

Overseers

6

-Achyor



The highest chains of command additionally enlisted as separate advisors surveying operations conducted by the head frontiers. Under orders by High Council, they are not to play an active part in the secret metanite war unless need be.

Peaq is the Chief of Police and Legendary rhenai prophet who hails from an unknown, alien origin somewhat resembling that of Earth's hamsters. He takes stock of Deputy Sarube's progress and conduct, doing such while being blind and cripplingly tiny.

Bojali Tempu, the female qippi'tee is a confederate general who stands by with the reserves army in case of the absence of fighting forces. She also is a righteous and all-inclusive defender of The Rhenai Order, bestowed - in time-honor to all that came before - the title of paladin among her people. Aside from that, her side assignment is to keep an eye on The Major's actions as best she can.

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First Encounter



Why you are doing this lies nowhere. You can't explain your habitual wandering. But you assure your mind of the contrary as you calmly step over to the obviously high-ranking pair. Their doors are wide open, and you are a rusher, always fighting for new and wonderful attention. It feels like every officer is begging for someone like you to come waltzing inside. That persuasion was hammered, not tapped.

You take a short bit of time to narrow on the two odd-looking individuals relaxed in the upper middle of the room, a glance of speedy observation before approaching further.

To your right is an alien. Aliens are everywhere though. In the eyes of many others, you're an alien too. But this alien on your right has you questioning the theory of tangibility. Leisurely reclined in a cushioned chair is this tall, bird-like humanoid buried in light-brown feathers you'd describe as woolly. She - presumably by her figure - busies herself with a handheld holo-rec you cannot picture from here. The compact device is propped straight in her palm, which is so grass-green and stringy if laced in vines, fingers and elbow bent odd in shape. Stable joints are

a mystery, while the apparent gaps between her shoulders and biceps are mind spinners. Your eyes aren't deceiving you; there's literally nothing but empty space. Are those really arms? They honestly look like twisted asparagus.

This somewhat avian-looking officer is stern in the face, browless brow furrowing wide curves over massive eyeballs, stubby bill never clacking open and shut for any reason. The rest of her character that interests you is her choice of attire. She is adorned in two-toned, aquamarine robes, waist comfortably banded, loins classified by a preposterously short skirt made of the same fabric. A sleeve wraps her left 'bicep', deep-blue, slashed across with the universal emblem identifying her attachment to the UGC. A golden band is fastened to the right bicep.

Now. On to your left sits another new creature. This toy-sized creature looks as if he is sound asleep if the silent tapping of his stubby digits weren't there to inform the opposite. He sits on the far side of the couch in absolute respite, wearing a carefree grin rid of all the ugliness any person, any thing, any event the universe could dish out.

He looks very much like a rodent, having a small, furry body save for the hands and feet, twitchy whiskers, short muzzle topped with a dark-green nose, and rounded ears bouncing above his head. The real feature on him that hits your alien-tier are the balls of fluff tipping his ears, wiggling weightless and squeezable. Fascinating. The man is undoubtedly old, the indicator being his whitening, scruffy, harshly dehydrated body fur. It is hard to make out more details past his cedar robe. An oversized robe, mind you.

Your best thought is this officer being a kind of hamster-modded dwarf forgetting to ditch a wacky cheerleading fad you somehow missed out on. A certain device on you argues this organism hails from a species depicted of similar dwarfish size. Funnily, when waiting for the rundown, your codex fails to say the magical definition off the tip of its digital tongue. In the end, you don't know what to make of the peculiar little dude.

The two have an austere aura around them. A big giveaway is their baggy robes and pacific demeanor. Quite the overweight elephants cozied up in this 'office'.

You were thinking of how to comfortably approach the two, almost failing to realize the robed puffball has slowly but surely turned his head your way, a warm smile still caking an infectious layer of contentment over his dry face. You thought his attention was caught by the distant clatter ringing from behind you. But no. He continues to look your way with something clear in mind. Something that becomes more obvious as his wrinkled eyelids slowly peels open with labor. Peeking directly towards you through barely open eye-folds are two spheres, white and murky with ocular ruination.

The elderly little-thing has lost all sight. He is blind. That's... Huh...

Even after acquiring that wild fact, it still seems as if he sees you standing there awkwardly. Yes? Without question, the man knows someone has entered their room. You can be sure of

that. But those cold, milky-white irises. They are aimed straight for your face, watching your bemusement amidst the darkness that masks their vision. Damn that smile. Are you that good-looking or what?

"Unwelcome [pc.race], Sister Tempu. Unwelcome [pc.race]," the aged rodent squeaks in a whimsical tone, pointing a slender finger at you from his folded hands.

If it weren't for his benign pitch and cute chub to his cheeks keeping your brow loose, you'd be creeped the fuck out by the fact that a blind, oldie somehow knows **exactly** what you are.

Spoken to, the avian alien unoccupied herself, clicking off the holorec to see why her officemate has broken his quiet nothings. Her stern expression, whipped your way, is left indifferent.

Hi.

"Sorry. { Sir / Ma'am }, but there will be no surprise interloping here. This area is off-limits to any visito..." The much taller peace officer's politeness ends in silence by a dismissive wave from a sleeved hand.

"Nono, Sister Tempu. Can't you see?" The smaller officer says, leaning far until the fur on his chin brushes against the couch's arm. "Looook. Purpose. Down upon them, Exousia shines. Gracing their presence. Shiny hmmm."

The tawny bird-woman mirrors your completely lost expression to the smaller officer's weird assumption. It is nonetheless batted away as a frown solidifies her thoughts on the situation.

"What special appointments were booked for today? I am sure they are not authorized to be here," she calmly maintains.

"Let [pc.himher] stay. Let [pc.himher] stay! Mater Tempu." The old hamster passively croons with grated vocals. He reaches out a baggy arm sleeve, signifying a positive prospect. "I speak chatter-things with this young [pc.race]. Yes? Maybe you too, Sister Tempu. Hm?"

The arguably rational officer says no words in response, only stares at him quietly, and he does the same but with a more tranquil, assuaging glow to his dimpled cheeks. On the other hand, you continue to stand there stupidly, watching the two play a silent mind game against each other. You know they are not precisely fighting in a way, just seeing who can hold their ground on which decision is right.

With a great sigh and slump of the shoulders, she backs down on her own accord. Legs crossed, the feathered officer acts roughly all the same, sighing, "So be the say-so of The Prophet. { Sir / Ma'am }. Make yourself at home then."

The robed rodent-thing warmly giggles behind closed lips; each giggle met up with a very odd, very humorously tilt of his head from left to right. He turns back to you, his round ears lifted.

"Your name, visitor? Your name?"

After that bizarre spree of events, it takes some seconds of recollection to get back to step one. That step would be to address yourself, tell them who you are, and spill your idle strolling after a little look around.

Whatever you said has the grin on the old guy's lips slowly spread wider in astonishment. He heard some chosen choice of words uttered from your mouth that enchanted a giddy face long awaiting the time to be released.

"Aaaaah, yes! YES!" In his shrill, the robed rodent abruptly bounds out of his seat. Looking just over a foot in height, those sleeves flap a wacky dance above his head, parched maw quivering agape, bottom incisor protruding. So surprised, so enthralled, he skitters over to you, then to his mildly entertained colleague, then swoops back to you, then rebounds to mildly entertained colleague. Such swift maneuvers from this aged puff.

"/ifpcbrute: Me big company {man/woman} one day! /ifpcbimbo: And yeah! I will like, have Daddy's business soon! /else: Forgot to mention the child of Victor Steele, heir to his trillion credit company!}' Precisely as Exousia foretold!" He loudly repeats, blasting that particularly and uncomfortably close to his feathery co-lounger, chops flapped right up in her mildly entertained face. "[pc.name] Steele. The destined champion would appear! Always must figure of salvation arrive in our time of crisis! Now comes fruit of past glory!"

He meant something through the mouthful of joyous babbling. You attempt to break it down by paraphrasing his speech of you being a hero-to-be in his... eyes. And he speaks of someone coming before you some time ago. Someone that... bared fruit to you. Is he referring to **your** old man?

"Yes! Yes! Champion Victor Steele! Our hero mhm mhm! The one who defeated the paragon of our sworn enemy, The Xarth! You are next, yes, you are chosen!" The hamster happily clarifies, inversely adding more crypticism to batter your confused brain.

The woolly officer shuffled in her seat, featureless eyes presumably observing your evolving reaction. She sees where your blank, detached expression is coming from. She's apparently the levelheaded one to realize a person probably suspecting bullshit meant to make a fool out of [pc.himHer].

She nonchalantly waves a vine-like hand, attempting to sweep away implied bullshit by chiming, "The prophet can come off as a bit out of touch... sometimes senile. But, hopefully, you soon might understand what he thrills, as he is imbued with the wisdom of Exousia and can see

things we cannot. If he uh... sees something special within you, then be certain it does spell true. Or will when the clock hits."

"Uhu. Greet me with some more cryptic blah-blah. will you?" You sass, already having about enough of the silly superiors in just a minute or two of their cartoonish performance.

It was about time the weird hamster realized the out-of-nowhere embellishment he had put you through, promptly hopping back in his seat, invisible neck scrunched nonexistent in shame.

"Hmhm. Pardon me. Not yet introduced ourselves, we have. Peaq is me! The big-big chief of peacekeepers. Mhm, yes I am. I watch second-in-commander running big operations." The alien thing you can call Peaq motions to the other officer sitting from across him. "General Bojali Tempu, this qippi'tee be. Sister Tempu. She is assigned as reserves if Major Anxing falls in action."

The big-eyed general you now know to be named Bojali furrows her brow in irritation at a bit of detail Peaq mentioned when introducing her. She just feels the need to derisively remark, "Or flee, let's not forget that option. No use in appointing a troubled child to top leadership."

When all appears said and done, you take a deep breath with eyes closed, then release. Moderately renewed, you wear a decent smile to pass them both.

Peaq, now calmed down a notch, **looks** at you again, milky eyes giving you that sidelong stare. "You must know all our top-big secrets by now, no? Speak to Deputy Sarube. You must. You must."

Great. Whatever. It's nice to meet them. You'll go grab yourself a chair.

// **Recurring**

{/ifgeneral: "Steele. Undeclared as ever." Bojali mildly banter /ifchief: "Welcome. Champion [pc.name] Steele, welcome." Peaq kindly greets } as you take up a chair to scoot in the middle. The two same but separate-functioning heads nudge your way, paying you a piece of their plentiful attention.

[Talk]

"We all talk, yes? Much knowledge to give, yes?" Peaq inquires, catching you before your mouth could even open.

Indeed. There are a *few* things to talk about with these two.

[The Two] / [Operations] / [Rhenai] / [Exousia] / [Xarth] / [Deputy] / [Major] / [Race]

[The Two]

// Tooltip: What's two big-shot superiors slouching around here for?

You ask why the two confederate leaders sit around in this literal lounge room, letting valuable time fly by.

The general re-crosses her legs before she calmly answers you. "Well as stated to you before, we are primarily tasked by High Council to supervise those currently operating our war efforts against the current dominating threat; The Metanite Legion. I, general of the reserves battalion, must periodically observe The Major's duties, following along with her actions. Peaq, The Chief of Peacekeepers, does the same with The Deputy. We are babysitting, if you may word it that way. I'd say my position is an uphill battle."

"Hmhm. Easy job, I have. Easy job." Peaq smiles, cheekily wiping it in Bojali's face. Those two huge, ebon crystals narrow in half-hearted annoyance.

Nevertheless, there's no arguing that they both have a comfortable position for top staff undoubtedly making the six digits. Those in their rank must be more than envious.

Bojali obviously feels the contrary, pressing an inch deeper into her cushions.

"Don't bring material earnings into this - like retirement benefits for instance. It awakens the evil in all of us. Also, replace your perspective with a vanguard such as myself. I feel robbed of the honor to actively participate in the closing war against the technologically corrupt ones, declined from making just history by suspected agents of malversation."

You did not think of it that way.

In a cute manner, Peaq lifts his dry lips up to his wet nose, calling down Bojali for her sour squawking. "Enough pouting, Sister Tempu, enough pouting. Made their decision, the U.G.C. officials have. Let Exousia guide our valiant juniors to victory. We must, we must."

Bojali sighs quietly, eyes closed. "I suppose so. Although, I only turn towards the words of wisdom from The Prophet I honor."

That right there. The whole 'Master' and 'Prophet' thing you keep hearing. Are you missing a silly inner workplace roleplay, or are they a part of something outside their profession?

Peaq releases a short, high-pitched chortle before revealing what was bugging you for a bit.

"Hoho. Yes, we are a part of something, Champion [pc.name] Steele. A religious order, that is. An ancient order is where we live and devote. All settle within the lights that brighten life, where I am an old-timey seer and translator of veeery powerful entity." He lightly flaps a sleeve to Bojali. "And Sister Tempu is an exemplary practitioner and appointed frontwoman of order."

Do you need to update your codex? Because you only got two fingers in grasping what Peaq just said.

Bojali remembers the blank expression you had from when the old hamster opened his whimsical mouth before. She's gladly there to clear things up. "We are a part of a peaceful, monastic society devoted to a being not quite known or understood in the general universe; The Rhenai Order. Hope that is to your better understanding."

That's more helpful. As helpful as it could be when you impulsively picture two peaceful monks working as no-shit-and-giggles enforcers of peace and justice. You envision it now: Bojali fending off a galactic incursion of ferocious, sexualized gingerbread men. And Peaq tackling down and slapping cuffs on the most prolific spoonlord known to space.

While you were still reforming your thoughts of these two unconventional peacekeepers, it only dawned on you that Peaq is holding a peculiar look towards you. What could be stewing in his little head?

"Champion Victor Steele's face same shine as his adventurous young."

What?

Peaq smiles, too gripped by a nostalgic memory to see your awkward stillness.

"Yes. Champion Victor Steele of old," he dreamily repeats. "A dare-man to speak high. Hmmm. Few times, we both crossed paths. In those few times, I knew more of Champion Victor Steele than I should have! Joke-cracks were one. Much knee-slapping to his two-cent of rhenai order. But his tellings of crazy flukes and exploits. Ho no no. I then hear no more. An admirable man, he still was. Much knowledge and experience he had to give. Along with you, Champion [pc.name] Steele, Champion Victor Steele's ways live on."

You thank Peaq for speaking high regards for your father, even if those kind words could've been expanded upon. Hm. Thinking about it a little more, the hamster officer has this much to say about him, maybe there is more to be let on.

[Next] / [Father]

[Father]

// Tooltip: What is it that your father has done to leave this lasting impression on Peaq?

"Actually," you carry on, drawing back Peaq's smiley face, "I'm kind of curious about his ties with you, Peaq. Actually, more than that. He has exchanged numbers with lots of bump-ins and mostly kept in touch with friends and enemies. But in all my time spent with him, I've never heard him mention a tiny, funny-talking creature. And you keep putting 'Champion' in his name - I don't know why."

"No talk-chat of me? Know not, I do, Champion [pc.name] Steele." He passes you the guiltless shrug. "Maybe fault on you for not saying right spark-words. Hm?"

Sure. Like anyone can imagine your old man's past encounters, let alone yours. Anyway, there must be a memorable story to tell. Are you right about that?

"Yes yes. Hmmm... When was...?" Rather vigorously, Peaq's right palm glides across his chin. "Hoho! So long, it was! Can't pull out whole story from wrinkly brain!"

It's a wait then. You are patient with seniors.

The intense chin-gliding continues, extending for the time it'd take for you to burn through 2k credits.

Cogs finally fixed, Peaq throws his head up. "Ah! Yes. Yes-yes."

"Many cycles ago, I spend simple days as rickety-clickety yoomopa herder, not big 'BOOM' and 'POW!' popo. One day, I do my mundane things for the herd, prepare grazing time, mapping travel path." Arm shot high up, then not so smoothly descends to his lap, Peaq exclaims, "Then from no out of where, a message drone drops from great ether! My head, it almost came down on! No time was free when Babba Doctor Sarube popped on drone's screen-face."

A Doctor Sarube, huh?

"Oh yes. Shrieked at him, I almost did!" He laughs, vivid of reminiscence, "I could not give words before Babba Doctor Sarube hurled much-lots of information. Tells me of his slyveren bang-babba, and many lapses he could not remember, and the spooky-ominous people he catch lurking around his home. I tilt head and go 'Why you bother me this?' And then, like bumble-fool, I get remind of the day I knowingly got smack by Babba Doctor Sarube's wiggly tail." "The Serpentina."

The Serpentina?

"The Serpentina..." he raspily repeats, "Heeded the dastardly day, for wiggling in my way. It was disguised as dreadful woo-woo bad juju. But no joke, this **truly** was, Champion [pc.name] Steele. No fun and games. Suit was followed immediately, for great strike of ancient adversary

has been foreseen. The prophecy told of Exousia's essence contorting; swarms of inveterate malefactors rose from null and void."

From diverting to dire - like you were sort of expecting. Now is this involving the 'xarth' group he was talking about earlier?

"Mhm mhm," nodding once, The Chief explains, "The Xarth is what I talk here. Specifically, their former star is conflict that brought me to Champion Victor Steele. Babba Doctor Sarube turned to one who awoke him of casted 'juju.' And one he hold faith in might, mettle, and prowess. In my space-trip, remember was entwining fate I thought deeply for some time. How might this star handle a champion wholly ignorant of Exousia and her exploitation of its *back side*? Was event I could not perceive at time."

"Was there anyone else on the rescue, or was a two-man crew just enough?" you ask, partially eyeing Bojali side-listening. She apparently lacks the response you seek.

Butting in with nothing, your focus returns to Peaq in the second he answers, "Just me and Champion Victor Steele in picture. Was what I foresaw, after all. I knew of assembly with Champion Victor Steele at entrance of rocky research-place. He did not, however. Hoohoo! Was too funny! He stood uncertain, very disturbed when watching ittie-bittie me hop cliffside."

You think anyone would if they witnessed a mysterious, alien rodent **hop** across a steep cliff.

"Was first we met. I mean no harm to Champion Victor Steele. Here on same mission as him" Peaq says innocently, simulating the precarious introduction by raising his hands. "'Tiny bouncy fluffball? Hah! My ideal sidekick in this situation.' he joke. I was going to be best aid, he was confident. Confidence was blessed mindset, whether Champion Victor Steele was truly certain or no. Ceiling speakers made quick to greet us confidently and specifically, when we snuck in entrance. I assured was our target. Her voice was devilishly smooth but blare deep and daunting across atmosphere; voice I vaguely feel slither up into ears from many systems away."

"Research-place was great and wide outside and inside. Heavy guards and scientists roamed entrance hall, knew well of intruders but act nothing of. All gave us sideways stare, however, squinting dubious. Obvious trap as scary as was, Champion Victor Steele walked off, clear of concern, and I follow behind." It's obvious to see his sealed eyelids bend in from furrow as he earnestly states, "Xarth territory, this was, teeming with servants of the breathing star. Ascended to G level, clearance gained automatically by external authority. Events were prearranged. Meeting was preplanned."

Humored, you follow along with it. "Oh! Hold on! Could it have been..."

"The Serpentina." Peaq breathed even more raspily, extending his head far and low. "Sitting alone in conference space, she was counting down on our arrival. Pointy-head viper-woman with mouth scary if open wide, scales reflecting purple and black in light. Fingers long and

spindly. Spindly-long. And eyes sharp. Went blind twice over, for how sharp with caustic corruption they were. Serpentina was deadly honest during prying, ominous and scary for such forwardness of her nefarious actions. She understood mission was set by her colleague, mission that coincidentally placed on right people with knowledge and equipment to handle it. She knew what knock in her lab-place and divine history that repeats, whether it her, vulkrim mailman, or vanatae chitin polisher, it all same. A person or group arrive to put stop to this widespread mind-tinkering, exploit of natural forces, molestation of Exousia's integrity. Go unchecked and unpunished, this must not."

Okay. so how was this serpentina punished?

"To be stripped of this grandeur, she was." "Firstly, however, The Serpentina hoped for unfair fight. Funny armor Babba Doctor Sarube gifted to Champion Victor Steele was open for easy mind-tinkering. Not get her way like she did with unprepared challengers and obstacles, I made very sure."

You take it that he was there to assist. Teamwork makes the dream work.

"Some-yes. Must not directly interfere with prophesied duel, no one should. Neither I. Only made fair fight; have no funny things happening." "Did not deprive ALL of her innate weapons. Meeting table soar across room, chairs combined to huge club for whacking, computers malfunction. The huge boom of heat and chill was not ventilation, I am sure. Champion Victor Steele not too clean at work either! Left burning wood and metal everywhere! I was on other side of room, tuck safe in storage bin. If I hear loud clatter and boom-pow from one room, then huge '*THUN!!!!*' Then loud clatter and boom-pow in security lounge, there is hostile star running amuck."

You joke, "Must've been the kind of divine fights exploding with epicness and glory you're familiar with."

"No-no. Never this. So violent, it was. So destructive and loud. Was enough challenge funneling inner shouts, roars, and swears for meddling, present fear of collateral hurt made me curl tight to little ball." Those shoulders of his, crushed stiff, relax a great deal. "But then '*CEASE!*' and '*INSOLENCE!*' quieted with each ripple of galaxy's soul, and boom-pow lessened with more staff attending spectacle. Spectacle at dying, unfortunately for them all."

As in, your old champion came out on top.

"Yes! Hoho! Remember it all well, you just made me. '*Hey! Dusty puff! Hop over! Out of steam, she is!*' Never I felt my ears spring so hard to a sound so *quiet*. Hohoho! Right. Ends well that all's well. Exousia is put at ease for another eternity. Clarity scatter across universe, affect all minds wrung by an elusive star of xarth. Champion Victor Steele remain colorfully as was, maybe by the time we leave. Lost of days, he might be, Babba Doctor Sarube psyche eventually was mend to full health. No more a scatter simii, he was."

So the pair laid the smackdown on a manipulative scientist, then just up and left? Is that how a big, bad, and powerful xarth star is traditionally handled? And what about the surrounding staff? There had got to be some hostility rising in the air after what they did.

"Our victory was of course not rooted or cheered. Only bitter silence stab us from behind." Contrary to his concurrence, Peaq shrugs without contest. "But that is how the untouchable script is written. On that blank date, The Xarth Star does not feast another day of immunity and enormity. Nothing can rewrite fate. Stepping across a field of pointy tacks, we were. However! No immediate retaliation. No aggressive movement or action other than accursed squinting action. Meanfelt squinting. Mmmmm."

The tiny peacekeeper speaks as if he read a guidebook a thousand time over, doesn't he?

Snorting a light chuckle, Peaq dry lips spread an infectious grin. "Now is the story you know, Champion [pc.name] Steele. Long had my first impression of Champion Victor Steele, was the premise of this. Fate wrote my first interaction with Champion Victor Steele, is the foundation waiting to build on. From then, acquaintances became of our brief meet. Connections was sporadic, talk-chat was long and memorable. The more prying questions, I gladly answer. The more... hmm, handsy-handsy 'tagalongs' fetched on me, I reinforced my stance on self-discipline. A champion fated to defeat the slyveren nemesis, I revealed after given cycles. Never did he thought lots of it, though. Hoho."

Quite engaging. You weren't really hoping for him to end this supposed event just there. But you know some backstory of your father's old acquaintance. It always got to start with or relate to a brawl like no other; you should've expected much.

[What Next?] / [As For Me?]

[What Next?]

// Tooltip: Tell more of the aftermath. You must know everything.

"Oh don't stop now. Continue on with the story, please. I was just beginning to paint the perfect picture in my mind."

Your request cuts Peaq from rebuilding his peaceful quieting, raising his brow. "What continue, Champion [pc.name] Steele? All was said."

You meant to say that he should elaborate on the course of event during and after this serpentina's fall. You fluff his fur with knowledge-driven phrasing, delivering your great interest of the decision the former champion - aka my father - had made after his hard-fought triumph. Right when he stood over his fallen foe.

"Oh!" blurts Peaq, surely reeled in. However, the second "Oh..." comes with an indecisive pause, soon expressing a thoughtful, "Hmmmmmm." while he scratches the scruff of his stumpy neck.

[pc.ears] open, you stare intently at closed eyes.

"Blue waistband was not old job description in those cycles. No mean much, that is. The Serpentina was extradite to Bhelaris-043 temple. Her trials await in rhenai court. Largest, oldest, and most historically prevalent court. Like all captured Xarth Stars, she took stand for crimes against divinity, acts upon preternatural, Exousia exploitation, and breach of Code of Secularism. Verdict rule guilty of all; punishment of doe ging-anh was sentence. No more, The Serpentina was."

A doe ging-anh must be the harshest of the harsh punishments with how grave his grated but cute voice made it sound.

That was cleared up, yet there's more hidden in those blind eyes. Peaq knows the focal point of action you are looking for, the real meat in this juicy story, thus explaining his all too tiresome head-shaking.

"You seek closing scene just prior, I do understand," assumes the chubby-cheeked chief. "After victory for Champion Victor Steele, many with notebooks and recording devices flock to last room they wreck up, while I sat put in box. Much commotion whispered, tune up and with lots of funny wetness with patting sounds and squelchy. Nasty noises like retching and gagging muffle beyond, I hear for questionable moment."

Saucyyy... more, more. Your inner portrait needs mor-.

"No more! No speak of this," yells Peaq, flapping them sleeve up. obviously not too privy sharing the more refined inner portrait he bears. "Happened what happened at very moment. Can not recount what no see. The Serpentina left inert on hingeless chair after all was over. Champion prevailed. Babba good as new. Exousia resume serene balance. Xarth back to hiding in null. New champion seeks more knowledge than [pc.heShe] needs. Correct? Hm?"

Heh. You were just messing around with the tiny fluff. You get there was the classic victory fellatio going on in there. It had to be very underwhelming for it to never be worth mentioning during our father-{son/daughter} moments. Still. If someone were recording it, and that recording survived all these years, you might get yourself relic to dump in the ol' family heirloom.

[As For Me?]

// Tooltip: This would be the best time to ask what his brawl has to do with you.

"As for me?" You initially allude, redirecting to yourself with a [pc.hand] placed to the chest."

"Hmm?" responds Peaq, curious face giving off the impression that this conversation has just started.

You expand further then. "How might this past tussle my father had correlate to me? I am 'fated' to run into one of these 'xarth stars.' Right? Will history repeat, or am I up for surprises?"

"Oooh, yes. **Champion** [pc.name] Steele," he quickly rings back to himself. "None there are. At least, what seen through old dust and dry fog. Other than surname, his trials and yours could be one in same, or polar different. Same would be better for archives to easily inscribe. Hoho."

Well, if not, you then ask if this badged and blind prophet foresees at least something you can prepare for in the time being.

Peaq does not readily provide you with answers. His sinks into the cushions, focused face drawn away from you, leaving you to guess this request entails a heavy deal of shuffling through countless events and faces to find the right vision.

"Mmmmm... remember, I must. Concentrate, I must."

On the two-minute mark of soundless waiting, you wiggle in your chair, flicking to Peaq frozen in recollection, then Bojali frozen on her small holo-device.

Hitting the four-minute mark of soundless waiting, you twitch on instinct to Peaq twitching an eye and those whiskers. Nothing though...

"Mmooooh!" Peaq loudly blurts, resurfacing at the same time, same swiftness as you jumping up from your slouching. Ears perky and puffballs jiggling, he rubs both sides of his face with vivid premonitions, smooched cheeks dragging up and down. Much must be swimming in his mind's eye, hand-fishing the visions his little mitts can reach.

"Is there. Scaling face of craggy landscape through SSM base. Dire and gloomy canyons, formed by river-veins glowing with disfigurement and agony. Skies absent for bewitching celestial fog, casting dimmest on oozing rock titan."

Suspended Surface Mountain range, base. A hovering mountain base. Can't remember when you learned that acronym.

"Xarth Star stands before, front of bull-headed judgment, shining with passion. Doomsaying eyes singeing all who gaze them. All but... you? All but you, Champion [pc.name] Steele! Yes-right! Yooooou! For you are special in star's eyes. Thick-solid chains linked and tangled between two bodies and two hearts. Blocking rays of eternal damnation, blocking dubiety of convictions, blotching line dividing alignments of morality. Chains... Chains are blinding element!

No great tribulation in face of wrongdoer of good. But real encounter in darkest time is lay-person masked winsome in face and sound in tongue, yet warped in mind and corrupt in heart. For that it always was, were, and be at dawn through dusk. I see pain and confusion swirl. I feeeeel strong, heavy emotions wrought."

Both you and Peaq are grasping what pre-narrated from his gums. He's the first to realize something made clear as day, saying, "Much different it will be for you, Champion [pc.name] Steele. Much different. Strange for me to forget these details."

"Couldn't be any more parallel," you murmur, two fingers idly rubbing divets just above an eyebrow. "What do you mean by 'lay-person'? Someone I hang out with? Rough and tumble with behind curtains?"

"Quite-yes, a lay-person. *Cht!* You know as someone of you, Champion [pc.name] Steele." Always welcome to illustrate, Peaq hugs himself dearly and gleefully while describing, "Fond and intimate person. Knowing them well, treating them well with fondness and attention they require."

A symptomatic duo of chilling neck and sinking insides tingle you all over. Then, wanting to be absolutely sure you're on point with this, you cut and stitch Peaq's abnormal slang with, "A lover of sorts, right?"

Peaq nods rapidly, happy to confirm one of your greatest fears. "Mhm mhm. Lay-person."

A blank stare make it's way on your face, gradually frowning deeper, and deeper, and flatter.

Nope. Opting out of championhood. That's a one-sided battle. You could not lay a hand on any of your {ifSilly: butt-bumpers, ball-busters, tail-tanglers, tit-ticklers, and overall } bed-warmers; it's you only true weakness.

"No?" The Prophet sounds quite awestruck by your blatant rejection, evidently set up with a rationale for the irrational. "There is no **no**, Champion [pc.name] Steele. A panel of future fates you to best a fiendish avatar of Exousia, protecting its *back side* from dirty digits intent on dastardly deeds."

[pc.eyes] fallen shut, your head shakes the simplest 'no' as is. "No. That's not going to happen. Not by me. You're basically telling me I'm going to down a mystery-person I care - or will eventually care - deeply for. And then what? Let some group of robed strangers take her away, knowing they'll suffer in the court system home to more robed strangers. It just isn't realistic for me to do anything you described, especially after hearing the play-by-play **before** the play. It just isn't realistic. So no."

"You will, Steele."

Head turned at audaciously forward assertion from a long-absent voice, your eyelids lift to the qippii general absorbed in her tiny holo, who butts in her own confidence.

"If the fate of every and all galaxies are potentially at stake, why widen the risk for nonsense such as love squabbles? I'm telling you; you will. The Prophet is telling you; you will. Many of our reputable philosophers and source inscriptions proclaim you will. That day will come, no matter how much you detest its certainty." You laser in on the unoccupied handlike manifestation raised into view, it pointing a rigid finger right between your eyes from a distance. "Prepare yourself."

'Prepare yourself.' That's all you are given for advice. This is all a big joke, you bet.

You hope.

[Operations]

// Tooltip: See if the overseers are up to date with military plans, mobilizations, drafting, scouting reports. That kind of classified government information you know like as if it were filling your codex's memory space.

Feeling investigative, you glance between the 'uniformed' general and chief, casually voicing your question if the pair are sped up with recent events. You also stack an inquiry of supervisory or base reports, observations of captain's or lieutenant's battle stations, checking if conditions are adequate and cadets are in tip-top shape. If they **do** have much to impart, then their seconds aren't doing... their jobs... right.

A cloud of suspicion among both peculiar officers weighed heavier the more you speak aloud for a conversation to spark. Now the pressure is stressing your neck and shoulders out.

Bojali, presenting a rigid scowl to you, almost immediately cuts it out for a reason. It's hard to gauge two crystal balls, but it seems like she is looking away from you, possibly behind.

"Oh! Apologies for the sudden delay! We were just moments from disclosing battle tactics and coordinates to our latest compound with a curious member of the public," she says outspokenly yet under embarrassed chuckling, presumably spoken to a second arrival.

"Hm?" You twist around in your seat, finding only air waiting at the doorway.

"Trying to cost us, are you, Steele?" the robed qippi'tee pries shortly after, confusion swooping you back in place to her with grassy arms now crossed. "The matter isn't the main issue. It's the place and time."

Eh? You don't see any issueWAIT...! Okay. Sorry about that. Though, that clean acting got you good.

At the second you're pleading for, Peaq is there to roughly chortle nerves free from tight knots. You go along with the jolly laughter, albeit appearing forced and awkward.

"Let us keep this straight; you talk too much, Steele. And so do we at times, so it'd be beneficial for all of us not to talk of 'this' relating to 'that' when a doorway ends across the wing. Agreed? Agreed." Like you're never safe from pricking words the minute a mistake is made, blunt Bojali remarks, "If I have to be honest here, I wouldn't doubt some of what we've discussed isn't plastered behind your digital footprint, Steele."

N-no, you haven't. Any topic discussion about war, viruses, metal people, and robed people has stayed in this vessel, behind closed doors.

"Much bigmouth you are, Champion [pc.name] Steele. Too much talking-chat out of [pc.lips]." Peaq chortles along, thankfully not taking this too seriously.

You admit facts are where facts flap. Curiosity can have your [pc.mouth] swinging loose, meaning there has to be someone or something to shut, glue, or gape them to keep you quiet when needed.

[Rhenai]

// Tooltip: What is this order you are hearing about?

The two alien officers spoke of being part of some religious society - clearly demonstrated through austere attire and mundane demeanor. Could they go into more detail?

Peaq's dry face brightens with great delight. "Ohoo! Champion [pc.name] Steele would like the knowledge of our order. The Rhenai Order. If you open [pc.ears] to hear our ways, then hear you will." He turns over to his bird-like friend. "Shall we, Sister Tempu?"

Bojali dutifully nods, which queues both monkish robes to dive hands into their obscure pockets, pulling out metal chips for you to inspect closely. You firstly see they're etched with a weird bubbly insignia muted and light green, eye-catching center amid glossy metal. Both pieces appear as if they were crafted by worn hands, noticeable imperfections in shape and artistry. You guess those small things are a material form of membership.

Bojali speaks first, gracelessly flipping her special chip between her faux digits. "We are members of The Rhenai Order. Settled within many of space's natural floodlights, a colorful assortment of peaceful, monastic societies devotes to wisdom, prosperity, and responsibility of energies chaining everything together. Our order consists of great numbers, originating from all

corners of the galaxy, and always branching out in the diversity of mind and make. Each rhenai contributes their attained knowledge to help us better understand the milieu and order of today, tomorrow, and beyond. Exousia, our one and only galaxy spirit, is a shapeless, indistinguishable being. It welcomes all prepared for widening of thought. You name any race, creed, and occupation far and wide occupying outside our main borders; we have one carrying a tasilmin like these at all times."

You smile inwardly, thinking to yourself how weird it would be to see a preeminent and popular politician garbed in their raggedy robes.

Bojali flicks her 'tasilmin' back into her pocket, it vanishing to a place undroppable. "What we all have that brings us to the Rhenai Order is our respect of all life, yearning for knowledge, resolve on discipline, defending those who cannot themselves, liberating those with troubling or outright suspended fate. I can't forget to mention our bond with the bright side of Exousia."

The bright side of whowhat?

From the corner of your [pc. eye], Peaq bounces in his seat, squeezing up the lightest creeks. With eyes drawn, he is anxious to chime in before Bojali can flutter her mandibles.

"Mhm-yes! The bright side of Exousia. Soft and warm essence every and nowhere at same time. Within us all, void of us all. Energy we have understood, cradled, flourished, and expanded with. Exousia has given us means to power magnificent work of technology. The technology we use to grow small but amazing huts to majestic temples, heal the sick of ailments and injured of wounds, and to keep ourselves hidden in the bringers of life, away from the wild, spiraling minds of outside world."

Your face would've sagged to the floor at the complete nonsense flapped from the hamster's maw. It would've if you had forgotten the already strange interaction you are in right now. Not that this will ever makes any more sense to you.

After patiently allowing the hamster prophet to finish, Bojali gives information vaguely relating to her occupation in the REAL world. "What we rhenai do not possess is an all-powerful legion or army. The great societies we maintain are vast and amazing, and that is all spending time and resources for. A military force is a propensity for violence - even as a means for defense, which will disrupt Exousia's integrity. Not much a need for, anyway. From where we reside, there are not many practical ways for you outsiders with your current advancements to pass into our boundaries. You would be disintegrated in an instant. Following our loudest warnings. Who's to blame for crafts top-thrusting nose-first into a sphere at perpetual fusion point."

That surprisingly made the most sense to you. You throw out a real brain-twister, questioning what if, by some one-in-a-billion miracle, an outsider passed through their blazing gates and set foot on rhenai lands?

"What do you think happens?" is the initial, misprizing response from the stern qippi'tee before she bluntly answers, "Their sent back from whence they came."

That isn't cool - both the attitude and blatant unwelcomeness. Basically, any rhenai can step on outsider turf, while **we** can't do the same without those 'tasilmin' thingies? Privileged much? Doesn't sound too humble or selfless either.

The exotic general can only sigh at you, shaking her feathery head like she probably does any person who finds offense to her straightforwardness, regardless of context.

"Both crass and correct, are we? This is the better judgment long agreed upon and eventually inaugurated by our order and the United Galactic Confederacy. Yes. You heard me clearly, Steele. In a social and literal sense, the universal government body you occupy believes its own citizens aren't ready to meet the neighborhood of adjacent incandescent. With great power comes great responsibility. With that expression you have on your face, I feel this mutual agreement should still hold, and any more explanation will merely bring about a winding mind."

Seriously? Now the U.G.C. is in on this?

Bojali switches on silent-mode, resuming her usual seating position and angle, away from you. It is an odd, borderline disrespectful moment justly saved by the living plush toy on the right who hums deeply.

"Yes" Peaq rasps no simpler. "For some time now. Was signed ages back, I can only tell you, Champion [pc.name] Steele."

Wow. Okay then. This educational chatter might have just evolved into a conspiracy rabbit hole you never heard of - that, of course, will whoosh way over your head. Nice to learn something new every day.

[Next] / [Technology] / [Prohibition] / [Can I Join?]

[Technology]

// Tooltip: What exact tech stuff are these robed people using?

You point out that Peaq mentioned some truly wondrous technology their order makes use of, then boldly admit the applications he stated seem more than preposterous.

The two officers don't seem to have any hint of offense written on their faces, rather a blasé shrug of their shoulders.

"Of course you would think that, Steele. Many have until they have seen our wonders for their very eyes," Bojali plainly sighs, showing no interest in defending her prophet's claims. Clearly, they've heard too many doubtings to count.

In actuality, you're begging to hear them out on this one, therefore elucidating it is not their acclaimed innovations, but the cartoonish idea of monkish folk being the one and only makers and handlers. Does it not sound a little nuts to the pair?

You must be quite the jokester because Peaq slaps a thigh in time with a squeaky boom of laughter. Even Bojali's stolid composure isn't safe; her apparent stifling finally collapses into a loud snort quickly played off for a dry throat.

"Hohoho! How presumptuous, Champion [pc.name] Steele!" Peaq chortled in amusement.

After regaining her silly iron curtain, Bojali concurs with you, saying, "It does sound a little out there now that you mention, but believe us, Steele. It is all true. Magnificent machines from microscopic to industrial are our order's possession, used for lifting monumental objects, simulating and controlling planetary climate, and forming fields of energy even the irradiated fury of stars fails to crush or penetrate. I could go down a full list of incredible feats, and all of it is made possible by using an energy source unknown in your world. None other than Exousia itself gifts us this marvelous energy."

Not ready to put your thoughts in just yet, you ask if there's anything else to add.

Asked, and the confederate general kindly continues. "There are advanced weapons we also have at disposal if we rhenai have no choice but to defend ourselves or others. We are currently but not exclusively stocked with such things like gravity dispersers, electromagnetic trappers, energy sabers set to physilite or no, and mind inhibitors in our armory. Again, all of these are powered by the essence of Exousia. But, I'll have you know, this is not the limit of our galaxy spirit's potential. Those limits are **off-limits**."

Hmm. Thinking innovative yourself, you'll drop all of your skepticism in the dumpster and go about saying you do believe there is a civilization carrying such ground-breaking tech. Although however, this makes you wonder why this spectacular civilization has not yet opened its resources for galactic trade. If one mouse has the giant chocolate bar, why not pass it around to all the others in the den.

"No-no. Because-no, we will not do such," Peaq immediately interjects, he likely expecting you'd bring this up.

And why would that be?

The little hamster monk drops his usually jolly character, parched lips upturned and frowning. This geezer. Does he not know that endearing facial expression translates pleading for a sippy cup.

"Too much power. Too much application. Too much misuse." He lifts his old peepers wide open, which shows those two circular chambers of fog aimed directly at you. "All will lead to greed for Exousia's essence, hate for those with greed, and hate for those who hate, then violence among all."

Not convinced by Peaq's oracular reasoning, you argue that their tools could deliver a next, next, next generation of technology definitely possible for adopting and improvements by today's society. Furthermore, it seems proprietary of their order to hoard everything to themselves, especially when under the belief that nobody could handle their inventions - or this Exousia - any better than them.

Instead of rashly challenging your argument, when Bojali swiftly jumps back into the conversation, she provides a sample situation.

"Imagine this Steele: a New Texan cow-woman is whimsically strolling through the everyday traffic of townspeople, an advanced mind tapper dangling at the end her of tail. Then, without warning, her fairly grounded composure brittles, psyche swamped with carnal thoughts and desires after whiffing the stewing musk of a distant bull tramping back from overtime. Next thing you find out, her tail is flicking everywhere, bumping the delicate device around until she unknowingly flipped a switch in one tap to her hip. In that very instant, everyone that happened to be in the immediate vicinity experience **her** rush of emotions, ears swayed by echoing pants, buffeted brain incidentally spurring endocrine system, a consequence that circulates sex hormones. From one domino to another, and the throes of an uncontrollable orgy take place in town square. Why? With great power comes great responsibility."

"And the clumsy heifer was gangbanged happily ever after." Next, you quip an easy solution on the fly. "As for the epilogue, the U.G.C. amends a bill banning the public sales of rhenai technology. Peace, order, and all that stuff is alright again."

Peaq sighs, head shaking in foreseen disapproval. "No, Champion [pc.name] Steele. Just no. This leads to what Exousia has envisioned for me."

Not missing a beat on a chastising moment, you are met with a face of mild disappointment by none other than Bojali.

"This proves precisely why we keep all of our tools and wisdom to ourselves. We need not more taint on our grounds than what is already there. Sorry, { Mister / Miss } Steele. You will be our champion on *your* grounds."

It was just a joke. Pfft. A second ago, their laughing could be heard down the entire wing.

[Prohibition]

// Tooltip: What does their monastic religion practice bar?

Do their philosophical transcriptions denounce them from any acts of indulgence? Are all rhenai supposed to uphold a level of austerity such as the two? From what you've studied in comparison to them, The Deputy{ifSenkouMet:, and The Major}, their practices seem all over the place.

Bojali, the first one to react, takes a minute to ponder your question in its legitimacy. You are truly sincere in seeking understanding of their mixed bag of lifestyles, hence why the somewhat dour qippi'tee considers it by calmly offering, "Noooot exactly, Steele. The best and only answer to provide is yes... and no."

So, rhenai can pick and choose what to renounce. Is that it?

The tawny general contemplates even harder on what to return, tentatively twiddling and flicking an edge of her short skirt.

"No. You see... well. We rhenai **are indeed** rooted in a monk-style religion, starve ourselves, meditate in empty seclusion and what have you." Bojali says before she whips up to two thick 'fingers' for you to see. "With each new era and each new age, our culture and social depth have slowly morphed. Let us one path life had expanded beyond capacity, split into two where both diverge to their separate directions. Thus, there are two paths one may choose from."

Colorfully complex, you suppose.

"One is the old Eaterus path, a lifestyle strict on frugal and abstinent practices in the devotion of our galaxy spirit. It is a practice those millenia before us have lived by; monks and nuns wearing sufficient fabrics, upkeeping sanctuaries originally home to all, roaming barren land in search of those in need of salvation, etc. And like most prominent religions holding supremely strict vows, the United Galactic Confederacy limits little renouncements of this spiritual path. As you yourself can see."

Does this mean that General Feathers and Chief Fuzz chose this path?

"If it wasn't more obvious?" Bojali snidely replies, earning her some mean points. Not dropping her a curl of the lips take a concerted effort. Luckily, the timer skips ahead as she proceeds to topic by saying, "The other is The Berial path. This path opens room for freedom to practice your privileges in life as long as it does not break the code of our philosophy; violence, corruption, infidelity, etc. There is not much to dive deep into about Berials; you enjoy life at its

fullest or whatever. For further reference, go entertain yourself with the room adjacent to our right."

{ifmetSenkou: Oh. There's a lot of entertainment to be had in *that* room, you know all to well.}
For educational purposes, you guess Berials just are guys and gals living about a third the norm.

"Correct... indeed... right. Suppose a frivolous playboy praising an ethereal entity in his spare time is nothing out of the ordinary." Bojali jests behind a brick wall of sardonicism. "This path was instituted way back when. It is seen as a historical striking point in a slew of long and perfervid debating whether rhenai way of life is truly a philosophy mandated by Exousia itself. That latter came to the victor, and now we see our member wearing everyday overalls to assimilate outsider tradition and even..." A colossal bag of embarrassment descends on her head, dipping her neck an inch stout when she nonetheless exhales, "Huufetish wear to better suit a career in pornography or the like. Whatever is worn, our members ALWAYS stay firm iron to our sacred code. ALWAYS, those of us tighten belts, ALWAYS."

So a no-Grundy policy?

"Half-correct. Again, this is one side of our cultural spectrum. Nudists could be among our ranks for all we know, not that Exousia or we have the right to cast benighted opinions. In some circles, nudity represents the abandonment of the most basic material possessions, a higher level of asceticism. To others, it is no more than animalistic."

Hm. Next question: So, if their religion's foundation embodied authentic, monastic vows, are all rhenai of today essentially monks and nuns? If you saw a rhenai woman wearing a gimp suit zippered down where her pierced, clover-shaped nipples waves to the world, would she actually be considered a nun?

Peaq not so quietly burst into chuckles off to the edge of his couch, particularly humored by your totally legitimate question. He presents his own answer in honor of your educational entertainment.

"Yes, Champion [pc.name] Steele, indeed-yes. If forsworn maidenhead has broken in vow of celibacy or pre-betrothment, only then she would be a rhenai no more. Sister Tempu and I do not feel these ways. Some eateri reject those berials who break away from inalienable vows of abstinence. Most simplest vows taken at birth or youngling-age. We rhenai are not purely blocked from forms of pleasure, passion, and procreation. Just looked down by some, if not most, it is."

You smile at the normal climate in a not-so-normal society. "There must be more than a few rebellious teens jumping from star to star then."

"Funny." snorts Bojali, whether or not it be genuine. Bojali averts this ending topic with a fact of interest. "Some tidbit of culture background if you'd like; there are annual traditions all rhenai must participate in. One such is a fasting period that lasts a fixed duration of sixteen lumin cycles - or seven solar days. Some of us can refrain from our appetite well over that period, and others can not go three cycles without the edible delicacies of life. My personnel record is twenty-five of your solar days, and those days were to *obviously* occur during my time conducting long-range patrol missions."

Your time would be cut short without something delicious to chew and swallow. Lacking food or drinks to fill your tummy, madness for sure would claim you.

"Mmmh, it has been many, many cycles since I have filled my pouches," Peaq sighs and mumbles while his fluffy chubs for cheeks are rubbed in circles by sleeved mitts.

Now he won't stop rubbing them satchels of cheekfat, just dragging them around for a thorough power-scrubbing. Are those... like... really his stomach? Or stomachs, you mean.

[Can I Join?]

// Tooltip: Can you dawn one of their spare robes?

// Greyed out once picked.

// Greyed Tooltip: You blew your one shot!

"Can I, your amazing and awe-inspiring champion, join the ranks of this hoaky order?" You ask with unbelievable confidence.

After some time of mulling it over, the qippi-woman sights fall back to her fellow rhenai for the choice response to your request. Knowing this, the hamster prophet shakes his head in confirmation.

Shucks!

Bojali turns over to you to say. "Apologies, Steele. We do not feel you are the type of individual befitting an honorary induction, even if you are the chosen one we have been looking for."

"Why not? Explain, please?" You politely demand, shoulder slumped lower than honestly should.

"Well, just like your father, we can clearly see the excited, thrill-seeking passion deep within your [pc.eyes] and heart. There is no denying that. However, we also see the kind of eyes in our few members whose vows gradually blackened into the founs of debased passion and power. Not that we are plainly stating you are or could devolve into the likes of *them*. No. To be more clear, you are a lively [pc.race] who enjoys the sporadic and concupiscent qualities that come with life.

And to simply put it, those specific qualities could lead to a misuse of power, power our order possesses great amounts of. Besides, at the end of the day, you are what? Two decades too late for taking the youngling evaluations? I am sure your father wouldn't adore the lengthy processing and paperwork, not one bit."

[Exousia]

// Unlocked after picked **[Rhenai]**

// Tooltip: Who is Exousia?

"Who is this Exousia person?"

Perceived as a lack of respect, Peaq waves a sleeve at your simple question. "Now now. Exousia is not just 'person.' What you ask is BIIIG question too, a question that is best understood through a telling of its origin." He thankfully turns to Bojali, giving her the honors with a little head tilt. "If you please-so, Sister Tempu?"

Bojali accepts, taking a quick breath, preparing herself for the lengthy story that is about to unfold from her bill. Best get comfortable then.

She speaks with a crisp narrator's voice you swore heard of in some documentary.

"Long, long ago, two millennia, perhaps three. We will never quite know. Anyway, on an undisclosed planet, the decimating tides of civil war drove an assembly of peace-loving monks away from their sanctuary of sacred vows. These monks, humble and stoic in character, held beliefs of temporal accountability that opposed spiritual constructs said to control our universe by the strings. Their message did not range widely to other planets. Yet it stood strong enough to encourage a transport vessel offered by the world government of this undisclosed planet, ensuring these order of monks safe departure."

'Don't come running to God for your actions. Because there is no God.' is what you got so far. A fascinating twist that probably makes enemies.

"Ironically, the monks' faith in peace and righteousness began dwindling during their voyage across other systems plagued by war and corruption - thanks to the earliest known planet rush-slash-debacle. They searched the galaxy's farthest reaches for a new settlement. They planned to seclude themselves from the taint of violence and corruption teeming in early times. Though, for those handful, they were undeterred, continuing on with their campaign of peace across the galaxy."

"Ready yourself for this sharp turn in plot. At some point during deep-range travel, the venturing monks were struck with a strange phenomenon. They were experiencing a calling directed to the mind, beckoning them to change course and travel somewhere far, far away. To a place in

need of urgent help. All heard the pleading voice; all agreed this was their destined calling. So, off they made haste to discover what touched their ears. Difficulty was preordained. Pinpointing a telepathic distress call was nigh-impossible back then; drifting amid the vast and incomprehensible outer rim seemed a dead man's errand. A supposed span of **three** decades of patience and determination proved a miracle for those monks. With nothing but themselves to rely on, their eyes gazed upon one advent and tremendous anomaly. These adrift monks were faced with a shapeless vacuum of brilliance unseen by untapped souls. However, this spacial anomaly was not alone, confined behind an immensely fortified e-plasmite barrier, guaranteeing nothing passes in or out. Who took such great measures to construct and barricade this elaborate prison? No one - and I mean no one - has yet to solve this key puzzle definitively."

She can just keep going. You're not in the business for higher-tier rabbit holes.

Bojali chills a second to blow her feather-like bangs above her eyebrow.

"What the monks exactly witnessed once cracking open the deadly field - and how they even managed to perform such a feat in one piece - is unfortunately lost in our archives. Our members studying in universal intelligence have gathered that the scene they happened upon was a paramount project embarked by someone or something highly advanced, undiscovered, and uncontacted. Regarding the anomaly mentioned early, I am going to offer you my easiest interpretation. There lay upon a supercondensed pocket of space exhibiting an unnatural distortion of reality. At the nucleus, light energy flicked ecstatically in unpredictable intervals. At the epicenter, gravity could intensify and nosedive at any given notice, with no rhyme or reason. The circumference was formless, a jagged and understandably frighten border of absolute darkness."

Interpretation seemingly finished, Bojali is surely now glancing at your flat face.

Half-gasping, half-snorting, she says, "Sorry. It is only natural for The Paladin to get carried away with describing a majestic incident she cannot get enough of back home."

[Next]

Peaq jumps in the middle of the storytelling to quiz, "The answer, those the ancient one found?"

If you had to guess, "This Exousia, is it?"

"HmHMHMHMhm," he chuckles before replying, "Correct, Champion [pc.name] Steele. Partially correct, that is."

Peaq hands it back to his thin colleague, who just finished evening down her chest coverage.

"It was a tightly-packed pocket of raw, nearly undetectable matter that consists of the core fundamentals binding the matter that **makes** our universe. This former matter manipulates the

latter matter, hence the former flow within all things. When this matter conglomerates to increase its mass, the interaction between it and **ours**, under special conditions, will react in a slurry of violent explosions. This reaction can rapidly succeed to thermal combustions, electromagnetic bursts, radiation emissions, and of course, telepathic shockwaves."

In that case, you'd like to correct yourself by saying, "Was it a piece of Exousia?"

Smiling, Peaq answers you with a thrilled, "Mhm Mhm."

"Whatever may have kept Exousia's essence in stasis was deactivated, setting it free to resume equilibrium with the universe. Those heroic monks did not return to the core empty-handed. Said essence leaked into the devices that entrapped it, coincidentally coming into the hands of its rescuers who would then tirelessly study its properties, undoubtedly flabbergasted mind at marvels they would unfold through ingenuity. And in time, they were able to calculate and manipulate this essence in larger proportions effectively."

Very carried at this point, the involved qippi'tee lifts her material arms up and slowly spreads them out wider and wider. "Industrial machines were shortly created, purposed for harnessing its properties to hover even bigger objects, extract heaving bodies of water, even control the crackling webs of electricity through the very fabric of space."

Does that just sound so cheery and magical... and scientific.

"With this sparked the beginning of a new era for the monks. An era of enlightenment has given them new ideas, new philosophies, and new purposes beyond the trials and tribulations that befell them. The Rhenai era. *The Rhenai Order*. In a matter of precisely five years after mastering the properties of the mysterious energy, the order was already making headway to construct their first artificial planet capable of inhabiting the celestial titan thought impossible to touch. This originally mysterious energy was by now obviously essence spilled by the Exousia, the great and giving entity the later deciphered, immediately revere for its generosity."

Exhaling a lungful of dry air, Bojali has finally finished the long, thought-out story and takes a well-deserved headrest sinking. Overall great storytelling. The captivating voice she gradually tuned in would no doubt move people a certain way.

You were incessantly rubbing your chin, trying to put all of the slots in place.

Okay, okay. Let's get this straight. Some peace-loving monks practicing mundanity were driven away from their homes. They wandered the galaxy in search of a new home, all until some call for help molested their insides. This led them to find and **raid** a top-secret, lockdown project, looting an energy source no one had ever heard of. After all of that nonsense, they then put their fingers - and not literally - into this weird matter, learn something about it, and then create supercolonies. These monks now live in their new monasteries to practice a revised philosophy, influenced by some godly-but-not-godly whatchamacallit.

Sounds pretty badass and... very... familiar.

It just bonked you like a ton of bricks. This story... you think you've heard this before. Yeah. Way, way back when you were a little brat.

Not wanting to hold this recollection to yourself, you confess to the badged storytellers of remembering your father telling you of this strange tale back when you were still in preschool. It was one of the few stories that he insisted such hoaky folks living in stars were real. But now hearing it again after so long - by top-ranking officers embarking in a war of all things - you aren't sure what to make of this, to be entirely honest. If only you could see these temples and planets they spoke of. You'd be the runner-up for entertaining the next generation with anecdotes of nightless days and robed techies.

"Sadly, we can not, Champion [pc.name] Steele." Peaq regretfully refuses, which throws you back, begging the question.

"Well, for one, you are an outsider. We do not grant outsiders passage into our sacred domain," Bojali dully murmurs with a light bat of a green-and-grassy hand.

"And two, the dreaded Xarth."

The Xarth?

"Yes. The Xarth. Our ancient nemesis. The mysterious and much-hidden clan who incorporate idols they deem will see their dubious philosophies of peace and order. Destined idols with the capability to puppet weak-minded and unprepared individuals, encourage or outrightly command them to perform actions or collect knowledge the today's universe has to offer, which feeds idols information through their never-ending link with their puppets."

Sounds frightening.

Bojali reacts spontaneously, raising her recovering voice, pressing the gravity of such a prospect intended to spell fear over itself. "It is **extremely** frightening. This is why we rhenai strictly bar any outsiders - or simply just **anyone** - we believe are under the influence of an idol. Not that we have an inclination such strings are sewn into you, Steele. Else, your mind would have been in the hands of a completely different influencer."

She nonchalantly waves an 'arm' to puny Peaq, whose jolliness and goodwill are as contagious as ever.

"The Prophet would be sure of that."

Well, whatever then. This was an exciting nostalgia trip that has you revisiting the forgotten joys. You thank the two officers for that, even if this Exousia is a little too cryptic for your liking.

[Next] / [Identity]

[Identity]

// Tooltip: So... what does Exousia identify as?

Now that you think about it...

You say with no amount of shame in your voice. "So... your all-encompassing entity. Is it a *he*, or *she*? Does it have anything, in particular, I'd like to know about? Because, if there's some ethereal schlong *enlightening* me or a spiritual box *guiding* me to my path, that'd be something to keep in mind."

The Prophet was destined to get upset, but not to this degree, fuming from puffy eartip to eartip, chastising you for your witty insolence. "No. NO! Such basic manners, you lack! Not he or she, Exousia is! None of which defines a person, Exousia is! Not a person, because Exousia is! A formless spectator gearing our corporeal plane, it is!"

Hoarsely huffing and puffing, he calms down faster than you could figure out what he was viciously squeaking.

"However." The old hamster erects a finger, instantly reforming his bright smile like five seconds never existed. "Around you is up to what your heart beats for, how Exousia's essence gravitates. You just not know it."

Tirelessly decipher the crypticism, your head bobs back, coming to a surmise with a sly grin. "If my heart left like Exousia should insert its trillions of tentacle essence in my orifices and fill my soul with all it's got, it'll do just that, no questions asked? It's beginning to come full circle now. No wonder why my inner being has been feeling so blown up and stuffy this whole time."

Bojali looks at you in disgust at your depraved conclusion on one opposite end. The other end is a delighted giggle from jolly ol' Peaq of your understanding and apparent passion for the being he views highly of.

[Xarth]

// Unlocked after picked **[Rhenai]** and **[Exousia]**

// Tooltip: Who are their ancient enemies?

"Who are the xarth?" You simply ask.

Peaq "hmmms" a considerable gruffness, then answers, "Not who are The Xarth, But what is The Xarth. Though, that question, we can not fully answer ourselves. Anyway, for Champion [pc.name] Steele, we will try explain."

You gesture for them to go ahead, which has Peaq looking expectantly at Bojali.

"O... okay then." Bojali stammers briefly, taking a second to think of how to tell this to an outsider like you without coming off as too crazy.

"The Xarth is a shadow group - or inner circle of like-minded individuals - primarily functioned by even more powerful and influential figures who share a desire for molding the world through their warped image of peace and prosperity. Their philosophies are apparently driven by passion, conviction, desire, and corruption. Deception, obscurity, and control are also a common theme among their creed."

Their ancient enemy just is another group of elitists who can do whatever they want?

"No. Not even close. Where this come from, Champion [pc.name] Steele?"

Bumping a side-grin, you giggle. "Can't tell you. It sounded the most realistic and relatable in my mind."

"The Xarth's stratum is manifold in ratio to their numbers; that misperception is a slim possibility, but a possibility nevertheless." Bojali's elucidation doesn't stop there, instead "The Xarth devotees we encountered through time have all come from different spheres of life. The accounts have greatly ranged. Off the top of my head, I'd say I've either heard or came across xarthbond secretaries, celebrities, void bandits, taxi spacers, warp monitors, and apparently our very own officers in black and blue - I won't name a few who slipped up one too many times.

Dense fog issued from somewhere in your head, you comment, "Then a xarth could anyone in disguise? A wolf in sheep's clothing?"

Bojali nods casually, too casually for you to feel correct until her short beak opens.

"A comparative example would be you having no clue a berial pathwalker is, in fact, a rhenai unless he or she told you. Xarth walks among us all; it be one in every million, or one in every five. Need I not mention them residing **everywhere**. When dwelling on The Xarth for invasive chills, imagine bacteria roaming our every pores, occupying every pocket imaginable. Try not to chill yourself so soon, Steele." Fortunately, the buzzkill doesn't cue chuckles, so you don't force awkwardness. "Now. How we identify a xarth is primarily based on their own undoing. Xarthhood has a niche in recruiting the foulest of people, and usually, they have the irresistible

habit of calling us vulgar terms the galactic vocabulary can account for. A term you may come to discover or overhear is 'rhenaiasae.' They've long invented that derogatory name now circulating in outsider slang. It means rhenai scum in xarth literature. Look it up since you know now. You'll find various skewed definitions nowadays."

Not sure you heard 'rhenaiasae' before now, nor would you have connected it to the actual one.

"If shadow order and omnipresence was not ominous enough, The Xarth has achieved all of their known schemes by following their nominated embodiment of Exousia's essence; The Xarth Star. Stars are one-unit-one-shot leaders of The Xarth who use taboo arts to bend weakness to their favor and break the innocence in society, the three big rulebreakers we rhenai strongly oppose. Like a hierarchy pyramid, all lower-ranked members are subordinate to their most experienced members, who adhere to their chosen star. We view this power system to be along the lines of uninhibited autocracy."

You would agree from what it sounds.

Bojali draws a hand to herself, planting four green and dense-looking fingers to her chest. "Where The Xarth has come into play with **us** for centuries were, of course, played out in small and brief battles, political disputes, and doctrine challengings. The last and largest we must mention is the unseen twists and contortions rippling the universe due to their abuse of Exousia's *back side*. Great minds such as The Prophets sat before we can detect a disturbance in Exousia from light-years away. And when that happens, we know a big move taken place or *someone* has just made an equally bigger mistake."

Exousia's backside is all you'll remember and can't stop getting over.

"Their order does share some practice identical to ours; they are seclusive, follow some method of asceticism, harbors equal opportunity, and punctually keep their knowledge of Exousia to themselves. But unlike we rhenai with our star-encased home planets, The Xarth seemingly possess or even settle themselves with no central sanctum. We also believe they are not exactly pioneered in technology such as we. Or so is thought given what our archivers have documented."

"They much-indeed are, Sister Tempu." Peaq solemnly corrects, "Believe not what Brother Darfung, Sister Mayfin, or archives mislead us. The Xarth is ascended beyond our tools and crafts. Always have. Always will."

Smart not to debate with a rodent of many lenses, Bojali weighs, "If they truly do, it has yet to be seen outside of dumping all of their resources to one cause, one person."

[Next]

What Bojali says next has her head scratched to keep embarrassment away.

"With headfuls of info provided by the two best sources on this ship... it is shamefully ironic for us to tell you that throughout our centuries of coming into contact with The Xarth, we have no idea of their founding origin. How long they have stuck around? A profoundly mystery to both you and I."

You clearly rub it in a little, teasing about their order's years of mishandling the basic formula in warfare; know your enemy from the bottom-up.

No blowback of indignity hastily elicits from you, exposing issues in the system. You are an outsider when it comes down to it, your words carry valuable weight to these robed, unorthodox people. It could also be just a smidge of ignorance of their whole situation.

Bojali insists further before theorizing. "Theories run rampant among our passionate communities: The suebell sphere the ancient ones found was constructed by the very same brotherhood present enemies to us; therefore, The Xarth precedes us. The Xarth is a mutated spawn of us people of rhenai, sprouted by a small, roguish party dissenting from The Code to grow their sect. Members of the ancient monkhood dissented, pioneering The Xarth at the same chronology as we. Those are the most plausible theories, whereas the rest you outsiders would regard as fan service."

You figure that would mean these shadow people could have existed before their own order. That'd be a real shocker.

"Exousia's essence isn't only ours to cradle, Champion [pc.name] Steele." Peaq alludes, a small statement probably unbelievable to certain robes like him. "What theory do you make of?"

You don't know. You're just a rusher chatting with a couple of officers skipping Uniform Day.

[Next] / [Xarth Star] / [Immoral?]

[Xarth Star]

// Tooltip: Cultist celebrity leaders?

Could you know more about the leaders of this extraneous threat?

"The Star of The Xarth, do you mean?" Peaq asks with a light thump of a finger on his chin.

Your assent has Peaq chuckling, but then he quickly starts humming to himself in a thoughtful dilemma.

Long and silent decision-making goes down for Peaq, eventually having Bojali join in. She incessantly looks and motions Peaq's assurances to his wavering decision, but she forgets that mere gestures aren't going to get through to a sightless fellow like him. You are proven eerily wrong when Peaq somehow responds with a calm 'Mhm' to Bojali, who appreciatively nods like all is normal in their neighborhood. Blind people, you'll never understand what they can and can't perceive.

Bojali has been looking at you for a thoughtful second before declaring. "Okay, Steele. I am about to provide some information that may prove useful to you in the future, so listen up. Not many outsiders know the moniker that is The Star of The Xarth for a clear reason; their influence is dangerous. However, you are our destined champion, so this prospect would mean nothing."

"The Xarth's social system and organization are controlled by a quintessential figure in which they have been handpicked. This figure, either chosen in the past, present, or future, abandons all freedom of their person, identity, materials, and possibly preservation in favor of set entitlements as Star of The Xarth, or Xarth Star in simpler terms." She raises a talon up to you, slowly furling all of her scaly fingers, all except her index finger. "A *Sole Rule* structures the hierarchy. There can **only** be one Xarth Star at any given time. And with that rule, they hold the influence of reforming their current system's social structure or motto. A de jure lottery ticket, because if you flipped through the tomes that I have, you would think beyond edges to finding chronicled stars and accounted suspects written in the present tense."

Head a little boggled, you question how these xarth leaders could change their secret society. Because didn't she cryptically state earlier that the xarth range EVERYWHERE, as in their numbers are scattered across galaxies. The degree of supervision makes you think macro-management would be in order for the sake of starhood.

[Next]

"Orchestrate change in circle, one mind does not," Peaq exhibits a cooler, a tad somber impression, head tilted low and sleeves drooped from unwinding shoulders. "A living star is sponge to spirits of old. Collective phantasms of paragons that once was."

Your [pc.eyes] dull. "Say that again?"

"A Xarth Star is hivemind to spectral conscious of many formers." Prodding a finger to his temple, a gesture you needed while listening to him calm squeak, "One is mind-linked to many versed, so one has well of foreknowledge, counsel and utilities they need for rulership."

Then their numbers must be bigger than meets the eye if this is true and some folks out there have transcended beyond corporality. We're getting into metaphysics here, not any other transcendence silliness. Whatever collection of minds he refers to must be linked up to a memory node, or better yet, stored in a tiny hard drive somewhere.

[Next]

It is getting clearer and clearer how cult-like this secret society works. You're prompt with asking what extra-special, mystical ritual makes a xarth star.

"Hold your patience. We have to run down the few foregoing steps before that part is touched on," halts rhenaibound general, your sincere enrapture apparently locked in restraints.

"Great. Now. Firstly, throughout our immeasurable history of conflicts, we have obtained a decent understanding of how xarth devotees pick and choose their Stars. Typically when choosing a new Xarth Star, the current or former titleholder will have already accumulated a detailed list of names they foresee as candidates rightful to exploit Exousia's *back side*. Next in schedule, both Star and their acolytes have an absolute say of who to vote, where the latter often follow their list writer's vote. Finally, when a golden child is picked out, typecasted members will coordinate and abide by further procedures to ensure The Xarth's best chances of achieving a common goal. We are not certain how effective their organized executions are, but it is an estimated ninety-percent success rate."

You toss a joke of an average dump freighter putting down plans after shift, which abruptly changed from a deluxe slime pedicure for a hot date in three hours to ruling a powerful shadow order with an iron fist, eventually snowballing the whole freaking universe.

"Steele. The bizarre thing is, your made-up scenario is not out of the question." Bojali states in a less sober tone of voice, invoking a baffled crook on your still-grinning face. "The Xarth is a society that adheres to no true ranking system. However, when it comes to a Star of the Xarth, it is seen as more of an ascribed right or system. **Anyone** could one day become a figure of their order. It all depends on what is seen among the hearts and minds their decision-makers have laid eyes upon."

"In my heart, they would see dust and dried fur!" Peaq fights hard to say before blasting out hoarse laughter, yanking a quivering smile out of you.

Bojali, moving deeper, continues with an aspect you've been waiting for. "Every Xarth Star possesses a level of Exousia's essence - or matter if you want to be more scientific. Such granted essence in it's quantity is often determined by the visions of the previous star, where they may see to their successor bearing a cybernetic, internal implant. Of course, imbued and brimming with raw power."

You tap your chin, ruminating. "Would that mean a xarth star seizes Exousia's essence - and *backside* - directly from the source? Directly from **their** person?"

"A studious one you are, Champion [pc.name] Steele," smiles The Prophet, a compliment you don't mind taking.

Still is crazy-talk to this outsider.

[Immoral?]

// Tooltip: Are The Xarth actually baddies?

There's a struggle in grasping their order's contempt for this 'arch-rivaling' faction. You boldly but politely proposing if the xarth truly is the nemesis all should shun in fear.

"No," The Chief frankly utters, face expressed plain and simple.

"Inherently not so." Pink, furless flesh of a right hand unsleeved, he unfurls those four skinny fingers, palm opening one facet. "Good intentions, The Xarth can mean."

As that aspect clenches itself off, the other on the left performs the opposite. "Harmful deeds, they often do."

Concise words of wisdom won't work on an uncultured swine like yourself. You demand a massive breakdown.

Bojali once again trades off some of her limitless time, stopping the inert watching and typing on her holorec to further elaborate with a ruffled sigh, "Hhhalright. The nastiest individuals roaming the galaxy **may**, quote on quote, **may** be members of the secret society we rhenai... admittedly resent. However, know from the heart that The Xarth collectively executes their nefarious acts for *apparently* just reasons no one will ever comprehend besides they themselves. This is because The Xarth and their constitutes genuinely believe their actions are beneficial to the ecosystem. It just so happens that their leaders achieve such by manipulating, corrupting, and leading massive campaigns, crusades, and camouflaged operations."

A necessary evil for the greater good.

You suspect the impassive qippii-lady is rolling her huge eyes when sullenly snorting, "All the perks of one's simple convictions while backed by an aegis of myrmidons AND an untamable powersource."

[Next]

"Here is an example for you: Don Galotio. Galotian hardened to the core. Notorious jack of all trade. His infamy reigns and ends far back - I am sure you watch one of the many biopics."

"Wait!" You loudly blurt, [pc.tongue] almost caught. There's no brushing past such a historically monumental name like that, not by you. "THE Don Galotio. The galotian who rose as a

smuggler's pet to a notorious mob boss that shook the underworld market with his every squishy step? 'Muscles for hiryuh? Hit up an associate of the family for more information on what we provide tuh keep dem dirty rats and roaches off yuh back. Loose ends needin' de heavy-duty sweepuh set? Contact your local receptionists who will connect yuh to our trusted henchman, who will connect yuh to one of our finest capos, who will see if dey can book yuh a seat wit' the underboss.'"

Okay. You're going to far with this funny market pitch, calming it down to allow the qippii speak her outlandish claims.

"THE Don Galotio, or Inee Inee, is the hot topic for this session." Bojali chuckles ever too quietly to words Peaq is visibly dying for her to say aloud. She dutifully accepted by enunciating, "'Icky meanies got no business with the family' must be a phrase familiar to you."

"Hohoho! Icky meanies, Sister Tempu said! Icky meanies!" Peaq laughs squeakily high in pitch, clapping his sleeved hands together in a child-like manner. You'll regret not clipping that.

"It's a crime not rehearsing The Don's timeless catchphrase," you giggle for a minor minute but shortly go back to great confuzzlement. "Jokes and quotes aside, you're telling me a typical mob boss from whatever-how-long-ago was in the cahoots with shadow people. I don't see the connection at all.

"The Star of The Xarth himself, what if we told?"

N-... ah... well... Sure. Maybe. Where's the evidence?

The evidence you demand is being arranged in express convenience. Holo gadget already in her 'hand,' Bojali taps and flips across a projected picture library. She is actively searching around folders and saved images, and once found, it is rerendered and filtered for clearer visuals. The image is next expanded by spreading fingers, and wah lah, an inky-black, spherical object carefully propped on a pedestal, encased in a dome made of some translucent energy. The ball-thing vaguely resembles an eye given the vibrant, dotted halo seemingly revolving around this funky-looking...

It's... no. Is that THE Don's eye? You are being made a fool out of? Your [pc.eyes] must be gazing at a stock image. There is no way.

"An artifact long survived in the absence of its slurper, dating back a shy nine centuries of much earlier, many different times. Yet the base looks to be clasped just a day before, plastic straw lacking yellow from wear and tear by air. Stripped useless as it was, the implant to this day continues exuding imperishable power and ambrosial falsehood. No archive guardians are to idle too close a distance with this object, even under its stringent PPM."

But how?

Image instantly fizzled out of sight, the tawny-feathered officer answers with, "All xarth, when identified and captured, belong into **our** custody for crimes against Exousia. Okay. Not EVERY xarth; primarily their elites and stars turning the gears and cogs. This historical masterpiece of gallorenium and cyzantine was an indispensable forfeiture in Don Galotio's eventual apprehension. In our archives, it is said that The Don would ritualistically use Exousia's essence - through tapping into the eyepiece shown earlier - to break the big fishes swimming within the crime industries. He would supposedly milk their 'meaniness' away by a method of extracting and drinking it from a juice box he would safekeep for the special occasion."

You jump at the mention of the notorious juice box, Don Galotio's main instrument he used to overkill the countless number of 'eye-aches' he came across. You remember it is rumored to be held in the Galactic History Museum, locked tight in a heavily fortified section; not even the best thieves can slip their way through.

"Through her-to-his-to-probably-her ostensibly neutral legacy, many big-time syndicates from the past have yet to show their faces today. He achieved this all the while growing his own, which, wouldn't you guess it, heavily consisted of xarth practitioners. The organization eventually scattered during his fall and when rhenai and peacekeepers alike were catching wind of their lingering presence."

Space must've been pretty hectic back then. Luckily The Don was there to control most of it. But you still find it hard to believe he-and-or-she would be connected with this xarth.

Your last thought articulated soon has both general and chief simultaneously turn towards each other, where the one meters taller brings the bigger question on the platter.

"Have you ever sat down and went through any of Inee's biographies, past the eye-gluing events in her-his life? If yes, then you would realize that not one of them has ever discussed what otherworldly experiments had gone on. That particular one aimed at implanting a pet galotian with a crystalline core FAR ahead of its time period. Resulting in a drastic transformation mentally, physically, psuedosexually. You go from a fairly average galotian bubbly and harmless in her childish antics, to a cyclops host to luminescent energy coursing through his sculpted body, sharp iris beaming intelligence too untold for terror not to surface. And the earliest GAC wasn't conceived in that era."

Now that she says it, you admit that is a conspiracy everyone has tried and failed to piece together the clues. You had your own theory of The Don surviving a plasma reactor meltdown, in which the leaking energy had seeped into her body and the weird eye he had. The accident was actually a failed attempt on his life by the 'icky meanies' he swore to exact his revenge on. How about that?

Bojali breaks a faint snort. "If that were true, the box office rates for *Don Jelly* would have never been such a massive hit."

Peaq quietly nods his head a couple of times, agreeing to this statement a knowledgeable rhenai would.

"The former owner of Inee would unsurprisingly withhold his devotion to The Xarth. He was supposedly tasked with christening the next Xarth Star. You know who." Bojali put a 'hand' close to her face, twisting it around like there was a huge bulb bulging between her eyes. "An investigation was conducted, turning out that Inee's, or Don Galotio's was a Xarth Star all along, his glowing ocular molding to what he was then. Steele. Though I myself aren't well-read on the effects and aftereffects, I can say you would be shocked to learn what prolonged abuse of Exousia's *back side* can do to the body of any living, breathing organism. Years is what I mean by prolonged."

Well, if The Don was constantly being filled with Exousia's 'essence,' wouldn't he never go hungry?

"You presume it would, Champion [pc.name] Steele! You presume it would!" Peaq chuckles, armsleeve slapping armrest at your innuendo.

If that is not true, then The Don's grandiose defeat by the two trusty, herculean shafts of Sir Legeon the Goo Soother must be! You do hope so because that'd be a pretty gnarly ending for any superpowered, galotian kingpin to be stuffed with so much spooage, an EDM manager would have themself a steal using the bloated light-show you keenly remember he was left as in the end.

Feeling to have said enough, Bojali picks up from where her humdrum tapping left off.

"Anyway, I hope you understand The Xarth is not our counterbalance. A wage between pure good and absolute evil; the typical tale of long-standing battles." Funnily, she evaluates her phrasing, a wince soon forming around those bulging eyes. "That did not swing about too polished, but it is the best conclusion you are getting, Steele."

You wave Bojali's worries away, summarizing your no-so-sophisticated idea of xarth being the pretentious good guys trying to play god's judge'n'jury.

At first, the slim qippii's unamused face takes it that your immature perception means you've got nothing out of this. She emits an 'ah' a second later, shoulders shrugging. Peaq, on the other hand, leans his side on the couch's armrest. His chilled quieting paints credence concomitantly assuring your honest, though undignified acknowledgment. The silent wisdom that sees honestly. Hence why you never directly poked fun of his acclaimed title.

[Deputy]

// Tooltip: How is The Deputy in their eyes?

// Unlocked once met Lylis

You ask how the two overseers regard Lylis as a top frontier of their battles and just her overall.

"Did I hear soft flutter in your heart, champion [pc.name] Steele?" Peaq probes you, piercing spine-chilling beams past wrinkled eyelids.

What? No. You just...

The tiny old-timer senses your embarrassment from where he sits, playfully mocking you in the process. "I jest with you, champion, I jest. Hoho. You young ones."

Patting down ruffled strips, he treats your desires, "A bright and promising one, Miss Sarube is. Like a youngling of my own. Cared of her in my humble den of worship, honoring her grandfather's final request. Mature and wise, Miss Sarube eventually grew. When she did, I passed the funny gift Babba Doctor Sarube planned to give." The Chief fuzzy ears fall flat for split second, a cursory head-shake when gruffly sighing, "Misfortune clung to that gift, where career path suddenly and spontaneously head to United Confederacy. My pilgrimage for wisdom, peace, and justice, she further likened. Not many see this. I see her much-shine in mending and enlightening the minds of service-ones, delinquent younglings and others she knows in need. Can have those for-profit chaplains on run for their money, hmhm."

The little dude didn't have to mention any grim details. Nonetheless, you are pleased to hear his view of the ginger missus—the parts you read out of his strange language. Never did you once imagine he was the capability of foster-fathering such a pretty and polite specimen. But for real though, you can see the connection.

Next up, you turn toward the frowny and feathery general, inquiring for her thoughts and experiences.

Bojali gives you a quizzical look, nonetheless feeling no harm in sliding herself into harmless gossip.

"That question to me is more like 'how do I see a budding associate.' My answer is less in scope since The Deputy isn't someone I am fully familiar with. She has yet been a part of my close circle of friends and hutmates. Regardless, to me, Deputy Sarube is proving herself to be a fantastic officer from what I gathered firsthand. She has countless times found the best alternatives when working by-confederate-books, and pans out in positive limelight when the press gets involved. Maybe not **all** were perfect repeats, but surely enough to get here where she is now at such a 'young' age. Now, my standpoint when tying in strict faiths. This might sound ironic given us two at your service, but it takes a great amount of commitment to be both an enforcer of law and order, all the while maintaining vows to a separate field of thoughts,

styles, and traditions. Yet, perseverance prevails; Sister Sarube is a good fighter in her trade, an excellent preacher and defender of peace, and noble leader who has a certain way with words."

"All thanks to her tutelage from the prophet and..."

Bojali's voice drops off for a sudden, failing to utter the words of the other advisor. From the other end, Peaq's ears bounce low once again. She has to blink away the awful shade dulling her big and shiny eyes before quietly exhaling the rest.

"Though, regarding her current position, there is a big question as to why High Council's executive branch would assign her a stressful role of fleet commander. They had to have taken into her own subpar flight skills. It makes zero sense, in my opinion."

Peaq digresses in her criticism, albeit mute in liveness, "Nevertheless. The ideal keeper and speaker of tranquility, Miss Sarube is. This, I am confident of. Higher Council made right decision choosing her for these struggles. I believe much-so."

Ending off this discussion, Bojali gives you an iron-hard look like you're another cadet-in-training. You instinctively combat the pressure, neck standing as solid as possible.

"Steele, we know the business you have with the Deputy; you are *that* type of champion after all. As a fair warning, don't go sticking your nose in places you were forbidden to."

Of course. You mean well in every visit to the ginger simii's office. Why even concern that of their pure-hearted champion?

The scruffy ol' chief and faster-dad know this to be sincere. His grin rises from a mysterious pain burying itself deep.

That's much better.

[Major]

// Tooltip: What's their attitude towards The Major?

// Senkou must be active

// Unlocked once met Senkou

Trading a thoughtful look between the two superiors, you come out asking how they feel about Senkou being the military figure of their operation. Or basically how they see her as a person, as a fellow sister of their order.

As the military top-bird, Bojali reacts in a less than amicable temper to your new question. However, she chooses herself as the first pitch to contribute to your amassing social

atmosphere. It's not until plant-made arms and trim legs are crossed that she expresses her thoughts, such with definite distaste and disdain.

"If I have not insinuated my thoughts about The Major before, then let me say it is not very good. For one, you can say she fancies disappearing from active duty, slipping out of post to fool around void knows where. It is a mystery how martial law has not caught up with her yet. A few others and I think the councilwoman in office somehow has something to do with this - by either neglecting or even enabling this behavior. Two, she..."

"Serenity. Calm and professional, Sister Tempu," Peaq interrupts, the duty to keep the air warm and welcoming.

"Forgive me," she promptly murmurs with some hesitation. Caught off track for the right reasons, the critical servicewoman flips her thoughts around to fit a more positive note.

"Major Anxing **is** a talented sort - which do not hate to admit - is quite the rarity to find in this galaxy. Both her battalion, Deputy Sarube's, and her squadrons would say the same. The kui-tan has gifts, evidently more than just one if you have seen what decorates sections of her office."

If General Tempu is referring to the chockful of medals and plaques hanging below the assorted magnets you're convinced were nabbed from some toy convention, then you have indeed seen them.

"The budding Major is something else, and I have not even started on the things she is capable of on the battlefield. It unbelievable the reports given back to me from troops assign in her assault platoon." Even after commemorating her bushy second, the avian general can't help herself from balancing it out with tough truth and stone-faced accountability, explaining, "Anxing can be described as hardworking, but nowhere near saintly. At least, from the numerous reports brought back during her time in boot camp and... Well, day-to-day involvement, supervision, and mission-related undertaking with her be it the most damning part of it all. From the first day of post-conscription to where we all are now, I've gotten to learn of Anxing in a dramatically different field from what was promised to me by officials, her former coworkers, any reliable referral who could recall her past performances."

Revisiting a scene too unsavory to keep her beak uncovered, Bojali mumbles, "You could call this first face-to-face like a jester reporting for duty, but I wasn't humored when sizing up a kui-tan not fit and spirited. Instead, I am handed buxom with bitter who had to undergo in order to shape her act together. I tell you Steele. Sometimes, I think law enforcement agencies are hiring just about anyone these days, or this was truly the instance of a dried-up soul delivered to my front door. I'll let can be the judge of that."

"The judge..." you quietly drawl, eyes nailed to the center table, refusing to provide cursory hints of the many judgment you stockpiled the instant you set foot in this office.

"The miss was overweight by ten-fifteen kilograms that burned off in her due date, and even then, Anxing simply did not match the visual frame of reference I requested. It's just... just suspicious how such in short of time, her entire form plumpened that profoundly." The flightless general blows quick chuckles from her nostril. You picture an amused smirk when she sniggers, "What **was** funny was the various excuses whipped up for her ampleness, the failed attempts to play me for a fool. The worst mistake you can make is playing me for a fool. Our sister of sass and vylofrass learned not to act dense in my face ever again."

Mhm. Duly noted.

You look over to Peaq and politely ask him what he makes of this. He doesn't seem overly thrilled that you pulled him into this, but commits himself to serve his champion, whether that be insightful gossip.

"Sister Anxing is... complex to me, Champion [pc.name] Steele. Because this will spet on delicate strings, I must not get to serious-big details about my understanding of her 'finer' history. However, as big-and-shotty Chief, I was one handing badge when she was bright-eye and bushy-tail, hoho. It was only best she report to Sergeant Sarube right away. Breath held whole time when knowing her working as teamplayer with much-active SAAT unit. Knew I made right decision, is what Miss Sarube showed me in reports. Was proud at how steady fluffy sister placed fuzzy sister. As in by few cycles of their funny-little competition, Miss Deputy is on my right, and frisky lieutenant on hers. You not know **real** progression until seen kindred bonding, believe this. Feeling so *aged* in her years, my formerly Lieutenant Anxing not miss a chance to play Red Team to challenge streetmart of rookies moved to squalid and scary urban districts. Is good brain exercise I consider attaching to handbook for training officers."

"That's enough biography out of you," you playfully declare to the chatter-box chief. Although, this does beg the question...

Does Peaq have any comments about his former subordinate's sudden relocation to bigger guns and glory? That, or her rapid transformation, supposedly in both mind and body?

The diminutive peace officer is stricken a fashion only portrayed in perked lip rolling in confused circles. When inevitably responding, he looks at his half-yearning general and not you.

"Only known of incident and trial. Sadly oblivious, I still am of else," he can only say, expectantly presented a limp breath from the unsurprised qippi'tee.

Only then are you given attention.

"Not much to satisfy here, Champion [pc.name] Steele. Sister Anxing did change from when I last remember her in station. So hotheaded, stubborn, and quick to fly off handle, throwing lots planning away for passion. Back then, I never say she was capable of no-call-no-showing. But

since day of month-long absence, everything crumbled for her then and there. She came back to us hostile and forbidding, all voluptuous and big-chub in cheeks. Hmmm... I even wonder. Never I thought kui-tan muliebrity could naturally mature-BOOM to this brink, no gene-tampering or other cosmetic things. Strange indeed, is it, Sister Tempu. Strange indeed."

Late on the windup, you cut off this gossip before it spans any dicier, raising a hand for attention, which both overseers lend for you to conclude, "This was a long to take in. I feeling like I now know enough to get me gagged and kidnapped by her for interrogation."

Deeply frowning in the kind of wariness you wince to peak, Bojali sardonically remarks, "Mmmhm. There's no question in my mind you would *weep* and *howl* during your so-*miserable* stay."

[Race]

// Tooltip: What are these strange creatures reclining before you?

[Bojali's]

// Tooltip: Learn of this sentient avian of presumably flightless heritage.

What is General Tempu? Like, as in what is she biologically - in the species, race, or alien creature spectrum. You will ask her to spill the beans right now. All you can go by is the head turn, not those two big, frowning crystal spheres for eyes.

Then again, you've gone nervous all of a sudden, [pc.finger] thumping a chair arm. Your gesturing focus has the bird-like superior's solid attention.

"General," you address delicately, then wince eyefolds wrinkly, "You're so strange-looking to me, not to be disrespectful."

"Disrespectful?" Bojali mildly erupts, observing your wavered facial expression in misconstrued detail. Typical fashion of a deeply offended person, General Tempu's unusual arms buckle to bring splayed hands to flat chest. Her elbows are bent rounded, too rounded to be physically possible. The sight of it shrinks your face just a bit harsher.

"Steele. Does my appearance, my birth-person mildly disturb you?" she asks in a tone forcing anxiety, eyes widened bulgier.

Struck with dreadful fright, your head shakes vigorously.

Bojali's arms unwind, slinking back. Again, they literally **slink** back to her lap, calmly saying, "As I thought. So then, I will take it that I am **not** seeing discomfiture aversion. Have you never seen a qippi'tee before? Really?"

Like a cool towel slapped onto your moistened neck, you silently nod. "Well, uh... I might have spotted a couple of people with similar features to you. Just didn't get to say 'Hi! What are you?' You know what I'm saying?"

"Not so much." She bluntly replies. "Either way, you found a qippi'tee, asked a qippi'tee, and learned the word qippi'tee"

Qi-ppi-tee. Qippi'tee. Nice and fluent. You were searching for more, though.

The alien-looking general exhales, flat chest compressing flatter and eyelids falling shut.

"I am not stopping your search."

Search approved; [pc.eyeColor] beams roam like bloodhounds.

To bang out, for starters, you see a moderately tall sentient tied to the bird family. No tail feathers sticking from under the butt, intriguingly enough. The dense feathers, the beak though abnormally stout, the clawed talons for feet. All traits locked in avian blood. Those blackened, reflective eyes, while large in dimension, aren't exactly a 'WOWZER!' by any means. At least in texture, you've surely seen weirder some gene vendors are selling for a pretty penny. So next...

Her arms. This is a tricky puzzle right here. Aside from them being more akin to humanoid characteristics than feathery sets, they, in the literal sense, look like twisted weeds you can grab and make in a forest. That isn't the element straining your brain; it is the fabric of empty space separating those two bundles of weeds and her pronounced shoulder feathers.

Nothing connects from top to bottom. The longer you frown in concentration, the greater the ache your eyes and head experience trying to solve the magic trick. It's just impossible with your limited scope of knowledge. You have not any background to reference sculpted plants seemingly floating in absolute suspension, nothing you can remember or picture to relate to an exotic specimen like this here confederate general, a member of this qippi'tee race.

That's it. You are beat. Might as well say you've given up.

"I'm lost." you sigh glumly, defeated in the neck and shoulders.

"Hm? Words. Articulate."

"What are those? You got those plant things hanging from your side. But I see nothing for them to hang off of. There're just gaps between feathers... and the plant stuff....." Feeling to have

dug a hole of brimming with priceless idiocy, you just stop it, head faintly shaking, frustration pulling eyes upward. "I'm an ignorant [pc.race]. I know, I know. Don't rub it in."

"Hmhmhmhm. Hohoho."

Chuckles leak somewhere obvious from your right side. No way you are staring anywhere but the ceiling, not when cheeks are this beat-red.

To add more unsavory heat, the big-eyed officer does rub it in, merely compulsory in loud snorting.

"Plant stuff? Are you foreign to life itself, Steele?" Instant bursts of groaning and cracking play in your ears, and then swoops in those exact same hands of mystery, wiggling a friendly hello a foot from your uptilted face. "Smells indeed like plant stuff, do they? These are arms, my use for arms. Before you are fed past-due education, this must seem like quite the crafty work of a spirit. You have to agree."

Using this time to tilt back down, your returned field of view is alarmed by two thin appendages outreach to acquaintance you, stretching sheer and elongating several more impossible feet from Bojali's person. Moreover, those aforementioned gaps expanded considerably, making evidence of invisible mechanisms more present than earlier. And she still reclines in her chair, unbothered by a pair of gangly vines sticking far out from her.

Yeah. A crafty spirit perpetually clipped into her body, perfectly interpreting her thoughts, feelings, and conscious actions. Come on already. What's the deal here?

Those apparent 'arms' wound to former normalcy in faint click and snap. Bojali is mildly thrilled to elaborate, "These are my arms, Steele. What more can I tell you? They simply aren't sticks of flesh sprouting from the shoulders. This is how all people me - with mere legs and feathers - are born and raised to function as such." A soft-clenched fist a balled for you to eye, knuckles then rolled to depict occupation of self-rumination. "Telekinesis is the golden word you were scrambling for. No **actual** ghost was hired as my all-time caretaker. No machinations of wizardry. I, the person you see here, is a living posterity of adaptation psionic in nature, physical in achievement, a part of reality you for one should get accustomed to."

Oooooooh! Her existence is starting to make a lot of sense now!

"The 'gaps' you pointed out are a necessary incongruence of subconscious mimicry. Basically, without any comfort room, I, for instance, would have sharp, dry stems always poking me without even moving, and always scratching me when moving about."

That'd be a terrible life. Glad you know this isn't the case for her.

[Next]

You were just going to thank the qippi'tee for the elementary schooling. Well, until Bojali cop this peculiar frown hooding crystal-black eyes weird and unbalanced.

"I am indeed the female sex of my race. Yes. You must be informed of this because if not, and you happen upon the opposite sex, you will probably inquire of this in far more unasked awkwardness. We don't need anymore where that came from."

You crook an eyebrow yay high. "I don't need to ask the next part, right?"

Bojali keeps silent. Promptly enough, she overtly pushed down her leftmost marked shoulder plumes, letting one by one slip past her fingers, sharply flicking up from swelling pressure.

"You see these feathers? How long they stand out? Females can't be mistaken for males with thicker bouquets." Right after this light and brief sex ed lesson, hands are risen to head, brushing through head feathers to stumpy to interpret as a head of hair. "There stands an absence of long lushness to comb or spiky locks to riffle for females. Such is not the case for males."

Girls get magnificent armpit hair, and boys get flowing manes. You got it.

"Not all qippi'tees are as trimmed to fit as you see me. Actually, it would seem less than $\frac{1}{4}$ the population take up the challenge. You see, it is quite difficult for a qippi'tee to keep in shape. Our metabolisms operate slower thannn, say, a human's, meaning a greater thickening of body frame. You could say it often works against those who seek not ripe hips or weighty bosom every food party or night catering. Although, the whole point of this evolutionary weight gain is self-explanatory. A qippi'tee brother lives his entire life on a dark, frigid, and windy space-rock he calls home. All he has is bristly flocks providing only a mediocre shield from chilly shoves to soft flesh, and that is why he had stocked up on fatty foods, taking the cheaper route of padding up extra body warmth before his first day of work tomorrow. I believe there is a common saying that goes in society. 'A thousand calories a day keeps the gelid gusts away.' Fairly certain I got the translation down pat."

You pieced the phrase fluently, so someone gets a pass.

Bojali's single, expressed twitch at the brow nearly missed your [pc.eyes], happening just as she nonchalantly passes on, "There are even names organized to specific benchmarks of broadening physique. 'Egg' body. 'Sap' body. 'Balanced' body. Bizarre names, right? I have never once altered my form, and that classifies my body type as 'birth' body. That particular type is an 'officially' defined term, the germ of every beginning. But don't **you** worry, champion, that type sits at the bottom of the bar chart, tending to come and go. If you can read between the lines."

You clue in the avian general that lines were pulled apart. Was she also suggesting no more meat will ever be slapping onto her bones? Or rather, body fat on your meat.

Bojali's head shakes a plain negative, simply expressing, "For me, getting adverse gains would essentially entwine with desecrating my long-paved path of the rhenai way. Regardless of pledged abstinence, I wouldn't follow the norm of qippi'tee adulthood. There is no reason to in my lot."

You nod, if nothing else, seeing the overlapping functionality in her reinforcements.

"Anyhow," utters the stony qippi'tee in bleeding breath, casually batting around a limp hand to go along with her rolling this talk to a speedy end. "If you feel unsatisfied with your brief enlightenment, I would suggest you start researching from here, Steele. You won't dive further with me in pertinence to qippi'tee sex, sexual anatomy, society, history, or politics. So do not bother asking."

That's okay. The armless bird simply being here and talking to you was all your codex needed to auto-research for you. See?

{{[Insert codex collation text]}}

[Homeworld]

// Tooltip: Could the qippi'tee commander share a few facts about her homeworld?

"Does the so-kind qi-ppi-tee have much to tell about the planet she came from? Space-rock. Homerock. Whatever you define it."

"That 'space rock' I mentioned is the homeworld of qippi'tees, not my homeworld," reveals the reverse general, her not uneasy in the slightest, brisk in voice and sound in composure.

"Chenirdo eight-thirty-three is the star I have grown to call my safe haven. Yellow dwarf? A'lukroakin system?"

Those names, you are blank to. Also, what?

"I can't spoonfeed you always, Steele." Bojali punctually remarks, a smidge snappy for your taste. "I am a residing member of The Rhenai Order, so therefore, I am not a residing member of the Qippi'tee Stork Federation. Dual citizenship is a possibility, and acceptable to many other qippii-marked worlds, just not their 'elder stone of sacred origin.'"

Wow. This alien general means to say she is an alien to you and an alien to native aliens. That couldn't be any more unfortunate... and funny. It is a must that you bring up the question if

General Tempu has or have thought about visiting the birthplace of her people. Biological people, if you must say.

The shrug Bojali makes couldn't be any more insouciant. A bluntness gestured as fast as it was motioned.

"Not interested. I've already tried before, that is why. The drifting asteroid and its drifting territory are forever closed off to those without the extra-special card and papers to be scrutinized thrice over. No tourists. No campaigners of business. No long-lost relatives, lovers, or illegitimate blood. And certainly no rushers to roam willy-nilly. The warp gates are restricted to only citizens of the Q.S.F and allies in the nexus of crisis and communication. Not going to treat it that I **cannot** gain entry because the U.G.C is indeed the founder and orchestrator of this nexus. So under the most select of circumstances, I could find myself reporting to native qippi'tee lands. Give me another fourscore of a lifetime, and you might just see this general used as the poster girl of propaganda and homegrown warfare."

She'd fit the bill for propaganda easy on the eye. But that's REAL the only instance of her heartwarming, racial reunion?

"Yes, if I didn't convey yes," Bojali dourly confirms. "It has been almost two decades since I submitted my twelfth and last 004-N, and I honestly could not care less if there was a positive follow-up I missed all this time. I am comfortable where I am. And if I truly wanted a profound enlightenment of my akin, I can simply call upon my brothers and sisters settled in the star of that very same asteroid as we started with."

Oh... a substitute.

But hey. That's a 'Did You Know' right there: native qippi'tees isolate themselves on a drifting rock, and just down the stellar block, rhenai qippi'tees coop up in a ball of fusion. What a twist you'll likely never see to believe!

[Peaq's]

// Tooltip: A rodent this tiny, cute and squeezable, you gotta know of his mysterious bloodline.

The Chief exudes a great deal of qualities innate to his person, bundling cuteness, can-do goodwill, and bite-sized package of mysteries. Mystery is your current agenda since the make and features of this breathing, mini plush doll is as alien to you as the fad for bhurneple pizza. That comparison says a lot about his appearance to you.

You lift a friendly smile to the peculiar rodent, complimenting, "You look kind of out there, chief. It isn't everyday I settled down and chat with a cool-little creature like yourself."

"Hmhm. Warmfelt. A cool [pc.race] you are too, Champion [pc.name] Steele." Peaq kindly grins back, fervently brushing and batting in an adorable hint of bashfulness.

You didn't need to secure fuzzy cheeks of positivity to start your inquiry, but you felt like it. Next up is the request for the name that identifies Peaq as is his flesh, greyed fur and blood. The admittance of your ignorance is quickly voiced, setting the tone before [pc.ears] are yattered to the floor.

That contagious smile does not wane from Peaq's dry face.

"No name, I have for you," he blurts.

You chuckle earnestly. "Hamlet. Gremster. Pocket dwarfent. Please tell me it's Pweeny."

"No name."

What does he mean by no name? Is there actually a mod you're missing out on?

"No name," Peaq blurts A third time, bothering you a little. "My person, I can describe. My existence, I can not break down. My classification, I can not state with accuracy. Curious as you are now, Champion [pc.name] Steele. Now that you resurface great puzzle of me."

"Ooookaaay." you heavily drawl, no doubt catching General Tempu's eyes with your deep bogglement. "I'll just take that as a 'I don't have a answer' and believe you are a exiled member of a undiscovered, undocumented race of alien hamsters with fuzzballs dangled above the ears."

"Mhm. Right-yes," nods Peaq, smile completely undisturbed. It spreads wider, in fact. "Found somewhere faaaar away by rhenai expeditionists. You would say I grew as big-little 'Hamlet-thing.' Fit in palm, I could. Hoho."

Wow. He is REALLY going with this. Aaaalright then. Facts are facts.

But you have to ask: For all the time he used up, Peaq has never once contacted an alien being strikingly similar to himself?

Peaq, scraping incomprehensible words, coughs under his raspy throat to tell, "In my greaaat odyssey, leading me to meet place far and funny, people from all background. Learned many experiences, adapted many trades. Culminate all I gathered in my history, all I seeeeen. And no. No funny creature I saw and say 'Ooooooh! Yooooou!' Would scream and point mad-like now if yes."

His great odyssey? You thought the little dude was your not-so-average space-cop, not another adventurer with Main Character Syndrome.

You must have been insolent, because Bojali ain't having any of it, the feather-covered madam swipes and flings her device away in an irritated manner.

"The Prophet has skipped, hopped, and toured across stars and planets for over eight centuries. **Eight centuries** this... majestic being has spent to take routes of life and make stepping stone. Do you honestly believe he shackled himself to this outsider government for his entire life?"

"Eight centuries?!" you exclaim in utter awe, whipping from a Debbie Downer to Dylan Delectioner, checking back on that cheery senior flap gums loose and rub frail knees.

If those eight hundred years are au natural, then the ecosystem he originates is sweating **HARD** in an arms race on longevity. What's more, that'd be some masochist-level servitude if he has worn that blue waistband all this time. But no, not really.

The face of easygoing acceptance is easy even for the blind to spot. It doesn't bother Peaq being alone in the universe, void and clue of the society he could've been one with in another lifetime. You won't interview him any further, hoping you'll be proven wrong in this planet rush, or the next ballparks of deep space expansion and exploration. For now, you want this wacky officer to go to bed with the same mindset he flails and flaps all over the place. Positivity.