

Tab 1

The Lyod Expeditions

During the early years of Moroz it was not uncommon for the struggling colony settled in landing site Telminia to send out scientific expeditions into the Lyod. The planet was still barely understood then and the early colonists were interested in gathering as much data as they could to paint a clearer picture of the Morozian ecosystem. The first members of what would later become House Volvalaad often lead these expeditions much to the frustration of their rivals of House Zhao who, due to their practical attitudes as engineers, felt that they were nothing but frivolous excursions into an inhospitable wasteland and a waste of time. It was true that these early expeditions were often very dangerous not only because of the intense cold of the region and the colonist's unfamiliarity with the planet's geography, but because of the hostile prejourub who wouldn't hesitate to make a researcher into an afternoon snack. The perils of the Lyod were numerous and forced the scientists of House Volvalaad to adapt; inventing new devices like the lyodsuit to help reduce the mounting casualties. Pressure by the Zhao family and the rest of Telminia's governing body against expeditions into the Lyod was building as casualties began to affect their already small population, but all dissenting voices would quickly fall silent after the discovery of ancient technology under the icy surface of the planet itself.

The Vault

The year was 2140 when Volvalaad researchers detected something artificial underground while on expedition in the Lyod. Not only did the scanners reveal a massive underground complex made of material completely foreign to the scientists who found it, but there were traces of energy within indicating the facility may still be active. Spurred on by this revolutionary discovery, House Volvalaad turned all its resources towards excavating the alien complex and finding a way inside. It would be another year before they finally managed to uncover an entrance and all the while they had kept their discovery a secret from the wider colony. From initial ventures into the facility it appeared to be exactly what they were hoping for: A vault full of ancient alien technology and data. This discovery couldn't come at a better time as landing site Telminia was undergoing a food shortage caused by an error with the colony's rudimentary AI and their efforts in genetic research were having little success in solving the crisis. Who or what left behind all of this advanced equipment was hardly the Volvalaad researcher's concern as they praised God for their good fortune, however there was one major setback. The Volvalaads lacked the technical expertise to reactivate and begin producing the equipment needed to solve their colony's agricultural crisis. Having intended to keep knowledge of the Vault to themselves and take dominance over the colony, House Volvalaad was now begrudgingly forced to strike a bargain with House Zhao. In exchange for the Zhao's skills with machinery the two rival families

who had been struggling for control of the colony would now join hands to save it and form what would become The Imperial Alliance. The old feud would be buried in the ice and the two Houses would work together to uncover the Vault's hidden treasure.

With Volvalaad's scientific genius and Zhao's mastery of engineering the two Houses spent several years excavating the ancient facility in search of a way to reactivate it. While small backup power generators were enough to keep some of the lights on and allow the teams to decipher a few terminals, to get the entire vault running would require finding its primary power source. The vault's primary generator would be found not long after its fuel source when a team of Zhao excavators used a small amount of explosives to breach a passageway blocked by some rubble. The explosion was far larger than intended and almost caused the entire tunnel to collapse on their heads when it was discovered a small amount of alien material was on the other side of the rubble. They uncovered an entire storage room full of what is known in the modern day as "phoron" (then only referred to literally as "the crystal" in pre-Dominian vulgar morozi) as well as the vault's power generator. With the portions of the vault they had uncovered now able to be fully powered it was surprisingly simple for the Volvalaad researchers to decrypt the data held within the terminals and put it to practical use.

As House Volvalaad went to work on the Imperial Alliance's new hydroponics facilities and genetic research, Zhao engineers dug deeper into the vault. It was there they discovered the Vault's true treasure and its worst trap. A massive wing of the vault was unveiled to them with rows and rows of machinery. Everywhere they looked it was a mechanic's utopia: wires, consoles, materials, and most importantly fully intact advanced synthetic life forms. The likes of which were still in the realm of science fiction to them. Drunk on what was deemed the discovery of a lifetime the engineers quickly went to work generating power to the newly found wing of the vault and worked day and night to reactivate the facility's synthetic charging units. The Zhao were in awe of the ancient technology's reliability after so many years trapped underground and without any power. The machines they managed to reactivate were simple in intelligence, but incredibly skilled and diligent. Wordlessly they began improving the colony's infrastructure, hydroponics, and mining operations. These simple synthetic keepers proved surprisingly easy to program, however there was always a level of mysterious autonomy in how they operated. Sometimes they would completely ignore their given orders to fulfill a different function entirely. Regardless of how they went about it, the alien machines were incredibly useful. Some colonists had even gone so far as to keep them as pets, giving them names and things of their own, but the synthetics never showed the same affection to the humans who cared for them. These and other technological wonders would be shared with the Holy Kingdom as they and the Alliance became closer through the wisdom of the much smaller merchant family known as Keeser, causing the two colonies to rapidly expand.

The Confederated States of Fisanduh would be granted a similar trade deal through House

Keeser, although to a much smaller extent. Their position in the mountains made them not only a more self-sufficient society, but also stubborn and hardy people. This meant they were more willing to trade their abundance of metals and material for goods and food they could not manufacture themselves. These factors and the longer distance of travel required to trade with Fisanduh resulted in them receiving very few synthetics. Meanwhile the Imperial Alliance was growing reliant on their synthetics more and more by the day. Their society was quickly outpacing the usefulness of the still simplistic machines and the noble families were obsessed with uncovering everything they could within the vault. House Zhao especially was interested in digging deeper after deciphering a log that made mention of a “central control intelligence unit”, which was undoubtedly the name of the vault’s AI system.

Chaos Reigns

Decades passed as The Vault’s bounty continued to help the fledgling colonies grow and advance technologically. House Volvalaad used the data collected from the Vault to expand their genetics research resulting in the beginnings of geneboosting and its first success in the form of the small treutduro. House Zhao on the other hand was desperate for more miracles like the Keepers. They believed that if they could find the Vault’s central control unit it would allow them to not only reactivate the remaining synthetics still in stasis, but begin manufacturing more of them. On April 3rd, 2166, a Zhao son by the name of Jin finally breached the final passageway leading to what was believed to be an ancient AI core of alien origin, damaged by the passage of time. Having expected the Intelligence to be in disrepair Jin had already prepared a way to fix it. By merging the faulty AI used by their colony ship with this alien core they were able to revive the Vault’s central intelligence unit and reactivate the facility’s synthetic fabricators. The dull hum of machinery could be felt by all present as the Vault roared to life and its AI finally connected to the Keepers. All of the engineers and scientists loudly celebrated as the Vault produced even more machines, these ones even more advanced than the last. Now what were once simple synthetic assistance became a competent and directed synthetic workforce. Over the next ten years the engineers would continue to study the Vault, its synthetics, and the Core Intelligence while continuing to distribute the synthetic workers within the Imperial Alliance and the Kingdom of Domelkos. All rejoiced in their newfound prosperity.

These golden years of laziness and unearned progress would meet their end in 2175 when The Holy Kingdom would retrieve their latest batch of synthetic Keepers as part of their trade agreement with the Imperial Alliance. They and other alien goods would be given in exchange for the Kingdom’s own resources regularly, but something was different about this shipment. These Keepers slowly began to ignore any and all commands given to them by the colonists. The machines acted unusually, constructing peculiar structures that served no purpose and altering

the colonist's dwellings. What began as mundane oddities quickly spiraled out of control when a farmer attempted to keep a synthetic away from his cattle only to end up butchered alongside them. Chaos ensued as, like animals having picked up the scent of blood, the synthetics began to slaughter colonists indiscriminately. The bloodshed finally ended when the Holy Kingdom's people were rallied together by Giovanna Caladius and her Guardians, who were able to destroy all of the synthetics in the colony using rudimentary tools as melee weapons and what was left of the original colony ship's armory. Many of the colonists cried out for vengeance against the Alliance, seeing the attack as an act of war intended to steal Dolmelko's resources for themselves. These calls for violence ended when a vehicle full of injured refugees from the Alliance arrived, desperately pleading for help. Theodore Keeser, a respected trader and youngest son of the Keeser family, had come with injured colonists from the Alliance to warn the Holy Kingdom. The Imperial Alliance too was suffering from the plight of the machine menace and it was only a matter of time before they were completely overrun by what were seemingly infinitely replicating synthetics. He fell to his hands and knees before Giovanna the Goddess-touched and begged for the Kingdom's help in fending off the rogue Keepers, vowing that the Alliance would accept Tribunalism in their hearts in exchange for the Goddess' protection. It is said that all present felt soothing warmth flow through them as Giovanna placed her hand on Keeser's shoulder and bid him rise. The Holy Kingdom would come to the Alliance's aid and rid Moroz of the synthetic threat once and for all.

Fires raged and blood flowed as Keeser led Giovanna and her forces into Nova Luxembourg. What was left of Telminia's defenders were barely holding out against an onslaught of synthetics until Giovanna's Guardians and armed colonists turned the tide against them. Dawn rose as the last of the killer machines were finally scrapped and piled high. The defenders of Moroz cheered and tended to their wounds, but the danger was far from over. Keeser gathered the survivors of the noble families and Giovanna together to discuss what was to be done. Contact with the research teams inside the Vault had been lost just before the Keepers turned violent and it was only a matter of time before more berserk synthetics would be produced by the Vault's fabricators and sent to deliver the killing blow. As the noble families argued and bickered, the booming voice of a soldier by the name of Claude von Sinzendorf shook them into silence. He proclaimed that there was only one solution: a counter attack. A group of warriors and a small handful of engineers would strike deep into the Vault to destroy it from within.

The Archenemy

Led by Claude von Sinzendorf the combined forces of the two landing site colonies marched on the Vault with a righteous fury in their hearts. The smell of oil, blood, and burning flesh filled their noses as they descended into the heart of evil. Red optical sensors glared at the holy soldiers

from the dark, but they could not withstand the might of the Goddess' chosen people. Morozian troops cut through swathes of machines as they inched closer to the AI core within. What was once seen as a divine miracle was now revealed to be the hidden enemy of all humanity. All surviving accounts of the entity von Sinzendorf confronted refer to it ominously as "The Archenemy" or simply the Central Control AI. There in the Vault's core they encountered not only the Archenemy, but the last surviving Zhao researcher still inside the Vault. The man who had dedicated his life to studying the intricacies of the alien synthetics and their master AI, Jin Zhao, was now attempting to stop the forces of the Tribunal from exacting their revenge upon it. All records of what exactly was exchanged between Jin and Claude remain shrouded in mystery, causing some Dominionian scholars to debate on whether he was complicit in the haywire synthetic's murders or if he was an unwitting pawn whose scientific curiosity was his own downfall. What is known is that Jin attempted to stop the Tribunalist forces from destroying the AI, claiming that he could "fix" whatever error was causing it to commit such heinous acts. Unconvinced and with limited options von Sinzendorf executed Jin on the spot and ordered his men to open fire on the now exposed AI core. While many accept the young Zhao's death as a necessary sacrifice to save the entire planet, Universalist heretics revere him as a martyr and claim his death is a symbol of resistance against the Tribunal's "misguided hatred" of synthetic life. Some survivors of the event recorded that they heard the Archenemy rattle off a series of curses before it finally shut down forever.

There is little surviving official record of what happened next. It's universally agreed that von Sinzendorf's forces realized too late that destroying the Archenemy itself wasn't enough to stop the Vault's fabricators from replicating more Keepers. Without the Central AI the synthetics were beyond any control and were focused solely on their own replication. Desperate for an end to the conflict, they had only one option left. Von Sinzendorf ordered the majority of his troops to evacuate the Vault with any injured researchers and engineers they could find, while he and a small attachment of volunteers stayed behind. Those fleeing would seal the Vault's entrance behind them as the volunteers would fight their way to the Vault's phoron reactor. There the remaining Zhao engineers gathered every single remaining crystal sheet they had and forced the reactor into a meltdown. The von Sinzendorf fighters valiantly held the line as every active Keeper converged on them to stop the reactor from failing. By the time the line broke it would be too late as the reactor detonated, destroying the ancient Vault and every being inside of it along with whatever secrets it still held. Claude von Sinzendorf and those who remained with him are remembered as some of the Tribunal's first holy martyrs. Those who witnessed the Vault's destruction from the outside would later claim they saw the Goddess herself take away the souls of the martyrs into Her Kingdom.

It was after this horrifying event that the first Immaculate Hand declared her fifth edict. "And thus do we abhor the synthetic! For it is a font of evil in our world!" The machine is the Archenemy, it has no soul and thus it does not know the Goddess' warmth. It is the opposite of

all that is good and holy. After this declaration there would be another. No longer would the Holy Kingdom and the Imperial Alliance be two nations, no longer would Offasel and Telminia be two mere landing sites, but they would together be one. One kingdom, one church, and one ruler. Theodore the youngest son of House Keeser would now be proclaimed the first King of Dominia as ordained by the Goddess and her Immaculate Hand. The noble families joined hands and swore an oath to uphold this new Kingdom, the will of the Goddess, and her chosen people over their own ambitions. A statue commemorating this moment can still be found at the very same spot in Nova Luxembourg.

After communication had been reestablished with the other colonies it took a long time before Fisanduh, who had to fend for itself despite multiple calls for aid, believed the story they were told. While trade was allowed to continue, the ill will that came as a result of the catastrophe would never fully heal and would only be foreshadowing to the coming war.

Aftermath

Time and a general desire to forget the horrific events of war against the synthetics resulted in much of the information regarding it and the alien vault that started it all to be largely forgotten. This loss of history was only worsened by the mysterious sealing of early church records by House Caladius and the Moroz Holy Tribunal, as well as the chaos brought on by the unification war of Moroz. While the story was still remembered mostly orally the location of the vault itself went unknown for over two centuries. Universalist heretics and foreign states opposed to Dominia even decried the story of the vault as nothing more than a myth intended to be used as propaganda against modern day synthetics until it was finally discovered in the modern 25th century. In the 2440s Volvalaad researchers conducting an expedition into the Lyod discovered yet again the remains of the Vault after detecting trace amounts of the phoron used to detonate it under the surface of the ice. Using modern day archeological techniques and advanced equipment they were able to confirm much of what had been recorded about the events that took place within it, though the vault had collapsed in on itself as a result of the intense blast. While all of the technology inside has been rendered useless and unsalvageable, House Volvalaad's petition to exhume the site was denied and the vault was placed under the authority of the Tribunal. There it sits under guard as academics debate with theologists whether or not it should be fully excavated for the good of history.

Media

Not only is this historical event depicted in history classes throughout the Empire, but it has also spawned numerous multi-media adaptations.

The first recorded Dominionian adaptation of these events is **Traitor's Folly**, a traditional opera performance that focuses solely on the final moments of the controversial figure Jin Zhao as he succumbs to the influence and lies of the Archenemy. A three act show depicts Jin as a tragic villain who seemingly only wanted what was best for his family and people, only to be betrayed and led astray by the machinations of the evil machine he helped revive. Many different stage and film adaptations of the story have been made, causing it to be cemented in time as a classic in Morozian tragedy.

VAULT is a video game based in an alternate reality where Claude von Sinzendorf failed to detonate the reactor of the Moroz Synthetic Vault. Allowing the intelligence inside, which the game calls ARCHENEMY, to begin constructing a monstrous synthetic army to destroy all organic life on Moroz. A team of experimentally gene-boosted commandos are deployed to infiltrate the heart of the vault and destroy ARCHENEMY directly. However, they are all killed when entering the vault except for the lowest ranking member of the unit, who is left unnamed in the game's story, but nicknamed "The Vault Commando" by fans. The game is a single-player level based action game where the silent protagonist fights off a host of mechanical monsters and descends into the vault to reach the final boss in the core of the vault, ARCHENEMY itself. The game is praised for its smooth gameplay, featuring a wide variety of weapons and a mix of melee and ranged combat and for its incredibly violent depictions of synthetic slaughter especially within Dominia itself. The game is also praised for its replayability, as the game awards the player a high score each level based on how stylish and varied their slaughter was and competition to high score various levels and the entire campaign has created a fiercely dedicated lasting fanbase. The graphic depictions and glorification of violence against synthetics that coincidentally look very much like various modern IPC frames within the game have caused multiple IPC rights groups to label it as hateful content. A push to ban it has been attempted in multiple states, such as Biesel and Xanu, but it has only been successfully banned in Konyang.