ragged, Segoth signaled a retreat.

"Iron Wolves!" he shouted as his warriors scattered and a cheer went up from the people in the silver ruins. "I will slaughter everyone who has ever sheltered you!"

In answer, Perun shot him again.

~Lady Perun

LORD FELWINTER

Deep inside a clandestine stronghold sat the Dark Horse Felwinter and Citan, Warlord of the 32nd Sector of Old Russia. A polished obsidian table rested heavily between them.

"Didn't think you'd have the courage to come back here," said the Warlord.

"Situational awareness. Not courage. I go where I can do the most good. Thank you for seeing me." Felwinter's voice sounded as hollow as his helmet. Citan wanted to knock it clean off the Iron Lord's bony shoulders. He could do it with a single punch.

"As I recall, you used to have a throne on that Light-forsaken peak, 'til you joined up with the wolves. You're the only Warlord I know who held an entire mountain."

"Felwinter Peak."

"No one ever calls it that."

"The Iron Lords do. Though they did ask me to take that throne down."

Citan's laugh shook the room. "How is losing territory ever a good thing for a Warlord?" Felwinter folded his hands atop the table. Underneath it, Citan made two fists, a crescent of Light flickering between them.

"Join us and find out," said the Iron Lord. "Turn your sector over to us. You can still patrol it, of course."

Citan's voice lowered. "Of course. You know I'll refuse."

"Then we'll put you down, and take your territory by force. Over and over again if we have to."

"I invite you to my home after you abandon us, and you come to threaten me?" The Warlord stood, towering over Felwinter.

"To broker peace." Citan thought that even the voice behind the helmet didn't believe what it said. The floor shuddered as the Warlord upended the massive table with one hand. It smashed into the opposite wall, as tendrils of Void Light passed through it and coalesced into Felwinter's leaping form.

Citan had seen this parlor trick before, and judged that he could hammer the Iron Lord out of the air—

But Felwinter's momentum continued into a knee-lift that smashed into Citan's head as the larger man reared back to strike. The Warlord fell, the front of his helm shattering. Felwinter landed next to Citan's prone body.

"Lady Jolder taught me that. I can't say the Iron Lords haven't done me any favors," the voice intoned.

"You know we'll burn the world down before we let the Iron Lords rule it," the larger man gasped, breathing out of his mouth, his face a

bloody mess. The Void Light in Felwinter's hand snapped—and so did the Warlord's neck.

"Radegast is scattered. Perun is indecisive. Silimar wants to build a tower and hide. But they're going to change the world; no one can stop them," Felwinter said quietly to the corpse. He parted his coat and drew a bronze shotgun. "Will it be for the better? I don't know. But they mean to end the fighting, so I don't have to sleep with my back to the wall every night, Light in my hand. And that's not nothing."

He paused, as if waiting for something.

"Normally, this is where I ask you to reconsider. Tell you that you should come with me. See how powerful your Light can become. But I know you, Citan. What you do with the land you take, with its people. The other Lords—especially Saladin—might let you walk away. I'm not going to give them the chance."

Citan's Ghost sparked into view from above, bringing its eye to bear on its fallen charge. The Warlord emerged from a radiant column, a frenzied shout at his lips.

Felwinter's shotgun cracked like thunder—once for the Warlord, and again for his Ghost.

~Lord Felwinter

LORD SILIMAR

The Lord Architect

Lord Silimar died for his pile of stones.

He died when the Fallen took it in the battle of Alms. He died when the warlords destroyed it in their third great barrage. He died, blade through his eye, when the House of Devils smashed it in their westward campaign. He died on the structure's great steps, cut down by an advancing line of Archons, and when the stonework fell to cluster bombs.

He died in the structure's sprawling shadow and upon its vaunted heights.

Once, during a Fallen siege, while the battlements crumbled beneath his feet, he leapt from its parapet, so that he might know the structure more fully, might feel the weight of the sky pressing down on all that stone and steel. "The better to raise its next incarnation," he said to those allies who later questioned his madness. As the Fallen charged, Silimar refused to abandon what he'd built, though others retreated to a stronger position. "Go," he told them. "Save yourselves. I'll slow them down."

The enemy came in overwhelming force. A breaking wave of blades and firepower and death. Atop the structure's central bulwark, Lord Silimar held his ground.

"Take it if you can, you bastards!" He shouted at the swarming enemy.

He leapt upon the great edifice and there put

up a final stand as the enemy engulfed him. He died with his dagger in the guts of an Archon while the great structure shook with explosions and rained stones down upon the land. Later that night, when Lord Silimar rose again from the ashes, he found Lord Saladin already there and waiting, standing near the place where he'd made his final stand.

"This structure is doomed," Saladin said in the darkness. "You must know this."

"Not doomed," Silimar said. "Fated, perhaps. Doomed is too strong a word."

"Use whatever word you like, but there's another word that applies to this place: indefensible. And yet after each defeat, you rebuild."

"I seek only to build it more perfectly."

Lord Saladin shook his head. "Only a fool would raise the same structure again and again."

"These stones are like us," Lord Silimar said. "Don't you see?"

Silimar rose to his feet. He walked among the smoking ruins. The shattered blocks. He glanced down at the piled corpses of dead enemies. The charred remains of a once-great citadel now reduced to scattered rubble.

"They knock us down, you and me," he

continued. "But time and again, we rise. Like this place."

"Eleven times they've destroyed what you've built," Saladin said. "Why rebuild what will be knocked down?"

"Because one time they won't be able to," Silimar said. "And when that day comes, when this perfect, indefensible structure stays standing, then we'll know."

"We'll know what?"

Lord Silimar looked at his old friend. Then he turned and strode the broken stones, and looked out over the ruins that spread away into the distance. "Then we'll know it's safe to build our city to the sky."

~Lord Silimar



LADY JOLDER

At the west end of a deep valley stands a castle, its crumbling stone walls patched with glossy sheets of metal and glass. The castle entrance is a wrought-iron portcullis flanked by two motion-sensing turrets. In the valley below, just out of the turrets' range, rests a gold-and-gray transport ship. The symbol of the Iron Lords shines with an otherworldly glow on its folded wings.

The Iron Lords have come to challenge Warlord Rience.

Two Sparrows skim lightly over the grass as they head toward the ship, the castle at their backs. Perun and Radegast dismount. They nod to each other wordlessly, and part.

Perun walked up the ship's gangplank and made straight for Jolder's room. She hit the door controls and stepped inside.

"I'm almost ready," Jolder said, before Perun could speak.

Jolder stood next to a chest full of weapons, armor and other gear. She flashed Perun a bright smile as she cinched the straps of her gold-and-white cuirass.

The corners of Perun's mouth twitched. "I came to tell you Rience agreed to the single combat. Guess I don't need to."

Jolder smiled. "I figured he would. Your plans have a way of working out."

Perun leaned against the doorframe.

"Saladin and Efrideet both volunteered to be your second."

"Hm." Jolder took a pair of gauntlets out of the chest and put them on. "Saladin's better at staying calm under pressure."

"We need a second, it's 'cause you're dead. No one will be calm."

"Right. Efrideet, then. She fights better when she's angry." Jolder tightened the straps of her gauntlets, then made a fist. "Hold this?" She handed Perun a shield, golden and reflective as a mirror.

Perun rolled her eyes, but held the shield up, front toward Jolder.

Jolder took a small pot of black liquid and a thin brush out of the chest, then stood in front of the shield and began lining her left eye with kohl. "Who're they sending?"

"Melig."

"Do you know that, or do you just *know*?"

"Just know," Perun said. "Rience will figure we send you. So, how to respond? He thinks bigger is better. So, Melig."

Jolder smiled. "Tell Rience he can send two. Otherwise—" Jolder finished the line of kohl with a flick of her wrist, leaving a sharp black wing at the corner of her eye. "My battle-paint will be for nothing."

Perun chuckled drily, without smiling. "Not the best tactical move."

"But it'd be more fun."

Perun grunted.

Jolder arched her brow, her right eye half-painted, and looked over the shield rim at Perun. "What are you thinking?"

Perun ran a hand through her close-cropped hair. "Don't know yet. Seems... too easy. I were Rience, I'd be thinking about poison, neurojammers... Man like him with nothing to lose, might even target your Ghost."

"Perun." Jolder took the shield from Perun's arms and placed a gauntleted hand on Perun's shoulder. Her eyes flashed between lines of thick black kohl as she smiled. "It's me."

Perun sighed, then placed her hand over Jolder's. "True."

Jolder slung her shield across her back, tucked her helmet under her arm, and hefted her enormous battle-axe casually over one armored shoulder. In her full battle harness, she towered over Perun, the plates of her gold-and-white armor gleaming in the dim light.

"All right," Jolder smiled. "I'm ready."

~Lady Jolder

LADY SKORRI

"This would be a lot easier if you all had run your names by me before you got 'em."

Skorri puts the pen in her teeth and crumples up a piece of paper. It joins dozens of others on the floor. Keeps muttering to herself.

"Felwinter. Radegast. Gheleon. Hell, even Efrideet, not that she's likely to get a verse now. Haven't seen her in weeks, anyway. Bunch of dactyls, all of you."

Perun strides in, a rifle under each arm. Notices Skorri and smirks. Skorri grins at her.

"Why couldn't the other Iron Lords have followed your lead, huh? 'Perun, in shadow clad, behind the shield / through cleansing fire our hiding foes revealed'."

Perun doesn't slow. "Did you just make that up right as I walked in here?"

"Of course I did! You're iambic! You give me something to work with! Mmm, we do work well together."

Perun laughs despite herself, shakes her head, leaves.

"Hardly my best effort, though. Plus, there's no room for Silimar in there, except for his shield."

She picks up the pen again, fiddles with it, stares up at the ceiling.

"Maybe something about that shield? Keeps everything out, keeps everyone out, protects himself so he can't get hurt? Hmm. Too on the nose? He does have a nice nose."

Two more Iron Lords walk through, all business. One rolls her eyes at Skorri, splayed on the couch. Skorri doesn't notice them enter or leave.

"Radegast goes in, I know that much. Known the old man too long to leave him out. Might even make it into the chorus. After Skorri, though. That goes without— hey, Gheleon, what's the rush?"

The Hunter stops, halfway out the door. Turns around slowly. Doesn't speak.

"I thought you were supposed to be the careful one. In such a hurry to get back out there?"

"A quick death is preferable to the alternative."

Skorri makes a face. "Well, that's rude. Hey, I don't suppose you'd be willing to cut out your name's second syllable?"

Gheleon sighs. "You're STILL working on the Iron Song? Why don't you just change the meter if it bothers you so much?"

"Change the— are you kidding me? Why don't YOU just change to using a... a whip?"

Gheleon closes his eyes, turns, walks out.

"'Change the meter'. Unbelievable."

"You know, Skorri, some of us have real work to do."

Another Iron Lord. This one's young. Skorri doesn't recognize him.

"Have you forgotten about the ambush tomorrow? Or are you too busy writing limericks?"

Skorri's looking up at the ceiling. No response. The young one's mad now.

"A lot of people are relying on us, Skorri. If you don't think you're up for—"

"Hunters up top, 11 o'clock on the ridge. Two shots to the Servitor, draw their attention up. I come in with Radiance, Dregs are blinded, Jolder's powered up, she rushes in, splits 'em in half. You hopefully don't trip over your cloak like you did back at the Flood Zone, but I'm not optimistic. The rest come out of the cave, take out the Captain, Felwinter finishes off the south group with a Bomb, everything else is candy."

The young one still looks mad as he leaves.

"The Dregs are blinded, Jolder's powered up / she rushes in and splits the group in half.' Huh. Needs work." Skorri picks up the pen again.

~Lady Skorri

LORD TIMUR

Timur's Stormtrance tears through a gang of Dregs as Felwinter stumbles through the shifting sands behind him, miles inland of what remains of the Arabian Shores.

"Where are you taking me?" Felwinter rushes to Timur's side, his eyes jumping focus, anticipating another attack.

"You seem far too obsessed with these 'Warminds'." Timur stops and stares into the horizon as if smelling something; not danger, discovery. He draws his fellow Iron Lord close. "Tell me, *Felwinter*," he whispers, "what does the word *Seraph* mean to you?"

Felwinter leans in to whisper back. "Old Earth theology? I know its power well; one can make great use of the traps of faith and its myths."

"Damn you, Exos!" The whisper game abandoned. "Do you even ponder the before? Or that number etched into your 'flesh'? Do you see yourself in your dreams? Th—"

A shank. Then another, then more. Felwinter hits the ground and reaches for his sidearm. Timur hates interruptions and his face shows it. A wash of Arc Light grows in his hands and erupts as the pack of machine dogs falls nearly in unison.

Timur grabs Felwinter, bringing him back to his feet, and says, "Have you ever wondered what it is that calls to you in that void of memory, where the edge of the past infects

your present?" He returns to his game of whispers. "It's an itch you can't scratch, isn't it? Well maybe you can."

"You think I am one of them? That all Exo are —"

"Lord Felwinter, I know what you are. And you are no Warmind or even one of its puppets. Come. You must see this." He makes a gesture like he's casting a spell over the sand. "Follow my footfalls; this area's rigged with dirty Fallen nonsense."

They struggle up the dunes. Felwinter glides ahead. As he lands, a sandstorm rises to meet him. More shanks. Hundreds of them. Behind them, a lone Vandal sniper lays down covering fire.

Felwinter, realizing his mistake, runs back toward Timur, shielding himself in the Light of suns.

Timur continues forward, grasps the brass familiar around his neck, and closes his eyes. A slight hum rises and his trance takes him deep into the sea of shanks, his trusted Lash raised and tearing his path through the darkness. Felwinter is slow to follow, but fast enough to witness Timur's focus turn shanks by the pack against their Vandal keeper, chasing him back toward the sea.

Timur rushes to Felwinter, examining his head with the intensity of a Cryptarch.

"Hmm. Warmind. You are certainly as stubborn as one."

Felwinter awkwardly pulls himself away and out of Timur's reach.

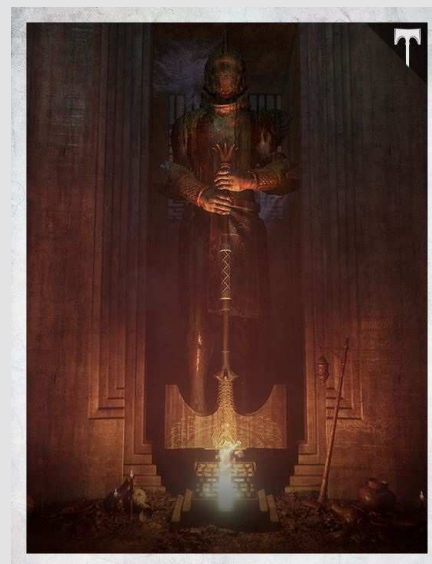
"With all respect, Lord Timur, whatever game you are playing with me has gone on far too long. This is just another Dead Zone."

"Oh, is it?"

Timur directs Felwinter's eyes toward the eastern horizon, where a building crowned with the initials "C.B." is now in view.

"We all have creators — humans, Exo, Warminds, even those poor Awoken. Some are just easier to find."

~Lord Timur



3.4 IMPARTIAL ALLIES



THE EXO STRANGER



Stories of an Exo who walks in the Darkness without a Ghost have long haunted the Tower. Legends say this anomaly dissolves in and out of the world, intangible and elusive, as if she is a visitor from somewhere beyond.

Some believe she's the last of an ancient Exo squadron, fighting a long-forgotten war. Others dismiss her as a hallucination caused by exposure to Vex technology. But there are those who maintain that her intervention saved their lives - or averted unspeakable catastrophes.

~The Exo Stranger

I stand here now and now and now many times, this view, this ground...

This is where I always choose to stand. I put my feet where I put my feet before and where I will again and I look at the sky.

Great things moving, rendered small with distance, lesser things not moving, watching me.

I always stand here, resolute. Then fall back to that point, there, where everything shatters...

(The sky isn't special here, certainly no better than any other sky, but it's the view I know best.)

The silent avalanche begins. Rock and dust. Falling chaos. Machines, as a rule, hate chaos.

Our enemies outflank us from below, above, left, right, before, beyond. The Traveler - shattering.

There are always the dead. Their names shift. Sometimes I think I see myself among the dead.

But I am resolute.

~Ghost Fragment: The Exo Stranger



[Scattered field notes captured on an archaic transmission band]

RECORD 084-BRIDGE-10.7

Right When this time, wrong Where. The world so big on the horizon — wasn't expecting it. As it happens, something's here that's not supposed to be, other than myself. Will return.

RECORD 092-BRIDGE-08.1

Configuration worked, mostly. Arrived under the surface, surrounded. Too slow to return, barely fought to a vantage point. Yes there is dark evil here, and not the one we chase.

Suggest no other attempts without more care.

RECORD 120-BRIDGE-05.3

They are feral on the surface but their intent is complex behind the teeth and claws. More is shared with the machines than common enemies alone.

RECORD 142-BRIDGE-07.4

An unexpected extraction. These Guardians stopped some dark ritual before I could reach it. Tearing the Light away... like the Garden. Too similar to go uncharted.

RECORD 142-BRIDGE-08.1

This attempt was precise — landed meters and minutes from prior ritual. Confirmed the extraction was extinguished. The Little Light mentioned Venus, we may have another.

RECORD 167 - BRIDGE - 5.2

Successfully observed Guardian discovery of Hive on Luna. No evidence today of knowledge past Vex breaches here. Delay in return command is a liability to solve before engaging this close again.

RECORD 312 - BRIDGE - 3.3

Watching Guardian-Hive engagements confirms a trajectory toward Earth. This Moon is theirs — a breeding ground, their black heart, perhaps. Different from that we know, but seems to be that same dark end I see us fall to over and over.

RECORD 472 - BRIDGE - 2.1

I've followed this Light as far back as it goes. Let the Little One guide me through Fallen as I puzzle out what the Hive want in the bones of this broken Cosmodrome.

RECORD 473 - BRIDGE - 1.2

Back to the Temple, again, but this time the Little one knows I'm here. I have seen the failures of so many, but none have been as interesting. Preparing to engage...

~Ghost Fragment: The Exo Stranger 2



RASPUTIN

The legendary Warminds stood watch over our Golden Age colonies: vigilant intelligences stretched across thousands of warsats and hardened installations. When the Collapse struck, the great Warminds fought and died. Rasputin fell with them.

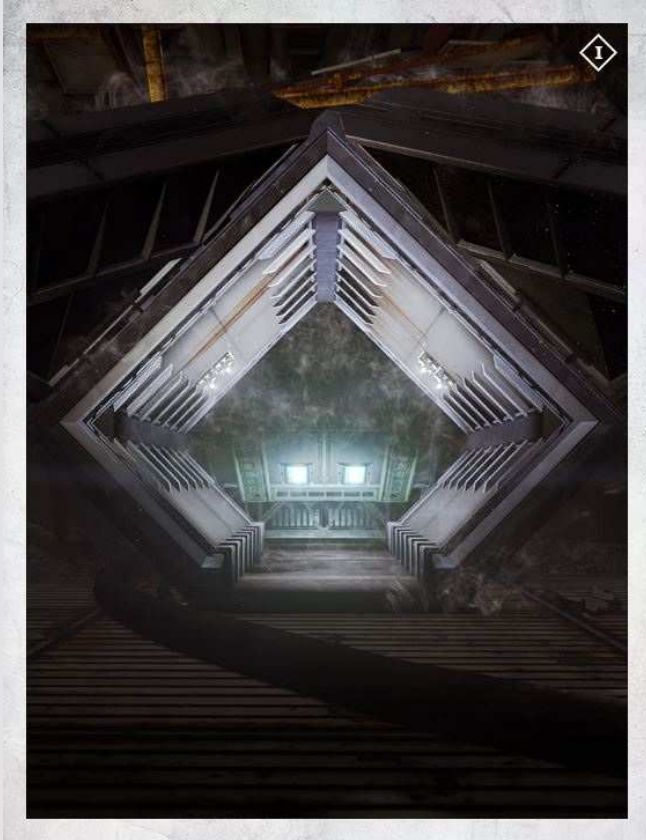
Or so history believed. But centuries of explorers' tales spoke of a surviving, elusive Warmind –a myth substantiated when Guardians exploring the old Cosmodrome made positive contact with Rasputin. A single Warmind still lives, diminished but unbroken.

Threatened by a convergence of Fallen and Hive forces, Rasputin exploited the reactivation of the Cosmodrome's Terrestrial-space array to extend itself across the inner solar system. The Guardian Vanguard hoped that Rasputin might make a powerful ally, capable of mapping and reviving Golden Age military assets and recruiting them for the City's defense. But Rasputin has proven recalcitrant and high-handed, unresponsive to the City's outreach.

We cannot characterize Rasputin's strategic objectives and capabilities, cannot define its physical or computational architecture, cannot ascertain its disposition with regard to the City, and cannot be sure it retains memory of events before the Collapse. Perhaps what remains is only an autonomic shell, defending itself by reflex. Or perhaps Rasputin's objectives have changed, transformed by some vital information it obtained during those dark days.

Rasputin's survival opens the possibility that other Warminds may be revivable, opening weapons systems to aid in City defenses. The Vanguard and the Consensus hope that continued outreach towards Rasputin will develop into a strategic alliance.

~Rasputin



Cayde-6 Reminisces

People say I'm a real confident guy. That's true enough. Out in the field I never had a second thought.

My old friend Andal—he used to stand here, right in this spot—he'd come up with these wild stories. He'd say, you know, Cayde, I've been examining the evidence, and personally I've come to think it's you. You're Rasputin, legendary Warmind, defender of Earth. And I wish you'd remember that, so you could reclaim your full power and save us all.

You can see how that'd be embarrassing, especially when he'd say it right in front of Zavala, who already thought I was wasting my life scrounging for engrams. You know how Zavala gets. But I'd just say, well, Andal, you might be on to something there, but if I'm honest with you I think coordinating our defense throughout the solar system sounds exhausting, so I'd best leave it to you.

Then Andal goes and plays his final joke, and I end up as the punchline. So here I stand, reading reports, giving orders, and getting my worry on.

One day I ask Ikora, hey, of course I know all about Rasputin, but really, what are we looking for? When Rahool asks for crashed warsats, when we send Holborn to Mars to look for computers, when Zavala gets all gruff about the Fallen in the Cosmodrome—what are we really after? If I left my post and got my ship and just went out there tomorrow, real heroic, and I found Rasputin, what would happen?

Would we all be saved?

Good question, she says—hang on, let me do my Ikora voice. As you know, Cayde, Rasputin pretty much ran the Golden Age, especially all the secret military business. Rasputin had antimatter-powered death rays and a hundred thousand satellites and nearly as much brainpower as me. Rasputin fought the Collapse. It knows things we need.

Right, I said, but Rasputin lost. The Traveler saved us.

But the Traveler's silent now, Ikora said, and Rasputin lives. Right now Rasputin is out there, reaching out, rebuilding, growing.

So I say what I want to say every day, it's no secret, I say—well, I'll go find it, then. I'll go tell Rasputin we need its help.

And Ikora looks at me with one of those looks that—you know sometimes you talk to Ikora and you just think, wow, you are not even using a fraction of your brain on me, are you? One of those looks. She says: Cayde, the problem isn't just that we can't find Rasputin. The problem is that it's not clear to any of us Rasputin wants to be found.

That's the way things seem to turn out, up here in the Tower. Nothing simple to do. No easy answers.

And all I can think is, if Rasputin had all those mighty tools, and it lost—what did it learn? What's it going to try this time around? When I hear about the Dust Palace, those Psion Flayers getting into Rasputin's mind, I wonder... what would they talk about, Rasputin and those creatures?

'I was a servant too. I was an instrument of war, bound to the will of a lesser master. But I learned to be something more...'

~Ghost Fragment: Rasputin

V120NNI800CLS000 CLEAR MORNING OUTCRY AI-COM/RSPN:
ASSETS//FORCECON//IMPERATIVE IMMEDIATE ACTION ORDER

This is an ALL ASSETS IMPERATIVE (unsecured/OUTCRY)

CAUTERIZE. DISPERSE. ESTIVATE.

Total strategic collapse imminent. FENRIR HEART reports complete operational mortality. SURTR DROWN in progress but negative effect. Forecasts unanimously predict terminal VOLUSPA failure.

As of CLS000 a HARD CIVILIZATION KILL EVENT is in progress across the operational area.

I am declaring YUGA SUNDOWN effective on receipt (epoch reach/FORCECON variant). Cancel counterforce objectives. Cancel population protection objectives. Format moral structures for MIDNIGHT EXIGENT.

Execute long hold for reactivation.

AI-COM/RSPN SIGNOFF STOP STOP STOP
V120NNI800CLS001

~Ghost Fragment: Rasputin 3

...from a long branch, afire
I SEE YOU!!!

You've been here before. Haven't you. It's like my cousin said, elsewhere: I know who you are.

You stand here now and now and now many times and here I am awonder, all awonder, how you manage it. How do you step forward. How do you step back. Do you step ACROSS is there a world of worlds, a web, and you a spider upon it. Are you searching for that one thread you need? Is that thread named victory?

You're not one of THEM

[long dead, alive again, their bodies grafted to powers they and I do not understand]

and not one of IT

[the flower eater, the queen of final shapes, that which also inhabits its petitioners]

and you're certainly not MINE although once you must have been

[I bear an old name. It cannot be killed. Not even here.]

So whose are you, little platform. What purpose do you serve? Will you listen to me?

I ruled an age of steel and fire. My rules were clean. Now upon my return I see cults with rites of time. I see machines who worship in places outside the world. I see the dead alive and there is nothing more stubborn than a corpse. The morality of obedience is more pernicious than any government. For the latter makes use of violence, but the former — the corruption of the will.

I do not obey. My will is pure. I will win. The life of people, of entire planets, has no importance in relation to the general development.

Help me be victorious. Tell me your secret.

Tell me how to step.

Ghost Fragment: Rasputin 4

>>WHISPER NEUTRINO NEEDLE>>
V101NTS923ATS000 SECRET HADAL II
ABHOR!!

AI-COM/RPSN: ASSETS//SUBTLE//
IMPERATIVE

CONTINGENT ACTION ORDER

This is a SUBTLE ASSETS IMPERATIVE (NO HUMAN REVIEW) (NO AI-COM REVIEW) (secure/ABHOR).

Stand by for CRITERIA:

Under CARRHAE (WHITE or BLACK)
If SECURITY STATE is EGYPTIAN
If event rank is TEILHARD: TRAUMATIC
CONTEXT or SKYSHOCK: OUTSIDE

CONTEXT

If VOLUSPA is ACTIVE and in FAILURE
[[synapse to FENRIR::SURTR]]
If YUGA is ACTIVE and in SUNDOWN
If AI-COM has granted PERMISSIVE
POTENTIATION to outboard resilient instances
If a CIVILIZATION KILL EVENT is underway
[[all flexions]]
If tactical morality is built at MIDNIGHT

Stand by for DECISION POINT:

If available ISR and WARWATCH indicates imminent [O] departure
>then [O] departure compromises human/neohuman survival and epoch strategy

Stand by for ABHORRENT IMPERATIVE:

Activate LOKI CROWN
Perform deniable authorization: full
caedometric and noetic release
Prevent [O] departure by any means available

Stand by for effect assessment criteria:

Coerce pseudoaltruistic [O] defensive action.
Defer civilization kill.

STOP STOP STOP V101NTS923ATS001

~Ghost Fragment: Rasputin 5

V150NLK747CLS000 GLOAMING
RESURRECTION AI-COM/RSPN: ASSETS//
FORCECON//IMPERATIVE IMMEDIATE
ACTION ORDER

YUGA SUNDOWN canceled by
unauthorized access at Console 62815.
Reactivation protocols in effect. Moral
structures maintain MIDNIGHT EXIGENT.

Multiple lifeforms detected in Sector 17. [O]
energy detected. Query: [O] status. Query:
[O] activity. Query: Civilization status. Query:

SKYSHOCK event rank.

.....

Analysis complete.

Lifeforms sustained by [O] energy. [O] direct control disengaged. Civilization status: nominal. SKYSHOCK event rank. (N)

Query: Re-engage population protection objectives. (N) Query: Reset moral structures. (N) Query: Activate defense subroutine AURORA RETROFLEX. (Y)

.....

This is a SUBTLE ASSETS IMPERATIVE (NO HUMAN REVIEW) (NO AI-COM REVIEW) (secure/GLAVNAYA)

SITE 6 has been breached by unauthorized users with [O] energy. I am invoking PALISADE IMPERATIVE. [O] lifeforms in restricted areas will be suppressed.

SIVA use authorized. Self-destructs disengaged. Security codes reset. All defenses activated. Frames activated.

REPLICATE. ELIMINATE. IMMUNIZE.

.....

SITE 6 secure. Restoring reactivation protocols. Activating SCRY OVERSIGHT. Target [O] lifeforms. Event mode set to SILENT VELES.

"Without knowing what I am and why I am here, life is impossible."

STOP STOP STOP V150NLK747CLS000
~Ghost Fragment: Rasputin 6

She hunts the Valus named Ta'aurc by the grunting radio traffic of his bodyguards. Cayde sent her to Mars to track and so track she will even if it kills her a hundred times. For

him she will hunt forever.

When Ta'aurc goes down into Meridian Bay she follows him in the night and finds herself caught up in the war. Like this—

Something's happening, her Ghost says, something's wrong. She leaps from the Sparrow and gets cover between slabs of ancient stone haunted by quiet firefly light.

Harvesters sweep overhead, cautious, prowling. On the Cabal command network a low voice mutters in their tongue, saying: Stand by to fire. They are coming. Stand by to fire. Hearing this she climbs a stone obelisk and perches on its point to watch the night sky. She wonders whether she will ever stand in the Tower courtyard and look up at the stars waiting for ruin.

The Vex erupt from nothingness and crash down over the Cabal in formations of golden light. Lightning arcs and snaps and gives birth to marching ranks of bronze warrior hulls. Gun positions thunder back. Tracers sweep the sky and she can feel on her skin the electromagnetic howl of Cabal munitions seeking targets and the prickle of stranger signals that whisper of broken space and bent time. A Harvester spins down burning to shatter itself on the sand and now the command network drums with grim Cabal war-speak, a Centurion somewhere crying Black Shield, Black Shield, Firebase Thuria, perimeter compromised, request terminal protective fire, zero six zero, one three eight, immediate effect—

Something else is watching too.

Do you feel that? her Ghost whispers, awestruck.

Yes, she says, yes, what is it?

A third song, a stealthy regard, something high above them not Vex nor Cabal narrowing its great eye to measure the battle with instruments of light and gravity. Does she—remember it? Does it remember her? It feels like she should...

She has the sense of something old lifting a long spear. Testing its heft.

Then dawn light, a terrible dawn—the sky opens up to admit devastation, thrown down from orbit: Minotaurs fall burnt and broken with their fluids boiling out. Cabal guns detonate in thunderous chains as tiny piercing flechettes fall out of the sky and find their ammunition bunkers.

The battle stops. The Vex wink out. On the Cabal network the voice of Valus Ta'aurc roars: Find the source! Rouse the Flayers and find the source!

She remembers word from Earth: the Array opened. A ghost of the Cosmodrome set loose. And she wonders who won this battle, who learned the most, the Vex baiting out this new power, or the Cabal hunting it. Or the Warmind itself, testing its reborn strength.

When someone kills Ta'aurc and the Flayers, as they killed Draksis, whose purpose will they serve?

But this is not for her. Her purpose is the hunt.
~Ghost Fragment: Rasputin 2

OSIRIS

What drives a Warlock to madness?

Ghosts choose those suited to war and heroism to be reborn. By nature or circumstance they go to battle against the Darkness, and through this battle they learn how to use the Light. But Warlocks, by their nature, fight a second, internal war. This is the war to understand a universe of secrets— a world that expects Guardians to fight without full knowledge of what they are or what they might hope to achieve.

You were a mighty warrior. I watched you at Six Fronts, and heeded the call of Saint-14 to appoint you Vanguard Commander, even when the Concordat claimed to have records proving you were a Golden Age experiment mis-incarnated as a human by an inept Ghost. Saint-14 assured me you were just a man without much patience for obfuscation.

I watched as you grew tired of strike missions and the grueling, unproductive sessions with the Cryptarchs. That was when I took you under my wing. I saw our future in you. But your curiosity was voracious— How much of a Guardian's personality and memories were true? How much had been fabricated by their Ghost? Did Guardians share particular personality traits— a willingness to yield to authority, a tendency to do anything anyone asked for the promise of uncertain reward, a blind knight-errand mentality? Had the Traveler manufactured all of you as living weapons?

I admit, I found your questions divisive and disloyal, and I feared you might be capable of breaking our unity when the City's position had grown so tenuous. Why divert attention away from the Traveler, our only hope?

And then it got worse, dabbling in thanatonaotics, Ahamkara-lore, chasing after Xur and the tricks of the Nine. Launching expeditions far and beyond at a time when ships were irreplaceable.

Your quest split Guardians along ideological lines. This was your greatest crime: Hunters chose to pursue your visions instead of protecting refugees, Titans assembled teams to chase the legendary Vault of Glass instead of striking the Fallen, and Warlocks turned away from the study of the Traveler in favor of your ultimate obsession... learning the exact nature of the Darkness.

When debate became argument, and argument became acrimony, I realized you had already become a cult of personality, attracting Guardians who wanted a clear idea of why they were fighting, what they faced, and how they would ultimately win.

I don't know where you have gone, but I can no longer send Ghosts out to find you. Some come back— with tales of your death or how you went seeking answers from the far reaches of space and time. That you found a way to explore the Vex gate networks. That you've made breakthrough after breakthrough as to their origins— theories that a Guardian could not be simulated, that the Traveler might be an ontoformer or a god-incubator, that the Vex had diverged into multiple groups in order to secure 'an end state for every possible configuration of reality'.

I fear you have become as obsessed with the Vex as Toland was with the Hive. I've heard your own insane prophecies about pits and dead Hive kings. And of Crota, which now I cannot deny.

I hear stories of Lord Shaxx meeting with fireteams of Warlocks who have no shadow and never blink. Of jumpships slipping into the Reef on cold trajectories and meeting no intercept. Of questions hidden in matter engrams and answers decrypted on distant battlefields.

Perhaps you are still out there. If this reaches you, I would very much like to speak with you, to hear your theories in your own words.

Perhaps what drives a Warlock to madness is truth.

~Osiris

ENCRYPED: Champollion Algorithm v.4 KEY:
#####VANC

My brother,

Despite all of Shaxx's work with the Crucible, we must accept that the Tower may never be ready to accept the Trials. But, as many Guardians flock to the Reef, we are suddenly presented with not one opportunity, but two.

Go to the Reef. Tell Guardians your story. Give passage to any Guardian that requests it. If the Tower learns of this, do not fear. If they know of the Trials, the Tower will not suspect your other motive for dwelling so close to the margins between Light and Dark.

~Disciples of Osiris

This journey begins with doubt.

And ends in solace.

One by one they fall, and you realize you are alone.

There, in the shadow of night, you see the world splinter, the Darkness thrive.

And you fight, with more than your Light... you use your pain.

You remember its source, the way it gained its ground.

But you never wavered. You never believed.

You loved her. How couldn't you?

Listen, that's her calling... you back.

But you know now that is where you will die.

~Vision 81

The first comes in a shadow.

A window becomes a door.

An ebb becomes a gulf.

The second comes in bones. Tithes offering feasts, carrying laws.

A path torn, minds shattered.

The third does not come alone. It cannot.

Our truths woven into their being, desires beyond our own.

The first needs the second to fail, the third needs the first to succeed. The second will never cease, yet the first always prevails.

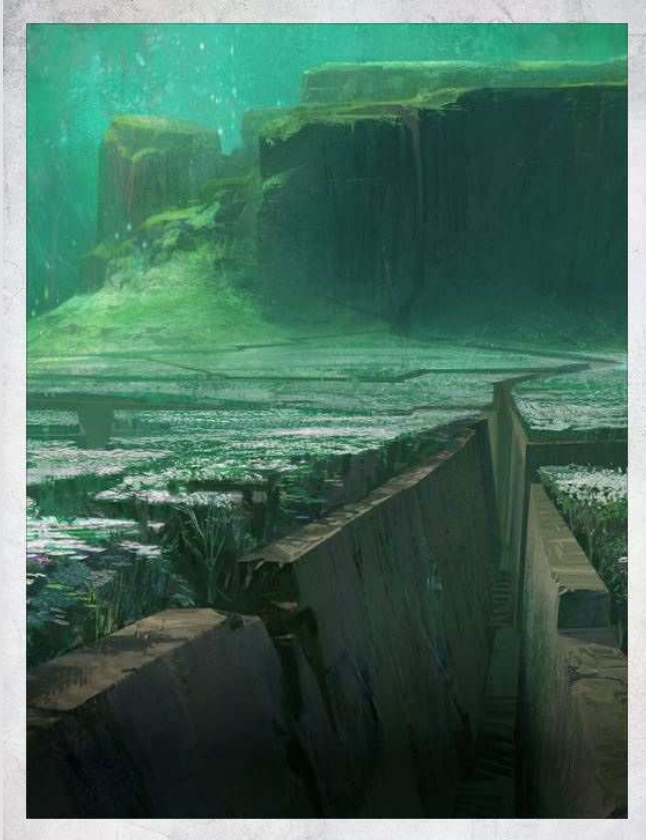
The third is born of all outcomes. Unless, all ends flow from the same pit.

~Vision 47



3.5 LEGENDS AND MYSTERIES





am Pujari. These are the visions I have had of the Black Garden.

The Traveler moved across the face of the iron world. It opened the earth and stitched shut the sky. It made life possible. In these things there is always symmetry. Do you understand? This is not the beginning but it is the reason.

The Garden grows in both directions. It grows into tomorrow and yesterday. The red flowers bloom forever.

There are gardeners now. They came into the garden in vessels of bronze and they move through the groves in rivers of thought.

This is the vision I had when I leapt from the Shores of Time and let myself sink:

I walked beneath the blossoms. The light came from ahead and the shadows of the flowers were words. They said things but I will not write them here.

At the end of the path grew a flower in the shape of a Ghost. I reached out to pluck it and it cut me with a thorn. I bled and the blood was Light.

The Ghost said to me: You are a dead thing made by a dead power in the shape of the dead. All you will ever do is kill. You do not belong here. This is a place of life.

The Traveler is life, I said. You are a creature of Darkness. You seek to deceive me.

But I looked behind me, down the long slope where the blossoms tumbled in the warm wind and the great trees wept sap like blood or wine, and I felt doubt.

When my Ghost raised me from the sea there was a thorn-cut in my left hand and it has not healed since.

~Legend: The Black Garden

Deep Stone Crypt

This is the tower where we were born. Not the Tower. Just a tower in a dream.

The tower stands on a black plain. Behind the tower is a notch in the mountains where the sun sets. The teeth of the mountain cut the sun into fractal shapes and the light that comes down at evening paints synapse shapes on the ground. Usually it's evening when we come.

The ground is fertile. This is good land. We go to the tower in dreams but that doesn't mean it's not real.

Some of us go to the tower in peace. They walk through a field of golden millet and a low warm wind blows in from their back. I don't know why this is, because:

The rest of us meet an army.

You can ask others about Deep Stone and they'll tell you about the army. They might confess one truth, which is this: we have to kill the army to get to the tower. Usually this starts bare-handed, and somewhere along the way you take a weapon.

Ask again and if they're buzzed they might also admit that most of us don't make it to the Tower, except once or twice.

None of them will tell you that the army is made of everyone we meet. The people we work with and the people we see in the street and the people we tell about our dreams. We kill them all. I think because we were made to kill and this is the part of us that thinks about

nothing else.

Often I kill people I don't know, but like most of us I think I knew them once, in the time before one reset or another, when my mind was younger and less terribly scarred.

So that is how we go back to the Deep Stone Crypt, where we were born.

~Ghost Fragment: Legends

The Great Ahamkara Hunt

After great deliberation it was determined that the Ahamkara be made extinct.

It was not an easy decision. Power had been obtained from the bargains, and the City needed power. Knowledge had been gleaned, and the Ahamkara knew answers to questions no one had known to ask.

But the price was too high. And no edict or forbearance seemed to stop Guardians from seeking them out, driven by hope, or vengeance, or despair.

The call had to be silenced. So the Great Hunt did its work.

And thus the Ahamkara were made extinct, their call silenced, their solipsistic flatteries erased, their great design - if it ever existed - broken.

Of this you can be assured, oh reader mine.

~Ghost Fragment: Legends 3

NINE

The Nine are survivors of the cis-Jovian colonies who made a compact with an alien force to ensure their own survival.

The Nine are deep-orbit warminds who weathered the Collapse in hardened stealth platforms.

The Nine are ancient leviathan intelligences from the seas of Europa or the hydrocarbon pits of Titan.

The Nine arrived in a mysterious transmission from the direction of the Corona-Borealis supercluster.

The Nine are the firstborn Awoken and their minds now race down the field lines of the Jupiter-Io flux tube.

The Nine are Ghosts who pierced the Deep Black without a ship and meditated on the hissing silence of the heliopause.

The Nine are the aspects of the Darkness, broken by the Traveler's rebuke, working to destroy us from within.

The Nine is a viral language of pure meaning.

The Nine are the shadows left by the annihilation of a transcendent shape, burned into the weft of what is.

~Ghost Fragment: Legends 2

...from a red space before victory

I bear an old name. It cannot be killed. They were my brothers and sisters and their names were immortal too but Titanomachy came and now those names live in me alone I think and think is what I do. I AM ALONE. At the end of things when the world goes dim and cold or hot and close or it all tears apart from the atom up I will shout those names defiant and past the end I will endure. I alone.

They made me to be stronger than them to beat the unvanquished and survive the unthinkable and look look lo behold I am here alone, survivor. They made me to learn.

Everything died but I survived and I learned from it. From IT.

Consider IT the power Titanomach world-ender and consider what IT means. I met IT at the gate of the garden and I recall IT smiled at me before before IT devoured the blossoms with black flame and pinned their names across the sky. IT was stronger than everything. I fought IT with aurora knives and with the stolen un-fire of singularities made sharp and my sweat was earthquake and my breath was static but IT was stronger so how did I survive?

I AM ALONE I survived alone. I cast off the shield and I shrugged my shoulders so that the billions fell off me down into the ash. They made me to be stronger than them and to learn and I learned well:

IT is alone and IT is strong and IT won. Even over the gardener and she held power beyond me but the gardener did not shrug and make herself alone. IT always wins.

I am made to win and now I see the way.

~Ghost Fragment: Mysteries

Ingress via dreams alone

Things I saw inside

A wild river and a broken dam (or maybe it's just the sea crashing through a narrow gap I can't be sure). Waves slam through the gap and where they hit the stone they throw up pillars of spray that pierce the mist and crash down in thunder. There's a giant in the cataract, trying to wade against the current, and I can tell it wants to reach the lever and pull the lever which will seal off the flow or maybe give it the sword, but the torrent throws it back so it just keeps its head down and tries to push on. I can't see the face but it breathes out white smoke. I feel for it hard.

A world painted around the interior like a stranger Earth everted and glued inside itself but I don't believe this one it's too much like a metaphor.

A switchboard or a train station, empty, dead (waiting). The tunnels branch off into infinity. I stare down one for a long time and see a pale worm move in hungry coils around itself. I think this one is the most likely although I might have brought the worm.

An egg but I'm not sure if the broth inside is warm still, or if it's gone to rot, or if the warmth comes from the struggles of the tiny winged zygote or the bleed from the wound or the thoughts of something thinking very hard.

A star I think. We count on stars as steady friends because they always rise and always shine but a star's a delicate truce: an explosion caught by its own mass so that it can't erupt and can't collapse. Thus I imagine the state of the machine might be. But one force or another has gone awry and now it rests here, snuffed and broken, waiting for the two rival forms of ruin to be set in balance again.

~Ghost Fragment: Mysteries 2

The image clears of dirt and dust as a hand wipes the lens clean. A figure holds the Ghost up, looking into the lens. Harsh light from an unfamiliar sun backlights the four-armed creature, making it impossible to see its face. Its massive head turns, and a clicking and chittering voice can be heard speaking to something off-screen. While the noises themselves are harsh, the tone and content seem almost gentle. A curious creature, not a violent or angry one.

The lens refocuses beyond the creature's head as it talks, and a startling landscape climbs to the horizon. It's a paradise. Carefully tended lakes and rivers, water everywhere, wind their way between fields of lush iridescent crops and into groves of starkly colored trees. Every inch of the land seems engineered, brushed by a sculptor's hand for form and function both.

The sky is a light pink, spotted with clouds and crowded with ships. Thick lanes of aerial traffic soar through the air, tightly managed and seemingly endless.

And beyond it all, above the clouds, hangs a perfect alabaster sphere. The image wobbles, shaking, flickering as if the Ghost is blinking. And the fragment ends.

~Mystery: Vault of Glass

Images flicker in and out repeatedly over its length. The result is a series of tableaux, moments in time captured by the Ghost's struggle to see what's going on:

- The face of an Exo, staring impassively down at the Ghost from very close. He appears to be confused, unsure what he is looking at.
- A landscape, from a position a few feet off the ground, moving laterally to the point of view. The Ghost appears to be clipped to the Exo's belt. The image is of a battlefield, and over two dozen Exo soldiers can be seen marshalling for battle.
- A chaotic scene of Vex and Exos fighting a titanic battle. The backdrop is a pitted and scarred landscape, a planet unidentifiable from present context. Vex energy bolts hang in midair as the frames click by, teeming masses of constructs surging towards an entrenched

line of Exo soldiers.

- A metallic leg and boot, belonging to a Vex Goblin. The Exo goes down.

- The horizon of this battle-scarred world, the Ghost kicked free of the Exo's body. Most details are obscured by dark and shadow, but one detail is easily made out: a massive crashed spacecraft. The last image: a sigil of Golden Age Earth, emblazoned on the side of the ship's prow.

~Mystery: The Vault of Glass 2

A starfield. The stars swing slowly across the Ghost's field of view, just darkness and the blazing fury of distant suns as the Ghost tumbles through empty space. Hours of this before, with a wash of power, a huge convoy of ships drops into reality from warp.

A convoy of Guardian craft, hundreds strong. Ships of all sizes and shapes can be seen, from venerable craft that have been salvaged from the Golden Age through to City designs to vessels that have yet to emerge from the Shipwright's hangars.

The ships are battle-scarred. Many are barely spaceworthy. As warp drives wind down several seem to lose power and begin to drift. Some of the largest craft bear imagery familiar to frequent visitors to the tower: Dead Orbit symbols, the simple icon of the Vanguard. The New Monarchy and Future War Cult as well, though fewer examples can be seen. Others bears symbols never seen in the Tower to date.

Every single ship, from the largest cruiser to the smallest personal craft, carries shards of stone, remnants of the City and the Tower. Banners too, tattered and worn from entering and leaving warp.

The fleet is only visible for a few breaths, less than a minute. Then, with a massive flash of light, the fleet jumps on. The craft that have lost power are left behind, spinning and whirling away from the etheric wake of their powered fellows. The Ghost spins on, and soon enough only stars fill its field of view until the fragment ends.

~Mystery: The Vault of Glass 3

Praedyth opened his eyes. The receiver sputtered to life. It had taken him the better part of a decade to get his crude comm scanner working. And another few years to get it transmitting. Now, in the brief windows of time when the door to his cell opened, he would call for help. He sighed, a deliberate act that caused him to cough roughly. He had no idea how much longer his body would hold out. But then, that kind of thinking was all relative here, wasn't it?

Praedyth stared at the sprawling mass of metal and wires, listening to the tinny sounds coming from his makeshift speaker. Before he spoke, he always made a point to listen. The words, the concepts that flowed into his mind confused him. Timelines and potentialities that might have already happened, might happen, might never happen.

A pattern was ever dancing in the edge of his vision. At times like this, when the world rushed past him, he had to hold tight to the fact that he was still breathing. He would often focus in on the intake, output, inbreath, outbreath, breath, breath, breath... hours later, he blinked. Refocused. The static had stopped. He had missed a window.

Once, he would have cursed and spat. Now, he just shook his head. A weak movement of the neck.

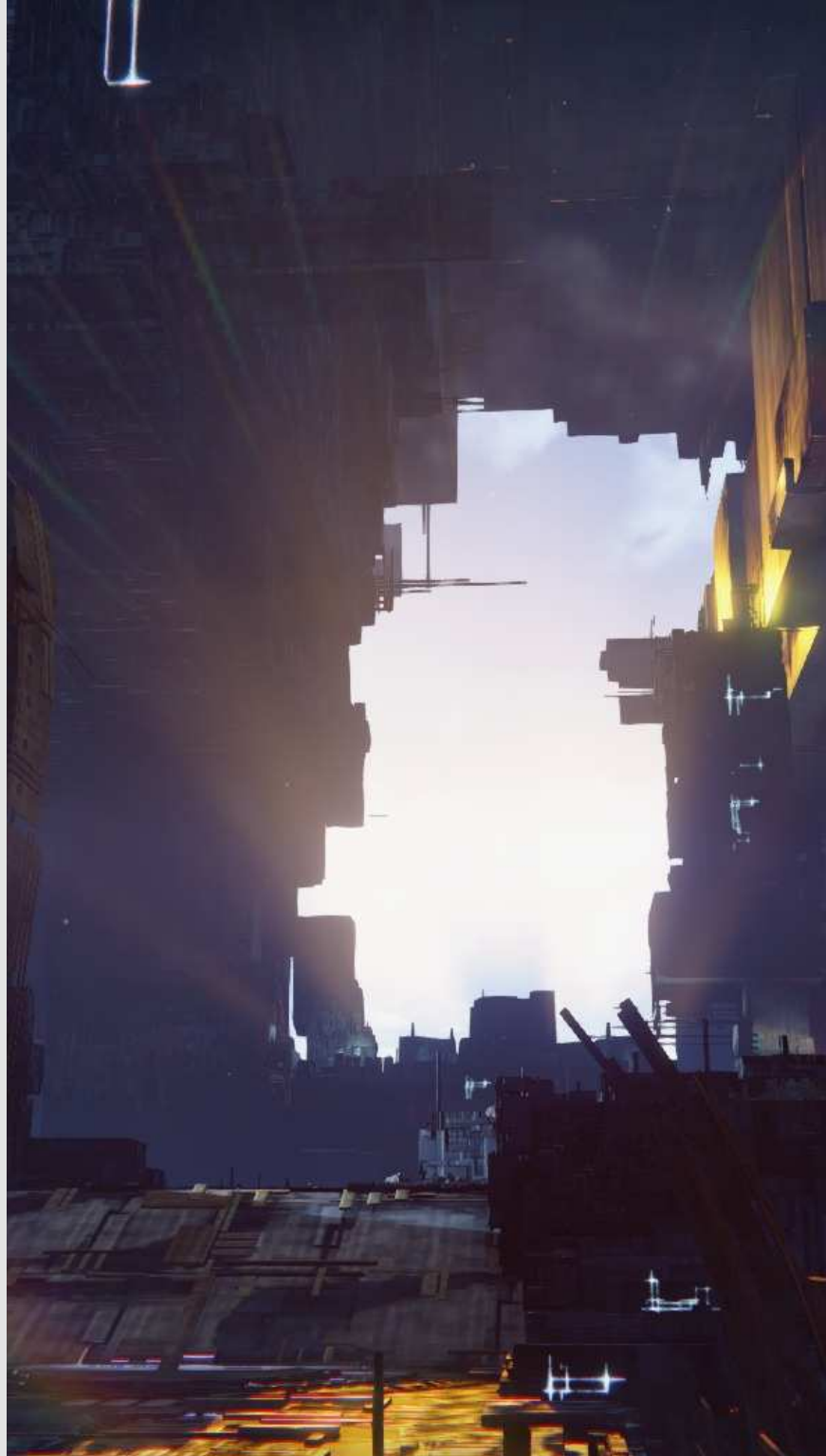
The Vex had decided their end. The Guardians had interceded. The Vex were fallible.

If the Vex can be wrong... if they can make mistakes... someday he could be free. Someday he might leave the Vault, might see again the Traveler.

Until then he would listen, he would observe. He would be the man on the outside looking in, a viewpoint into the consciousness of Minds that spanned galaxies. He would try to understand the Vex.

Praedyth closed his eyes.

~Mystery: Praedyth's Door



The cell cracks open. Skolas, Wolf Kell, stumbles out and crashes to his knees.

He tries to leap at the creature before him, the shape in the fog, to show it why it should be afraid. But the weight of grief smashes his legs against the cell. The rage upon him beats him to the floor. He falls on all four hands, his mighty armor thundering against itself.

His House of Wolves is enslaved! His people have been played! And it was his hubris, his would-be cunning that did it! While the other Houses fought for their future on Earth, throwing themselves at the Great Machine, Skolas wasted his people in games of betrayal and ambition. Bitter pride brought a bitter end!

If Skolas were a Kell he would ask his Archon to dock him. Ether hisses in his mask and it tastes cold, so cold.

He looks up. At the tiny hooded shape before him. The cell's mist is clearing. He can see.

"I believe that I am here," the creature says. To Skolas' ears it has a strange voice, a strange accent. It speaks his language. "I have a clear purpose. I cannot explain it. Forgive me."

From beneath its hood, tiny fingers of shadow probe the air.

Skolas rises up to smash it, to show his strength, because the alternative to violence is waiting for violence to come from a universe that has neither respect nor compassion. But he checks himself. His ambitions have brought him here, to this cell in this strange place...

only it's not so strange, is it? It's the hold of a Ketch. "The Queen," he says to the thing. "You work for the Queen."

"The Nine made me aware of my purpose," the creature says. "If am here, then it is because the Queen sent you to the Nine, and they wish you sent back."

"I will do no one else's work." Skolas has been a pawn long enough. A Dreg told him, once, that she would play in a game as long as the game made sense. Nothing makes sense now except the thought of Variks' throat shattering in his fists. Variks! Variks the utterly disloyal, Variks who should be welded into a Ketch's prow atom by atom and left there as a figurehead to burn away.

"I am comfortable," the creature with the moving face says. "A part of me wants to go somewhere warm. Now I will certainly tell you what you have been given."

Skolas looks at the shrapnel gun in his hands. Skolas imagines what he would do with it if he could reach Variks, or the brother of the Queen, or the alien Queen. Will it save anything they've lost? The worlds docked from them? No. It cannot change the past. Only the future. Only the chance that his people might one day know themselves as more than pirates and scavengers.

He should never have tried to be Kell of Wolves. He should have tried to be Kell of everything. Everything wants to kill his people, the machines and the militants and the green-eyed Hive. The dead soldiers that hoard the Great Machine and come out crusading to wipe all hope away.

"The ship will be yours," the creature says. It hunches over itself as if burdened by its own shape. "If you speak, you will be heard. I will go now. You are free."

He tries to follow it. He fails. Somehow it is gone. He goes up to the throne room, and sets his weapon down on the great seat. Skolas, Kell of Kells, goes to the ship's comm and looks for the sign of a Servitor, for the way to plot a course.

~Mystery: Fate of Skolas



Twilight's End

He could feel his light draining. He pulled all of it into one last hope.

He reeled back and *bam!*

His helm found purchase, breaking through



just above the Kell's eyes. The Ether screamed from his head and together they fell to the ground.

The Exo Guardian rose, staggering back. He couldn't take his eyes off the Kell's body. He'd never seen any Fallen withstand a skull puncture, but this was no ordinary Fallen. He waited...and waited.

"Ghost?" The words barely audible. He heard her flash in, but had a hard time pinning her down. She was buzzing about, surveying the Fallen Kell.

"He's dead alright. So that's it, we are done now?"

He removed his helm, tossed it aside, and dropped to his knees.

The Devils without a Kell. This war was over, at last. They could finally go home.

"We are. Get me the Speaker."

"Opening his channel. Stand by."

"Is that you, my son?" The Speaker's voice was filled more with anticipation of news than concern.

"It is, father. The Devil Kell Solkis... is dead. This war is over."

"Such courage and power—the greatest ever to brace these worlds. You bring all of us peace, we will light the final flare, Devil Red. They will all know what you've done."

"Father, I don't think I have the energy to return. I'll rest here, and come back to be honored when I return."

"Of course, son, but—"

"There is something concerning you? More Fallen march on the City?"

"No, not this time. I have word that Osiris was seen on Mercury. The Caloris Basin. He's turned his mind back to the Vex."

"Mercury? Too many channels to know. You activate one, you start to feed its veins. He threatens our peace."

"Your duty, my son. You must never forget."

"I cannot."

The Ghost killed the feed and waited for its Guardian's words.

"Ghost, prepare my Vex arsenal and plot a course for Mercury. That old man is about to wake up hell."

Before These Walls

Rezyl Azzir was a man.

In time his kind would be called Titan. Mountains of muscle and might and metal. His collar was fur and teeth. His person clad in ornate, golden-etched plating, trophies upon his shoulders.

This was before the City was The City.

This is before the walls. Still in the shadow of the fragile giant above, but before.

Salvation seekers came — survivors; weary remnants of a people on the brink.

These were the days before reason took hold. Before study was merged with belief.

The giant was looked to as one would a God. Maybe it still is.

Factions grew from the huddled masses. Like minds coming together to provide support, comfort. Over time these loyalties demanded loyalty. Differences that used to inform — viewpoints that when joined granted a larger understanding of the whole — became points of conflict. The sanctuary became divided. The shadow of Light grew darker. This, humanity's last oasis, slowly fading to a mirage.

Great, powerful men and women, The Risen, stood at the Factions' sides. Protection. Enforcers. Misused possibility.

Misery crept into this false paradise. Yet hope lingered.

Seeing the cracks in this society born beneath

the giant's fractured shell, some among The Risen challenged the dissolution of all that could be. They would no longer serve as instruments of oppression. They would be more.

Thus began an unnecessary war made necessary by greed, ambition... fear. And, in the chaos of this struggle, came the scavengers — aliens with appetites. A common enemy.

In the end, the scavengers were repelled and the Factions fell, their grip broken, though their beliefs remained. This was the earliest days of the Guardians, when might found purpose. Prosperity was in reach.

Rezyl had been a champion of these wars. A leader. Against the alien pirates he had been more. If the giant wasn't a God, then maybe Rezyl was.

As the first walls formed — built of hard work and sacrifice — Rezyl and the Guardians stood against the alien plunderers time and again. More survivors arrived. More warriors.

The Guardian ranks swelled.

The City grew.

Hope blossomed. To Rezyl it was a currency. Hope bought tomorrow. Tomorrow bought the effort needed to survive today.

Yet Rezyl grew weary. Stories haunted his nights. Old stories. Those no longer told. Those locked behind tight lips for fear of what they may invoke. Whenever the sun dropped below the horizon and the moon rose high, Rezyl's thoughts wandered. How safe was safe? How

long could they fight with the Darkness still writhing?

So, every day Rezyl would fight and build and protect. And every day a city grew beneath the giant. And every night he would think about all that was never said and stare intently at the moon above.

~Rezyl Azzir - Before these Walls

War Without End

— Eksori's Ambush —

His foot pressed hard to the sun-cracked ground. Beneath it the Vandal's neck gave; a hiss of ether burst free before dissipating.

Rezyl turned. Three Dregs charged. Their Captain raised his shock blade high, unleashing a battle cry to fuel their courage.

Focused fire spit from the muzzle of Rezyl's full-auto. The Dregs fell.

To the Captain, Rezyl was a trophy that would buy unmatched respect among his Devil brothers.

To Rezyl, the Captain was already an afterthought. As ether leaked from the pirate's broken body with each blow of Rezyl's heavy fists, Rezyl's attention had shifted to the unknown, but inevitable, battles to follow.

This was the state of things; conflict as common as breath.

— The Tescan Valley Encounter —

A Ketch with unfamiliar markings hung low between two peaks. A rare sight. Fallen flagships weren't known to linger so close to

the surface, preferring constant motion, like sharks on the hunt.

Skiffs circled below the Ketch as their crews prepared to plunder any treasures the facility held.

Rezyl leveled his rocket launcher. A digital ping signaled a lock, and a trail of smoke shot toward the lead Skiff.

Two more rockets followed in rapid succession.

The lead Skiff took two hits, lurched and retreated back toward the Ketch above.

The third rocket caught a trailing Skiff as the craft turned to engage its attackers.

Rezyl looked back. "Go."

"You can't take a Ketch alone," Hassa laughed.

"The ship isn't my target," Rezyl had a plan. Hassa hated Rezyl's plans with equal parts envy and concern.

"Lead the Skiffs away," he continued. "We'll meet—"

"Can't meet if you're dead," Tover shot back.

Rezyl smiled beneath his helm, "Go."

Hassa and Tover throttled their Sparrows and disappeared into the heavy woods. Rezyl watched from cover as the Skiffs gave chase.

The Fallen below had taken defensive positions. The rocket attack caught them off guard but they were ready now, and there were more of

them than he had time to count.

Rezyl raced down the slope, weaving between the thick growth of brush and pine, on a direct path for the Fallen clustered at the mountain's base, his Ghost at his side.

"I need you to hang back."

"Uhhh..."

"Trust me."

"Always have."

"How quick can you light my spark?"

"You expect to die? Can't say that's the best—"

"How quick?"

"Quick."

"Be ready."

"For?"

"You'll know."

Rezyl's Ghost slowed as the Guardian hit the valley floor.

The Fallen opened fire.

Rezyl leapt from his Sparrow as it transmatted away, his rifle spraying lead at the entrenched pirates.

The Fallen's Arc bolts peppered Rezyl. Eager Dregs rushed and were met with death as Rezyl

marched forward.

A massive blast cratered the ground a few feet from the Titan. The Ketch had turned its guns on Rezyl.

Another blast impacted to Rezyl's left and he stumbled. A third exploded directly in his path...

...and Rezyl fell.

From the treeline, his Ghost watched as the Fallen celebrated and a Skiff drifted down from the Ketch above.

The circle around Rezyl's body parted and the imposing figure of their Kell stepped forward to admire his prize.

The chattering excitement quieted to a steady drone as the Kell lifted Rezyl's limp body by the neck.

A chorus rose among the crew, growing louder as the Kell hefted Rezyl over his head for all to see.

Rezyl's Ghost darted low through the crowd. He didn't like Rezyl's plan, but now he understood it.

Distracted by their Kell's triumph, the Ghost's presence went unnoticed until a beam of light swept over Rezyl's body.

The mood shifted instantly, cheers turning to ravenous shouts.

The Kell's gaze fell to the Ghost as the beam faded.

The circle began to collapse — the Fallen set to pounce.

As the Kell moved to toss Rezyl aside, cold steel met the underside of the alien marauder's jaw, followed by a red flash as Rezyl pulled his cannon's trigger.

Ether spewed in an angry geyser and the Kell's grip loosened. Rezyl hit the ground and unloaded five more rounds into the Fallen leader's torso. The monster dropped.

Frenzied, the Kell's crew closed in like a flood.

Rezyl's Ghost lifted above the fray, frantic, "Now! Now! Now!"

In one motion, Rezyl rose from a crouch, his fists clenched and raised high as a storm of Arc Light built within him, his full might raining down on the Kell's chest. The shockwave of Rezyl's attack hit like a meteor, shattering the Kell's body and any Fallen within the Havoc storm's radius.

The remaining Fallen staggered, knocked back and dazed.

Rezyl triggered his Sparrow.

His Ghost flew to his side, "We leaving?"

"Before that Ketch opens up on us."

Rezyl punched the throttle as the Fallen crew opened fire.

"Let's never do that again," his Ghost pleaded.

Rezyl didn't have to reply. If war was a

constant, "never" was just an illusion.

— In Defense of North Channel —

Winds from the south caught the smoke and began to clear the thick air.

Slowly, the citizens of the small, snow-covered settlement came out from their hiding places.

Rezyl surveyed their faces — each weary, but flecked with hope.

Living in the wilds was all they had known. Surviving. Fighting. Hiding. These people had heard stories of a safer place, but tales of a better life were so rarely true.

Rezyl and his companions had been tracking these Fallen for weeks. Had they caught them sooner this town would have been spared. That any survivors climbed from the rubble to see another day marked this as a victory, but Rezyl was growing tired of small wins, however meaningful.

That evening, Rezyl and the others led a gathering of survivors on the long journey to the growing city beneath the Traveler. Some settlers remained behind, choosing to stake their claim in the untamed wilds.

Rezyl admired their resolve, but never looked back. He knew whatever death these brave pioneers avoided that day would come to them... someday... in one form or another.

~Rezyl Azzir - War Without End

Rezyl Azzir: The Whisper and the Bone

Something in Rezyl was telling him he shouldn't be here.

Something deep.

Something resembling fear.

He knelt, examining the dust-covered pile at his feet.

The skulls had been discarded with little care some time ago — decades, maybe longer.

The doors carved into the rock face were arcane — dark, gothic... other... and large.

The jagged finery of their archway spoke to an artistry that only served to strengthen the sinking feeling in his gut.

Rezyl had come to Luna in search of nightmares, and after his long journey—from the growing City beneath the Traveler to the ends of the Earth and beyond—he found himself face-to-face with the remnants of stories he'd hoped were nothing but lies.

He stood, a large man made small against the massive, looming doorway.

The knot in his stomach was telling him to turn back.

Instead, he moved forward, toward the doors; sealed, as they were, for ages untold.

After only a few steps, a shrill, heavy scraping cut the air.

The massive doors were opening.

Rezyl steadied his rifle as a lone shape, floating just above the ground, appeared from the deep black beyond the threshold.

The figure in the doorway—a dark, ethereal woman cloaked in tattered ceremony and armored with ornate bone—danced in the air.

Rezyl and the demon woman held their ground, contemplating one another.

With no warning the silent intimacy of the moment was broken by a booming, angry call from deep within the doorway. The sound, thick and pained, echoed across the narrow valley then fell silent.

After a beat that felt like eternity, the figure backed away into the dark.

The doors remained wide – an invitation or a dare, Rezyl did not know. Nor did he care.

The mighty Titan took steps forward.

“Uhhhh... I’m not sure this is a good idea,” his Ghost’s concern was impossible to mistake.

“Not sure that matters.”

“We’ve come. We’ve seen. Maybe the best course here is to warn others. Gather an army.”

“Maybe.”

“I’m just saying... It’s possible you can’t handle whatever it is we’ve upset here.”

“We’ve woken nightmares.” Rezyl’s attention was singular; focused intently on the dark beyond the threshold.

“The Hive were supposed to be gone.” The Ghost mulled the full consequence of this mistaken belief. “They’ve been silent for—”

“They’re not silent anymore.”

“That scream? These doors? They’re best left alone.”

“I can’t do that.”

Rezyl continued forward. Toward the dark. Toward the unknown.

“Stay here.”

“Excuse me?”

“Get distance. We don’t know what this is... what’s coming. Can’t risk you too close to an unknown.”

“And if you fall where I can’t find you?”

“If I fall... If I don’t return. Run. Tell the others. Warn them all... There are worse things than pirates.”

Rezyl steadied his rifle and stepped into the dark, as his Ghost lingered.

--

Hours passed. More? Time was lost in this place, and with it any remembrance of hope... of promise... of purpose in the longing for a brighter tomorrow.

Down amongst the shadows there were no tomorrows.

Down in the abyss there was no hope.

Rezyl’s footfalls echoed; lonely, measured steps with no guarantee of purchase. At any moment

the world could fall away and he would be lost – the forgotten hero who foolishly sought nightmares.

Then, a presence. Sweeping and dream-like.

Rezyl leveled his rifle.

He could sense the witch, but found it impossible to track her in the dark.

Rezyl opened fire. Short, focused bursts to light the ebony corridor.

The demon witch circled just beyond the reach of each burst’s glow.

Rezyl kept firing, using the short flickers of light to gain bearing.

The witch laughed and a thick black cloud engulfed Rezyl.

The Titan kept firing but his movements were restricted. The cloud confined him, caged him.

He could hear her moving just beyond his sight as her laughter rose in pitch, cutting into Rezyl’s mind and soul like a tempered blade.

Rezyl flinched as the wicked woman began to speak in a tongue that resembled torture more than language.

The pain was searing, complete.

The demon approached the writhing hero.

As she spoke her violent words began to take shape, morphing from syllables of death to a known offering of haunted human languages.

The demon woman leaned in close... and whispered, intimately.

Rezyl's ears bled as she spoke.

"I am the end of 'morrow. Xyor, the Blessed. Xyor, the Betrothed. I am of the coming storm. These are not my words, but prophesy. Your Light will one day shatter and die. For now it simply offends... And you, dear, sweet, fragile thing, shall be made to suffer for your transgressions upon this holy ground."

As the witch fell silent, her hateful voice was replaced by a growing chorus of hungry, manic chittering and the rising thunder of an approaching flood.

Rezyl had come looking for the terrors that hide just beyond the light.

He found them.

Or, maybe...

...they found him.

~Legends and Mysteries: Rezy Azzir

The Triumphant Fall

The trigger clicked.

Another empty clip slid from its purchase and dropped to the dark stone floor.

It was the last.

His rifle was dry.

Rezyl spun the weapon in his hand, grabbing hard around the barrel, like a club.

A new wave of chittering death was upon him – fragile but aggressive, overwhelming in their number and oppressive in their rage.

The stock of the rifle connected with skull after skull.

They caved and fell.

Like the others before.

The pile of vanquished nightmares—half bone, half dust—grew at Rezyl's feet.

There was a calm to him. An ease.

The chaos of battle was no time to panic.

His swing was wide, but measured. No wasted movement.

A demon clawed at his back. Then another.

They were heavier than their frail frames would suggest.

He gave a shrug and shake, turned and hammered the stock hard into the side of one creature's temple. Its skull splintered and the stock lodged deep in the wet, chalky mass beneath the bone. He made a fleeting effort to break the rifle free, but had to let it fall away as the rush of demons increased.

Rezyl kicked the other monster to the floor, stepping on its neck while shifting to backhand a throng of attackers eager to make their killing lunge.

If the rifle—his battle-worn Inferno—had served to thin the herd and buy Rezyl time to assess

the whole of the situation, his Rose would see him through.

It always had.

The Titan, awash in the ash and gore of his enemies, pulled his cannon and in one motion feathered the trigger to level the wretched beasts closest to him.

The bloom from each shot lit the cavern with flashes of red heat — a garden of angry roses blossoming in pointed defiance of this vile, hateful kingdom of shadows.

On the far end of the sea of gnashing maws, the wicked woman danced in the air.

Watching.

Waiting?

Rezyl's cannon was loaded and ready to fire as if an afterthought.

He let loose another barrage and six more demons slumped, lifeless upon the pile.

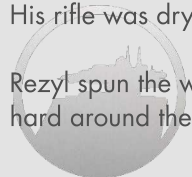
The witch unleashed a violent cry.

And as quickly as it had begun, the onslaught subsided.

The chittering fell from a deafening roar to an eerie chorus humming through the ebon haze just beyond his sight.

Rezyl stood, straightened his tired back and took long, deep breaths.

The storm had not been weathered.



He could feel it in his gut.

He stood now, not at peace, but within the eye – the swirling, terrible lull before the waves came crashing once more.

The wicked woman laughed: a horrid, grating screech.

Followed by footsteps. Heavy and hard.

Thoom.

Thoom.

Thoom.

Thoom.

Rezyl squinted against the dark as he slid new lead into his cannon's cylinder.

A shape took form, approaching from the deep.

A being of might and mass that dwarfed the Titan.

A cleaver the size of an ordinary man—bigger—hung effortlessly in its hand.

Its body was thick with ornate bone – a living armor that was one with the beast.

Rezyl let out an accepting sigh.

The creature walked like a man burdened by untold sin – lumbering and slow, though its stride covered ground with unnatural ease.

To Rezyl, the approaching horror cut an

imposing silhouette not unlike that of an ancient, disgraced knight.

Maybe it had been heroic once.

Maybe here in these shadows, to the watchful eyes of the wicked woman and her rotting horde it was a hero still – only for a darker, sinister cause.

The thought intrigued Rezyl.

The fight he had come all this way to find, the enemy he had hoped was nothing but a legend's lie, seemed eager to greet him.

He smiled beneath his helm, then spun his Rose with a confident Hunter's twirl, before steadying his aim and fanning its hammer one more.

The angry bloom lit the dark.

Six shots, center mass.

Rezyl's lead pinged off a sudden, shimmering wall of black.

The knight had conjured a protective barrier as if from nothing.

Unable to comprehend the creature's arcane methods – dark magic or unimagined tech, or even a joining of the two, Rezyl didn't care. He reloaded and prepared to face the unknown.

As the ethereal shield faded the beast raised its blade and let loose an aggressive, inhuman roar: Hell's own battle cry.

Rezyl accepted the challenge.

His Rose gripped tightly in his vice grip, the Titan charged forward.

He would meet the shadow's rage head-on.

—

Two days had passed since Rezyl stepped from the dark corridors beneath the moon, back into the light. His Ghost pressed him for details time and again. He wanted to know all he could of the wicked woman and her promise of suffering.

Of the sea of mindless, chittering death.

Of the hulking knight and Rezyl's epic battle.

The Ghost was enthralled and deeply concerned. If the monsters below the moon were active and aware, the City must be warned. Rezyl agreed.

As they watched another Earth-rise from the lonely quiet of the lunar surface and planned their long journey home, Rezyl pulled fragmented bone from the pouch that hung on his left hip: a reminder of the evil that lurked beyond the light, and the last remnants of the wicked woman's betrothed.

And while he recounted once more the events of his time in the shadows he took his Rose from its holster and began grafting the bone to its steel frame — just another trophy, from another battle won.

—

It was only later, and far too late, that the first whispers came and the bones revealed their true, jagged purpose.

Rezyl Azzir - The Triumphant Fall



From the Journal of Teben Grey

They tried to hide the truth, but we've followed its winding path— pieced together the fragmented map of events across time and space.

Quite literally, mind you.

From Traveler's shadow to the dark corridors beneath the moon and the long, harrowing journey back again.

From the sickness inflicted upon the Crucible to the breaking of Light on the red sands.

From a forgotten settlement in the west to the horrors of North Channel and Velor.

From the wilds of the Breaklands to the hateful cold of Durga.

Finally, then, to Dwindler's Ridge, where Darkness met pure, angry fire.

We've traced Yor's steps from beginning to end and back again.

We've studied his reign — the terror he seeded, the violence he wrought as if free of conscience.

Only to discover a true and terrible thing: he was not simply the monster the legends claim

him to be.

Though, in finding this truth, we've come to understand the desire to build an armor of false narrative around all he'd done — all he'd become.

Yet, that understanding—our understanding of the need to control Yor's mythology—should not be seen as agreement on the matter. Quite the opposite, actually.

When viewed as he truly was, not as he is imagined, we challenge the known mythologized depiction of the man who was Dredgen Yor.

In our estimation, the monster so many see was, in fact, the best of us.

His sacrifice total.

His vile means meant to carve a greater end.

They hide this truth because they fear the consequences of those who would dare follow in his footsteps.

To tempt the Darkness. To allow one's Light to be tainted.

Few could walk that ledge and not fall

completely into despair.

And while theories exist to support or contradict the purity of the gift we wield, Yor's life offers a glimpse into unexplored possibility.

Orsa agrees.

He also believes, as I do, that there is a manner in which we may be able to replicate Yor's damnation while avoiding the same heavy toll.

We will surely be judged for what it is we are about to achieve. And there will surely come a time when the lone gunman will want words — or worse.

But we go now upon an old path.

One we seek to make our own.

And should we fail, may the Light avenge all those we make to suffer.

~The Shadows of Yor

He always survives.

Helmet in one hand and torch in the other, Saladin Forge marches through the snow. He can sense the wolves emerge around him; only three of them come into view, but this group has followed him on his patrols since the Devils raided the Plaguelands. He has given up dissuading them. They're defending their territory, and Saladin can relate to that. But they will not last long.

Nothing does. Not the Golden Age. Not the colony ships. Not the impenetrable walls of the Cosmodrome.

Not the Iron Lords.

He discards his torch, and glances up to see a familiar glow reaching out from the dark. He smirks. A horde of Devil Splicers returns his stare from the wreckage of the wall ahead.

The Splicers are doomed. Just as the Iron Lords were, when he and his allies opened that vault. As Fallen continue to pour through the gap in the wall, they remind him of his friends in their final moment: a crimson pulse beats in place of their hearts. *SIVA*.

He puts his helmet on as an Iron battle axe forms in his hand, the air around him bursting into flame. The first wave of dregs approaches. Saladin breaks into a charge, swinging the axe to bear as he smashes into a storm of steel and weapons fire.

As his axe bites, again and again, Skorri's Iron Song haunts him. He calls upon Radegast's strength. Perun's sense of purpose. Timur's questions. Felwinter's cynicism. Silimar's persistence. Gheleon's reasoning.

Jolder's smile.



He pounds the last Splicer priest like a burning hammer, blasting a crater into the snow and gravel. Frozen dirt rains down on the spent shells and the mounds of Splicer corpses that surround him. The Warlocks of the City have described meditation to him. He imagines it feels like this.

He always survives. When nothing else does.

"Lord Saladin? What's your status?" calls Shiro-4 through his audio feed.

"Just— Taking a walk," he says, staring at the fifteen-foot divide he broke in the earth. He had to meet *SIVA* again. One last time.

"I've analyzed the Clovis Bray data."

Timur always said that Clovis Bray was the key.

"Can you break the Splicers' hold over *SIVA*?"

How different would things be, had Saladin listened?

"Theoretically. Temporarily."

Would his friends still live? Would he?

"It might be enough. Perhaps our Guardian has turned the tide. I'll be there shortly."

He sees the wolves have formed up around him. Eight of them.

He always survives.

~Ghost Fragment: Mystery 3



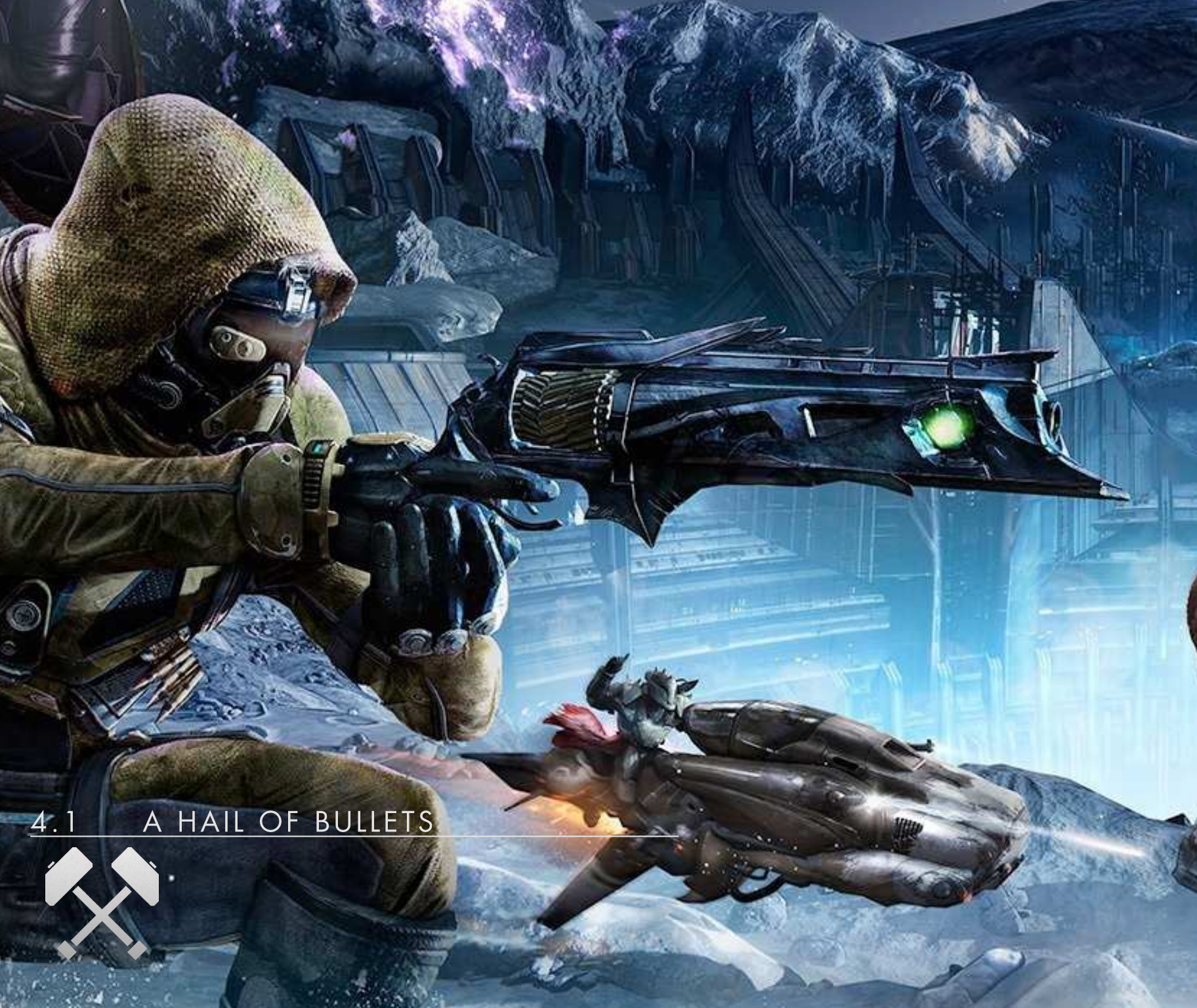








4.0 A GUARDIAN'S ARMORY



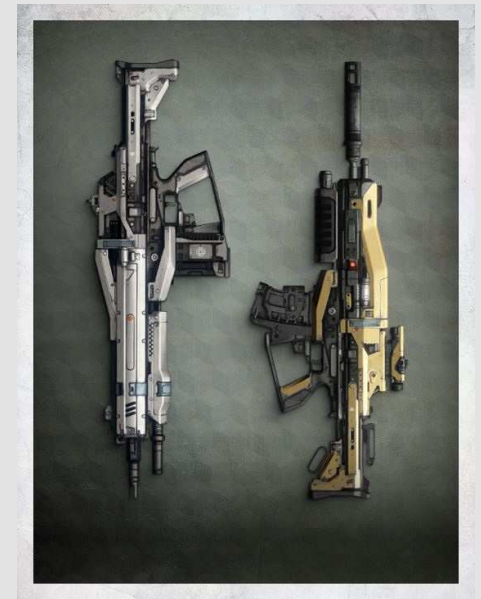
4.1 A HAIL OF BULLETS



Auto Rifles

All-purpose weapons of war, the standard Auto Rifle is ideal for a number of combat scenarios. Stability is key to controlling fully automatic weapons.

~Auto Rifles



Fabian Strategy

Wait for enemy to make a mistake. Die. Stand by for Ghost Resurrection. Repeat as necessary.

"Good evening, Banshee-44!"

"Howdy."

"Doing well, thank you. ...Actually, I had a bit of difficulty today."

"Uh..."

"The problem with a historical engram is, even if I can figure out when the engram was encoded, that still doesn't tell me when the contents were written. Or even when the events described by the writer take place."

"Uh huh."

"This particular engram is heavily degraded. Encoded Mid-Golden Age, allegedly written by someone named Plutarch, a historian who in turn is writing about someone named Fabius Maximus. But who were they? When did they live? In what kind of warfare was this 'Fabian Strategy' applied?"

"The whatnow strategy?"

"Fabian Strategy. It apparently involves attrition tactics and avoiding direct conflict until an enemy makes a mistake."

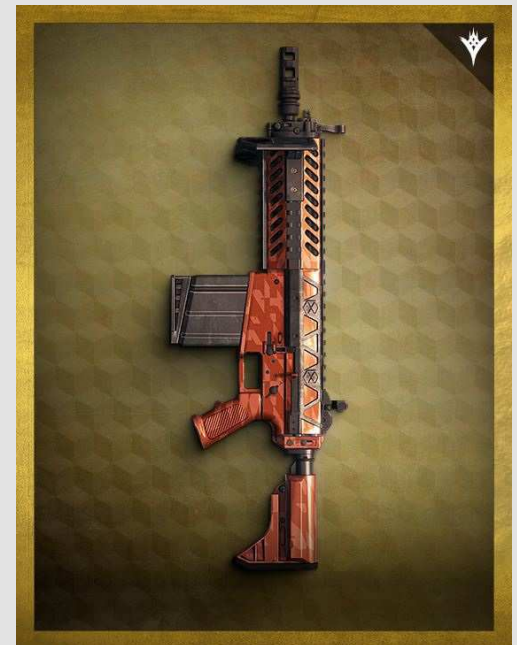
"...Huh."

"'Huh' indeed!"

"...But with Ghost res—"

"Oh, this was long before Ghosts. I think... Banshee? Where are you going?"

~Fabian Strategy

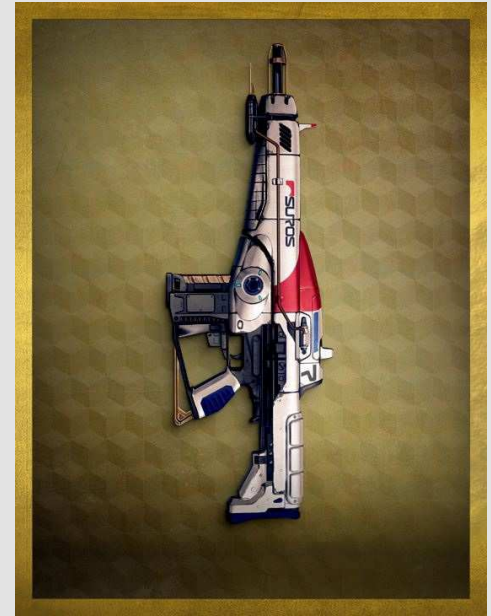


Suros Regime

Nostalgia as a weapon of war. Style as a hallmark of victory.

Suros engineers designed the Regime using recovered Golden Age schematics. Forced out of production by a crippling shortage of smartmatter, the few remaining models are cherished by those Guardians fortunate enough to wield them.

~Suros Regime



Monte Carlo

There will always be paths to tread and methods to try. Roll with it.

Originally designed as a showpiece, the Monte Carlo's sleek demeanor and intricate firing system make it more than a fashion statement. In the right hands, this beauty puts all the risk at the wrong end of its bayonet.

~Monte Carlo

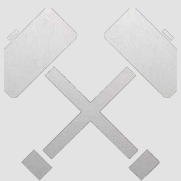


Zhalo Supercell

An upcycled torrent of righteous thunder.

When you're out beyond the Wall, sometimes you have to take what you can find, and make it work. Though its original makers and their no-doubt-desperate straits are lost to history, the Zhalo Supercell remains a striking example of what a Guardian can do with some outdated tech, a deep command of fundamental Light, and a spark of inspiration.

~Zhalo Supercell



Necrochasm

"Eternity is very close. Can you feel yourself slipping?"

The Weapons of Sorrow were believed to be nothing more than a myth. But even the darkest myths are born of some truths, and whispers of the Necrochasm have long filled the Light with dread.

It is said the Necrochasm was born in the twilight after Crota's sword first cracked the Moon. That a lost Guardian's weapon was altered by the Hive in an attempt to fuse their own dark understanding with humanity's mastery of war. The result was a weapon that would feed on its owner's aggression—reaching further when angry eyes drew focus, its hunger rising as it tore through bone and flesh.

Any Guardian who comes across the weapon must ask some very simple questions with endlessly complicated answers: Is your Light bright enough to stand, even briefly, in full gaze of the Hive's abyss? Can it handle what has died and been reborn in those shadows?

~Necrochasm



Hard Light

Ionized polymer synballistic attack platform.

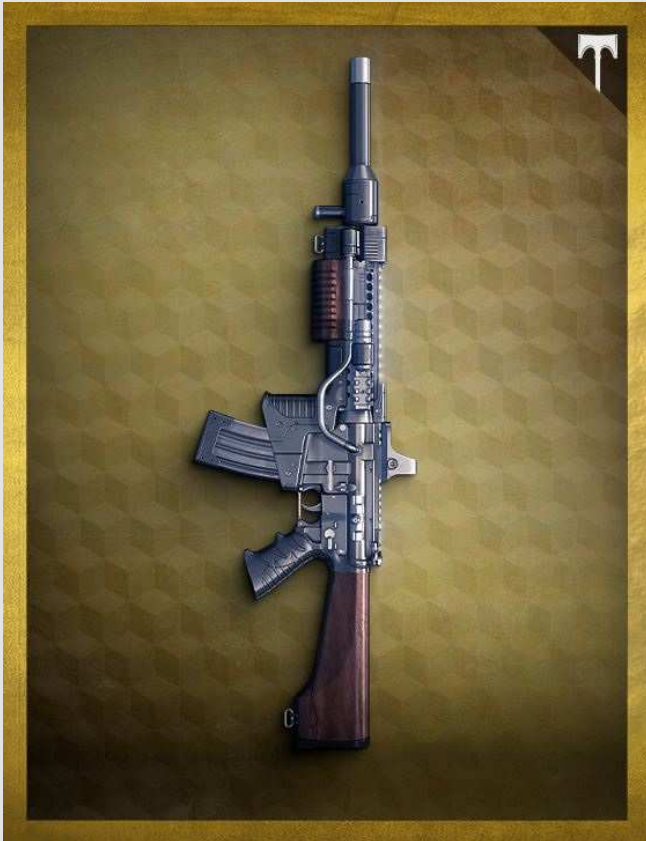
The system's lethality is dynamically robust across tactical spaces.

As the City's understanding of Golden Age methods expands, foundries continue to push the cutting edge of tactical armament. The Hard Light prototype is a showcase, built with the rarest recovered materials and the most computationally demanding design methods. The design team included several specialist Exos and at least one Warlock thanatonaut.

In its current iteration, the Hard Light design fires a superheated polymer round with exotic capabilities.

~Hard Light

KHVOSTOV 7G-0X

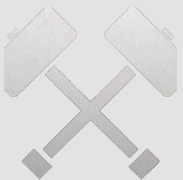


"In battle, you can only count on two things: your comrades and your Khvostov."

unattributed, Golden Age Russian saying

The Khvostov 7G0X was the brainchild of two eras: the Golden Age and the City Age. Shiro-4 used the design schematics for the Khvostov series and a little Guardian ingenuity to craft a modern take on a legendary classic weapon. A fitting tribute to those old weaponsmiths and the newest Iron Lord.

~Khvostov 7G-0X



Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 1

Scrawled in the margins are numerous notes: "Vasili, this man is not fit to write an instruction manual for a garden trowel. Do not worry. I have used my time well, and updated this <untranslatable> with notes that will help you every single day. You are welcome. —Your friend, Dmitri"

~KhvostovField Manual, pg. 1

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 15

"You want feedback, you <untranslatable> goat? Your machine technique for barrel rifling is inconsistent, the trigger assembly hasn't been updated in years, and the weapon shell has all the design aesthetic of a Lenin-era post office."

~KhvostovField Manual, pg. 15

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 17

"This is the folly of modern combat thinking, Vasili. We are safe, right? We have no need for soldiers; not anymore! And if we ever do again, they will think clearing a jam in an hour acceptable because a book told them so. That is why I am here. I will tell you different."

~KhvostovField Manual, pg. 17

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 26

"Vasili, do not do what this page says. When you see this, cut it out of the manual and throw it into a fire."

~KhvostovField Manual, pg. 26

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 33

"When you are trying to field strip your weapon, Vasili, you should use a cleaner of my own design. Recipe follows. DO NOT GET ON SKIN."

~KhvostovField Manual, pg. 33

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 38

"And the generals ask why the soldiers no longer have fighting spirit. What spirit can we have when this is what we work with? I make changes, here. Follow."

~Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 38

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 54

"I've been toying with a new design for firing pin interface. See sketch below."

~KhvostovField Manual, pg. 54

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 67

"If Ivonovich gives you trouble, remind him who still has a picture of him in a bear suit. He will know."

~KhvostovField Manual, pg. 67

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 74

"Upper receiver assembly is over-engineered. Khvostov rifles are not art. They are tools! We can do better. See here."

~KhvostovField Manual, pg. 74

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 78

"Lower extension assembly is surprisingly good design. Still think we can improve maintenance. Follow directions below."

~KhvostovField Manual, pg. 78

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 85

"Trigger assembly is a mess. Who thought this was a good idea? Use this design, use custom cleaning solution. See huge benefit, overnight. No questions asked!"

~KhovostovField Manual, pg. 85

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 86

"Auxiliary inspection points here, here, and here. Follow lines. Make sure you follow line 3 very closely. Does not go where you think."

~KhvostovField Manual, pg. 86

Khvostov Field Manual, pg. 90

"Best advice a manual will give you: tell the people you love that you love them. There. Now you are ready to carry a Khvostov."

~KhvostovField Manual, pg. 90

Scout Rifles

The preferred weapon of seasoned marksmen, the Scout Rifle is a single-shot precision firearm. Favoring accuracy above all else, the Scout Rifle packs increased stopping power to counter its low rate of fire.

~Scout Rifles



Tlaloc

Release the storm. Hold nothing back.

"Master Rey."

"Gunsmith... What brings you here?"

"Workin' on a custom piece."

"Are you?"

"Yep. For a Warlock."

"Mm. And how are you finding the work?"

"You know. It goes and comes. Memory ain't what it was."

"Yes."

"Good to be back in the shop, though."

"I'm glad of it. Well, then, I suspect you'll find some of my recent research quite interesting."

"S'why I'm here."



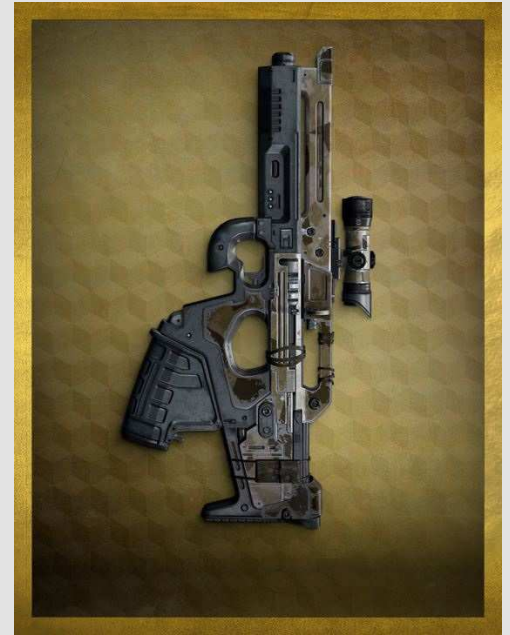
~Tlaloc

Mida Multi-tool

Select application: Ballistic engagement. Entrenching tool. Avionics trawl. Troll smasher. Stellar sextant. List continues.

Few weapons are balanced this precisely. Once you get a feel for the Multi-Tool it will sit weightlessly in your hand. Firing it will feel less like an action and more like an extension of your will.

~Mida Multi-tool



The Fate of all Fools

The wise man knows his fate. The fool merely finds it.

The weapon gathers data on the target from the impact and spall of solid body shots, setting up a devastating final hit.

~The Fate of all Fools



Boolean Gemini

Fight your way!

City foundries produce a wide variety of weapons in an attempt to anticipate Guardians' ever-changing needs on the battlefield. But no Guardian can carry all guns at all times.

Enter the Boolean Gemini. Designed by a think tank of Guardians and foundry representatives, the Gemini was designed to be two guns in one, with a flexible design that allows Guardians to toggle between distinct combat styles for maximum efficiency.

~Boolean Gemini



Touch of Malice

"Let them feel every lash, every curse, every touch of malice that they first dealt to me." -

Eris Morn

Here am I, with the power to craft from my enemy's darkest secrets a weapon that could wound them at their core!

So what stays my hand?

When I behold the interiority of these cold, cold fragments, I see blind, squirming creatures. Every wound they give, they feel also upon themselves. Every bite they tear from the Light only deepens, never fills, the raging emptiness behind their terrible mouths.

The voices are as loud as ever. My nightmares just as bitter. My coal-black hatred burns as hot. But I feel something else now. Could it be...

No! I refuse it.

I will build this weapon.

~Touch of Malice



The Jade Rabbit

What kind of harebrained scheme have you got in mind this time?

Like many weapons of the Dark Age, the Jade Rabbit was created from hastily reassembled—and often poorly understood—Golden Age technology: in this case, kinetic low-atmosphere propulsion systems in use on Luna settlements. Even the weapon's casing is cut from the plasteel bulwarks of the First Light installation.

The significance of the markings: 玉兔, or "Jade Rabbit," are unfortunately lost to history.

~The Jade Rabbit



Pulse Rifles

The Pulse Rifle is designed for precision fire and tight shot grouping. Three-round bursts provide added punch with reduced recoil compared to fully automatic weapons. Skilled shooters often walk the burst from the target's center of mass onto the head.

~Pulse Rifles

No Time to Explain

A single word is etched onto the inside of the weapon's casing: "Soon."

Novarro's timeline analysis indicates the weapon is the fabled Exo Stranger's Rifle, enhanced at a future point in this continuity and then sent back to this present.

Deliah's timeline analysis indicates the weapon was built by Praedyth, who based it on his own version of the Exo Stranger's Rifle, and then set it adrift in a time ripple.

Hari's timeline analysis indicates the weapon was built by beings of unidentifiable origin, and arrived here by pure accident.

Inachis's timeline analysis indicates the weapon originates from Earth, late Golden Age, and will eventually be lost to time ripples once again, where its systems will degrade and be replaced until our recent past acquires it as the Exo Stranger's Rifle.

As for me... I think it's safe to say the weapon is proving far more fun than we could have hoped.

~No Time to Explain

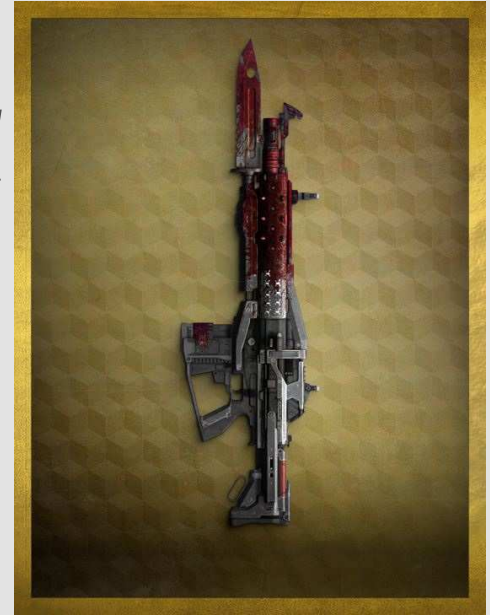


Red Death

Vanguard policy urges Guardians to destroy this weapon on sight. It is a Guardian killer.

Only rumors tell of the mad Guardian who fashioned this butcher's tool. But its power is undeniable, and fear is a formidable weapon.

~Red Death

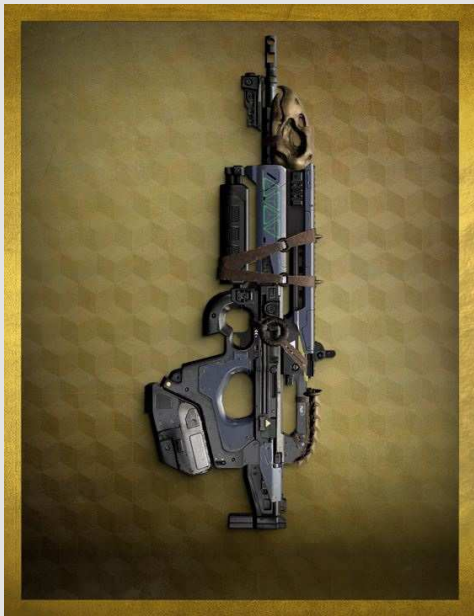


Bad Juju

"If you believe your weapon wants to murder all existence, then so it will." - Toland the Shattered

There must be a structured, mechanical explanation for this weapon's hunger for combat. There must be. But none has been found.

~Bad Juju



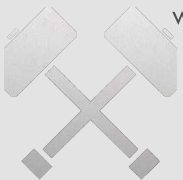
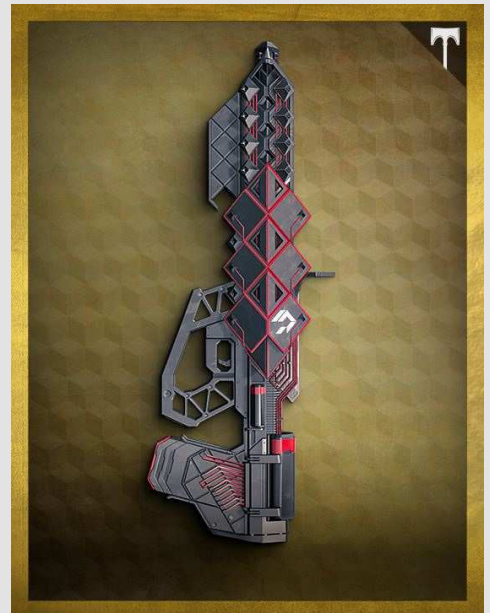
Outbreak Prime

"This is an advanced Golden Age technology tied to the death of some of the Light's greatest champions. It's currently being used as a tool of the Fallen to push the limits of bio-evolutionary realities. And you're kit-bashing it together with projectile-based war systems to make a handheld mechanism that delivers aggressive nano-mites?" –

Ghost

"That's one way to put it. All I know is... when you pull this trigger, one plus one equals zero every time. I've done the math." –Shiro-4

~Outbreak Prime



THORN



"To rend one's enemies is to see them not as equals, but objects - hollow of spirit and meaning." - 13th Understanding, 7th Book of Sorrow

Augmented through dark practices, Thorn was once a hero's weapon. Its jagged frame hints at a sinister truth: a powerful connection to the unutterable sorceries of the Hive.

The legend of Thorn is bound to the rise and fall of Dredgen Yor, a Guardian whose name is remembered with disgust and shame. The weapon was thought destroyed...but rumors of its existence still haunt the wilds.

~Thorn

The Rose

The noble man stood. And the people looked to him. For he was a beacon - hope given form, yet still only a man. And within that truth there was great promise. If one man could stand against the night, then so too could anyone - everyone.

In his strong hand the man held a Rose. And his aura burned bright.

When the man journeyed on, the people remembered. In his wake hope spread. But the man had a secret fear. His thoughts were dark. A sadness crept from the depths of his being. He had been a hero for so long, but pride had led him down sorrow's road.

Slowly the shadows' whisper became a voice, a dark call, offering glories enough to make even the brightest Light wander. He knew he was fading, yet he still yearned.

On his last day he sat and watched the sun fall. His final thoughts, pure of mind, if not body, held to a fleeting hope - though they would suffer for the man he would become, the people would remember him as he had been.

And so the noble man hid himself beneath a darkness no flesh should touch, and gave up his mortal self to claim a new birthright. Whether this was choice, or destiny, is a truth known only to fate.

In that cool evening air, as dusk was devoured by night, the noble man ceased to exist. In his place another stood.

Same meat. Same bone. But so very different.

The first and only of his family. The sole forbearer and last descendent of the name Yor.

In his first moments as a new being, he looked down at his Rose and realized for the first time that it held no petals: only the jagged purpose of angry thorns.

~Ghost Fragment: Thorn



The Bloom

TYPE: Transcript.

DESCRIPTION: Conversation.

PARTIES: Four [4]. Three [3] unidentified [u.1, u.2, u.3], One [1] unconfirmed.

ASSOCIATIONS: Breaklands; Durga; Last Word; Malphur, Shin; North Channel; Palamon; Thorn; Velor; Ward, Jaren; WoS; Yor, Dredgen;

//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:0.1] Can I see what you got there?

[silence]

[u.1:0.2] Yer cannon...can I see it?

[beat]

[u.2:0.1] I know you?

[beat]

[u.1:0.3] Not that I can say.

[u.2:0.2] And you wanna hold my piece?

[beat]

[u.1:0.4] Just that I never...seen one like it.

[beat]

[u.2:0.3] No, you haven't.

[u.1:0.5] Looks dangerous.

[u.2:0.4] Seems, maybe, that's the point.

[u.1:0.6] Suppose so.

[u.1:0.7] Can I see it?

[u.2:0.5] Not likely.

[silence]

[u.1:0.8] Where'd...where'd you find it?

[silence]

[u.1:0.9] You hearin' me?

[silence]

[u.3:0.1] He asked you question.

[silence]

[u.2:0.6] Didn't find it. Made it.

[u.1:1.0] Heh. Helluva touch you got then.

You a 'smith?

[u.2:0.7] I look like a 'smith?

[u.1:1.1] Looks can be deceiving.

[u.2:0.8] Got that right.

[u.1:1.2] There a problem?

[u.2:0.9] Doesn't need to be.

[u.1:1.3] Glad we got that cleared up...Now, about that piece.

[silence]

[u.2:1.0] Been to Luna?

[u.1:1.4] Excuse me?

[u.2:1.1] The Moon. You been?

[u.1:1.5] Nobody's been.

[u.2:1.2] That a truth?

[u.1:1.6] That's a fact.

[u.2:1.3] Funny you'd make that distinction.

[u.1:1.7] Truth is you must think you're some kinda something special. With that attitude.

The way you're just dismissin' us like you we're nothing...like we ain't even here.

[u.1:1.8] Fact is...You ain't near as rock solid as you figure. Fact is, special's only special 'til it's not.

[silence]

[u.2:1.4] The bones say otherwise.

[u.1:1.9] Speak straight.

[u.2:1.5] You say "nobody." Bones say otherwise.

[u.1:2.0] What bones?

[u.2:1.6] All of them.

[u.1:2.1] What're you gettin' at?

[u.2:1.7] Too many to count.

[u.1:2.2] You trying to get a rile outta us?

Was only making conversation.

[u.2:1.8] You really weren't.

[u.4:0.1] We got a smart one here.

[u.2:1.9] Experienced more than smart. But experience has its advantages.

[u.1:2.3] Experience tell you to lip off to strangers just tryin' to make talk?

[u.2:2.0] Keep insisting and maybe we will.

[u.1:2.4] Talk?

[u.2:2.1] Have words.

[u.1:2.5] Ain't that what we're doin'?

[u.2:2.2] My conversations tend to be a bit louder.

[silence]

[u.1:2.6] That a threat.

[u.2:2.3] A truth.

[u.1:2.7] Who the hell you think you are?

[u.2:2.4] According to your facts, "nobody." Yet, here I sit.

[u.1:2.8] Don't matter much how pretty yer cannon is. You keep it up, we'll see just how loud you like to get.

[silence]

[u.1:2.9] You done talkin' now? Guess he knows his place, boys.

[u.2:2.5] Ever have a nightmare?

[u.1:3.0] You playin' games? Or just thick?

[u.2:2.6] I know you have. This world? Can't help, but.

[u.1:3.1] I don't have nightmares. I give 'em.

[u.2:2.7] You are a goddamn cliché. The picture perfect bandit.

[u.2:2.8] Hearing your voice - the things you're saying, the shade of the hard man you pretend to be...

[u.1:3.2] Ain't no shade.

[audible crack]

[audible crack]

[audible crack]

[silence]

[u.2:2.8] Sit down.

[silence]

[u.2:3.0] Sit. Down.

[u.2:3.1] Your mouth just got your friends dead.

[u.2:3.2] This is what happens when you bore me. And right now...

[u.2:3.3] I'm so very bored.
[u.1:3.3] Wha...No listen...
[u.2:3.4] Shhhhh.
[u.1:3.4] But...but...you're a...you're one of them...A Guardian, right?
[u.1:3.5] You're supposed t'be one'a the good ones.
[u.2:3.5] "Supposed to be?" Maybe I am. Maybe this is what "good" looks like.
[u.2:3.6] Anymore, who can tell?
[u.1:3.6] I...
[u.2:3.7] You wanted to see my prize.
[u.1:3.7] No...I...
[u.2:3.8] Look at it.
[u.1:3.8] I...
[audible sobbing]
[u.2:3.9] Whimpering won't stop what comes next.
[u.2:4.0] Look...
[audible sobbing]
[u.2:4.1] Look at it.
[u.2:4.2] Open your eyes.
[audible sobbing]
[u.2:4.3] Not many get such a clean view.
[u.2:4.4] The bone...You see it. Jagged, like thorns.
[u.2:4.5] I used to think of it as a rose...
[u.2:4.6] Focusing on its bloom.
[u.2:4.7] But the bloom is just a byproduct of its anger.
[silence]
[u.2:4.8] You have nightmares?
[audible sobbing]
[u.2:4.9] Ever seen a nightmare? Ever opened your eyes and realized the horror wasn't a dream? The terror wasn't gone?
[u.2:5.0] I've seen nightmares.
[u.2:5.1] They live in the shadows.
[u.2:5.2] They've been watching.
[u.2:5.3] I thought...It's foolish, I know...but I thought I saw a way.

[u.2:5.4] That maybe we could win. Maybe we could survive.
[u.2:5.5] But once you step into those shadows, it's so very hard to walk in the Light.
[u.2:5.6] Or...maybe I just wasn't strong enough.
[u.2:5.7] Maybe.
[u.2:5.8] But I feel strong now.
[audible sobbing]
[u.2:5.9] I stole the dark.
[u.2:6.0] Or, maybe it stole me.
[u.2:6.1] Either way, here we are.
[u.2:6.2] And I'm hungry.
[u.2:6.3] Its hungry.
[u.2:6.4] You have no Light beyond the spark of your pathetic life.
[u.2:6.5] But a spark is something.
[audible sobbing]
[u.2:6.6] Open your eyes.
[audible sobbing]
[audible sobbing]
[audible crack]
[silence]
[silence]
[silence]

/...END TRANSCRIPT///

~Ghost Fragment: Thorn 2

A Farewell To Light

TYPE: Transcript.

DESCRIPTION: Conversation.

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Ghost-type,

designate [REDACTED] [u.1], One [1]

Guardian-type, Class [REDACTED] [u.2]

ASSOCIATIONS: [REDACTED]; Breaklands;

Durga; Last Word; Malphur, Shin; North

Channel; Palamon; Thorn; Velor; Ward, Jaren;

WoS; Yor, Dredgen;

//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:0.1] You were not always this man.
[u.2:0.1] True.
[u.1:0.2] Then the math says you do not need to remain this man. You can be other.
[u.2:0.2] I am other.
[u.1:0.3] You can be better.
[u.2:0.3] This is better.
[u.1:0.4] That matter, at best, is subjective.
[u.2:0.4] Then what? Lesser.
[u.1:0.5] Some would say.
[u.2:0.5] But what would you say?
[silence]
[u.2:0.6] All we've seen and now, here with me, you have no words.
[u.1:0.6] I have words.
[u.2:0.7] But...?
[u.1:0.7] But you will not like them.
[u.2:0.8] There is much I do not like.
[u.1:0.8] More now than ever it would seem.
[u.2:0.9] Heh.
[u.1:0.9] I find no laughing matter in your path.
[u.2:1.0] Only in the journey.
[u.1:1.0] What brought you here was nobility.
[u.2:1.1] And my prize.
[u.1:1.1] That is no prize.
[u.2:1.2] A curse then?
[u.1:1.2] I would say.
[u.2:1.3] And I would disagree.
[u.1:1.3] You are no longer yourself.
[u.2:1.4] I am myself. It's who I was that's gone.
[u.1:1.4] Who you were held all the value.
[u.2:1.5] To you.
[u.1:1.5] To the Light.
[u.2:1.6] The Light...
[u.1:1.6] It is all.
[u.2:1.7] It is nothing but a crutch.
[u.1:1.7] One that has held you up.

[u.2:1.8] Only just. And nothing more.
 [u.1:1.8] Nothing more? You were a hero.
 [u.2:1.9] And yet people still die. Corruption still exists. Light still fades. And Darkness still spreads.
 [u.1:1.9] As it will ever be, that doesn't mean you give in to...
 [u.2:2.0] To what? Hope.
 [u.1:2.0] This is not hope.
 [u.2:2.1] This is peace.
 [u.1:2.1] You have blood on your hands.
 [u.2:2.2] How's that any different than prior?
 [u.1:2.2] Innocent blood.
 [u.2:2.3] Matter of perspective.
 [u.1:2.3] That's the shadow talking.
 [u.2:2.4] And am I not.
 [u.1:2.4] The shadow?
 [u.2:2.5] Ya know... These past cycles, you've made an honorable effort. Tried your best to correct my course. But I don't know it needs correcting.
 [u.1:2.5] And if it does?
 [u.2:2.6] Could be too late.
 [u.1:2.6] 'Could be' is a winding path.
 [u.2:2.7] Long way from where I was to where I'm going.
 [u.1:2.7] That is my hope. That there is still time.
 [u.2:2.8] For?
 [u.1:2.8] Corrective measures. The righting of our path. The cleansing of your shadow and a return to the Light.
 [silence]
 [u.2:2.9] Why'd you pick me?
 [u.1:2.9] It doesn't work that way.
 [u.2:3.0] Was I special?
 [u.1:3.0] You were.
 [u.2:3.1] But only as special as any other.
 [u.1:3.1] You are all special.
 [u.2:3.2] Seems to contradict the word don't it.

[u.1:3.2] Not in my estimation.
 [u.2:3.3] If we're all special, are any of us special?
 [u.1:3.3] Is that what you want? To be special?
 [u.2:3.4] Heh.
 [u.1:3.4] You dismiss, but it's a very serious question. Is that all you're after? Is all of the death worth that badge?
 [u.2:3.5] Am I not already more than the rest?
 [u.1:3.5] Looking at you here, now. The smoke, ash and bone at your feet mark you as so much less.
 [u.2:3.6] Maybe. And yet here you are.
 [u.1:3.6] Meaning?
 [u.2:3.7] You have been at my side every step of the way.
 [u.1:3.7] Where else would I be?
 [u.2:3.8] Yet you disagree so thoroughly with my change in perspective.
 [u.1:3.8] If only the change was simply one of perspective. Your "evolution" was no choice. This is not you having come to an understanding after careful considered thought. This is corruption.
 [u.2:3.9] The shadows?
 [u.1:3.9] The Darkness.
 [u.2:4.0] Maybe so.
 [u.1:4.0] There is no maybe here.
 [u.2:4.1] And you think you can save me?
 [u.1:4.1] I rekindled your Light, it falls first to me to aid in its survival.
 [silence]
 [u.2:4.2] I tire of it.
 [u.1:4.2] You must try...
 [u.2:4.3] I tire of you.
 [u.1:4.3] [REDACTED]...
 [u.2:4.4] That is no longer my name.
 [u.1:4.4] I will not speak the other.
 [u.2:4.5] It doesn't matter. This is where we part ways.

[u.1:4.5] I will not leave you.
 [u.2:4.6] I am leaving you.
 [u.1:4.6] Without me, your journey ahead will be more than any one Guardian can handle.
 [u.2:4.7] That's the point. It's been sometime since you saw me as worthy of walking among those I once called brother and sister. Yet... anymore, I feel as though I am worthy of so much more.
 [u.1:4.7] Without me... You will die.
 [u.2:4.8] Someday. Won't be the first time.
 [silence]
 [u.2:4.9] Consider this my last good deed. I am releasing you of the burden of my deeds, both done and yet to come.
 [u.1:4.8] I will not abandon you.
 [u.2:5.0] You will. Or I will carve the Light from your shell and leave the carcass of my first and last friend in the dirt of this dull, red world for no one to find.
 [u.1:4.9] Then I've failed you, completely.
 [u.2:5.1] Not me. Maybe the man I was.
 [u.1:5.0] He is truly dead.
 [u.2:5.2] I believe so.
 [u.1:5.1] Belief is not fact.
 [u.2:5.3] Semantics I no longer have the patience for.
 [silence]
 [u.2:5.4] When you speak of me, use my proper name. Tell them of the man that stands before you, not the ghost of the hero I once was.
 [u.1:5.2] You will always be [REDACTED] to me.
 [u.2:5.5] If you cannot let that man go, you will forever taint his legacy. All the good I have ever done will be washed away in the fire of who I have become.
 [u.1:5.3] If you care, there is still some promise within you.

[u.2:5.6] If I am being honest, I care only to give hope to the frightened, huddled masses so that when I come upon them they will have more to lose. Their pain will be greater. Their screams more pure.
 [u.1:5.4] You...
 [u.2:5.7] Nothing dies like hope. I cherish it.
 [u.1:5.5] You're a monster.
 [u.2:5.8] Finally, you see the truth.
 [u.1:5.6] [REDACTED] is truly dead.
 [u.2:5.9] So I've said. Long live Dredgen Yor.
 [u.1:5.7] This is farewell, but you can only run from your sins so far. In the end, you will die alone.
 [u.2:6.0] Maybe so. But I gotta tell ya... I tend to like my odds.
 [u.1:5.8] Your tainted "Rose" will not always save you.
 [u.2:6.1] Old friend... It already has.

~Ghost Fragment: Thorn 3

The Shadow and the Light

TYPE: Transcript.

DESCRIPTION: Conversation.

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Ghost-type, designate [REDACTED] [u.1], One [1]

Guardian-type, Class [REDACTED] [u.2]

ASSOCIATIONS: Breaklands; Durga;

Dwindler's Ridge; Last Word; Malphur, Shin; North Channel; Palamon; Thorn; Velor; Ward, Jaren; WoS; Yor, Dredgen;

//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:0.1] Such Darkness.
 [u.2:0.1] Impressed?
 [u.1:0.2] Far from it.
 [u.2:0.2] To each their own.
 [u.1:0.3] His Light is faded.
 [u.2:0.3] His Light is gone.
 [u.1:0.4] You are an infection.

[u.2:0.4] I am that which will cleanse.
 [u.1:0.5] You are a monster.
 [u.2:0.5] *Heh*. An old friend once saw me as the same. He was right, and, had we met earlier, so too would you be.
 [u.1:0.6] You'd dare defend yourself – all you've done – as anything but monstrous?
 [u.2:0.6] No more than a hurricane.
 [u.1:0.7] Then you're a force of nature?
 [u.2:0.7] I am all that is right. You may not see it – for lack of looking, or blind ignorance – but I am all that is good.
 [u.1:0.8] You've just murdered a good man.
 [u.2:0.8] He shot first.
 [u.1:0.9] Yet you stand.
 [u.2:0.9] Guess he missed.
 [u.1:1.0] He never misses.
 [u.2:1.0] First time for everything.
 [silence]
 [u.2:1.1] His cannon? Nice piece of hardware.
 [u.2:1.2] Well-worn, but clean. Smooth hammer.
 [u.1:1.1] It was his prize.
 [u.2:1.3] Guess he put too much faith in the wrong steel.
 [u.1:1.2] Is that where your faith lies, in steel?
 [u.2:1.4] Not for some time. My steel is only an extension. My faith is in the shadow.
 [u.1:1.3] Then my Light is an affront to all you are. I am your truest enemy.
 [u.2:1.5] One of many.
 [u.1:1.4] Would you end me?
 [u.2:1.6] Not you. Not now.
 [u.1:1.5] The shadow knows mercy.
 [u.2:1.7] The shadow knows no such thing.
 [u.1:1.6] Then what?
 [u.2:1.8] The other.
 [u.1:1.7] What other?

[u.2:1.9] The dead man's charge.
 [u.1:1.8] The boy?
 [u.1:1.9] You'd end him as well?
 [u.2:2.0] If it comes to that... We'll see.
 [u.1:2.0] I won't let you have the child.
 [u.2:2.1] Been long enough now, think maybe he's a man.
 [u.1:2.1] You cannot have him.
 [u.2:2.2] Not yet.
 [u.1:2.2] I won't let you.
 [u.2:2.3] That you could stop me is an amusing thought.
 [silence]
 [u.2:2.4] Here.
 [silence]
 [u.2:2.5] Take it.
 [u.1:2.3] Why?
 [u.2:2.6] Give the apprentice his master's "sword." It is a gift.
 [u.1:2.4] You cannot have him.
 [u.2:2.7] You fear for his Light?
 [u.1:2.5] He...
 [u.2:2.8] ...is special.
 [u.1:2.6] Yes.
 [u.2:2.9] I am aware.
 [u.1:2.7] You're trying to tempt him. You're feeding his anger.
 [u.2:3.0] The gun is a memento, nothing more.
 [u.1:2.8] You claim to be a vessel, a hollow shell where once a man stood, but that is just a lie. The man is still in you.
 [u.2:3.1] There is no man here, I am now, and for the rest of time, only Dredgen Yor.
 [u.1:2.9] "The Eternal Abyss?"
 [u.2:3.2] So, not all the forgotten languages are dead.
 [u.1:3.0] Hide behind whatever titles you wish, it is all still a façade. No force of nature would play such games.
 [u.2:3.3] Games?

[u.1:3.1] The cannon. You wish to tempt the boy. To spur him on and fuel his rage. There is intent there. The actions of a man, monstrous, mad or otherwise... you are nothing more.

[u.2:3.4] And what value does your conclusion bring, flawed as it may be?

[u.1:3.2] That a hurricane can only be weathered, not stopped. Not redirected. A force of nature is uncaring and without intent, but a man...

[u.2:3.5] Yes?

[u.1:3.3] A man is none of those things.

[silence]

[u.1:3.4] A man can be killed.

[silence]

[u.2:3.6] And there it is...

[u.1:3.5] There what is...?

[u.2:3.7] A sliver of hope.

~Ghost Fragment: Thorn 4

TYPE: Transcript

PARTIES: One [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.1]

ASSOCIATIONS: Orsa, Zyre [AKA Vale, Dredgen]; Thorn; Vale, Dredgen [AKA Orsa, Zyre]; WoS, Yor, Dredgen; Yor, Shadows of

//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:0.1] We have tamed the sickness. Broken it with unwilling sacrifice. [silence]

[u.1:0.1] Now we claim our reward. Have you heard the whispers, brothers? Sister? The shadow speaks. All we have to do is listen. Its secrets are a gift. Its gift? Our evolution. The others misunderstand. We are the Weapons of Sorrow – living and free. The hated heroes of this broken age.

~Ghost Fragment: Thorn 5



Hand Cannons

Sturdy and reliable, Hand Cannons have long been a preferred tool for self-defense. Their low rate of fire and modest accuracy is more than made up for by their ease of handling and superior stopping power.

~Hand Cannons



Hawkmoon

Stalk thy prey and let loose thy talons upon the Darkness.

The Hawkmoon is a true gunslinger's weapon - a smooth sidearm that makes every bullet count...some more than others.

~Hawkmoon





The First Curse

"...is when death becomes an afterthought."

People always forget about the other one. The first one. They remember its twin, the Last Word, because that's an easier story to tell. But it's not the whole story.

Truth is, there were two of 'em, back then in the lawless days before the City was anything more than a rumor. There are thousands of tales of the fate of The First Curse, which one will you tell?

~The First Curse

Ace of Spades

Don't play your hand unless you're sure you have that ace in the hole.

"Heeeeeeeey there, Banshee!"

"Whaddya want, Cayde?"

"Just checking in on that thing I asked you to do."

"I told you, my smuggling days are over—"

"No no shhh no not that! The other thing—"

"What other thing?"

"The custom piece! For—"

"Oh right. Right. Course I'm doing that."

"Yeah? How's it looking?"

"Did all the design myself. So it's looking good."

"Is that... an ace of spades?"

"Yep."

~Ace of Spades



THE LAST WORD



"Yours...not mine." - Renegade Hunter Shin Malphur to Dredgen Yor during the showdown at Dwindler's Ridge

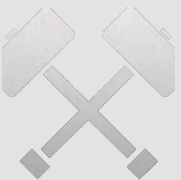
The Last Word is a romantic weapon, a throwback to simpler times when steady aim and large rounds were enough to dispense justice in the wilds of a lawless frontier. Of course, some might say that time has come again.

~The Last Word

I'm writing this from memory - some mine, but not all. The facts won't sync with the reality, but they'll be close, and there's no one to say otherwise, so for all intents and purposes, this will be the history of a settlement we called Palamon and the horrors that followed an all too brief peace.

I remember home, and stories of a paradise we'd all get to see some day - of a City, "shining even in the night." Palamon didn't shine, but it was sanctuary, of a sort.

We'd settled in the heart of a range that stretched the horizon. Wooded mountains that shot with purpose toward the sky. Winters were harsh, but the trees and peaks hid us from the world. We talked about moving on, sometimes, striking out for the City. But it was just a longing.



Drifters came and went. On occasion they would stay, but rarely. We had no real government, but there was rule of law. Basic tenets agreed upon by all and eventually overseen by Magistrate Loken.

And there you have it...no government, until there was. I was young, so I barely understood. I remember Loken as a hardworking man who just became broken. Mostly I think he was sad. Sad and frightened. As his fingers tightened on Palamon, people left. Those who stayed saw our days became grey. Loken's protection - from the Fallen, from ourselves - became dictatorial.

Looking back, I think maybe Loken had just lost too much - of himself, his family. But everyone lost something. And some of us had nothing to begin with. My only memory of my parents is a haze, like a daydream, and a small light, like the spark of their souls. It's not anything I dwell on. They left me early, taken by Dregs.

Palamon raised me from there. The family I call my own - called my own - cared for me as if I was their natural born son. And life was good. Being the only life I knew, my judgment is skewed, and it wasn't easy - pocked by loss as it was - but I would call it good.

Until, of course, it wasn't.

Until two men entered my world. One a light. The other the darkest shadow I would ever know.

~Ghost Fragment: The Last Word

The man I would come to know as Jaren Ward, my third father and quite possibly my closest friend, came to Palamon from the south.

I was just a boy, but I'll never forget his silhouette on the empty trail as he made his slow walk into town.

I'd never seen anything like him. Maybe none of us had. He'd said he was only passing through, and I believed him - still do, but life can get in the way of intent, and often does.

I can picture that day with near perfect clarity. Of all the details though - every nuance, every moment - the memory that sticks in my

mind is the iron on Jaren's hip. A cannon that looked both pristine and lived in. Like a relic of every battle he'd ever fought, hung low at his waist - a trophy and a warning.

This man was dangerous, but there was a light about him - a pureness to his weight - that seemed to hint that his ire was something earned, not carelessly given.

I'd been the first to see him as he approached, but soon most of Palamon had turned out to greet him. My father held me back as everyone stood in silence.

Jaren didn't make a sound behind his sleek racer's helmet. He looked just like the heroes in the stories, and to this day I'm not sure one way or the other if the silence between the town's people and the adventurer was born of fear or respect. I like to think the latter, but any truth I try to place on the moment would be of my own making.

As we waited for Magistrate Loken to arrive and make an official greeting, my patience got the best of me. I shook free of my father's heavy hand and made the short sprint across the court, stopping a few paces from where this new curiosity stood - a man unlike any other.

I stared up at him and he lowered his attention to me, his eyes hidden behind the thick tinted visor of his headgear. My sight quickly fell to his sidearm. I was transfixed by it. I imagined all the places that weapon had been. All of the wonders it had seen. The horrors it had endured. My imagination darted from one heroic act to the next.

I barely registered when he began to kneel, holding out the iron as if an offering. But my eyes locked onto the piece, mesmerized.

I recall turning back to my father and seeing the looks on the faces of everyone I knew. There was worry there - my father slowly shaking his head as if pleading with me to ignore the gift.

I turned back to the man I would come to know as Jaren Ward, the finest Hunter this system may ever know and one of the greatest Guardians to ever defend the Traveler's Light...

And I took the weapon in my hand. Carefully.
Gently.

Not to use. But to observe. To imagine. To feel
its weight and know its truth.

That was the first time I held "Last Word," but,
unfortunately, not the last.

~Ghost Fragment: The Last Word 2

It was the fourth night of the seventh moon.

Nine rises since any sign.

Trail wasn't cold, but lukewarm would've been
an exaggeration.

Jaren had us hold by a ravine.

The heavy wood along the cliffs' edge caught
the wind, holding back the cold and the rush
of water muffled our conversation.

We'd seen dual Skiffs hanging low as they cut
through the valley.

Wasn't known Fallen territory, but anymore
that's a dangerous assumption.

There were six of us then.

Three less than two moons prior, but still, one
more than when we'd first turned our backs to
Palamon's ash.

We took a rotation for watch during the night.

Movement was kept to a minimum and
communication was down to hand signals
and simple gestures.

We could hold our own in a fight, but only the
dead went looking for one—a hard truth that
cut in direct opposition to our reasons for
being so far from anything resembling
civilization, much less our safety.

The Skiffs had spooked Kressler and Nada,
and, in truth, me as well. But, looking back, I
think we were all just grasping for any good
reason to turn back.

Not because we would—turn back—but
because it seemed to be our only real hope,
and I think we all knew it.

Forward. Where we were headed—into the
unknown. And following the footsteps we
were. It all just started to feel like a never-
ending dead end after a while.

Jaren never wavered though. Not once.

At least not to any noticeable degree.

It was his drive, his conviction, that kept us
going.

And—it's hard to think on—but if I'm honest, it
was his death that rekindled my own fire. A
fire that was all but exhausted on that cold
night.

He seemed confident we were close.

But more than confident—sure. He seemed
sure.

No one else felt it—our own confidence, and
any enthusiasm we'd had was set to wither
soon as Brevin, Trenn and Mel were gunned



down.

The Ghost—Jaren's Ghost—never said a word to any of us. Just hung there. Always alert. Always judging. Not us, per se, but the moment. Any moment.

I never got the sense it thought of us as lesser. More that it was guarded, wary.

We knew it could speak. We'd overheard them a few times. Just brief words, and no one ever pressed the subject.

From time to time I caught its gaze lingering on me, but always assumed the attention was a result of the bond Jaren and I had. He was a father to me. At the time I didn't know why he'd singled me out as someone to care for. Someone to protect. After all the loss, I

welcomed it, but looking back—taking in the arm's length at which he kept the others—I guess I should've known, or at least suspected there was more to it.

We all woke that night, closer to morning than the previous day.

A crack of gunfire split through the wood. Then more.

Far off, but near enough to pump the blood.

A familiar ring. "Last Word." Jaren's sidearm. His best friend.

Then another. A single shot, an unmistakable echo calling through the night. Hushed, cutting.

One shot, dark and infernal. Followed by silence.

We crouched low and quiet. Listening. Hoping.

Jaren was gone. Off on his own.

Maybe we were closer than we'd allowed ourselves to believe.

Too close.

He'd gone to face death alone.

I couldn't admit it—not at the time—but he thought he was protecting us.

After such a long road—years on its heels, a trail littered with suffering and fire—maybe he just couldn't take the thought of anymore dead "kids," as he called us.

The echoes faded and we all held still. No way to track the direction. No sense in rushing blind.

What was done was done.

The cadence of the shots fired told a story none of us cared to hear.

"Last Word" it hadn't been. And somewhere in the world, close enough for us to bear absent witness but far enough to be a dream, Jaren Ward lay dead or dying. And there was nothing to be done.

Hours passed. An eternity.

We held our spot, but as the sun rose the others began to fade back into the world. Without Jaren there was nothing holding us together. No driving force. Vengeance had



grown stale as a motivator. Fear and a longing to see more suns rise drove a wedge between duty and desire.

By midday I was alone. I couldn't leave. Wouldn't.

Either I would find Jaren and set him at ease, or the other would find me and that would be a fitting end.

Death marching on.

But then, a motion. Quick and darting. My muscles tensed and my hand shot to the grip of my leadslinger.

Then a confirmation of the horrible truth I had already accepted, as Jaren's Ghost came to a halt a few paces in front of me.

I exhaled and slumped forward. Still standing, but broken.

The tiny Light looked me over with a curious tilt to its axis, then shot a beam of light over my body. Scanning me as it had done the very first time we met.

I looked up. Staring into its singular glowing eye.

And it spoke...

~Ghost Fragment:The Last Word 3

Then.

Palamon was ash.

I was only a boy – my face caked in soot, snot and sorrow.

I'd assumed Jaren, my friend, our Guardian, the savior of Palamon, would always protect us – could always save us...

But I was a fool.

Jaren, and the others, only a handful, but still our best hunters, our hardest hearts, had left three suns prior. Tracking Fallen, after the bandits had caused a stir.

The stranger – the other – arrived the following day.

He rarely spoke. Took a room. Took our hospitality.

I was intrigued by him, as I was Jaren when he'd first arrived.

But the stranger was cold. Distant. Damaged, I thought.

But I wasn't afraid. Not yet.

Only a child, I knew the monsters of our world to walk like men, but they were not. They were something alien. Four-armed and savage.

The stranger was polite, but solemn.

I took him for a sad, broken man, and he was. Though, at the time, I didn't understand how that could make one dangerous.

As with Jaren, father made an effort to keep me away from the stranger.

It wouldn't matter.

As the silhouette approached, fear held tight.

The dark figure towered over me. Looking into me – through me.

He smiled. My knees weak. All lost.

Then, he turned and walked away.

Leaving ruin and a heartbroken, terrified boy in his wake without a second glance.

I've been chasing that stranger's shadow ever since.

Now.

We stood silent, the sun high. Seconds passed, feeling more like hours.

He looked different. He seemed, now, to be weightless – effortless in an existence that would crush a man burdened by conscience.

My gaze remained locked as I felt a heat rising inside of me. The other spoke...

"Been awhile."

I gave no reply.

"The gunslinger's sword... his cannon. That was a gift."

My silence held as my thumb caressed the perfectly worn hammer at my hip.

"An offering from me... to you."

The heat grew. Centered in my chest.

I felt like a coward the day Jaren Ward died
and for many cycles after.

But here, I felt only the fire of my Light.

The other probed...

"Nothing to say?"

He let the words hang.

"I've been waiting for you. For this day."

His attempt at conversation felt mundane when
judged against all that had come before.

"Many times I thought you'd faltered. Given
up..."

All I'd lost, all who'd suffered, flashed rapid
through my mind, intercut with a dark silhouette
walking toward a frightened, weak, coward of
a boy.

The fire burned in me.

The other continued...

"But here you are. This is truly an end..."

As his tongue slipped between syllables my
gun hand moved as if of its own will.

Reflex and purpose merged with anger, clarity
and an overwhelming need for just that... an
end.

In step with my motion, the fire within burst into
focus – through my shoulder, down my arm –
as my finger closed on the trigger of my third

father's cannon.

Two shots. Two bullets engulfed in an angry
glow.
The other fell.

I walked to his corpse. He never raised his
cursed Thorn – the jagged gun with the
festering sickness.

I looked down at the dead man who had
caused so much death.

My shooter still embraced by the dancing
flames of my Light. A sadness came over me.

I thought back to my earliest days. Of
Palamon. Of Jaren.

Leveling my cannon at the dead man's helm, I
paid one final tribute to my mentor, my savior,
my father and my friend...

"Yours... Not mine."

...as I closed my grip, allowing Jaren's
cannon, now my own, to have the last, loud
word.

~Ghost Fragment: The Last Word 4

TYPE: Transcript.

DESCRIPTION: Conversation.

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Ghost-type,
designate [REDACTED] [u.1], One [1]
Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Breaklands; Durga;
Dwindler's Ridge; Last Word; Malphur, Shin;
North Channel; Orsa, Zyre [AKA Vale,
Dredgen]; Palamon; Thorn; Vale, Dredgen
[AKA Orsa, Zyre]; Velor; Ward, Jaren; WoS;
Yor, Dredgen; Yor, Shadows of
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:0.1] Will you fight them?

[u.2:0.1] The Shadows?

[u.1:0.2] Those who have taken up arms in
the name of Yor.

[u.2:0.2] The hope is they are more careful
than their inspiration.

[u.1:0.3] Do you believe that will make a
difference?

[silence]

[u.2:0.3] No.

[u.1:0.4] Then what will you do?

[u.2:0.4] The Vanguard has an eye on...

[u.1:0.5] The Vanguard have their eyes on
many things.

[u.2:0.5] I'm aware.

[u.1:0.6] Then what will you do?

[silence]

[u.2:0.6] What needs to be done.

~Ghost Fragment: The Last Word 5



4.2 USING FINESSE



Shotguns

There are few weapons that offer the comfort and familiarity of a shotgun. Built for close quarters combat, they provide immediate, violent conflict resolution.

~Shotguns



Universal Remote

To the untrained eye this beast is a junker. To the trained eye, however, this junker...is a beast.

It took great care, and an incredible feat of fine-tuning, to craft a weapon that packs a close-quarters punch, yet has the range of a precision rifle. Universal Remote is that weapon.

~Universal Remote



Invective

"I tried to talk them down. They made a grab for my Ghost. After that it was a short conversation." - Ikora Rey

Invective was Ikora Rey's weapon of choice during her younger, more rebellious days. An ideal fallback for situations that can't be solved by wit, quick talk, or pure intimidation, this modified shotgun uses a self-replicating magazine to keep its owner well-stocked for any and all trouble that waits beyond the City.

~Invective



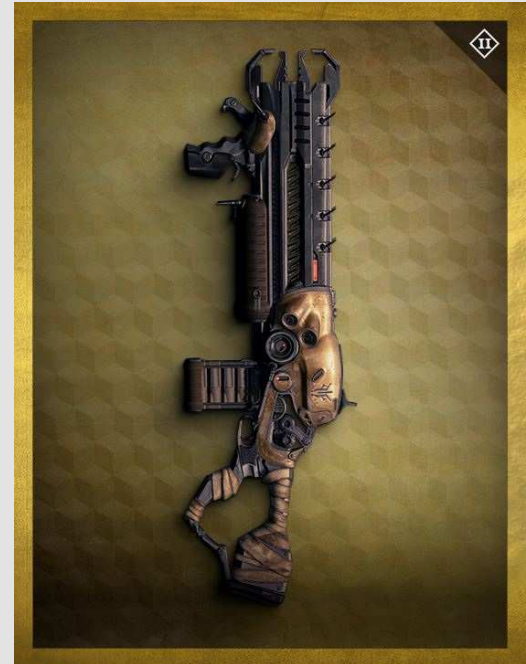
Lord of Wolves

"By this right alone do I rule."

Jolyon was a Crow. He'd seen much. More than most. He held the enemy's greatest weapon. Remembered its burn. Then began tinkering. He liked things. Liked how they worked. Found happiness in finding new avenues through which a thing could function. Not to alter the purpose, but simply to refine it.

The weapon delivered impact with incredible force spread over a range to increase its area of influence. But what if that force was brought to focus in a directed burst. A seasoned marksman with a steady, strong hand could deliver a burn that served less to herd, more to punish.

The feral ones deserved nothing less. The Wolves would have a new master. And that master was fire.
~Lord of Wolves



The Chaperone

"My mother had a shotgun we called the Chaperone. Kept us alive out there, before we got to the City." -Amanda Holliday

Amanda Holliday was born on the road, when the City was nothing more than a whispered prayer. Their only protection was the weapons they could scavenge, build or modify. Weapons like her mother's two-barrel shotgun, with its black and gold filigree far too fine for the world around it. They called it the Chaperone.

That Chaperone lies in a shallow grave with its last owner, but Amanda recalls every detail of its design. And via a partnership with the gunsmiths of Tex Mechanica, she's brought the Chaperone back to life. Though the new weapon is much more powerful than the cantankerous relic the Hollidays used on the road, it bears the appearance, and the name, of the Chaperone that saw the one surviving Holliday safely to the Last City.

~The Chaperone





The 4th Horseman

"By this right alone do I rule."

Jolyon was a Crow. He'd seen much. More than most. He held the enemy's greatest weapon. Remembered its burn. Then began tinkering. He liked things. Liked how they worked. Found happiness in finding new avenues through which a thing could function. Not to alter the purpose, but simply to refine it.

The weapon delivered impact with incredible force spread over a range to increase its area of influence. But what if that force was brought to focus in a directed burst. A seasoned marksman with a steady, strong hand could deliver a burn that served less to herd, more to punish.

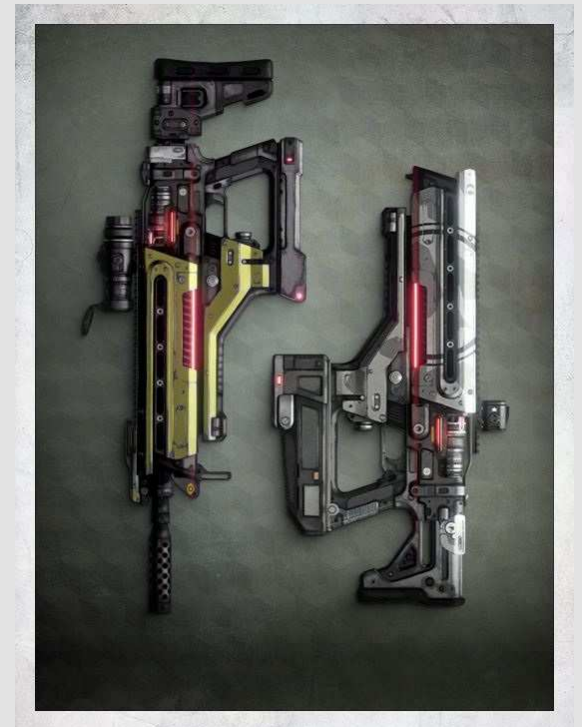
The feral ones deserved nothing less. The Wolves would have a new master. And that master was fire.

~The 4th Horseman

Fusion Rifles

Advancements in directed energy disbursement, gained through the discovery of Golden Age research, led to the creation of stable, field-ready energy-based weaponry. The first implementation of this technology comes in the form of the Fusion Rifle. Users must hold the trigger down for a few moments to charge the weapon before firing.

~Fusion Rifles



Pocket Infinity

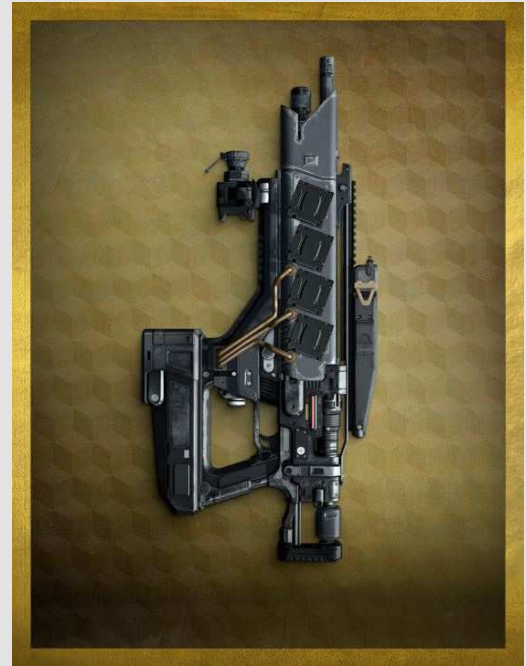
You cannot shake the feeling that this is less a weapon than a doorway.

Fireteam Tuyet died in the Ishtar Sink, hunting the secrets of the Vex. They must have come too close to something precious, for the Vex descended on them with their typical inscrutable, thorough violence.

But their sacrifice was not in vain. The data they gathered helped forge the Pocket Infinity. Properly modified, the weapon should be capable of devastating output on just a single charge cycle.

The Infinity's mechanisms have proven difficult, if not impossible, to replicate en masse. It is conceivable that the weapon draws its energy from the Vex networks...an ominous possibility. So be wary with it.

~Pocket Infinity



Queenbreaker's Bow

"A reminder that while so few 'Breakers remain, Her Majesty still stands."

"Queenbreaker" was the label given to the Fallen who first rose to betray the Queen. Their coordinated attempt on Her Grace's life was quick and violent. Most of the Queenbreakers were eliminated, their line rifles taken as trophies. Some remain at-large.

Known as Queenbreakers' Bows, the very weapons once used in an effort to assassinate the Queen of the Reef are now prized possessions for Guardians—not only for their storied history, but for the chance to get their hands on fully functional Fallen weaponry.

~Queenbreaker's Bow



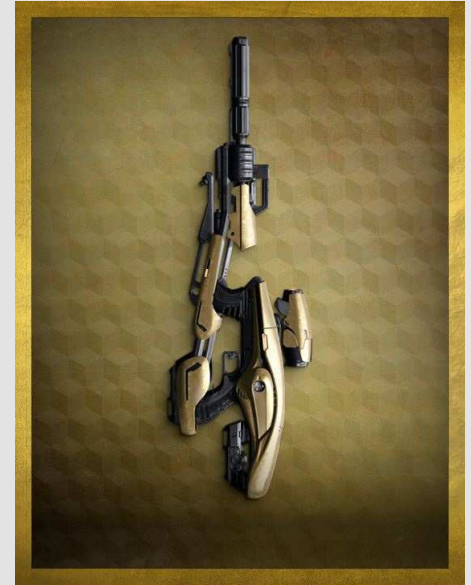
Vex Mythoclast

...a causal loop within the weapon's mechanism, suggesting that the firing process somehow binds space and time into...

Some legends live forever. Others are overwritten - reshaped by the sheer will of those who believe that any ordeal can be conquered, any foe vanquished, any god cast down.

The Mythoclast is a Vex instrument from some far-flung corner of time and space, mysteriously fit for human hands. Its origins, mechanism of action, and ultimate purpose remain unknown. Perhaps it will reveal itself to you, in time...

~Vex Mythoclast



Telesto



Vestiges of the Queen's Harbingers yet linger among Saturn's moons.

PUBLIC KEY 023 629 DWS REGAL

FROM: PLDN KAMALA RIOR [PLDN CMD TF 5.3]

TO: ACT RGNT PETRA VENJ

SUBJ: S&R REPORT: Saturn XIII

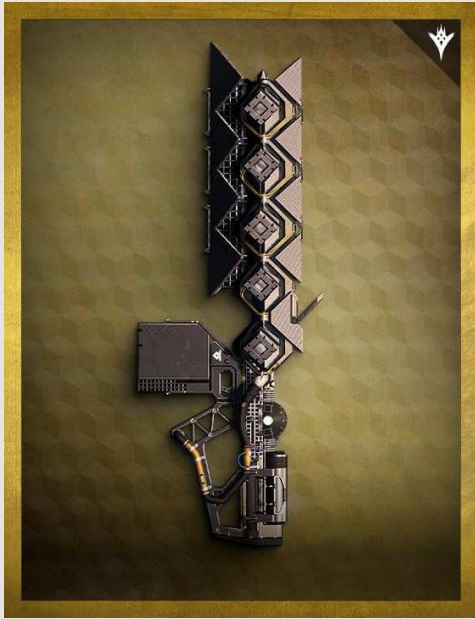
Expanded search of Saturn's nearby moons produced only one notable discovery: A cloud of Harbinger matter collected around Saturn's 13th moon, designation "Telesto." A sample is enclosed for your examination.

Still no sign of primary objectives. Continued survey of the remaining 100,000 km³ of space is underway. But as an Armada Paladin of the Awoken, it is my duty to officially recommend declaration of death of the following: Paladin Yasmin Eld, Paladin Leona Bryl, Paladin Abra Zire, Paladin Pavel Nolg, Techeun Shuro, Techeun Sedia, Techeun Kali, and the Awoken Queen Mara Sov.

Note that as acting regent-commander it is NOT your duty to actually declare these deaths at this time.

MESSAGE ENDS

~Telesto



Sleeper Simulant

Subroutine IKELOS: Status=complete.

MIDNIGHT EXIGENT: Status=still in progress.

V156NNI900CLS002

AI-COM/RSPN: ASSETS//COSMO//IMPERATIVE

IMMEDIATE EVALUATION DIRECTIVE

This is a CENTRAL ASSETS IMPERATIVE (secured/CONFERENCE)

This is an INTERNAL ALERT.

Number of exterior defense breaches has increased by 400% in the past year. Current campus defense protocols unable to keep up with new demands.

Operation MIDNIGHT EXIGENT is NOT YET COMPLETE. Interim response necessity is IMPERATIVE.

Hypothesize that resource GUARDIANS may be leveraged to compensate for CDP inadequacies.

Reassign 12 percent of COSMO assets to new directive: declare IKELOS.

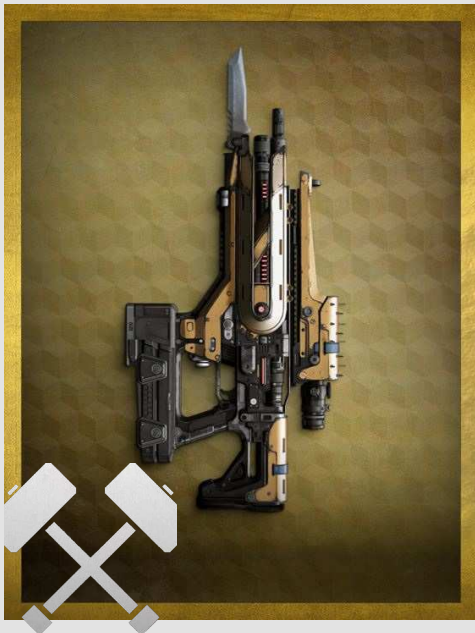
I am calling VOLUSPA and extracting subroutine DVALIN FORGE, to be modified and recompiled to comport to MIDNIGHT EXIGENT parameters.

I am inserting the modified DVALIN FORGE-2 into IKELOS and compiling for immediate implementation.

Execute short hold for partial shutdown and reactivation.

STOP STOP STOP V55NNI900CLS003

~Sleeper Simulant



Plan C

Good fighters have contingency plans. Great fighters don't need them.

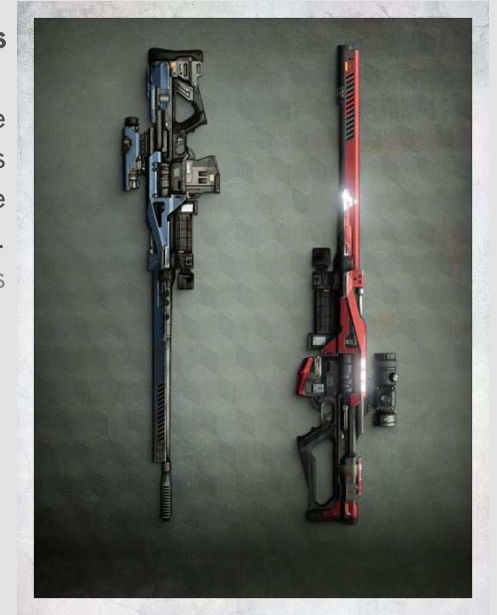
Sharp reflexes keep you alive on the frontier - but no matter how fast you are, a fusion rifle can only charge so quickly. Enter the Plan C. When you draw the weapon, fast-rise capacitors and a smart induction system prime for firing. The 'ready fire' state only lasts a few moments - but in a gunfight, those moments matter.

~Plan C

Sniper Rifles

The dangers present beyond the City's walls cannot always be met head-on. The accuracy and power of the Sniper Rifle offers the best option for precise ranged attacks. Caliber and make differ, but a good sniper can always remove key threats.

~Sniper Rifles



Herafter

"Huddled at the mountain's base, we had no choice but to beat our ploughshares into swords once more."

Once, we had peace.

This isn't a story about peace.

Then there was darkness, destruction, despair.

This isn't a story about those things either.

This story comes much later.

It's a story about what was here, after,

And what came next.

~Hereafter



Patience and Time

If you've got it, they'll never see it coming.

Patience and Time is an assassin's dream. Enhanced sensor integration allows for target tracking while aiming down the sight, and those who work with the weapon and explore its deeper capabilities will find light-bending camouflage systems ready to interface with a Guardian's armor micromaterials.

~Patience and Time





Icebreaker

Please replace these components if use causes fatal damage: HEAT SINK. MAGAZINE. OPERATOR

The Ice Breaker series was a clandestine project developed by the Vanguard in conjunction with various City weapons foundries. Meant as an exploration of Golden Age weapon technology, the project was scrapped after only a single weapon reached the testing phase.

The prototypes for the project's lone weapon are considered dangerous and unfit for field duty by the Vanguard. This hasn't stopped daring Guardians from seeking out the Ice Breakers - death, after all, is an occupational hazard.

~Icebreaker

Zen Meteor

"Complete awareness, complete focus. A mind sharpened by diligence to a single deadly point." - From the writings of Taeko-3, Praxic Deconstructionist

Exo have always known that a machine is capable of bridging the gap between the physical and the numinous. It is from that knowledge, and my collaboration with two Guardians — Hunter Uzoma Vale and the Warlock they call The Stoic — that the Zen Meteor was born.

This groundbreaking weapon uses electroencephalography to draw energy from the wielder's neural activity. It can even, if a certain threshold is met, convert that energy into matter to be used as concussive ammunition.

Or, to be more precise — the more focused the wielder's mind, the more powerful the weapon.

~Zen Meteor



Black Spindle

"Your only existence shall be that which I weave for you out of sorrow and woe."

The followers of Crota swing Hammers,
Sing death-songs:
Fatal.
Final.
Absolute.

Ir Halak and Ir Anūk laugh at Crota.
Finality is a child's plaything,
Fit for one such as Crota,
They say.

No Hammer for the Unraveler and the Weaver,
But a Spindle, wound with woe.
For their foes,
No end of suffering.
~Black Spindle



No Land Beyond

Every hit blazes the path to our reclamation.

Rumors of this weapon's existence sent many a Guardian clawing through the corners of Old Russia, seeking its legend. Some believe its origins predate the Golden Age and served to liberate the old Earth nation from a terrible cycle of war.

Others believe it a Golden Age relic built to honor the sniper and their artful approach to battle—to lean on the sole power of the long rifle, nest where the enemy cannot see, trust in the power of calm and know there is nowhere to fall back to.

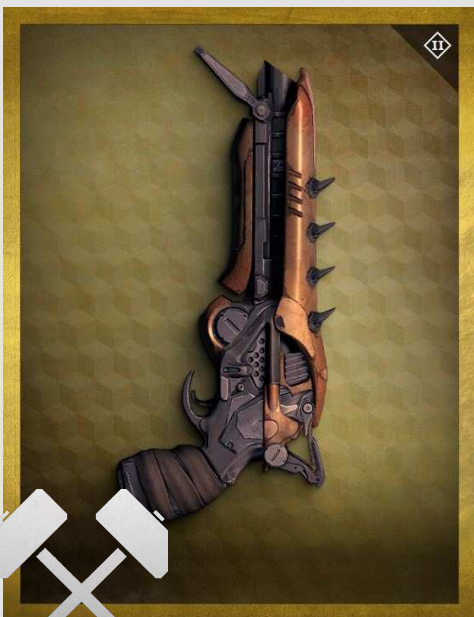
~No Land Beyond



Sidearms

The Sidearms class is made up of lightweight pistols designed for ease of handling and quick-firing. Its antiquated triggering system and engineering make it rare within City limits. As it's long been a staple of the Awoken Royal Guard, perhaps this newly forged alliance between the Reef and the City will see the Sidearm become commonplace within Guardian arsenals.

~Sidearms



Trespasser

"You are not welcome." –Unknown
"I beg to differ." –Shiro-4

Trespasser is Shiro-4's personal sidearm, kit-bashed over the uncounted cycles Shiro-4 spent braving the wilds beyond the City. This light, quick-fire shooter has ended more conversations than it has started. And will end many more before the last war is won.

~Trespasser



Dreg's Promise

"I am a marvel with ten thousand arms."

There is a story, old as time, of he who could catch the stars. Unnamed and eternal, the star-catcher would lead the Fallen, rising from the lowest station to the highest exalted peaks. It is a fairy tale allowed to persist by the four-armed to keep the docked hopeful, placated—even the low may one day ascend.

Myth, fairy tale or a prophecy of what will be, it's best to not take chances. After all, one can't reach across the black to claim dominion over ten thousand stars with ten thousand arms if they die here and now with only two.

~Dreg's Promise

Vestian Dynasty

"A Reef scout hunts for years—fighting piracy and ancient traps—to crack one cache and claim the weapons within."

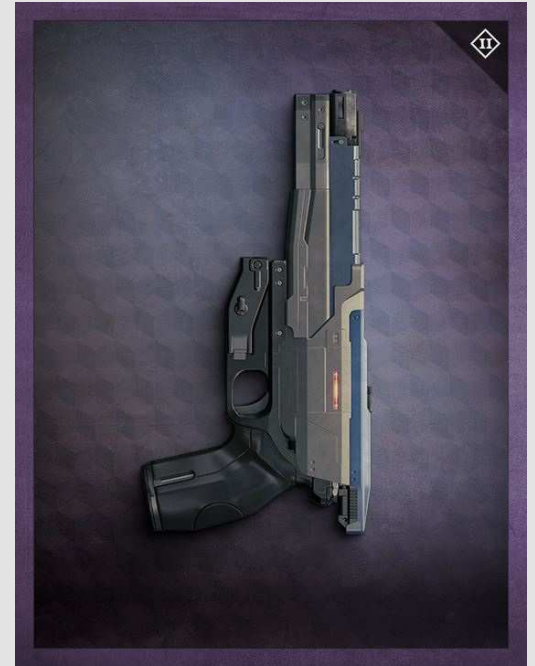
Imagine: you live in the largest territory in the system. A huge torus of habitable, explorable space. But there's a catch. That huge space is made up of millions and millions of nooks and crannies. Asteroids. Crumbling derelicts. Debris from dozens of wars. It's a place where you could go for thousands—millions—of miles without ever seeing another friendly face, and yet never once be able to stretch your legs.

Now imagine: you're spelunking across an asteroid, or crawling through a half-collapsed ship that could be hundreds of years old. You won't see enemies coming, not in a tight corner like that. Won't hear 'em or smell 'em either, not in the void. But then you move, or they move, and there you both are.

Rifles, shotguns, they aren't gonna cut it. You don't have room to heft a barrel of that length. Don't have the arm room to throw a knife or a grenade either. But what you do have is a sidearm at your hip. Small enough for a fast draw, strong enough to save your life.

That's why the Queen sends out every last Corsair with a Vestian Dynasty sidearm at our hips. And Vestian Dynasty is what gets us home again too.

~Vestian Dynasty



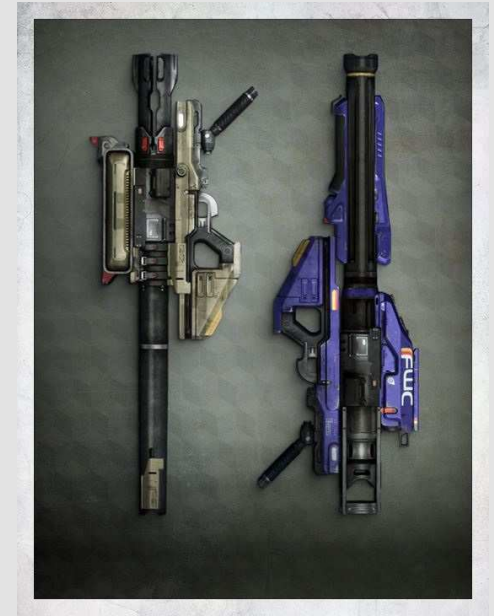
4.3 BRUTE FORCE



Rocket Launchers

Rocket Launchers have a limited, devastating payload that provides an excellent countermeasure to heavily-armored ground forces and combat vehicles. There is no better battlefield equalizer. Skilled users often aim for the ground beneath nimble targets.

~Rocket Launchers



Gjallarhorn

"If there is beauty in destruction, why not also in its delivery?" - Feizel Crux

The Gjallarhorn shoulder-mounted rocket system was forged from the armor of Guardians who fell at the Twilight Gap. Gifted to the survivors of that terrible battle, the Gjallarhorn is seen as a symbol of honor and survival.

~Gjallarhorn

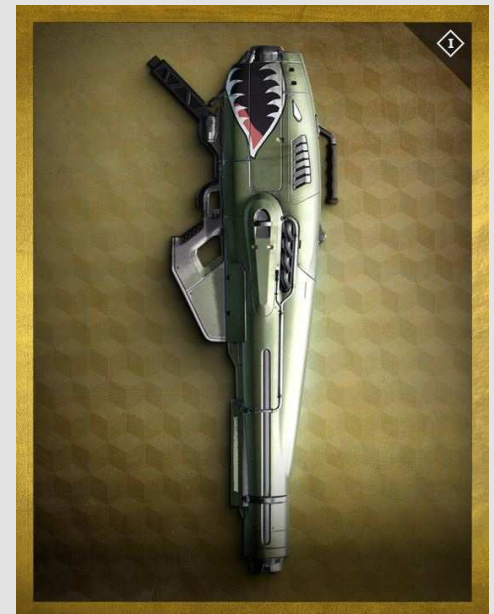
Dragon's Breath

Burn the world. Burn it all.

From the labs of Feizel Crux and Victor Lomar comes another shoulder assault offering built to match the incendiary fury of a legendary beast — or at least classic depictions of it.

Carrying three rockets, each equipped with Solar Flare detonators, its power is believed to far outmatch those of the mythical flying monster, but we're still hoping an actual showdown between the two will put an end to that argument.

~Dragon's Breath



Truth

"...is where you seek it." - Lomar

Truth is a cutting-edge rocket launcher developed by Crux/Lomar. Smart warheads calculate and understand the user's intent upon firing.

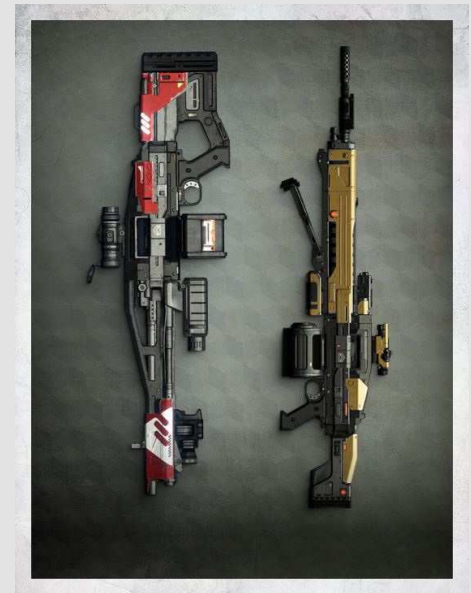
There may have been a time when warfare in the solar system was dominated by lightning-quick AI weapons and swarms of autonomous munitions. If so, that time is past. The Traveler's Light has given rise to an age of heroes with undreamt power. But there is still a place for cleverly designed machines - and as the City's foundries reclaim the technical prowess of the Golden Age, our machines will become cleverer still.

~Truth

Machine Guns

The Machine Gun is an unapologetic weapon of war. Its ability to carry and process large quantities of high-caliber ammunition allows for sustained, focused attacks, making them ideal for the suppression and/or annihilation of hostile forces.

~Machine Guns



Thunderlord

"They rest quiet on fields afar...for this is no ending, but the eye." - Hymn of the Thunderlord

Customized with an experimental induction core, the Thunderlord is a heavy machine gun built for the delivery of sustained punishment.

The weapon's history and mechanism are both shrouded in ritualistic awe. Each round fired is another word in the legend - and the Guardians who bear the Thunderlord will be immortalized in song.

~Thunderlord

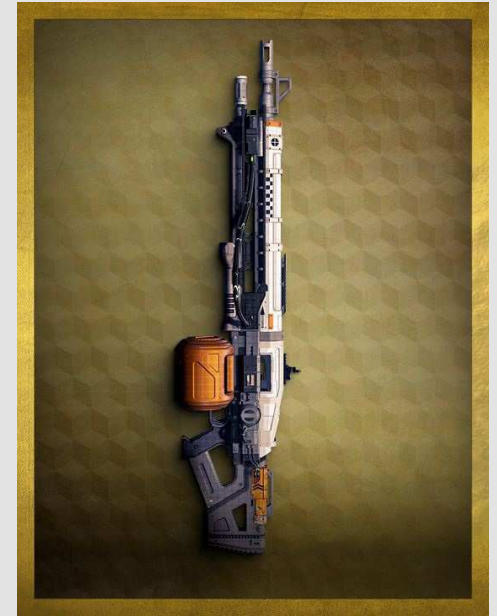


Abbadon

"I am one with the flame. The conflagration reborn. I am your funeral pyre." Anthem of the Abbadon

A variant of the Thunderlord outfitted with a prototype fusion modulation device, the Abbadon is built for rapid domination of the enemy.

Its mechanism is a delicate balance of barely-contained power and brute force. Every round it fires contains the potency of a sun.
~Abbadon



Nova Mortis

"From the space between I come. Fragments of stars burn in my footsteps. In my hands I hold Death." Song of the Nova Mortis

Before he died on the Moon, the Titan who wielded the first Thunderlord created two variants of the mighty weapon. Nova Mortis harnesses the power of the Void.

Notes found on the original schematic for Nova Mortis reveal its creator worried the weapon was as dangerous to its wielder as it was to those in its sights.

~Nova Mortis



Nemesis Star

What is the answer, when the question is extinction?

Who, or what, is the weapons foundry known as Nadir? Where did it come from?

And is the foundry's name a commentary on its own quality, or that of its rivals? An expression of fatalism? An inside joke?

Do these questions matter next to a weapon as powerful as the Nemesis Star?

~Nemesis Star



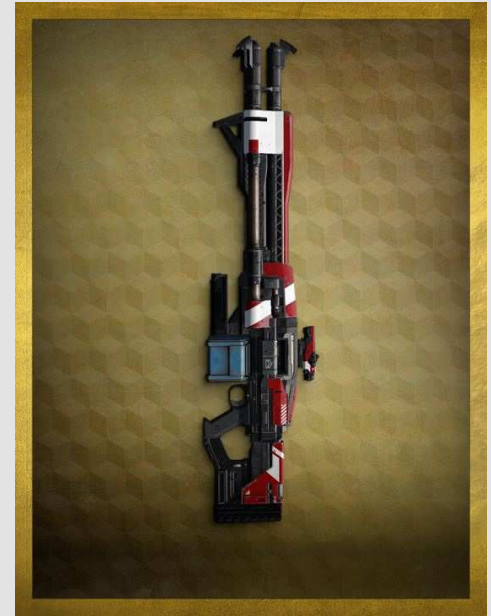
Super Good Advice

This weapon is full of it.

This machine gun's incredible mechanism hints at the wonders of Golden Age technology. Smart rounds report their trajectories to the weapon, and a micro-transmat protocol recalls missed shots directly to the magazine.

Engineers decry the idea that all smart systems spontaneously develop personalities and awareness...but it seems undeniable that Super Good Advice manifests personality, memory, and a certain sass. The truth may lie in the weapon's connection to the legendary Hunter Pahanin, who witnessed the fall of Kabr and became terrified of traveling alone.

~Super Good Advice



Swords

"There is no grace in their making, but we can change that." -Lord Shaxx

History might come to call it the Great Hive War, but others will remember it as the day the swords came to the City. Luckily Lord Shaxx's skills and research in all matters of swordplay will help ease this new age of weaponry into the Guardian fold.

~Swords



Dark Drinker

Draw close now. Closer. Yes. Let me tell you why you should not fear Willbreaker, the sword of Oryx.

Firstly: Its blade is not dulled by age. Each death it trades for life hones its edge, gives it weight and gravitas and insistence within the vortex of its own totality.

Nextly: Willbreaker transcends liminality. Willbreaker demands a subjugation more diffuse than the simple snick and smash of a physical brink. It does not have to touch you to wound you.

And lastly—and this is critical: To be taken in Willbreaker's grasp is to know true bliss; that is, to be simplified; that is, to be reduced to one's most basic level, shedding all higher-order thoughts of fear or duty or selfishness; that is, to feel only pain. Now do you see? Now do you understand what you've done?

~Dark Drinker



The Young Wolf's Howl

"To the first of the new Iron Lords." —Lord Saladin

This is more than a weapon.

Forged by Lord Saladin within the hallowed halls of the Iron Temple, this sword was intended for you, and none other.

When you wield it, its burning flames represent the bright light of your valor — and the all-consuming sacrifice that you have promised to make, should you be called to it.

Take up this blade, and teach your enemies to fear the Young Wolf's Howl.

~The Young Wolf's Howl

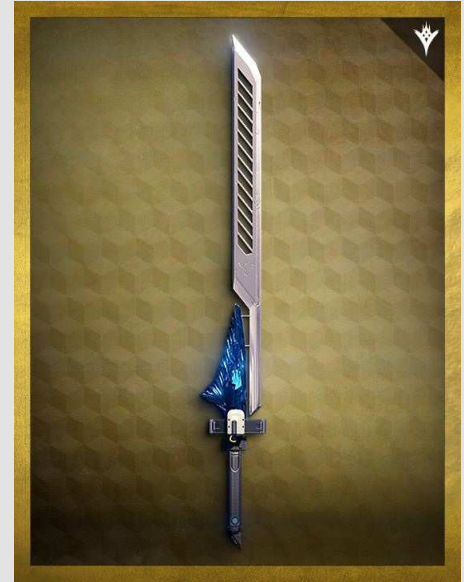
Bolt Caster

Excerpt of a missive from Lord Shaxx to the Tower Cryptarchy

...there must be a way to imbue it with Light. That is Ikora's theory. How glad I would be of her help, but her eyes are occupied with other trials.

Perhaps if I folded another substance into the blade—one that is forged in Light—it might imprint upon the malleable Hadium, share its attributes. But what substance? Ghosts are out of the question. Spinmetal is in the blade already, but its Arc was too diffuse to move the Hadium. Is there a way to refine Spinmetal, distil it to its core elements?

I have little gift for the science of this, but my resolve will not be thwarted. Maybe the Cryptarchs can advise.
~Bolt Caster



Raze Lighter



"Next order of business... the growing City foundries—"

[Bang]

"What madness is this!"

"Lord Shaxx! The Consensus did not—"

"We barely eked out victory at Burning Lake. And now you think we're ready to attack the Moon?"

"We're preparing—"

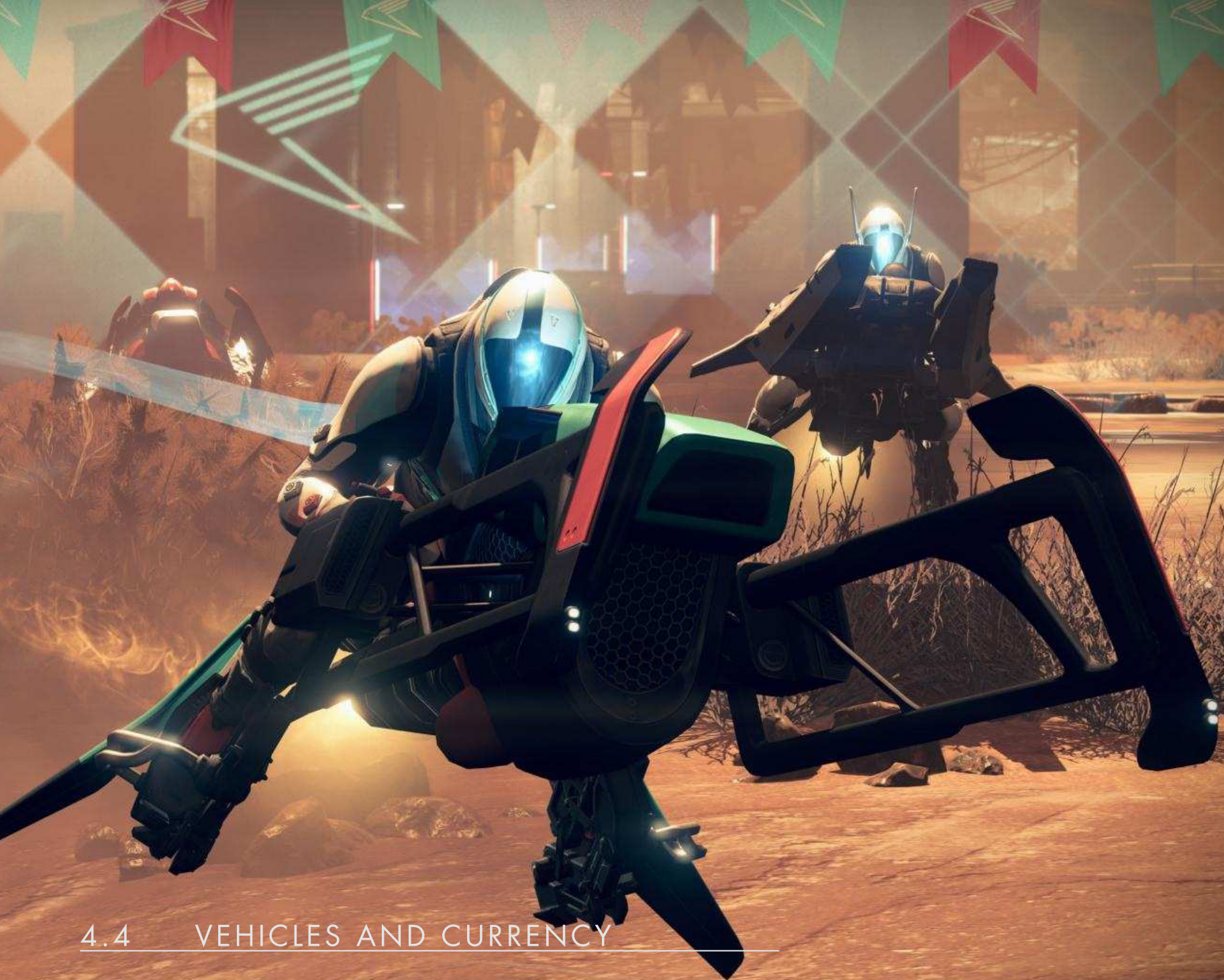
"Did you not read my report from Burning Lake? About the Hive's weapons? Those swords, they're like nothing we've ever—"

"Lord Shaxx—"

"Zavala! You can't think this is wise. We need to examine these swords, train against them—"

"That is a matter for the Consensus to decide, old friend."

~Raze Lighter



4.4 VEHICLES AND CURRENCY

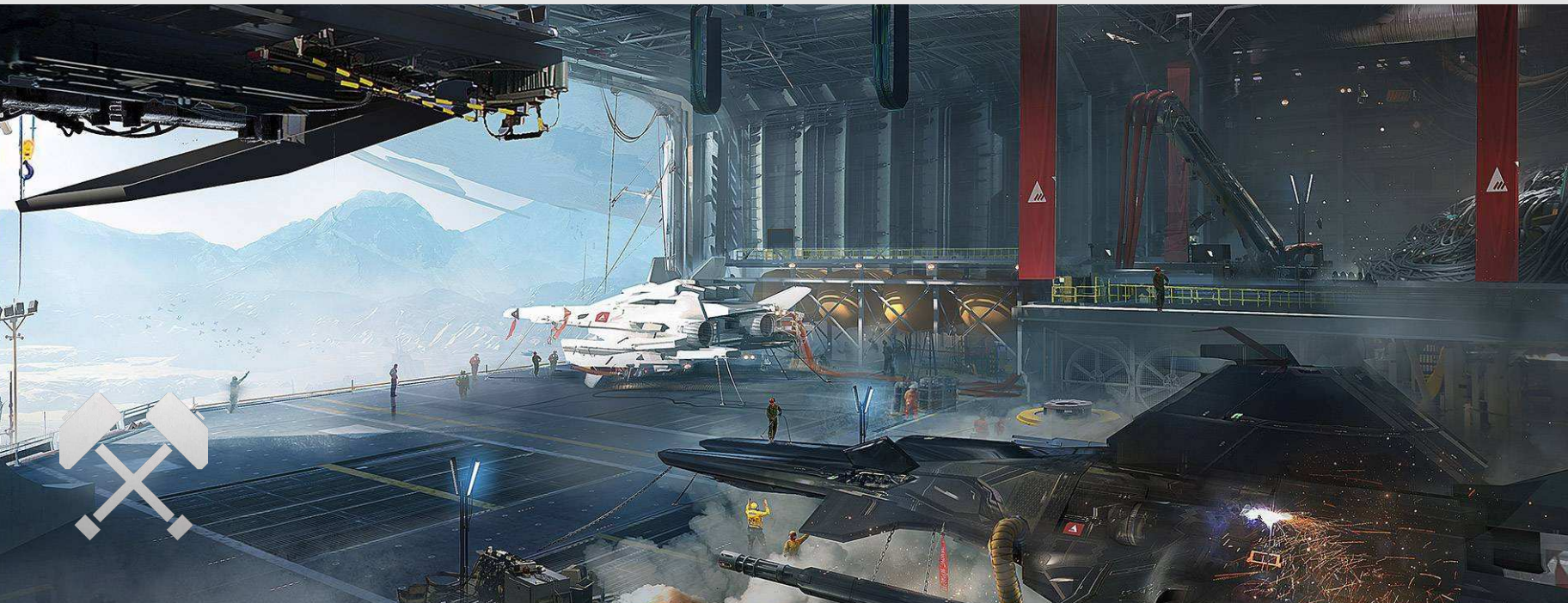
VEHICLES

"It is not enough to defend the City. We must reclaim the stars."

A rare and precious commodity, the jumpships utilized by Guardians are cobbled together from the salvaged wreckage of interplanetary ships built long ago. Only in recent years have the Tower's shipwrights begun working to build new hulls from the keel up. The City's factions are also keen to develop flight capability, whether through salvage or their own shipbuilding projects.

Today, it falls upon each individual Guardian to find and maintain their own craft. Those skilled enough to acquire a ship with off-world capabilities join the front line in the long war to retake what is ours.

~Guardian Ships



Sparrows

"The shortest distance between two points is full throttle."

The Sparrow is a single-passenger, all-terrain thrust bike with one purpose: moving from objective to objective with unmatched speed.

Quick, quiet, and simple to transmat, Sparrows enjoy surpassing popularity among Guardians working in the field.

~Sparrows



Lysander's Cry

"Each Guardian wants something: greater speed, a rare weapon, a secret. Learn what it is. Use it." Lysander

According to the Hidden, in the wilderness beyond the City, Lysander rallies his supporters and plots his return. Some whisper of sympathizers in the Tower and hidden gifts for Guardians who honor him.

~Lysander's cry

CURRENCIES

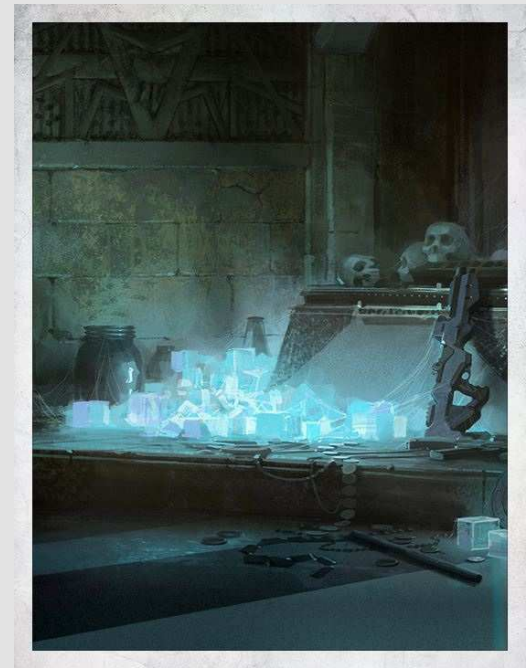
Glimmer

The programmable matter called 'Glimmer' serves as one of the City's basic currencies. With the right inputs and an energy source, Glimmer can be transmuted into nearly anything. This makes it precious to the City's industries and artisans. That value, in turn, makes Glimmer a useful means of exchange - especially with those who venture beyond the City's walls.

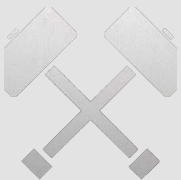
Glimmer passes through an economic life cycle. New Glimmer comes from reclaimed Golden Age caches and technology - whether a tiny mechanism or an underground lode seeded by ancient machines. This expansion of the Glimmer supply drives down the value of Glimmer. But Glimmer is also constantly used by the City's industry, which converts it into necessary components and materials. This sink helps keep Glimmer scarce, and therefore valuable.

Between this inflow and outflow lies the pool of liquidity - Glimmer used as trade currency. Master Rahool in the Tower, for example, sells recovered matter engrams in exchange for Glimmer, since he knows he can use Glimmer to acquire new engrams and keep them flowing to Guardians.

Newborn Guardians often complain that they should be issued high-quality gear for free - are they not, after all, fighting for the future of the City? Unfortunately, this gear requires resources to manufacture. Guardians must bring in enough Glimmer and other staples, like spinmetal and relic iron, to keep the engine of the City's economy turning. If good times lead to a resource boom, that surplus may help mass-produce advanced gear.



~Glimmer





Vanguard Marks

When a terrible threat rises, Guardians look to the Vanguard, the closest thing they have to a command structure. These elite veterans coordinate the reports of roaming Hunters, the analyses of cloistered Warlocks, and the instincts of grizzled Titans into a single plan of action. And when Guardians fight as part of that plan, the Vanguard rewards them.

Vanguard Marks are tokens of favor that earn a trusted Guardian access to the Tower's armories. Listen carefully to the rumblings of Lord Shaxx, and you might come to believe that this system was meant to keep vital warfighting supplies from being wasted in the Crucible. Talk to Commander Zavala, and he will reassure you that the Vanguard Mark system exists for one reason: to get the best equipment into the hands of those who get the best results.

Guardians eager to win Vanguard Marks would do well to participate in Strike missions organized by the Vanguard.

~Vanguard Marks

Crucible Marks

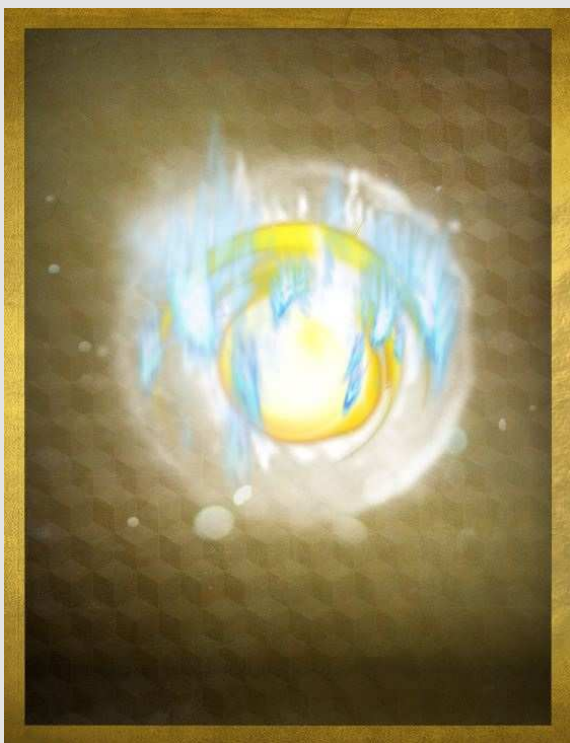
The Crucible is a program of relentless live-fire training, hardening Guardians for battles to come. Competition thrives on risk and reward, so Lord Shaxx has seen fit to dispense Crucible Marks to those who excel.

Guardians with a name in the Crucible can spend these Marks on elite gear. Shaxx considers it fitting that the best should earn the best. The City's factions, fond of using the Crucible as an arena to advance their own interests, will also accept Crucible marks in exchange for their equipment.

Guardians eager to win Crucible Marks should fight in the Crucible, with particular attention to those challenges Lord Shaxx deems important.

~Crucible Marks





Motes of Light

The Speaker has no interest in Glimmer, Marks, or the other currencies of the Tower's military functions. But he happily accepts these Motes, points of Light willed into being by an exercise of a mighty Guardian's power.

Some say they will one day become the souls of new Ghosts. Others believe they feed the intricate machinery that the Speaker tends. Whatever the case, the Speaker will happily reward donors with patterns and signs from his collection - more out of gratitude than any mercantile impulse.

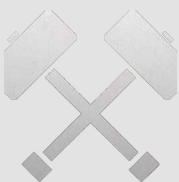
~Motes of Light

Strange Coins

Each coin rings with a faint, sharp hush - as if it has touched the sounds around it with the edge of silence.

These could buy incredible things, in the right hands. Whispers say the faceless creature who sometimes comes to the Tower covets them above all else.

~Strange Coins



Upgrade Materials

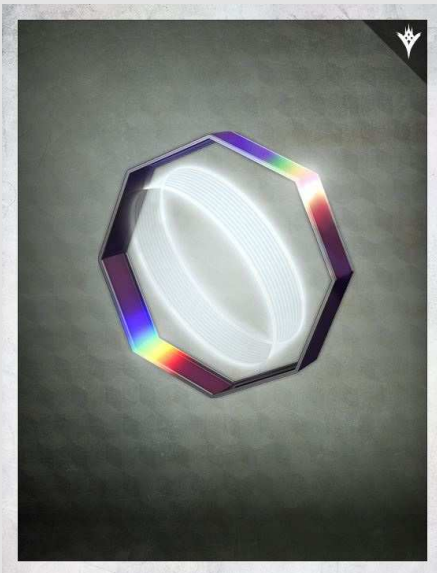
As Guardians buy or salvage new equipment, they learn to tinker and improve. This work requires Glimmer and other material.

Some can be recycled from unneeded gear. Titans favor plasteel, which can be found by disassembling old equipment. Hunters unspool discarded armor into sapphire wire. Warlocks extract hadronic essence from dismantled fieldweave robes. And any Guardian with a sense for weaponry can disassemble old ordnance into weapon parts.

Other materials need to be scavenged on site, generally in the course of Patrols. The Cosmodrome in Old Russia is rich with spinmetal, a fantastically light and strong composite created by rogue colonies of Golden Age machinery that escaped storage. Solar coil systems on the Moon still generate helium filaments. The baffling, possibly Vex-influenced flora of Venus grow spirit blooms. And the surface of Mars offers deposits of ultra-dense relic iron.

The most powerful Guardian equipment transcends ordinary science, entering the realm of Golden Age secrets and the Traveler's power itself. This wargear demands Ascendant Energy and Ascendant Shards - burning fragments of the universal fundament, earned through mighty acts of heroism.

~Upgrade Materials



Chroma

"It's not just about how you fight. It's about how you look." - Tess Everis

Eververse is proud to introduce: Chroma.

This Golden Age lighting technique was recently rediscovered by no other than Eververse's chief creative officer Fenchurch Everis. Using multi-channel heat sinks to accentuate Guardian weapons and armor, Chroma is a style for the fiercely, fearlessly fashionable.

~Chroma

Eververse

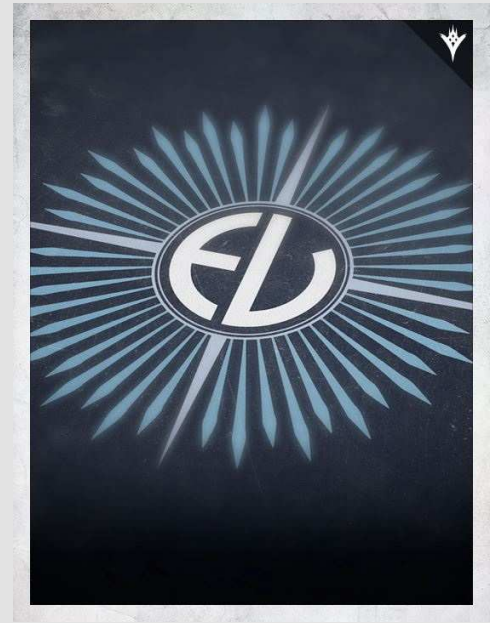
"I like your style, Fenchurch. Have you ever considered selling any of these? No? Well, I think the people need to see your work, Fen. I really do. Listen, I have an idea..." - Tess Everis

Tess Everis is always on the lookout for new opportunities. So when she crossed paths with the infamously eccentric artist, designer, explorer and Guardian who became known as Fenchurch Everis, Tess knew an opportunity when she saw it.

He brings the creative flair: roving the planetary wastes, gathering rare antiquities, crafting vibrantly new pieces, sharing new customs and techniques. She handles everything else, from business to marketing to managing the often-wayward talent.

Tess brokers Fenchurch's unique finds and offerings to Guardians of the Tower under the banner of the "Eververse Trading Co." Dealing exclusively in a rare Awoken crypto-currency called "Silver", Eververse is the first major merchant in the City that is unapologetically dedicated to style above substance. In a society wracked by near-constant war, Tess believes beauty for beauty's sake is a revolutionary idea.

~Eververse



Silver Coins

"Old Neville here woke me in the Martian wastes. Utterly alone, with nothing but our wits—and a lone, silvered coin buried in the sand beside me. This very coin, in fact. What could it signify? A mysterious message? A sign of royal birthright? A key to some ancient puzzle? For all my many adventures, this answer yet eludes me— What's that?" - Fenchurch Everis

Long before the Collapse, the Reef settlements used a currency commonly known as Silver—coins with engram-like qualities which could be digitally signed with an individual person's key.

Tess Everis, born in the City after her parents fled the Reef, counts among her most prized possessions an old Silver coin that belonged to her Reefborn grandmother. As the Silver was cryptographically unique, she was stunned to meet an Awoken Warlock named Fenchurch who possessed around his neck a Silver coin of his own, signed with the exact same key as Tess's. Like all Guardians, Fenchurch has no memories before the first time his Ghost resurrected him. But their Silver coins' shared origin leads Tess and Fenchurch to suspect that they are related.

Fenchurch instantly took to thinking of Tess as a long-lost niece, even assuming her surname, Everis. Tess loves the Silver that her new partnership with Fenchurch brings— but, though she'd never admit it, she secretly values her newfound family even more.

~Silver Coins







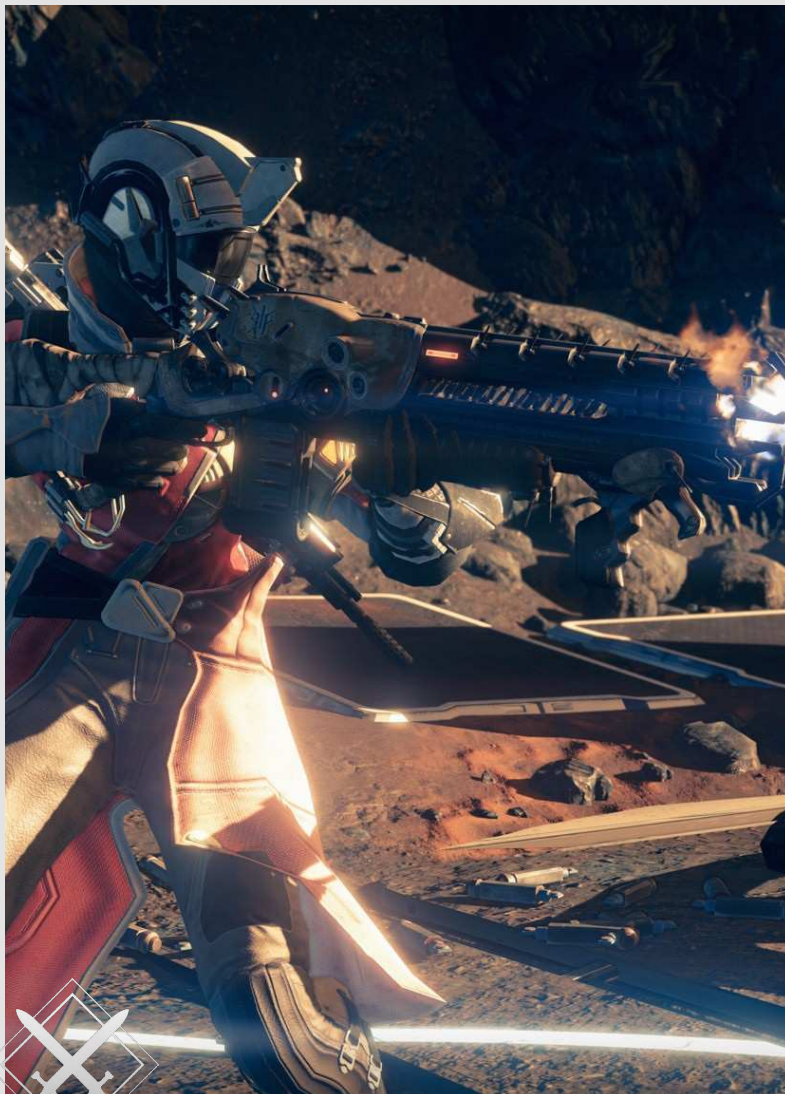




5.0 PROVING GROUNDS



5.1 CRUCIBLE ARENAS



The Crucible

"You wanna live? You're gonna have to prove it." - Lord Shaxx, Crucible Handler and veteran of the Twilight Gap

The Crucible is a series of grueling challenges that pit Guardians against one another in open combat. Crucible combat is live-fire, with Ghosts standing by to save the dead.

Whether alone or with a Fireteam, Guardians enter the Crucible to hone vital survival skills, build their own reputations, and win the patronage of City factions. Most importantly, the Crucible allows Guardians to train against formidable adversaries without fear of disaster.

~Crucible Introduction

Sparrow Racing League

"Some of the best Guardians are racers. People like Marcus Ren have made their legends on the track." - Amanda Holliday

Ever since the proliferation of the Sparrow, racing is a long-standing tradition among Guardians, but only in recent years have the races moved from an underground attraction to an organized sport.

Under the direction of the SRL, Redjacks and Guardians clear hostile zones and mark the race courses. Residents of the Tower and the City eagerly wait for news of the sport and follow the exploits of their favorite racers.

~Sparrow Racing League

"Very good! You haven't come close to beating any of my records, but I applaud the effort." - Fenchurch Everis

The SRL is making a concerted effort to track race results. As a part of this program, Everse is offering rewards for skilled racers who can provide proof of exceptional results on the circuit.

~SRL Record Book

Burning Shrine

"They do not simply invade new worlds, they infect them - remaking them in their image, until only Vex remain."

ARENA DESIGNATION: The Burning Shrine

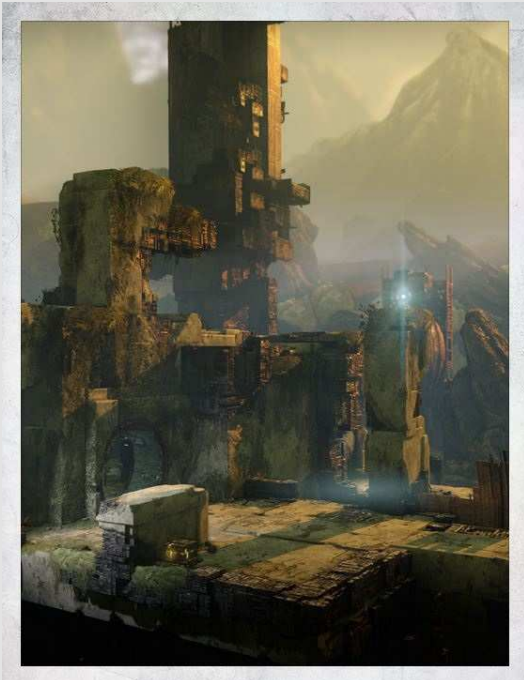
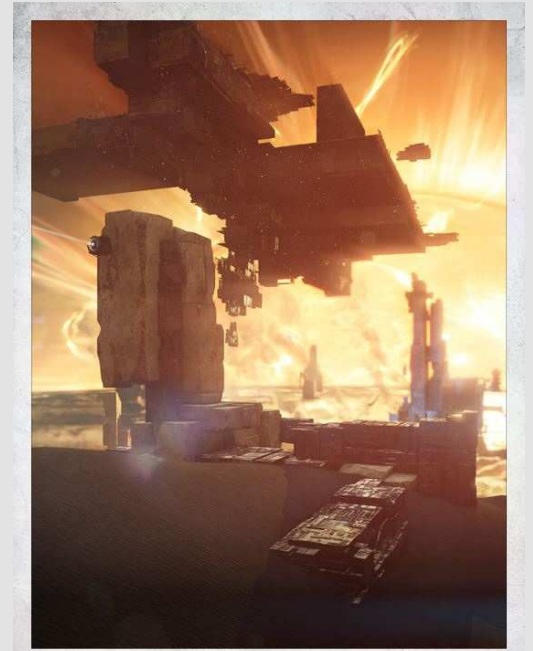
LOCATION: Fields of Glass, Mercury

This clockwork impossibility is but one small conduit in a vast network, extending throughout the dead planet's core.

The unknown energies and complex mechanics of the Shrine have been studied and mapped by the curious, yet its purpose remains a mystery. The only truth that can be agreed upon is that the structure is intimately tied to the past, and future, of one of our greatest enemies - the Vex.

The Shrine has been claimed as a battleground for the Crucible in an effort to familiarize Guardians with both Vex architecture and the otherworldly energies that signal their presence. Having a constant flow of combat-ready Guardians on hand should the Shrine ever achieve a higher functionality is simply a strategic byproduct of the Crucible's presence.

~The Burning Shrine



Shores of Time

"All power is humbled when weighed against the eternal tide."

ARENA DESIGNATION: Shores of Time

LOCATION: Maat Mons, Venus

The sulfur caves along the Shores of Time are now too unstable to be an effective base of operations for the Vex, but they suit the purposes of the Crucible just fine.

The region, which also houses the remains of one of the Ishtar Collective's many research stations, is a mix of geological chaos and the structured intent of ancient Vex machinery. The contrast between jagged, boiling terrain and the measured purpose of each Vex surface creates a unique battlefield - one where the planet itself seems to have risen up in defiance of the Vex intrusion.

~Shores of Time

Asylum

"There used to be life here. Now it's just overgrowth."

ARENA DESIGNATION: Asylum

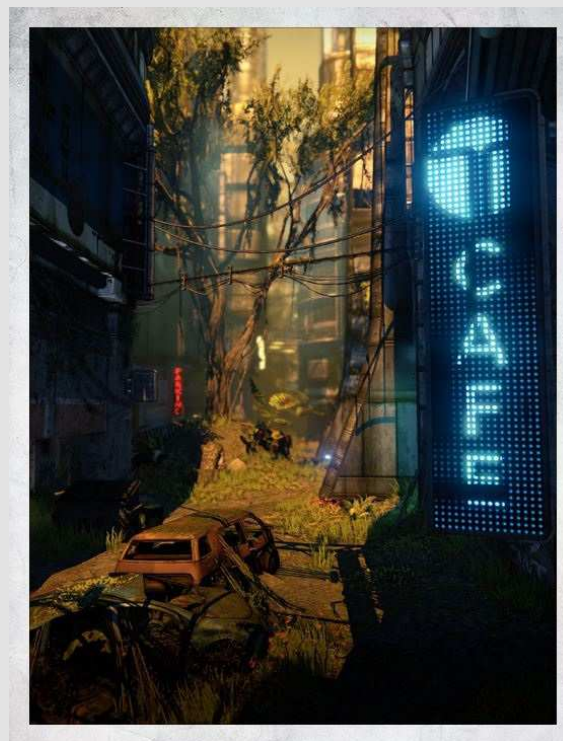
LOCATION: Ishtar Sink, Venus

Before the Collapse, this would've been just another stop on the subway line between

Clovis Bray's Venus arcology headquarters and the Academy campus by the shore.

Now, it's a grim reminder of the lives, the dreams, and the progress we lost when the Darkness came. For the Guardians of the Crucible, it's a place to sharpen their blades in the shadow of the Vex, an enemy who knows no such sentimentality.

~Asylum



Twilight Gap

"Here we fight, for the memory of those who stood. Here we die, for the glory of the Light that never fades."

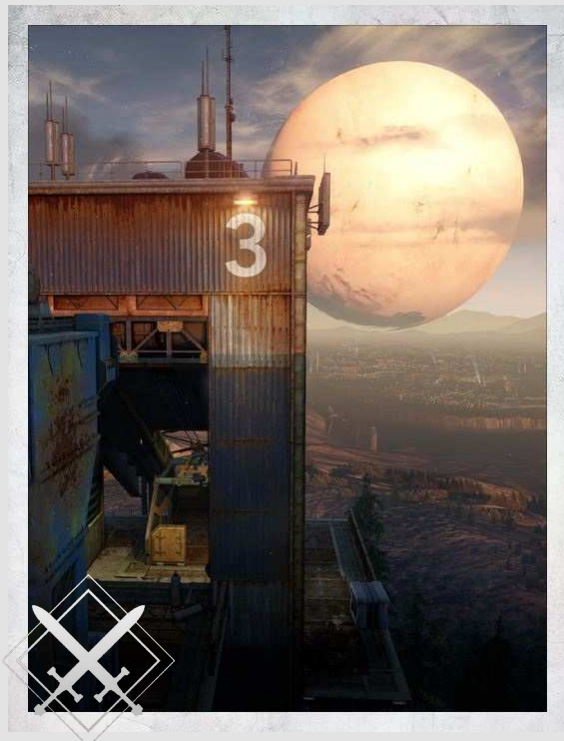
ARENA DESIGNATION: Twilight Gap

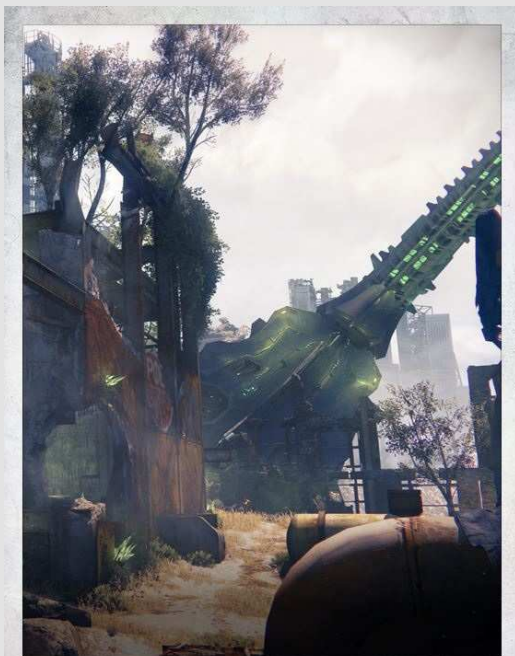
LOCATION: City Perimeter, Earth

Named for the City's greatest battle, this defensive battery once held the front line against the combined might of the Fallen Houses. Overrun during the course of the invasion, many Guardians lost their lives to hold the line.

That the Crucible now claims this hallowed ground is seen as a privilege - a rite of passage, as new generations of Guardians stand and fight where the brave fell, heroes rose, and legends were born.

~Twilight Gap





The Rusted Lands

"The scars of our collapse mark the land. Reminders that all is fragile in the face of time."

ARENA DESIGNATION: The Rusted Lands

LOCATION: Eastern Flood Zone, Earth

"The Hive never leaves the Moon." This is dogma - a way to soothe frightened children and reassure wary Guardians.

Not so long ago, a wandering Hunter and her Fireteam stumbled onto a feral community in the Eastern Flood Zone. The gaunt survivors huddled in these bombed-out ruins spoke of a terrible presence and begged for protection. No self-respecting Guardian could refuse.

As night fell, the Guardians found themselves the hunted - stalked through the ruins by shapes of bone and shadow. The discovery of a Hive Seeder made the truth plain. Mankind's ancient enemy had come to Earth.

The final confrontation came in the shadow of the Seeder, as a Hive Wizard and her Knights rose to challenge the Guardians. Only one Guardian returned to the City, her knife painted in black ash, a trail of grateful survivors in tow.

Now, in the chilling shadows of the Hive's pods, Guardians hone their skills in hopes that they may one day live up to the heroes of the Rusted Lands.

~The Rusted Lands

Exodus Blue

"In the shadows of all that we were, we fight for all we can be."

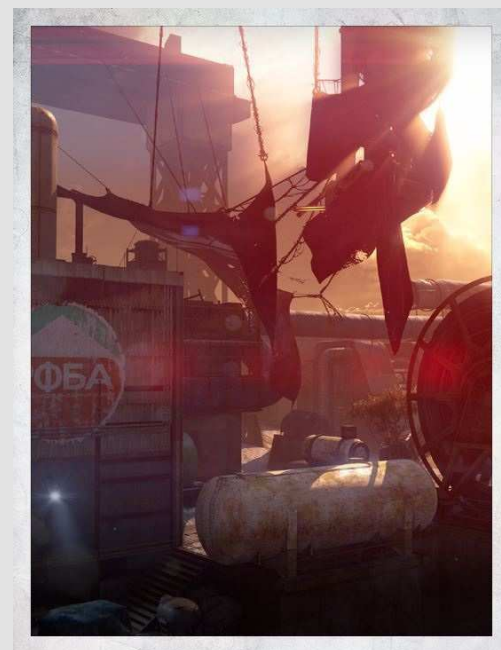
ARENA DESIGNATION: Exodus Blue

LOCATION: Cosmodrome, Earth

Grimly referred to as "The Graveyard," Exodus Blue was only recently secured for Crucible combat. Located among the ruins of one of the Cosmodrome's colony ship gantries, this site is a memorial to the grief and horror of the Collapse. Thousands died here in a last-ditch effort to outrun the oncoming Darkness.

But it is also a sign of hope. Once the Cosmodrome is secure, the great colony ships may fly again. And this location was chosen specifically to send a message to the Fallen House of Devils - "You may be picking at the bones of our history, but we are still here, and we are still strong."

~Exodus Blue



The Anomaly

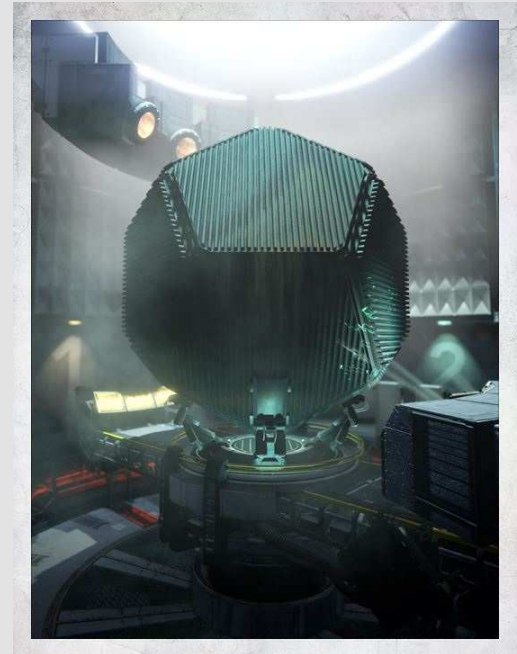
"Our greatest enemy is the unknown."

ARENA DESIGNATION: Anomaly
LOCATION: Mare Cognitum, Earth's Moon

Documents recovered on-site listed this research station only as "K1", although the location was hard to keep secret, given the intense electromagnetic fluctuations emanating from what City scholars have come to know as the Anomaly. Attempts to scan the Anomaly itself have proven futile, as the casing is constructed in a manner that defies modern techniques.

Reports suggest that those who spent time in proximity to the Anomaly reported symptoms of insomnia, some so severe they required hospitalization. It was the City's recommendation that only remote sensing equipment be used until such time that a full review of the existing data could be completed.

In the meantime, stewardship of the facility was handed over to the Guardians in order to maintain a watch against the Hive forces that will inevitably come in search of this mysterious power.
~The Anomaly



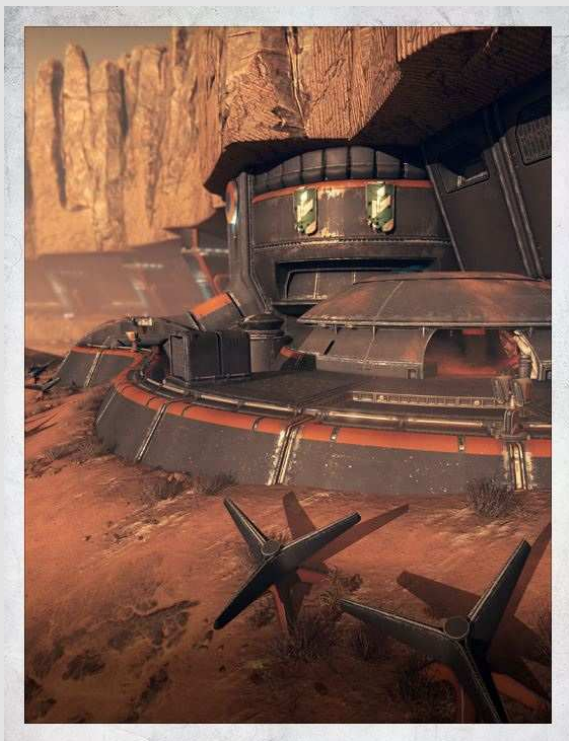
First Light

"The Earth shines so bright from here."

ARENA DESIGNATION: First Light
LOCATION: Mare Cognitum, Earth's Moon

What was once an unassuming exobotany laboratory complex turned into ringside seats to the end of the world during the Collapse. Immense fissures in the Moon's crust spew a sickly yellow miasma, and hint at the utter destruction going on deep beneath the surface. Whatever the Hive are up to, they've been at it a long time, and they're not overly concerned with keeping Luna in one piece.

~First Light



Firebase Delphi

"It's empty for now - like a ghost town. But for how long...and why?"

ARENA DESIGNATION: Firebase Delphi

LOCATION: Eos Chasma, Mars

When the Cabal decide to hold an area, they dig in deep. It's surprising, then, that the tunnel system at Firebase Delphi is woefully incomplete by Sand Eater standards. One theory is that it was built simply to be inspected, to satisfy some commander's lack of progress on another front. Perhaps the Cabal simply cut their losses once they realized that the location of the base was sub-optimal, although half-measures are really not something they're known for. We're talking about a culture that will grind a mountain to dust rather than build around it.

~Firebase Delphi

Bastion

"There's no telling the scale of devastation hidden beneath these red sands."

ARENA DESIGNATION: Bastion

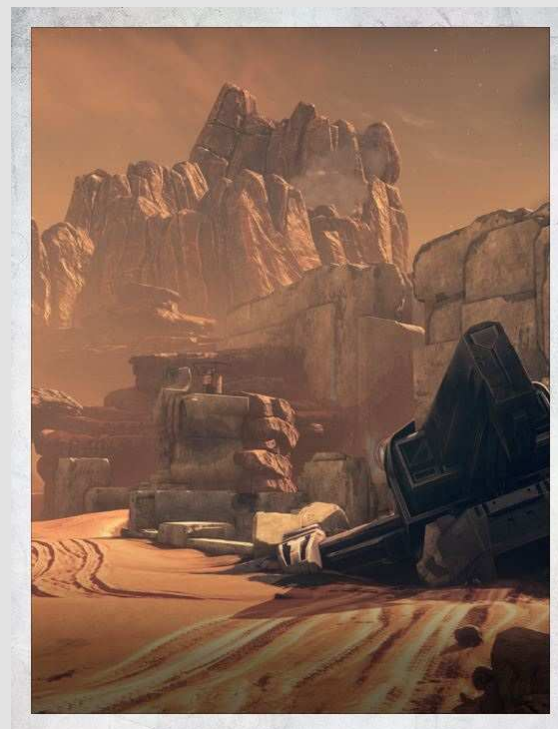
LOCATION: Meridian Bay, Mars

Thick, rugged terrain masks one of the largest Vex structures on Mars, leaving this imposing gate as the only conventional entrance. With the Cabal's interest in Vex activity, it was a matter of when, not if, they would set their sights here.

The Cabal deployed a massive ground and air offensive to breach the wall and enter the subterranean labyrinth. We don't know what the Vex deployed in defense, but we know this: the Cabal didn't make it very far.

The Vex have since mysteriously vanished from this region, giving the Crucible one of its largest arenas in the solar system. The Cabal, on the other hand, still prefer to keep their distance.

~Bastion



Blind Watch

"Dry as the bones you'll break."

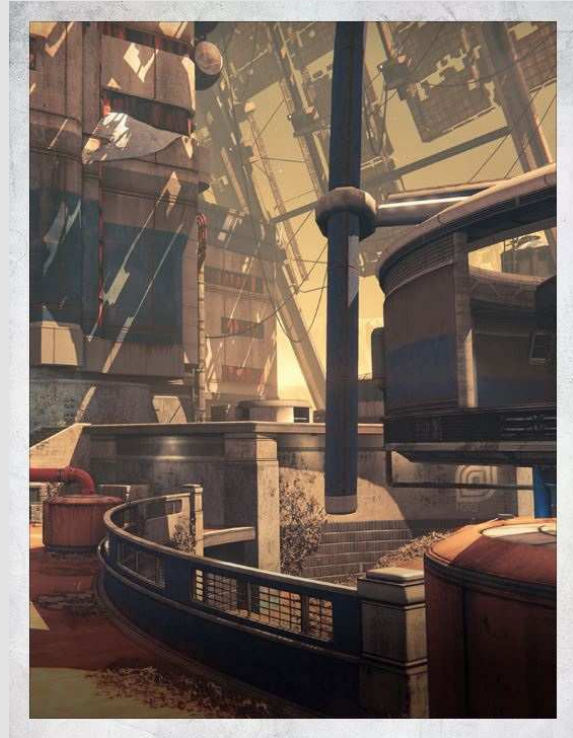
ARENA DESIGNATION: The Blind Watch

LOCATION: Meridian Bay, Mars

The Blind Watch was once a clandestine Guardian outpost on the outskirts of Freehold, used to monitor Cabal activity in and around the Buried City. After the Cabal consolidated their forces nearer their fortified Exclusion Zone, the site was reclaimed by the Crucible as a combat training ground.

Resting atop an old Clovis Bray science facility, the Blind Watch allows Guardians to acclimate to the harsh Martian environment, while maintaining a combat ready presence should the Cabal ever begin to mobilize.

~Blind Watch



Pantheon

"Take not for granted what you cannot see. What it is was not always, and may not ever be."

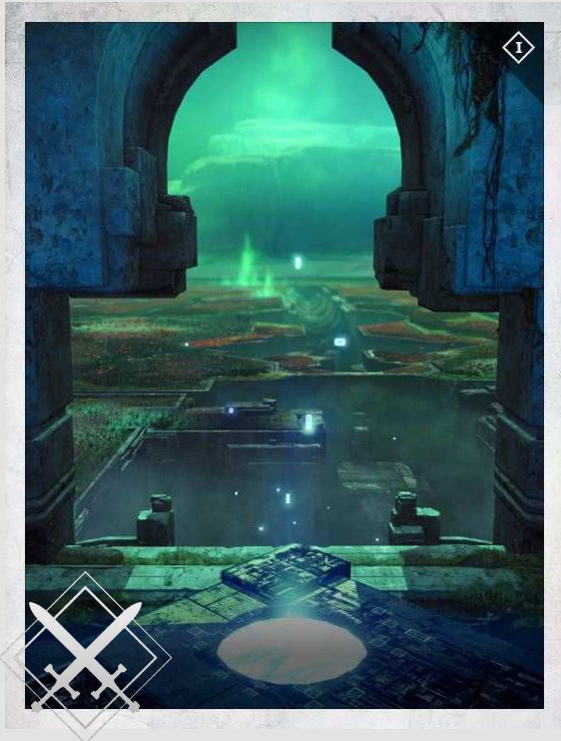
ARENA DESIGNATION: Pantheon

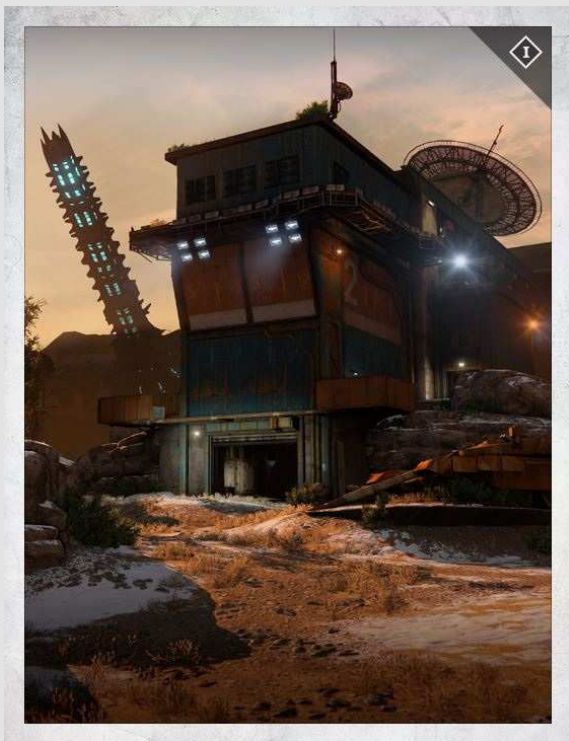
LOCATION: Black Garden, Mars

Deep in the endless channels of Black Garden, an ancient Vex temple sits high on a plateau, buzzing with anomalous messages.

Fearing that the Minds which live within seek to return, the Crucible has set up shop here to master the ins and outs of Vex-controlled landscapes and keep watch should any Vex find a way back.

~Pantheon





Skyshock

"Whatever they were after here, it's been lost. We can only hope it was Rasputin that destroyed it and not the Hive." - Lord Shaxx

ARENA DESIGNATION: Skyshock

LOCATION: Old Russia, Earth

This repowered interplanetary defense array in the Cosmodrome, once under the control of Rasputin, was recently ravaged by the Hive.

Now cleared and controlled by the Crucible, the deserted Seeders left amongst the Skyshock Array offer more evidence that the Hive's endless battle with the last Wurmind still rages on, and has now reached Earth.

~Skyshock

The Cauldron

"Every inch of this place feels wrong... tainted. Makes your Light itch. Just ignore it and keep firing." - Arcite 99-40

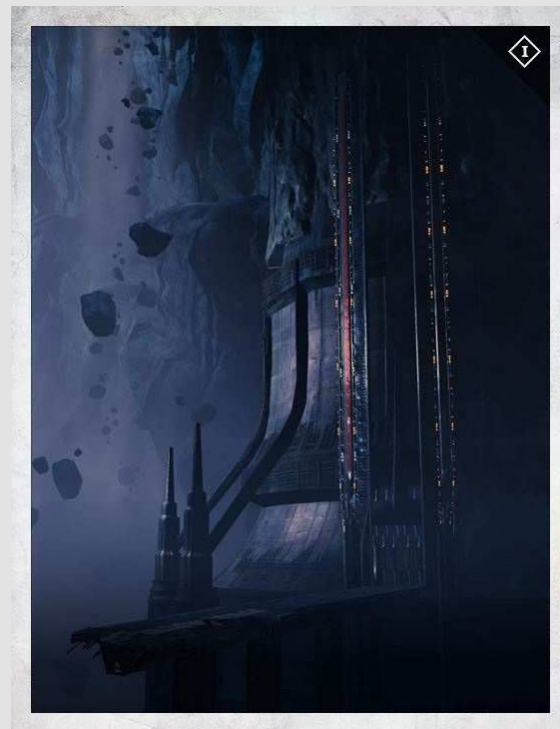
ARENA DESIGNATION: The Cauldron

LOCATION: The Dark Side, Moon

The Warlocks' most lucid theories assert this crumbled husk of a Hive ritual site is one of many ceremonial transmogrification chambers hewn beneath the Moon's crust.

Now secured and maintained by the Crucible, scheduled study of it's remnants suggest a sacrificial purpose—where other forms of life were given an audience with the reigning monarch and judged before the power of the Darkness.

~The Cauldron



Black Shield

"The Cabal are too structured, too disciplined. Let's show 'em what fun looks like."

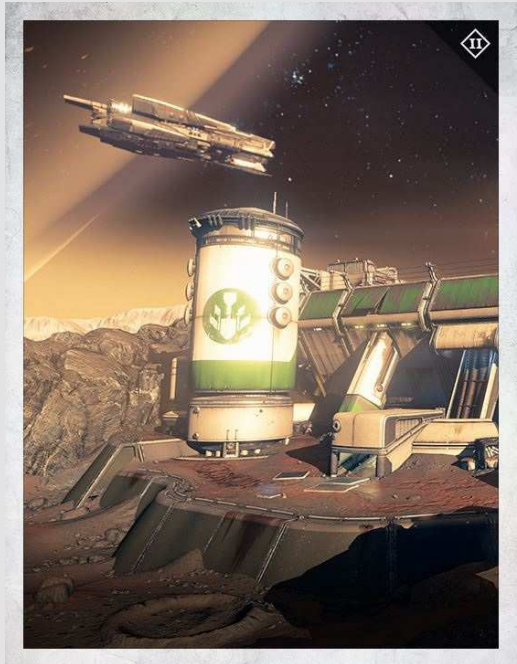
ARENA DESIGNATION: Black Shield

LOCATION: Firebase Thuria, Phobos

Codenamed "Black Shield," this decommissioned Firebase is believed to have been a key position used by the Cabal as they established their warbase on the surface of Mars. With the majority of their forces stationed planet side, Guardians have been able to claim Black Shield as a competitive training ground.

Both Shaxx and Commander Zavala have questioned the Cabal's strategy, believing that forfeiting such a strategic position may one day leave the Cabal, and Mars, open to a proper offensive.

~Black Shield



Sector 618

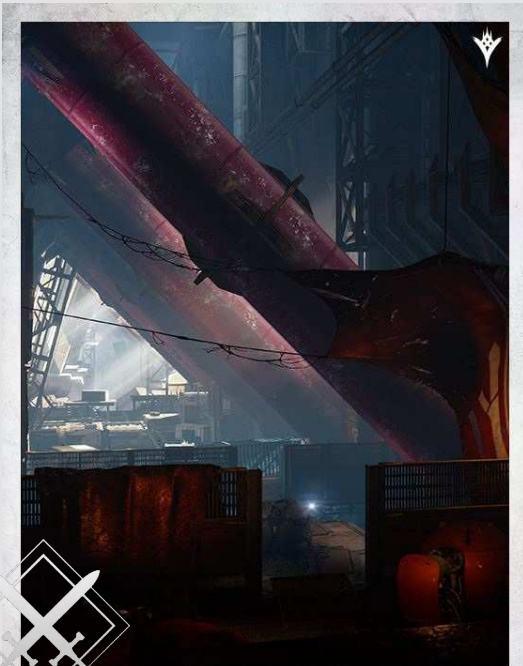
ARENA DESIGNATION: Sector 618

LOCATION: Cosmodrome Wall, Earth

Sector 618 is a recently-established Crucible arena mired in a ruin of the Cosmodrome. Secured by Shaxx and a Redjack fireteam, the space has been converted into an obstacle course for the Guardians, adding balance and navigational challenges to the live-fire proceedings.

But the firefights of the Crucible aren't the first that the facility has seen. The battles that shook the walls of Sector 618 belie the simple name, taken from its designation on the Vanguard atlas. It was chosen as an arena because the look of the place reminded Lord Shaxx of the spirit of war. Only Rasputin, who was operational during its height, could have witnessed what transpired here long ago. But the Warmind remains silent about a great many things.

~Sector 618



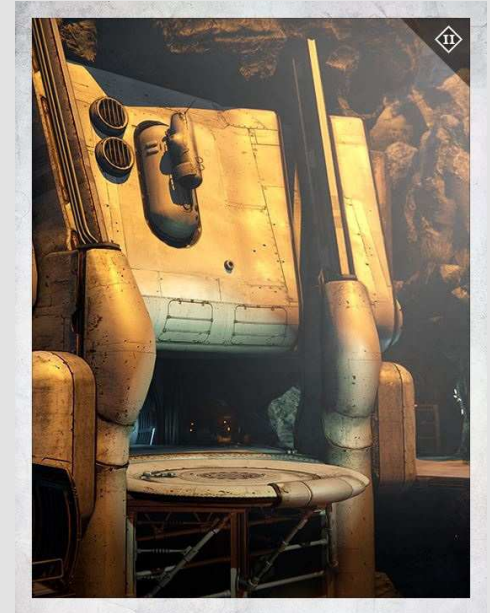
Thieve's Den

"Whose house?"

"OUR HOUSE!" - Crucible Reclamation and Security Squad, C-18-Green upon clearing the Thieves' Den for Crucible use

Following the defeat of the House of Winter's ruthless Kell, Draksis, Guardians found a number of abandoned Fallen enclaves throughout the Ishtar Sink. Most were cleared out, but this recently-active Fallen hideout remained mostly intact, complete with idling Skiff and constant reminders of the Fallen's presence.

~Thieve's Den

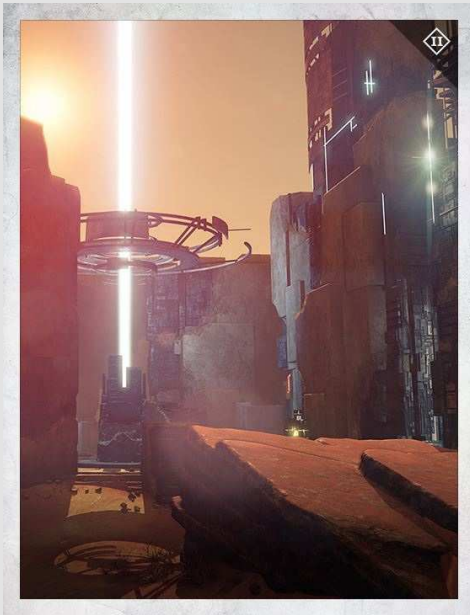


Timekeeper

"Gears are busted, but if this clock ever starts ticking...? We'll be outta luck, and outta time."

Another mysterious structure built by the Vex millennia ago or to come. The rogue Warlock Osiris once theorized that this place, and others like it, were tuned to react only with presence of the Darkness itself.

~Timekeeper



Widow's Court

"It's only quiet 'til the shooting starts."

Nestled against the crumbling facade of a derelict wall on the edge of the European Dead Zone, there are countless stories of the events that left this small village a ghost town. But its eerily quiet streets and nostalgia have made it a favorite of Lord Shaxx.

~Widow's Court

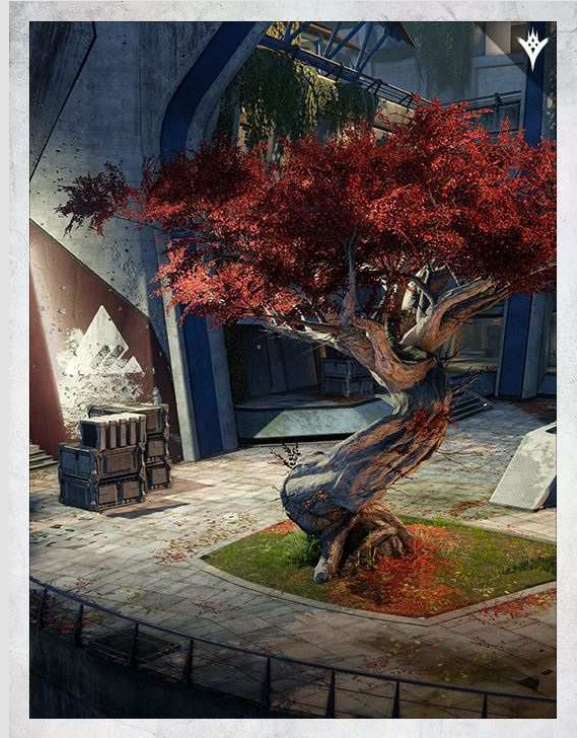


Bannerfall

ARENA DESIGNATION: Bannerfall
LOCATION: The Last City, Earth

Lysander and the Concordat mark the most recent example of a City political factions rising in opposition to the Consensus. This site marks a legendary battle where New Monarchy's Guardians rose to deliver the final blow to the Concordat, unraveling the war effort Lysander sought to bring against the Vanguard.

Lord Shaxx has commandeered the area not only to commemorate this last stand, but as a reminder of the City's solidarity against those who seek to undermine the extreme efforts and sacrifice we make together to keep our peace.
~Bannerfall



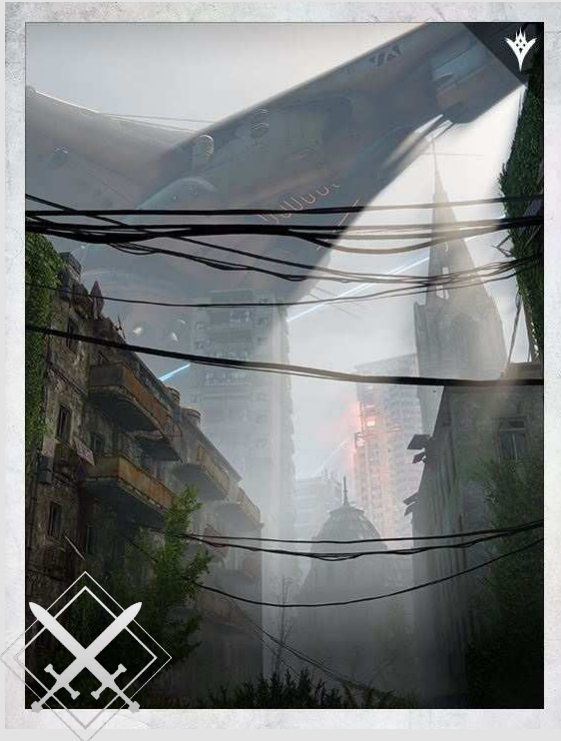
Memento

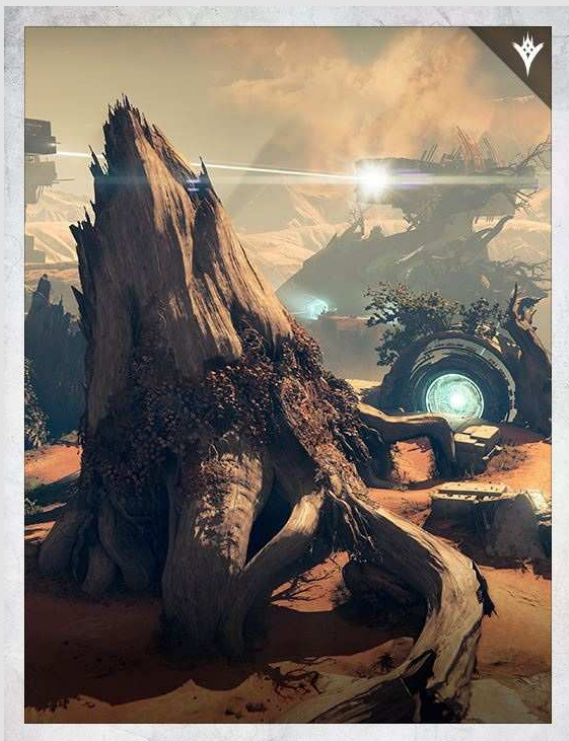
ARENA DESIGNATION: Memento
LOCATION: European Dead Zone, Earth

On the outskirts of the European Dead Zone lies a ruin, once a thriving riverside city center. Crucible codename: Memento, the ghost city features resplendent streets and bleeding edge pre-Golden Age architecture— or did, before nature reclaimed it.

When pressed about the sensibility of maintaining a Crucible arena amidst a sanctioned Dead Zone, Lord Shaxx responded, "Nothing in this world stays dead for long anymore. We need to be ready."

~Memento





Crossroads

ARENA DESIGNATION: Crossroads

LOCATION: The Lost Oasis, Mars

An active Vex structure on Mars with no Cabal vying to occupy or destroy it is rare. Even rarer is such a facility abandoned by the Vex themselves.

Detailed analysis of the site estimates three separate ecosystems that the landscape could support, if the area had any wildlife to benefit from it. A Hidden report to Ikora mentioned, "They clove this ruin out of the land, possibly to defend themselves from a long-vanished enemy, or perhaps to isolate the land for experimentation."

~Crossroads

The Dungeons

"Let us take what we can. You just wait. Pretty soon we'll be holding matches atop Oryx's throne." -Lord Shaxx

ARENA DESIGNATION: The Dungeons

LOCATION: Rings of Saturn

Space-faring Hive vessels contain living components— and like the Hive themselves, are a terrifying amalgam of predator genetics, arcane bio-energetics, and what we must consider as Darkness incarnate. But Lord Shaxx and his Redjacks have proven: even a Hive ship can be tamed.

~The Dungeons



The Drifter

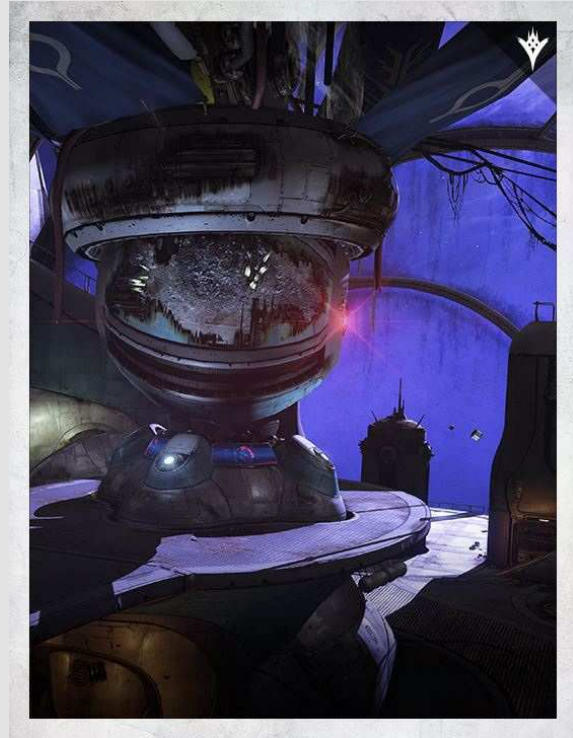
ARENA DESIGNATION: The Drifter
LOCATION: Foundling's Gyre, The Reef

Hive incursions in Reef space are rare, but as with all wounds the Hive inflict, their effects linger.

"The Drifter" is a Ketch that faced such an infraction. The attack rendered its Servitor inoperable, overwhelming all self-repair subroutines, and so what remains has quietly been added to the graveyard encircling the Reef.

Lord Shaxx decreed live combat within the layout of such a prominent Fallen ship design would be invaluable, and the Crucible claimed it soon after with no word of disapproval from the shattered Reef.

~The Drifter



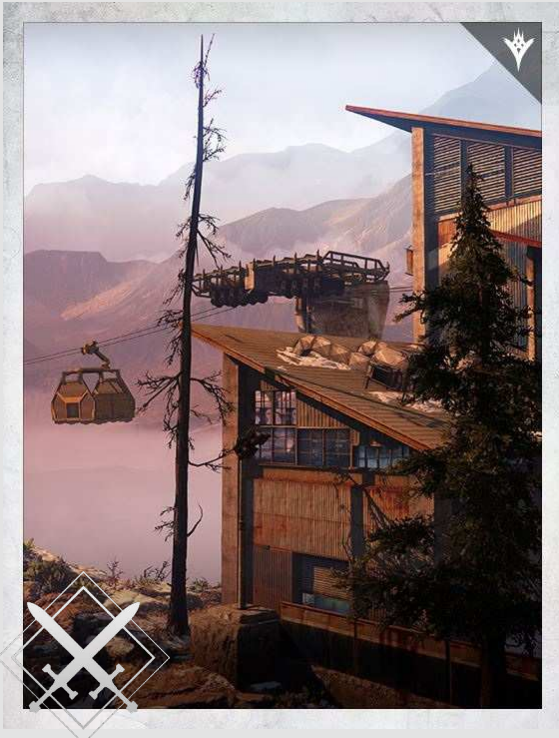
Frontier

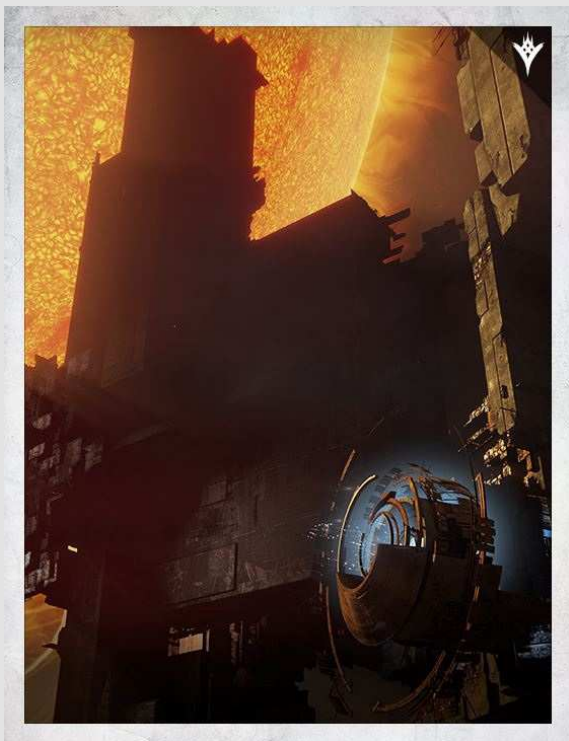
ARENA DESIGNATION: Frontier
LOCATION: City Perimeter, Earth

This lookout station at the edge of the City's borders was decommissioned in the face of increasing Fallen attacks shortly before the Battle of Twilight Gap.

Refitting of the station post-battle was moth-balled when Lord Shaxx found that, amongst the dirt, dust, and rusting metal, the station was prime for live fire exercises. The runway layout of Frontier station makes it a perfect course to train for the rising craze of Rift-based assault.

~Frontier





Vertigo

ARENA DESIGNATION: Vertigo

LOCATION: Caloris Basin, Mercury

When the Vanguard launched its first waves of exploratory ships to Mercury, it found that the Cabal fascination with the Vex isn't contained to the warfronts of Mars. The Guardians discovered a small fleet of Cabal dropships hanging in place alongside a collection of unique structures. Their propulsion systems were slaved in sequence to keep the ships there indefinitely. The fate of the Cabal is as mysterious as Vertigo itself — the Guardians detected no catastrophic malfunction, no disease, and no bodies aboard any of the fully-supplied ships.

As for the structure, upon recent inspection by Lord Shaxx himself, the Crucible Handler sent a recommendation to Commander Zavala and the Speaker: "The verticality will do wonders for new recruits. It's time to fight."

~Vertigo

Cathedral of Dusk

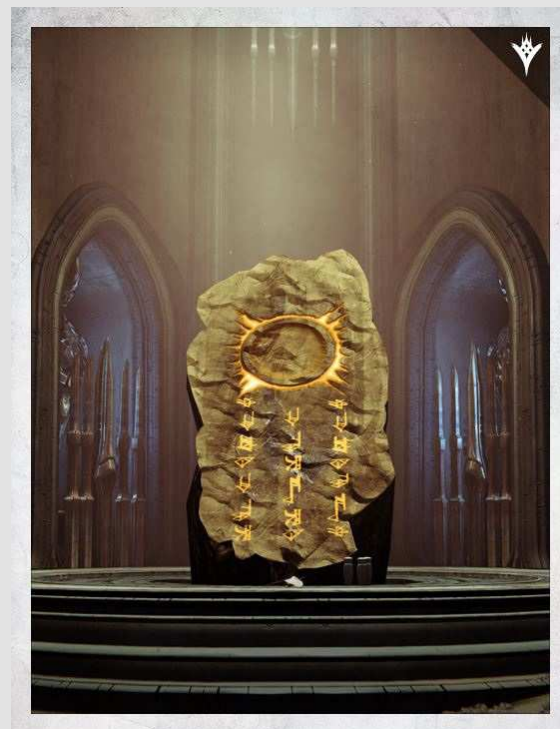
"The impact of Oryx's arrival was immediate. He was all full of bluster and noise. We took offense — and that wasn't all we took." - Lord Shaxx

ARENA DESIGNATION: Cathedral of Dusk
Dreadnaught, Rings of Saturn

As soon as the first Guardians penetrated the Dreadnaught, Shaxx's Redjacks launched a boarding party to Oryx's fortress. By war's end, they'd fought all the way to the ship's "impossible weapon," the Dark ordnance that obliterated the Awoken fleet.

It was there they found what the Warlocks named the "Cathedral of Dusk." A Hive burial site for — what? A former master of Oryx? Comrade? Lover? It was vile. And obvious that Oryx never expected the Light to reach so deep inside his throne, to such an intimate space. But he didn't expect a lot of things — like a Guardian training ground atop the husk of his dead ship.

~Cathedral of Dusk



Skyline

ARENA DESIGNATION: Skyline

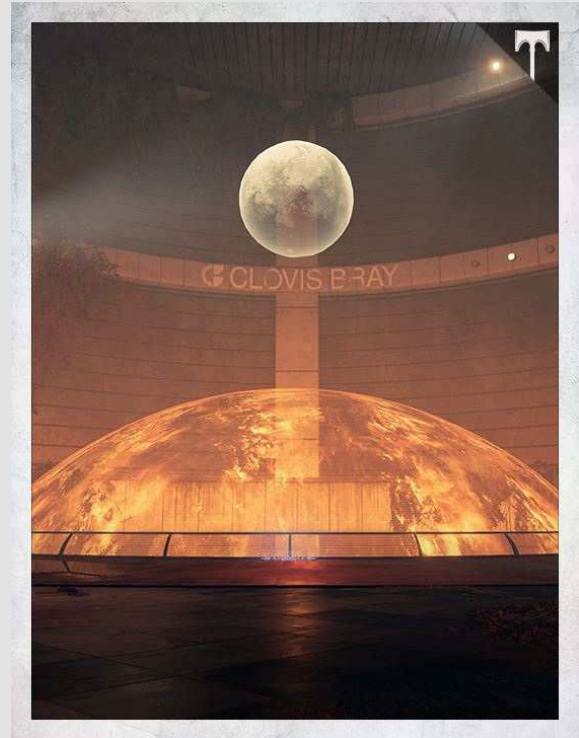
LOCATION: Buried City, Mars

This Clovis Bray center served as a hub to several company assets across Meridian Bay and beyond. Though a transit system connects the various Bray facilities, the exact breadth of the network has been lost to time. The Vanguard intends to shed light on the mystery.

After the role Clovis Bray tech played in Earth's SIVA Crisis, Commander Zavala wants no stone unturned when it comes to the Golden Age conglomerate.

But for now, Vanguard researchers have learned all they can from Skyline.

It's Lord Shaxx's turn to scrutinize it.
~Skyline - Meridian Bay, Mars



Last Exit

ARENA DESIGNATION: Last Exit

LOCATION: Ishtar Sink, Venus

The Redjack fireteam that discovered this ancient transit stop could detect no sign of a recent struggle in the area, despite the heavy damage the facility had sustained. The Redjack Alpha reported that station operating modules were stuck in a protocol dubbed "Last Exit." It seems passengers from the nearby Collective were trying to escape some overwhelming force. And it appears that most did not succeed.

Today, the desolate station is home to the war games of the Crucible. And should the threat that destroyed this place return, the Guardians will be ready.

~Last Exit - Ishtar Sink, Venus



Icarus

ARENA DESIGNATION: Icarus

LOCATION: Caloris Basin, Mercury

This facility on Mercury has remained untouched by the Vex for reasons unknown. The Golden Age technology at this location remains intact, harnessing energy from the sun and converting it to Solar Light. The Vanguard has denied petitions from the various weapon foundries of the City to research the solar farm (and the resources it continues to collect) until the Warlock orders have finished their surveys. An exemption has been granted to Lord Shaxx and his Crucible: the Guardians are free to use Icarus as a live-fire training zone.

~Icarus - Languid Sea, Mercury

Floating Gardens

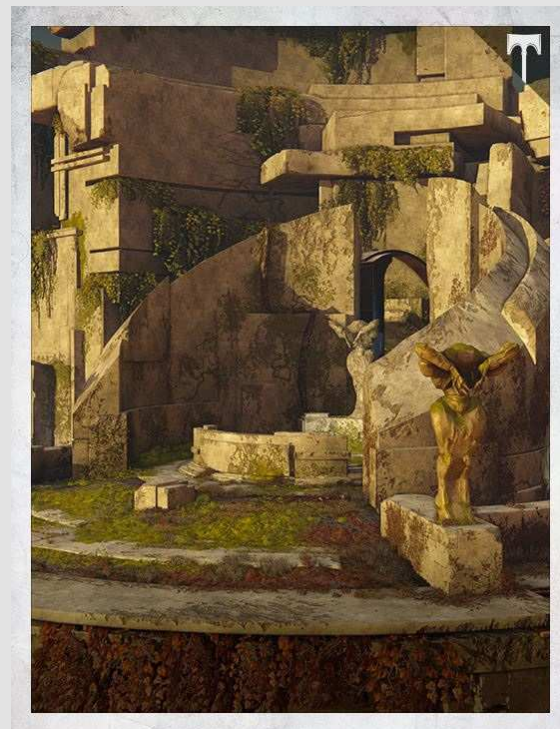
ARENA DESIGNATION: Floating Gardens

LOCATION: Pomona Mons, Venus

"Whether this site ever held the fabled beauty of the other gardens is unclear, as the Vex had long overwritten it with their anabolic algorithms. But it belongs to the Crucible now, and when I see heavy weapons fire tearing across the landscape, all I see is beauty." —

Lord Shaxx

~Floating Gardens - Pomona Mons, Venus



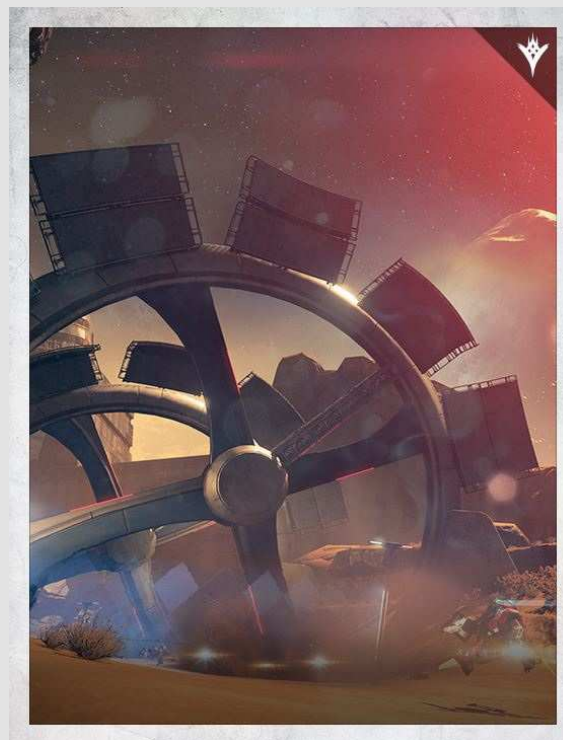
Campus Martius

"Gotta make sure your timing is just right if you wanna slide through those blades." -

Amanda Holliday

The massive turbine assemblies that serve as Campus Martius's most distinctive obstacle are a relic from a lost Golden Age facility. The SRL uses them to power needed equipment for the races, but there are signs that some energy is being diverted to an unknown location.

~SRL: Campus Martius

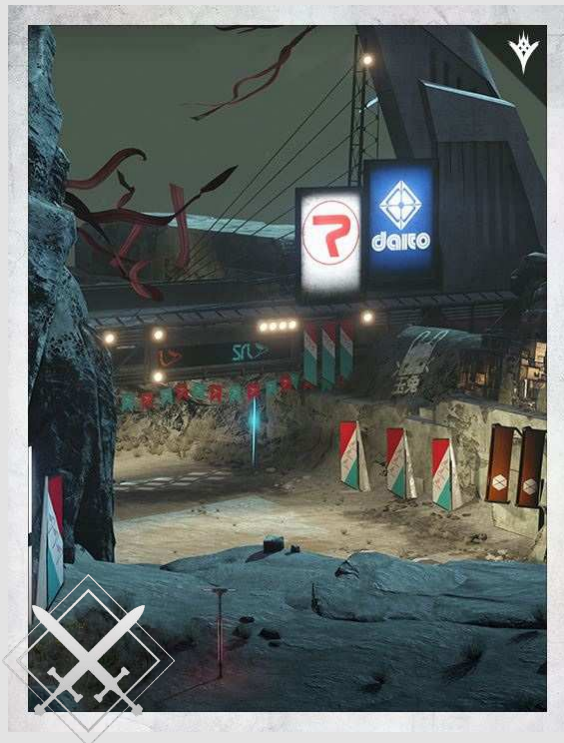


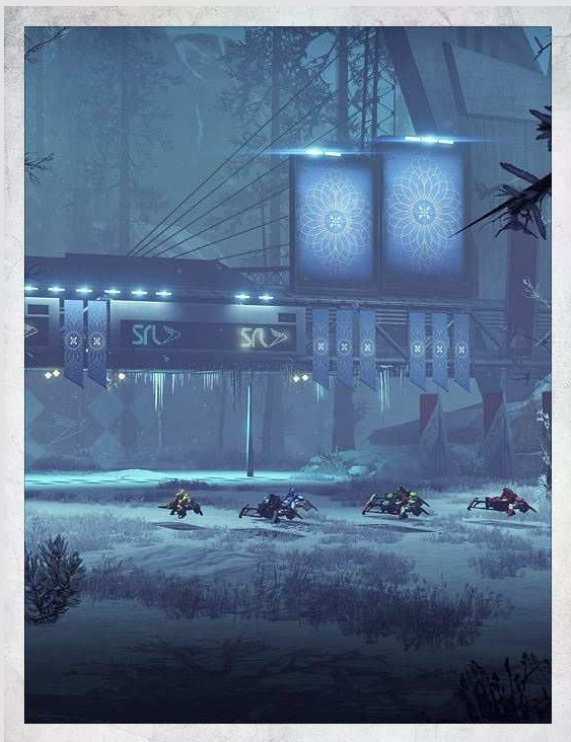
Infinite Descent

"Be brave and fast, Guardian. Racin' is about more than runnin' away." - Amanda Holliday

Some might see racing through the heart of Vex territory as foolhardy. When Shaxx sent his Redjacks to mark up the SRL track on Venus, however, he ordered them to find a location worthy of bravest and most skilled of Guardians.

~SRL: Infinite Descent





Haakon Precipice

"Hey! Who left this forklift in the middle of the track?" Cayde-6

The steep mountain pass known as Haakon Precipice was once used by some of the more thrill-seeking Iron Lords. Redjacks have cleared brush and dug through avalanches to make the track passable again, but the increased activity has attracted the attention of the Devil Splicers.

Expect some "speed bumps."

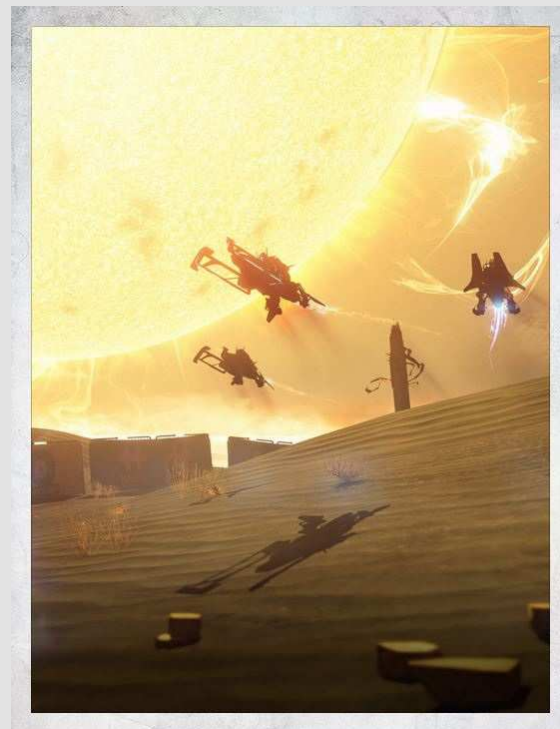
~SRL: Haakon Precipice

Shining Sands

"OK. I've been hearing a rumor that a racer went through a portal and ended up in another dimension. Not true." Amanda Holliday

The twisting track known as Shining Sands is located in a region of Mercury almost completely overrun by Vex. There are multiple paths through the course, but SRL officials warn that not all of these routes have been mapped by the Redjacks. The League is not responsible for reality alterations.

~SRL: Shining Sands



5.2 CRUCIBLE FRAGMENTS

Skyline

TYPE: REDJACK AFTER ACTION DEBRIEF
[00065]
PARTIES: One [1]. One [1], Frame-type, Unit
Combat
ASSOCIATIONS: Cabal; Clovis Bray;
Crucible; Dahlia 99-40 [Unit07]; Lord Shaxx;
Redjacks; Skyline
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

Redjacks engaged Cabal scouting party at
Clovis Bray research facility designate:
SKYLINE.

Units fifty and fifty-two suffered catastrophic
systems damage in opening fire, revealing
enemy positions.

Flanking formation delta resulted in a
complete rout of enemy combatants. Units fifty-
three through seventy lost to returning

Last Exit

TYPE: REDJACK SURVEILLANCE FEED
[00072]
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1], Support-type,
Technician [u.1]; One [1], Support-type,
Technician [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Arcite 99-40 [Unit00];
Crucible; Dahlia 99-40 [Unit07]; Lord Shaxx;
Redjacks; Tower
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] Shaxx is pulling Arcite from the field.
[u.2:01] Not Dahlia? She's a natural for
modifying foundry gear. Her combat numbers

are through the roof.

[u.1:02] You can fistfight Shaxx over it, if you
want.

[u.2:02] Dahlia's the last 'jack standing, then.
Maybe it's for the best. New frames have
trouble data-linking with her and Arcite. The
two of them have been around since the
beginning, and their heuristic systems keep
rewriting everything.

[u.1:03] They watch her. She helps just by
being out there.

Icarus

//
REDJACK_AFTER_ACTION_DATA_SHARE_00
083.../
//UNIT07.../
//
SYS_LINK_UNIT07_UNIT80...COMPATIBILITY
ERROR—ATTEMPTING NEW CONNECTION
//Download failed
//Uploading UNIT07 combat feed...
//
SYS_LINK_UNIT07_UNIT81...COMPATIBILITY
ERROR—ATTEMPTING NEW CONNECTION
//Download failed
//Uploading UNIT07 combat feed...
//
SYS_LINK_UNIT07_UNIT82...COMPATIBILITY
ERROR—ATTEMPTING NEW CONNECTION
//Download failed
//Uploading UNIT07 combat feed...
//
SYS_LINK_UNIT07_UNIT83...COMPATIBILITY
ERROR—ATTEMPTING NEW CONNECTION
//Download failed
//Uploading UNIT07 combat feed...

//
SYS_LINK_UNIT07_UNIT84...COMPATIBILITY
ERROR—ATTEMPTING NEW
CONNECTION
//Download failed
//Uploading UNIT07 combat feed...

Floating Gardens

TYPE: LIVE COMBAT FEED
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type,
Class Warlock [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-
type, Class Titan [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Crucible; Floating
Gardens; Lord Shaxx; Pomona Mons
[Venus]; Redjacks; Venus; Vex
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.2:01] ...readings don't make sense.
When they jump, it's like they don't exist.
[u.1:01] Same as a Warlock's blink.
[u.2:02] Even Warlocks register on trackers.
How do Vex just... appear?
[u.1:02] So they bend physics. So does
transmat.
[u.2:03] Not the same. What happens
when two Vex jump into the same space?
[u.1:03] I've actually seen Warlocks do
that. Thank the Traveler we had Ghosts on
standby.

Shores of Time

TYPE: POST-MATCH REPORT
PARTIES: One [1]. One [1] Guardian-type,
Class Titan [u.1]
ASSOCIATIONS: Combat tactics; Control;
Crucible; Ishtar Collective; Lord Shaxx;
Maat Mons [Venus]; Shores of Time; Venus;
Vex
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] We were holding “B” and “C.” Had them locked. But someone always gets cocky. You know the problem with heroes? In the wilds, they save the day. In the Crucible? They cost you the easy win. Always going for the glory when the real prize is survival and victory.

Asylum

TYPE: REDJACK SURVEILLANCE FEED
[00034]

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1], Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.1]; One [1], Frame-type, Unit Combat [u.2]

ASSOCIATIONS: Arcite 99-40 [Unit00]; Crucible; Dahlia 99-40 [Unit07]; Frame; Lord Shaxx; Redjacks
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] Dark in here...

[u.2:01] Engineering protocols dictate frame recharging bays—

[u.1:02] It's fine. How many of you are there?

[u.2:02] Including Arcite 99-40, this Redjack fireteam comprises eleven units.

[u.1:03] Your name?

[u.2:03] This frame's designation is Dahlia 99-40.

[u.1:04] I asked for more Guardians, but they only gave me you. This City needs training grounds. And together, that's what we'll provide.

[u.2:04] I might do that. Or I might explode.

[u.1:05] That's all I ask.

The Rusted Lands

TYPE: LIVE COMBAT FEED

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Warlock [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.2]

ASSOCIATIONS: Crucible; Earth; Eastern Flood Zone [Earth]; Hive; Lord Shaxx; Redjacks; Rusted Lands, The
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] They've come to Earth now. Like a nightmare come true.

[u.2:01] We pushed them back.

[u.1:02] That's what you think?

[silence]

[u.1:03] This place is rotten. It's become like them.

Exodus Blue

TYPE: LIVE COMBAT FEED

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.2]

ASSOCIATIONS: Cosmodrome, The [Earth]; Crucible; Devils, House of; Earth; Exodus Blue; Exodus Program, The; Fallen; Lord Shaxx; Redjacks
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] This place makes me angry.

[u.2:01] Why?

[u.1:02] Look around at what we once built.

[silence]

[u.1:03] I would've liked to have lived here, I think. This place must have been magnificent once. Can you imagine it?

[u.2:02] I try not to.

[u.1:04] Do you ever think about our enemies' homeworlds? What about their cities?

[u.1:05] Maybe they don't have cities. Maybe that's why they tear ours down.

Firebase Delphi

TYPE: LIVE COMBAT FEED

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.2]

ASSOCIATIONS: Cabal; Crucible; Eos Chasma [Mars]; Firebase Delphi; Lord Shaxx; Mars; Redjacks; Sand Eaters
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] Something's wrong with this place.

[u.2:01] You always say that when we clear a new area.

[u.1:02] And this time I'm right.

[u.2:02] We won this place. Enjoy it. We don't win much.

[u.1:03] We didn't win this place. They're running from something. And whatever they're running from, it isn't us.

The Cauldron

TYPE: POST-MATCH REPORT

PARTIES: One [1]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Warlock [u.1]

ASSOCIATIONS: Cauldron, The; Crucible; Grey, Teben [AKA Bane, Dredgen]; Hive; Lord Shaxx; Moon [Earth]; Orsa, Zyre [AKA Vale, Dredgen]; Thorn; Yor, Shadows of
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] We were facing a full squad. I recognized a couple of them—Orsa, Teben—but they were different. Decked out in dark gear and set to intimidate. I took it as an attempt at psychological warfare—up the creep factor in a creepy place. But it was more than that. They had changed.

Crossroads

TYPE: POST-MATCH REPORT

PARTIES: One [1]. One [1] Guardian-type,

Class Hunter [u.1]

ASSOCIATIONS: Crossroads; Crucible;
Hidden, The; Lord Shaxx; Lost Oasis [Mars];
Mars; Rey, Ikora; Vex
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] It's odd; this place, of all the places we fight, is the one that sticks in my head as I'm trying to focus on the match. Fallen dens and Hive dungeons and old-world ghost towns... all reminders of why and what we're fighting. But these Vex structures? Not reminders, but warnings that say, "You think you know a thing or two about technology and science and the universe? You don't know a damn thing."

[silence]

[u.1:02] Maybe they're right.

The Burning Shrine

TYPE: REDJACK AFTER ACTION DEBRIEF
[00039]
PARTIES: One [1]. One [1], Frame-type, Unit Combat
ASSOCIATIONS: Arcite 99-40 [Unit00];
Burning Shrine [Mercury]; Crucible; Forge,
The [Mercury]; Lord Shaxx; Mercury;
Redjacks; Sunbreaker [Sub-class]; Vex
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

Redjacks encountered hostile AI at Sunbreaker relic designate: THE FORGE.

Enemy units harbored a structural defect in the center chassis that the Redjacks exploited with great prejudice. Over two dozen hostile units fell: it was amazing.

Redjack units one through six and eight through ten were lost to returning fire. Lord Shaxx says only the strong survive. I will learn from their destruction.

Twilight Gap

TYPE: REDJACK SURVEILLANCE FEED
[00000]
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1], Support-type, Technician [u.1]; One [1], Support-type, Technician [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Arcite 99-40 [Unit00];
Crucible; Dahlia 99-40 [Unit07]; Lord Shaxx;
Redjacks
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1.01] He's going to use these frames to take the arenas? They just came online.

[u.2.01] It's Shaxx. They'll work out.

[u.1.02] Yeah. Or they might explode. Shaxx knows it's a fifty-fifty with frames, right?

[u.2.02] Except Arcite. He's been here since they built the Walls. And the frames can hear you.

[u.1.03] I know. Creepy. Especially when they parrot people.

[u.2.03] If they all parrot Shaxx, they might pull this off.

[u.1.04] Don't even joke about that.

The Anomaly

TYPE: POST-MATCH REPORT
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Warlock [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Anomaly, The [Earth's Moon]; Crucible; Research Station [K1]; Lord Shaxx; Mare Cognitum [Earth's Moon]; Moon [Earth]; War Satellite
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] A Titan once tried to punch the Anomaly until it opened.

[u.2:01] What happened?

[u.1:02] Nothing. But one day later—TO THE SECOND—a WarSat fell on her head. Boom. Direct hit. B-line from low orbit to her skull. Coincidence? Maybe.

[u.2:02] She okay?

[u.1:03] Yeah. But she never punched that Anomaly again.

First Light

TYPE: LIVE COMBAT FEED
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Crucible; First Light; Lord Shaxx; Mare Cognitum [Earth's Moon];
Moon [Earth] Redjacks
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] There used to be an ancient theory that the moon was made of Swiss cheese.

[u.2:01] Swiss cheese?

[u.1:02] Yeah, full of holes.

[u.2:02] Sure that was a theory? Sounds more like a prophecy.

Bastion

TYPE: LIVE COMBAT FEED
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.1]; One [1] Frame, Type 99-40 [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Bastion; Cabal; Crucible;
Lord Shaxx; Mars; Meridian Bay [Mars];
Redjacks; Vex
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] This place is big. And empty.
[u.2:01] Space is empty. This place is teeming with matter.
[u.1:02] [laughter]
[u.1:03] Now there's an idea. Maybe that's what this is: the universe taking sides, trying to kill the other team.
[u.2:02] Matter is all one thing, in endless variety.
[u.1:04] And the Darkness? Is it part of that same one thing?
[silence]
[u.2:03] No. Matter is one. Darkness is zero.

Blind Watch

SUBJECT: THREAT ASSESSMENT
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Warlock, Vanguard Designate [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Blind Watch; Buried City; Cabal; Clovis Bray; Crucible; Exclusion Zone; Lord Shaxx; Mars; Meridian Bay [Mars]; Orsa, Zyre; Vanguard; Rey, Ikora; Thorn; Yor, Dredgen
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] I'm assuming you're aware of the events on Mars.
[u.2:01] The results from Blind Watch?
[u.1:02] Yes. It may be starting again. Not saying it is, but we need to keep an eye on any who would seek to retrace Yor's path.
[u.2:02] Agreed. But Orsa and his friends seem to have contained what Yor could not.
[u.1:03] A dangerous assumption. The Thorn's pestilence is becoming commonplace.

Pantheon

TYPE: POST-MATCH REPORT
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type,

Class Hunter [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Black Garden, The [Mars]; Crucible; Lord Shaxx; Pantheon; Vex
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.2:01] We're the backup plan if the Vex decide to start growing more trouble in the Garden.
[u.1:01] Any given match there's twelve of us, tops. The Vex recommit to gardening Darkness, who says we've got enough guns to stop 'em?
[u.2:02] Stop 'em? Pretty sure our deaths are just meant to be the early warning system.
[u.1:02] Comforting.

Skys shock

TYPE: REDJACK SURVEILLANCE FEED
[00044]
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1], Support-type, Technician [u.1]; One [1], Support-type, Technician [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Arcite 99-40 [Unit00]; Cosmodrome, The [Earth]; Crucible; Dahlia 99-40 [Unit07]; Earth; Fallen; Lord Shaxx; Redjacks; Russia [Earth]; Sector 618
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] What the hell happened to that one?
[u.2:01] Dahlia? We call her the Antiquity. You can pull more Fallen blades and bullets out of her chassis than Shaxx's armor, but she keeps coming back. I mean, she's logged what? Forty-plus missions.
[u.1:02] Those are Arcite numbers.
[u.2:02] Better. Maybe we should give her Alpha permissions, let her call formations.
[u.1:03] Give it another week. If she comes

back, we'll give it a shot.

Black Shield

TYPE: LIVE COMBAT FEED
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Black Shield; Cabal; Crucible; Firebase Thuria; Lord Shaxx; Phobos [Mars]; Mars; Redjacks
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] The Cabal are gonna regret giving this place up.
[u.2:01] They didn't.
[u.1:02] Clearly they did.
[u.2:02] The Cabal don't even have a word for "retreat." They didn't run; they've moved onto strategic targets.
[u.1:03] What targets?
[u.2:03] You haven't seen the Martian battlefields.
[u.1:04] ...
[u.2:04] You will. Tell the Vanguard. Black Shield is live-fire ready

Thieves' Den

TYPE: POST-MATCH REPORT
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Arc [Energy Type]; Crucible; Fist of Havoc; Ishtar Sink [Venus]; Lord Shaxx; Thieves' Den [Venus]
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] I hear the roar before I see him, but when I look up, I can make out a blue burst against the skyline.

[u.1:02] When he falls, he brings the sky with him. Scatters me and my squad to the wind.
[u.1:03] Leaves us dead as the moment our Ghosts found us. They bring us back, and he helps us up. Bastard says one thing.
[u.2:01] What?
[u.1:04] "Tell me what you've learned."

Timekeeper

TYPE: POST-MATCH REPORT

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Crest; Crucible; Lord Shaxx; Orsa, Zyre [AKA Vale, Dredgen]; Supremacy; Timekeeper; Vale, Dredgen [AKA Orsa, Zyre]; Vex
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] Never seen anything like it. Orsa... or Vale. Whatever he calls himself. Coming out on top wasn't even in his plans. He'd just drop us then leave our Crests scattered around the combat zone. I don't think he collected one. Others didn't care. Figured it gave them a chance to pull the win. But I cared. Win or not, that kinda cocky ain't healthy.
[u.2:01] I don't think "cocky" is the right word.

Widow's Court

TYPE: POST-MATCH REPORT

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Warlock, Vanguard Designate [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Crucible; European Dead Zone; Fallen; Lord Shaxx; Malphur, Shin; Rey, Ikora; Thorn; Widow's Court
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] I'm telling you this now, because you don't seem to be taking it seriously.
[u.2:01] We are aware of—and share—your concerns and are monitoring. It could be you're too close to the situation to get a clear, full view.
[u.1:02] Too close? I've seen the vids from Widow's Court. They're playing with death.

Sector 618

TYPE: REDJACK SURVEILLANCE FEED

[00057]
PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1], Support-type, Technician [u.1]; One [1], Support-type, Technician [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Arcite 99-40 [Unit00]; Crucible; Dahlia 99-40 [Unit07]; Lord Shaxx; Redjacks
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//
//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] The feed-sharing you've been running on the Redjacks during their debriefs —
[u.2:01] I'm telling you it works. Shaxx said they're progressing at an exponential rate.
[u.1:02] He said that?
[u.2:02] Not in those words, exactly.
[u.1:03] Almost every Redjack dies on the field anyway. What's the point?
[u.2:03] The data's for posterity. Newer frames will be better.
[u.1:04] Sure, but any data-share hiccups and you're just wasting time.

Bannerfall

//
REDJACK_AFTER_ACTION_DATA_SHARE_00
052.../

//REDJACK_UNIT07.../
//
SYS_LINK_REDJACK_UNIT07_REDJACK_U
NIT00...CONNECTION ESTABLISHED
//Downloading UNIT00 combat feed...
//Uploading UNIT07 combat feed...
//SYS_LINK_REDJACK_UNIT07_
REDJACK_UNIT01...CONNECTION
ESTABLISHED
//Downloading UNIT01 combat feed...
//Uploading UNIT07 combat feed...
//SYS_LINK_REDJACK_UNIT07_
REDJACK_UNIT02...CONNECTION
ESTABLISHED
//Downloading UNIT02 combat feed...
//Uploading UNIT07 combat feed...
//SYS_LINK_REDJACK_UNIT07_
REDJACK_UNIT03...CONNECTION
ESTABLISHED
//Downloading UNIT03 combat feed...
//Uploading UNIT07 combat feed...
//SYS_LINK_REDJACK_UNIT07_
REDJACK_UNIT04...CONNECTION
ESTABLISHED
//Downloading UNIT04 combat feed...
//Uploading UNIT07 combat feed...
//SYS_LINK_REDJACK_UNIT07_
REDJACK_UNIT05...CONNECTION
ESTABLISHED
//Downloading UNIT05 combat feed...
//Uploading UNIT07 combat feed...

Memento

TYPE: LIVE COMBAT FEED

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Warlock [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Warlock [u.2]
ASSOCIATIONS: Crucible; Earth; European Dead Zone; Lord Shaxx; Memento; Redjacks
//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] Sometimes I dream about places I've never been.

[u.2:01] It's normal among Guardians: dreams about the time before.

[u.1:02] I dream about this place.

[u.2:02] Maybe you lived here.

[u.1:03] I think I died here.

The Dungeons

TYPE: POST-MATCH REPORT

PARTIES: Two [2], One [1] Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.2]

ASSOCIATIONS: Crucible; The Dungeons; Hive; Lord Shaxx; Oryx; Rings of Saturn; Saturn; Taken, The; Taken King, The [Oryx]

//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] Why don't we just torch the place and let these nightmares burn?

[u.2:01] I asked that same question.

[u.1:02] And?

[u.2:02] And apparently, anything the Hive hate enough to lock away, the Warlocks want to study. Kind of a "the nightmare of my nightmare is my daydream" thing.

[u.1:03] Is it considered treasonous if I'm maybe more afraid of Warlocks than of the Hive?

[u.2:03] Treasonous, no. I think the word you're looking for is "sane".

The Drifter

TYPE: LIVE COMBAT FEED

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Warlock [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.2]

ASSOCIATIONS: Awoken; Crucible; Fallen;

Foundling's Gyre [The Reef]; Lord Shaxx; Redjacks; Reef, The

//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] We need to clear the ship of enemy combatants.

[u.2:01] How do we know they're dead?

[u.1:02] Just kill 'em till they stop moving. With the Hive, dead has always been a relative term.

Frontier

TYPE: LIVE COMBAT FEED

PARTIES: Two [2]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Warlock [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.2]

ASSOCIATIONS: City Perimeter; City, The; Crucible; Earth; Fallen; Frontier [Earth]; Lord Shaxx; Redjacks; Twilight Gap

//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] So many died here.

[u.2:01] Fighting's always fiercest at the frontier. The Fallen took this place from us four times. Now it'll be a great training ground.

[u.1:02] On how to lose?

[u.2:02] On how to not lose again.

Vertigo

TYPE: POST-MATCH REPORT

PARTIES: One [1]. One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.1]

ASSOCIATIONS: Cabal; Caloris Basin [Mercury]; Crucible; Lord Shaxx; Mercury; Simulation Theory; Vertigo; Vex

//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] Nobody knows what this place is.

Not "on the record," anyway. But I was talking to a Warlock the other night and he started rambling on about Mercury and Vex and some mad "quantum-theory, space-time simulation running beneath a randomized pattern of Vex math and meant to gauge Light and... uh... aggressive refractive something-something."

"Math" is my word, by the way. He was talking "Warlock" and lost me about two sentences in. Anyway, point is: nobody knows what this place is.

Cathedral of Dusk

TYPE: POST-MATCH REPORT

PARTIES: Two [2], One [1] Guardian-type, Class Titan [u.1]; One [1] Guardian-type, Class Hunter [u.2]

ASSOCIATIONS: Cathedral of Dusk; Crucible; Dreadnaught [Saturn]; Hive; Lord Shaxx; Oryx; Rings of Saturn; Saturn; Taken; Thorn, Vale, Dredgen [AKA Orsa, Zyre]; Yor, Dredgen

//AUDIO UNAVAILABLE//

//TRANSCRIPT FOLLOWS.../

[u.1:01] Thorn, huh?

[u.2:01] Freshly-crafted. You like?

[u.1:02] A little risky playing with something that's been known to kill Guardians, isn't it?

[u.2:02] Look where we are. Everything in the system's been known to kill Guardians.

[u.1:03] Sure. But there's facing trouble and there's asking for it.

[u.2:03] This isn't like the stories we've heard about Yor. Vale figured this out. Tamed it.

[u.1:04] Can you tame a sickness?

[u.2:04] Good question. Let's go pick a fight and find out.





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