

Alien Nation Lore (Work in Progress, Spoiler-Lite)

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Note: Lore is liable to change as the story continues 'in development.' Certain things are still getting 'ironed out to be more consistent.' Special thanks to people helping build the lore- which at this point is 40 pages!

Shil'vati (Who are they, What are they? Current state of Shil' society?)

Shil'vati Morphology:

Shil'vati, (abridged as Shil'), are purple skinned, blue-blooded ("Hemocyanin") Matriarchal aliens with tusks and naturally dark hair. Shil'vati women stand roughly between six feet to nine feet tall and are bound with muscle. The women are both the dominant and most common gender, with a birth ratio of 8:1 women to men. The Shil'vati males are smaller and less physically imposing, standing about five feet to six feet tall.

Shil' is colloquially (though incorrectly) used to refer to the Shil'vati ('vati' being people of Shil') species by humans. It is more correctly used to refer to the home planet, or the language they communicate in.

The Shil'vati Empire:

Spans roughly one third of 'the known' Galaxy. The scale and scope of *exactly* how much has been discovered as opposed to 'claimed but uninhabited,' is unknown, but the population is measured in at least the trillions. The other two major factions in the 'known' Galaxy consists of the [Alliance](#) and [Coalition](#).

Shil'vati Political Structure:

The Shil'vati Empire is ruled by an Empress, who directly controls the Nobility, Military, Interior, and Government of the Shil'vati people. Her power is absolute. The title is hereditary, as are titles of Nobility, all passed down matrilineally. Noblewomen carry out duties and tasks in the Empress's name; almost any position of major import carries with it a Noble title. Noble titles can be earned by an individual, and an individual can have their nobility stripped away. See [Shil'vati Power Structure](#) for more.

There are two other major factions in the galaxy who they consider themselves rivals to- the bureaucratic-led [Alliance](#), and the hyper-capitalistic [Coalition of Species](#). See [Other Factions](#) for more details.

Should the Shil'vati attempt to move too aggressively against either party, the two would unite, so the current stalemate has developed into an uneasy peace after millennia of wars across thousands of planets. The Empire has begun exploring in a new direction, and encounters Earth, to bloody effect on the local population. This barely registered as a skirmish to the broader galaxy, who still consider themselves 'at peace.'

Shil'vati Family Structure:

Polyamorous marriage is the norm among Shil'vati. Families are formed around the husband/father of the children as the nucleus of the family. A good husband seeks to remain low in partner count and devoted to his partner- and a woman doesn't want to hear that while she was on deployment he got five or more new wives.

Shil'vati Government:

Shil' Government consists of the Civilian, Militia, Military, Interior, Nobility, and Royalty. See [Shil Power Structure](#) for more details. Shil'vati Legal Framework and Contracts allow for a "Living Will" interpretation of the law, as all laws are seen as springing from the ultimate authority- the Empress. The intention of the law is clear. Laws do change, over time, but exploiting loopholes for personal gain is a quick ticket to a visit from the [Interior](#).

Shil'vati Economy:

Credits are their universal currency. Systems are set up largely free-trade for certain products, though certain products are protected via tariff or limitation on production for the sake of sustaining the industry.

Shil'vati Social Structure:

Shil'vati women are supposed to protect men, even if it means laying down their lives. Wives are expected to provide for their husbands, and he in turn is supposed to run the family's internal affairs, raise and rear the children, and so on while the wife is out fighting in wars or otherwise working.

Gender roles have been heavily enforced for millennia. Homosexuality among women is quietly tolerated, albeit with some shame in the widely accepted notion that it is by necessity (which indicates a lack of attractive assets), but those judgments relax, especially on deployments. Male homosexuality is comparatively frowned upon, as men's sexuality is seen as 'valuable' and therefore 'tampering' or 'experimenting' with it, especially if it denies women sex or marriage, is seen as borderline heretical.

A woman cheating on a man is more quickly forgiven and less scandalous. If given the opportunity, it is borderline expected she will at least consider it. It is embarrassing for the male, but less so for the woman. Husbands/Fathers/Family Men cheating, however, is *extremely* scandalous, especially given the polygamous nature of the relationships. ("If a man wants a woman, which he shouldn't in the first place, but if he finds his virtue failing, then he should marry that woman, not sleep with her on his own initiative.") Much discussion is made in their current political arena over whether the offense is caused by their alarm over a male expressing his own desires, or over his wives not monopolizing his sex, while being given more of a pass to find other outlets, (should they happen upon one.)

Shil' Society:

They are a war-like honor culture, but the story starts in a time of relative peace between the three major factions, currently stretching approximately eighty years.

To wit: An expansionist empire that is deeply troubled and society being strained by peace. Peace, to the empire, is Pandora's box. *Peace* is deemed *worth enduring* by the current Empress, even for the social struggles, social stagnation, ossification, complacency and corruption it is causing.

The sense of 'common direction' is being lost. Many people in the service, without a war or victory conditions, and others with Civilian jobs and no prospect of upward mobility and declining living standards, are 'just punching the clock,' largely idle instead of being productive for the Empire with the free time they have. Marines and even Civilian workers no longer think about what would further the Empire toward its goals with their free time. Instead- they feel any extra initiative is unrewarded.

Shil' Social change:

Shil' men can now demand more from their partners- that they be of a higher social status, that they conform to certain social views that were earlier unthinkable, that they hold more financial wealth. Driven by this newfound power, many are beginning to ask for unrealistic changes. (Shil' men are not necessarily the most worldly individuals, often sheltered and sequestered away from the world, viewing it only from indoors, or while under escort.)

Shil'vati Duelling

Matters of Honor are settled in individual duels. The rules as-codified vary from region of space to region of space, and act as a lubricant of sorts for when the system 'breaks' or issues come to a head.

Shil' Law: Illegal things of serious note (in addition to the usual laws):

1. Criticizing the Empress (when using or one's public station to do so). Punishments range.
2. Gene editing (*severely* illegal. Even inspection of DNA to counteract bioweapons is extremely closely monitored.)
3. Attacking a Noblewoman in the course of her duties is usually akin to attacking the Empress herself; the sentence is very commonly death.

Shil'vati power structure:

Empress and Royal Family:

The Empress is a living divine figure to the Shil'vati. The current dynasty has ruled uncontested for over two thousand years. The Empress has concubines and multiple husbands, but only the offspring of the first husband carries titles.

It should be noted that imitation of the Empress is *not* considered a form of flattery, for the Empress is considered perfect, and cannot be flattered. Attempts to do so will be taken as statements of the obvious and a waste of everyone's time, and that is if the listener is feeling generous or positively predisposed to the one performing the attempt. Woe unto those who are not, and are considered impersonation attempts.

Nobility:

Most powerful positions are occupied by a noblewoman, who are offered better educations, wages, and more. They serve a greater purpose than just 'being rich' or 'having a position of responsibility,' but actually serve a cultural importance similar to the Equestrian and Senatorial ranks of Rome. They also are tasked with leading by example, and also are expected to be the Empress's will upon the people and to serve them. The reality has shifted heavily to where they more frequently serve themselves and their own classes due to peacetime conditions and profiteering as some of the only assured avenues left to move up the social ladder, and being well-positioned to do so.

Military: (see also: [war](#) for how battles usually unfold)

Navy:

Considered the strongest in the known galaxy. Most firepower, most maneuverable, best armor, best logistics, best trained. Certain ships in the Consortium have better stats for certain ships, but the structure of the Consortium and their will-to-fight is much lesser than that of the Empire, who prevail in most naval conflicts.

Marines:

Serve on-board (repel boarders, board enemy vessels), and take part in engagements on planetary surfaces. These are common- due to the nature of war. They wear *Dominatria* armor, capable of repelling most small-arms fire without issue. Even a .50 cal round will tend to wound more often than guarantee a kill.

Militia:

Vary in strength and power, depending on the noblewoman. Large retinues have become the norm in recent years. Some are composed of veteran Marines, and equipped with better, non-standard issue weaponry. Others are military washouts, present just to give a pretension of power. Some are mixed units of veterans and 'presence.' Earth has a limitation on the number of militia allowed to be present in green zones, to prevent servitude as a workaround to earn passes to visit the luxurious, secured, 'green' sections (see "Green Zones"). Ministriva uses armed and armored droids as her militia and attendants.

Interior:

Act as a check on the absolute power of the nobility. Inquisition. They operate with impunity, but are quite impoverished themselves, and are all but forbidden from being nobility. They act as a check. Interior investigate with absolute authority- but are also known to disappear when they get too close to the sun/fly too close to the fire, and are widely despised within the Shil'vati ranks. There are whispers of corruption within the interior- agents on the take, in order to move up once they retire.

Human Security Forces:

Drawn initially from Police forces (referred to by the shil'vati as "peacekeepers"), these police forces didn't all accept the change into becoming the paramilitary 'Human Security Forces' (HSF).

Many departments quit outright. The gap in the ranks that was created by this split right as Emperor truly revealed his hand led to recruiting heavily from nation-states that were more cooperative, often 'true believers.'

Recruitment works closer to that of a sports franchise, with a standardized test, and departments choosing by need when they need reinforcements from the pool of talent available. Unfortunately, they have begun scraping the barrel for recruits as those with talent are drafted, and the remedials are left in the system to be retrained. Quality has declined significantly.

Armed with scaled down rifles, and armored with neosteel over a kevlar-style weave that deflects or absorbs bullets, their equipment does not work at all against a Shil'vati Marine's lasrifle.

Vehicles are armored human vehicles, helicopters, old army equipment, modified and up-armored tacticals and the like. The trainees were given rifles and armor sets that can lock up movement upon command from commanders who monitor them, via a remote signal.

Data Teams:

Data teams act as advisors of a sort. The unofficial voice of the bureaucracy. They largely just come up with data as requested to be measured by the above branches and report that data on to the bureaucracy, as well, and classify or declassify documents upon request. Sort of a floating I.T. Department as well, including digital forensics, tracking shipping manifests. They also provide local expert advice on the region for newly appointed bureaucrats. Frequently overworked.

Newspaper:

‘Stars and Strikes’ is the military press, their version of Stars and Stripes. Another publication is *Bulkheads and Banners*.

Shil’ Culture

Language:

Trade Shil:

Shil’ communicate in “Trade Shil” which is used to communicate between the client races (think “Pidgin” as an amalgamation of languages- an extremely parsed down form of the language, with all irregularities stripped out. Esperanto is an attempt to invent a ‘perfect’ language.) Easy to learn, fast to spread, and ‘good enough’ for basic trade, intentions, and so on. Borderline impossible to construct anything artful with, but *useful*. Utilitarian, in a word.

High Shil:

High Shil’ is the native form of Shil’vati. *Most* Shil’ understand it natively, but only nobility tend to use it amongst each other, or when delivering official addresses. It contains a few nuances, a broader vocabulary, and is considered artful when used- but can also be seen as ‘putting on airs’ when used inappropriately. Artful.

Most shil’vati communicate to each other a step between High’ Shil’ and Trade Shil’, which is largely just called, like so many other things, *Shil’*. (Before anyone starts, let me just: “*Hey, Earthling, where do you want this pile of Earth moved to? I get that it’s hard to get your attention, but hey! Hey, are you listening to me? Earth to humans! What on Earth else are you possibly thinking about?*”)

Linguistic and cultural Drift

While the Shil'vati Empire has a national broadcasting service, these are distributed via ships entering and exiting a system to be broadcasted within each system. Individual systems do broadcast their own entertainment media, and are able to broadcast them into other systems via loading them onto ships for a small fee and agreement with the authority managing broadcasts in the sector it's being shipped to. Universal conscription and service keeps the language together and from drifting *too* far, but in a time of peace there's a lack of unifying experience.

Shil' Dating Culture

Access to boys and men in general is STRICTLY controlled for almost all levels of society- balls and galas are sort of "THE" place to meet- the idea being that suitors meet under the supervision of parental units, who themselves meet with the suitor's families, and that everyone is observed and displays themselves in the eyes of their (rough) equals in society. This is where people can also intervene on the male's behalf, or at least disapprove and caution them away from foolhardy decisions that may have lasting consequences. Trysts were extremely rare, but are growing slightly more common for reasons described below:

Forbidden Romance is a cultural meme for them. A taboo subject, but also a perpetual fascination to them.

Shil is a planet with many great lakes, with landmasses stretched between them. There was little point in ocean crossings when portaging cargo took time and handling. A land fight could allow them to contest the land around the lake, and thus the lake itself. Ambushes and short, brutal conflicts along shorelines over territory, mates, and anything else one might imagine were common in their pre-history. Swimming, however, has much to do with their origin as a species, and it was for these very lakes that many of them fought, and they remained proficient swimmers. Eventually, connecting the lakes facilitated better trade, and through that came naval warfare, and the species never looked back.

Their Navy is second to none due to technological and materiel emphasis.

How the change to 'peace' affected Shil' Society:

Early on in their 80 years of current peace, the Shil'vati culture saw mass innovations- lots of brilliant minds who might have died in the war instead committed themselves away from war-effort innovations and poured them into the civilian sector. Technologies started jumping across, and emerging leaders of industry became very financially well-off selling consumer goods to a new, pseudo-consumer society. Existing

foundries could either continue building military vessels for a state that no longer needed them in such quantity, or switch to making Yachts for the nouveau rich. Massive social upward mobility was generated, and with it quick social upheaval and reforms that were largely uncontentious and generally agreed upon to have been for the somewhat-betterment, including moderately improved rights for boys to enter the workforce as due to all the spare Shil', the value of labor became somewhat lesser, and boys needed to now take on additional economic duties.

Boys out and about without an escort are 'fair game' for approach, though the approaches are frequently some combination of rough, crude, awkward, and aggressive. Culturally, the Shil', despite the women being the more outgoing sex, did not have the opportunity until recently to meet young boys outside of [organized balls](#).

Rather than dying off, however, as the reforms are met, these voices for social change are seeming to growing louder. This strengthens resistance against them, as the worry is they misrepresented their goals. These reforms were initially largely agreed upon as 'long overdue,' yet now the momentum has built behind the reformists, even after the lowest hanging fruit has been picked. With academics asking what it means to even be moral in an age when the society is upending itself- why *not* be gluttonous and greedy, and maximize a position for personal profit? As some of their critics note: 'When the pillars of society are gone, the reformists will hardly take a breath before getting to work demolishing the rest, to bring it all toppling down.' Politically this is leading to a degree of deadlock and factionalism.

Earth (How has it changed under the Shil'vati?)

Current Status of American Governments:

Official, government-led resistance ended in surrender after one year of combat since the Shil'vati fleet broke orbit and launched their attack. Each state, territory, and country is now referred to as a "Zone," with borders *mostly* intact to where they are colloquially known by their names when they were states and territories. Zones are color-coded, depending on how safe/hostile it is to the aliens. Green, Yellow, and Red zones. [see [Zones and Borders](#) for more details, including details on [other notable Zones](#).]

The United States is unusual in that it managed to officially retain its government and democracy, on account of their nuclear and conventional arsenals, and the high likelihood of toppling the government creating a long, drawn-out insurgency with needless casualties. By accepting 'terms,' the U.S. Government (and most of its various departments and individuals within) retained their jobs and positions, and in turn

immediately began collaborating with the aliens. They set about purging any ‘hard-line’ anti-Shil’vati officials from their positions. Other nominal-democracies include France, and Germany. Resistance largely ceased, though a few pockets of governmental resistance continued, along with acts of civil disobedience.

A few months later, a civilian government was sent for, and the Governesses were instilled to run each state.

Security and Governance:

Government-issued ID cards include banking account details.

Government has issued “Omni-Pads” to all humans that are kept isolated on their own, closely-monitored network with an extremely parsed-down ‘DataNet.’ Users can be tracked, and the devices are tightly locked down in their permissions. Omni-Pads are assigned to individuals. See [Doodads](#) for more. These are functionally like iPads. Built to be extremely robust, they are centuries-old and can not even interact with the broader Shil’ DataNet that is used by the Military and Shil’vati civilians.

Economy:

The United States Dollar (USD) is worthless anywhere outside of Earth. ‘Credit to USD’ transactions can be done almost anywhere, but ‘USD to Credit’ can be exchanged only through government requisition requests, with an artificially even exchange rate. The catalog of Shil’ made goods deemed ‘purchasable’ by humans is kept limited and scarce, due to the continuing insurgency and a tendency the humans have of weaponizing anything they are given. All of this is in an attempt to stabilize the domestic currency and to keep domestic labor cheap enough, which is to the benefit of the Shil’vati, who can afford anything they want on Earth, and encourages the hiring of humans, who can be paid in USD.

The exchange rate on the black market is far, *far* less equal. Humans are desperate for credits, which is seen as the long-term currency. The market and economy is kept stable only by not allowing a ‘run’ on the banks or for people to easily abandon the currency.

For scale, on the black market, then, a multimillionaire *might* be able to buy a modern Omni-Pad.

Business and Productivity

Humans have largely stopped innovating, as our technology and grasp of sciences is woefully backward by comparison; anything we do invent is largely thought to be inferior to whatever the shil’vati will next clear for us to be able to use. Even the

extremely antiquated Omni-Pads they are giving out are leaps and bounds more powerful than our best supercomputers, yet are themselves many centuries out of date by comparison to their technology. (The comparison used: “It’s like if we gave cavemen a landline phone from the mid-20th century, while we walk around with smartphones.”) The economy trundles along by the grace of trade. Officially, the currency exchange (1:20) is pegged far apart from reality (1:1000). Awards are paid out in local currencies (USD, Euro, etc.,).

Three of the most marketable things that Earth has been able to offer is, in order of desire:

1. Sex
2. Tourism (alcohol, food, nature, etc.,) (They happen to like liver a lot, due to being high in copper content, which is what blue blood is based on.)
3. Handcrafted goods/arts and crafts. Everything from clothing, swords, antiques, artifacts, and handmade goods out of natural materials (e.g., wood-carved figurines).
 - a. They can commonly be scammed into buying *anything*, and veracity is difficult for them, as the human internet is somewhat archaic to them and patchy at the best of times with all the satellites down, and the NSA monitoring all packet data slowing things down, and no one really laying new cable/putting much work into maintaining it.

Disruption to trade:

During the invasion, heavy damage was inflicted on our global trade infrastructure (sea ports, shipyards, even power plants). Local production of goods is being slowly restarted, at least until global trade can be assuredly smooth and reliable in its deliveries. However, severe restrictions on trade goods with red zones generate supply shocks. Localization is decided upon to resolve the shortages, rather than the massive undertaking that would be rebuilding ports, bridges, highways, ships, shipyards to build and maintain ships, drydocks, dams, locks, railways, and trying to train new staff to utilize what is seen as an antiquated way to move goods.

Gasoline is slowly being produced again, though plastics are being largely phased out, with the Shil’ providing the extra energy required. Many of our designs, however, rely on plastics (e.g., PCR test kits). Lots of localized knowledge is lost from this infrastructural collapse. See [New Infrastructure and Social Programs](#) for more—notably missing is the ability to produce quality human-specific forensics in the quantity needed to both maintain effective policing *and* anti-insurgency operations, coupled with not trusting human forensics technicians, creating a massive backlog in cases.

Zones and Borders:

America, being the last to surrender and by virtue of having possession of an unclear number of remaining nuclear weapons and a fanaticism that reminded the Shil'vati of a certain race (see: [The Roaches](#)), had leverage enough to sue for a conditional surrender. **The United States managed to keep their governmental structure intact**, and the Shil'vati rule over-top of that, albeit quietly and with a nominally 'hands-off' attitude federally. States vary in how involved the Shil'vati are. In some, they maintain a minor presence and a few garrisons, but the job of maintaining order and infrastructure principally falls on the shoulders of humans.

Even as the human government holds to the terms of the agreement by turning in any rebel they suspect and self-policing, the Shil'vati are working to undermine that rule and to overthrow democracy, piecemeal until eventually they do away with it entirely. The effect this has is that the bureaucracy competes with itself internally to sell out humanity the fastest, passing the most pro-shil'vati bills they can manage so that when democracy dies (with any dissent silenced, sometimes through coercion, sometimes through other means), not only will humanity be glad to see it gone, but that the bureaucrats expect they will be *rewarded* for this treachery.

Most national and state borders are kept intact for 'ease of governance,' with a very few exceptions, and a few minor deviations for the sake of simplification.

Red Zones:

No business can be carried out outside of what little pacification area they have-sometimes designated 'purple zones.' Think Green Zones in Iraq.

Yellow Zones:

Some business can be carried out on a day-to-day basis. Safe during daylight. Armor advisory is in effect, even for civilians, who are urged to travel armed and with an escort. Some organized insurgency is detected, perhaps even multiple smaller insurgencies who can carry out simple strikes of medium-effectiveness. Passes are obtainable, but inspections are frequent.

Green Zones:

Demarcated as being safe. One-off attacks occur from 'lone wolves,' but all organized resistance is determined to have absolutely ceased to exist or to at least be a threat to the well-being of collaborators, unarmored shil', etc., and it is effectively 'open for business,' in many respects. Contractors and fleet personnel like to visit these zones. **Travel between adjacent 'green' zones is allowed for humans, without a pass.** Green zones are seen as vital to be kept green, and yellow zones are seen as important to be kept from going red. Red zones continuing their resistance is seen as 'annoying, but will fade.' Their longtime enemies, the 'roaches' fought until their home planet was destroyed, and have fought on even since then, with a frothing hatred for the Shil'vati, having never laid down arms to the enemy. That humans have surrendered and even collaborated gives the Shil'vati hope that humans can be fully coaxed into doing the same, and that it simply needs the correct combination of military strikes and civilian policies, perhaps time, or cultural change will weaken the resistance. **They are self-assured of their own victory, even in red zones, declaring their pacification 'inevitable.'** However, seeing resistance spread in a green zone or a yellow zone's resistance intensifying to red is a cause of near-panic to the occupying aliens. Shil' students attending human schools can choose to do so on-site.

Notable Zones:

Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia are all red, and have been since the invasion. Being the seat of both former-human federal and now Shil'vati 'regional' power or having a large and long history of rebellion, this is to no one's great surprise. Overall, most 'zones' are, at least according to the news, making headway in being pacified. None seem to be slipping further into chaos that aren't *already* red zones.

Other Countries:

Countries who surrendered are now run sans their democracies. Human aristocracy in countries such as the United Kingdom has been elevated back into the position of monarchs, albeit as puppets. The United States, without any such formalized or history of aristocracy, retains its method of electing its leadership and nominal elections, though in reality the people have no greater power.

Many smaller countries that spoke the same languages have been absorbed into larger countries (e.g., Lichtenstein belongs to Germany, which has merged with Austria.) All of Ireland now belongs to the U.K., (though they no longer own the Falklands), along with Scotland, Wales, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, etc., with the Queen as 'sovereign,' but a Governess to 'manage' the region. This is typical for most regions,

including Sweden, Norway, and so on, whose monarchs have either been reinstated, or monarchs imposed from the ranks of human aristocracies.

The Spanish king did not bend the knee, but abdicated his position and abolished the government. The Shil rule directly- and are also dealt with directly.

Governments in Sub-Saharan Africa and W. Africa all were abolished and are now run under the “African League,” who are partnered and affiliated with the Shil’vati. The Shil’vati run Africa with an iron fist- zero tolerance for corruption, and are considered the Interior’s principal focus. The Shil’ run and manage the schools, infrastructure, and are having some success in building up Africa. They have had a lot of success in improving the material living conditions there, and in exchange, they have also had a lot of peacekeeper volunteers from those regions.

New infrastructure and social programs:

Clean energy to most urban and suburban areas restored relatively quickly. Hospitals built, curing ailments that vexed the best of humanity’s medical care techniques. Homelessness has been largely solved through a variety of programs. Universal basic income granted.

Social effects of occupation:

Religion:

Churches/Mosques and other places of worship lost their tax-exempt status due to the Empress being a pseudo-divine figure in the eyes of the Shil’, who brooks no competition.

To many one-time believers, the occupying Shil’ appear to be as angels from the Empress. They have managed to meaningfully improve the material conditions of the adherents, and can punish the non-believers with near-impunity and employ technology beyond human understanding. This has emptied the pews.

Per Arthur C. Clarke: (“Any sufficiently advanced technology is **indistinguishable from magic.**”)

The ranks of the faithful are further depleted by many embracing ‘end days’ prophecies and carrying out near-suicidally hopeless attacks against the invaders, armed and armored by little more than faith. Some survived their missions, their faith still shattered

and broken. Religiosity and religious thinking is still present within humanity, but they have merely transplanted it onto the Shil'vati.

News Media:

Utterly demoralized. Everything bends in one direction. The Shil'vati are never depicted as doing anything wrong. Investigative reporting is unnecessary, as they already have the answers, handed to them by the state or corporate masters, who increasingly are one-and-the-same.

The Shil'vati have their fingers on the pulse of the planet in many aspects- many corporations wish to be the first to become distributors of Shil'vati products, and will threaten to pull advertising or out of business deals over the slightest controversial statement made about the Shil'vati- (e.g., implying they are in any way at fault for anything that happens, no matter how clear-cut.) or since many of these wishful corporations outright own the media as well, the marching orders are clear.

News stories where responsibility of the Shil' cannot be dodged, simply does not get covered. Buzzword phrases are discussed in think tanks to protect this arrangement- Words are disseminated to the networks to be parroted in-unison, in a variety of tones and flavors from different anchors and channels and outlets, but the message is largely the same. (very *Pravda* in origin, coupled with ClearChannel.)

Academia faces a similar issue. Much discussion of reform has turned inward- the Christian concept of Original Sin is now alive and well, but with God, Heaven, and Forgiveness replaced by Empress, the Broader Galaxy, and earning any sort of official recognition or award from the Empire as akin to our concepts of baptism or confirmation. Dissent is heresy and the speaker a heathen or apostate. Persecution follows.

Uprooting and Eradication of Earth Culture:

There is a concerted push to obliterate human tradition and culture from these angles (reinforced by the Shil'vati backing them, should any serious push-back occur.) Even holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hajj, Ramadan, May Pole, Passover, Independence Day, and so on are being attacked as 'barbaric' by the supposed leaders of our societies. The Shil'vati, to try and ease the 'transition' are pinning their own celebration dates on the calendar on the same day, regardless of what the galactic calendar says. (e.g., President's Day now shares a holiday with Empress Day. Independence Day with Unification Day. And so on.)

Books, Film, and other Entertainment Media:

The largest touchstones are being remade and re-released, the original works buried, taken off-platforms, hosted on a ‘legacy Human [Internet](#),’ which is unstable- especially on certain pages which host the original movies. The remakes heavily feature Shil’vati- even in alternative-history books, and those of myth and legend (e.g., building of the pyramids), or well-documented historical cases, where it was impossible for a Shil’vati to be present. (e.g., The Patriot with Mel Gibson is now a Shil’vati warrior woman who mows down the British- whose soldiers are mostly human women, with a plasma rifle between one-liners, then overthrows the King, and declares Earth as belonging to the Empress).

Most of the time, the core messages are lost, and their status as a cultural touchstone persists only through billboards and posters being plastered around, and for want of any other creative media being produced, it is consumed by the force of its own momentum.

Preservation

The Shil’vati are doing their best to try to restore Earth’s nature to some kind of homeostasis (preventing further acid rain, ozone depletion, climate change, removal of invasive species (The irony is lost on them, sadly), preservation of endangered species, etc.,).

While they do note that there are terrestrial species that are *mostly* women with highly unequal birth ratios (e.g., bees, ants)- as well as species where the female is larger and stronger (e.g., Cassowaries, Raptors) called “Reverse Sexual Dimorphism,” but this is from *our* perspective. From the Shil’ and the broader galaxy’s perspective, this is the norm, and Earth is quite the outlier with its 50:50 birth ratio, and therefore a curiosity.

Internet

There are a few networks.

- **Human Internet** - Is a shambles. Volunteers and corporations keep it going along, but there are periodic major connection issues, privacy issues, and speed issues.
- **Human DataNet** - A Shil’vati run internet for humans to access via their freely-given omni-pads, works fine, but it is heavily moderated, and humans can’t host their own information webpages, only use what’s already there- think if the internet got turned off except for Facebook, a Shil’vati-built Wikipedia with *extreme* limitations on what you can read/research, a Shil’vati Netflix that’s very

limited but hosts all their own classics to basically teach you their culture (like a bad high school language education vid), and a smattering of other features.

- **Shil'vati DataNet** - Shil'vati Omni-Pads are connected to this network and they can communicate amongst each other within the system. Data batches are released with the arrival of ships from other systems, as FTL communication (generally) travels at the speed of ships arriving. Not technically legal for humans to possess or to access these networks. These devices can be tracked down easily, and their users are registered- so loaning one or giving them to a human or not marking them as 'lost' is a minor crime (payable fee/[bribe](#), but still, 'not good').

'Solving homelessness'

During the initial invasion, the Shil'vati leadership did secretly round up and cull the homeless to spur development of medical treatment for the broader human population, retrofitting the "doc bots" to be able to treat human beings with acute precision. This includes purging microplastics, PFAs, and other lifelong-accumulating toxins that the human environment has begun to collect. These homeless largely died off, though by the time that the most pressing emergencies were researched thoroughly enough, a sizable fraction of the homeless had been disposed of via experimentation. Other homeless were treated, given freshly built shil'vati housing inside former shopping centers near hospitals, rehabilitation via human social workers, and a stipend of money.

Earth to the Shil'vati

Earth's lagrange calculation and exact location and such is a closely-kept military state secret, held jealously from the [other major galactic powers, who themselves have an interest in Earth.](#)

Overall, the planet is unique in its even birth ratio. This is considered a paradisiacal planet by the Shil'vati, and much has been made of propaganda, as a way of justifying further exploration *away* from the other factions, thereby avoiding war. Much is made of Earth's summers, warm beaches, plentiful numbers of men, and rumors of their prowess and stamina are neither played down nor denied by propaganda.

To Shil'vati, humans are graceful, with long strides that flow effortlessly even at a run, almost as if they are gliding across the terrain. Human men lack a lengthy tongue, but their tongues are stronger, also lacking even the most minute of tusks and enabling certain fantasies. If large tusks are seen as "feminine" in their society (e.g., a sign of

brutish strength and such), then having none at all is “masculine” in their society (e.g., submissive to the point of near-incitement). Being shorter is an additional ‘masculine’ trait they enjoy in a man for a partner’s ‘masculinity.’ However, Earth holds a strange appeal (to them we are basically outgoing space-tomboys).

Shil’vati almost universally have naturally dark hair and purple skin of a general shade, depending on sunlight exposure. Humans come in a variety of colors, with almost all of them being exotic in some sense. Wiry hair is unknown, along with pale pink skin and straight black hair being considered exotic. Red and golden hair is also considered ‘eye-catching.’

Earth lets its men run amok without supervision or escort, which is dangerous, but also an opportunity. There is both genuine concern for men’s well-being, and an acknowledgment from the Shil’vati stationed on Earth that the arrangement is unlikely to last, so they frequently cause a scene ‘before the situation changes.’

Husbands are a status item. A single shil’ woman has to pursue a romantic interest, and is expected to have to invest a great deal in a partner as a display of interest and single-minded in her devotion. (Shil’ may not be built for long-distance stamina, but humans haven’t quite cornered the market on persistence.) Culturally, Shil’ men are reserved, withdrawn, and never act directly, nor are they ever up-front. They tend to play power-games, rather than act constructively or focus their energies on productive endeavors, they rather seek to acquire what has already been built. A ‘good’ and ‘attractive’ partner is one who would seek to remain devoted to his partner- and a woman doesn’t want to hear that while she was on deployment he got five or more new wives.

Men are not to go shirtless in Shil’ society, ever. It’s much akin to shirtless women. So, shirtless jogging men is very much the cause of excitement- and the focus of discussion for shil’ not present on Earth. Earth is completely alluring- no matter how a Shil’ might feel about contemporary politics, bickering, or their own local culture, Earth is *fascinating* to the shil’vati on many grounds.

Human men are sometimes seen as ‘not husband material,’ for being too independent and outgoing. However, on account of inability to produce offspring, and human men as being seen as ‘not terribly given to domesticity.’ (Which is generating some social dislike of human men among shil’ men- who feel they can only compete against human men by offering their domesticity. This is unfortunately timed because

the Shil' men were in the middle of trying to make social gains in Shil' society, where they have only recently been allowed to join the military, for example.).

However, just because human men aren't 'husband material,' in every way, doesn't mean the Shil' aren't attracted to human men. Tusks can get in the way of certain lovemaking acts (e.g., cunnilingus), and humans are seen as very lewd for not having them. Sex can wear out the smaller male Shil'vati, so their stamina is reduced to compensate for the more intense lovemaking for their own preservation. Human tendency to be rough and aggressive, or at least have stamina to last or go multiple rounds, which is broadly unheard of in the galaxy.

Ergo, human men- who devote themselves to a *single* partner, are accidentally displaying both short-term partner/fling material, *and* excellent long-term partner characteristics, and when rebuffing advances from Shil' women are often accidentally signaling 'just pursue me more.' Shil' women are used to being rebuffed, and basically all-but-forcing their way into a marriage or relationship anyways, sometimes over the objections of the first wife is considered a 'given.' (The first wife is expected to be the strongest at the least, or perhaps most powerful. If the first wife is unable to make any would-be-suitor regret or break off their pursuit of their husband, then a marriage is likely. The *usual, hoped-for* arrangement is that the new suitors are able to bring something to the table that both the husband and wife find alluring or very useful).

Unfortunately for Earth's women, they are utterly uninterested in sharing their husbands, no matter what trinket a Shil'vati might offer, but are also *much* weaker than Shil'vati women, who are finding it easy to muscle in on monogamous relationships and break them apart, and get what they want (often, sex or a partner for the night, or a 'deployment mattress').

Some Governesses have their hands full simply feeding, clothing, and managing their populations- the collapse of global trade has brought economic activity to an absolute and grinding halt in these zones. Invasion had them drop foodstuffs so the populations didn't starve in the wake of disruption of trade. For some zones, this supply of aid never stopped, though it has lessened, especially as the planet slowly came back online to some modicum of trade and local supply.

The local humans (America) embody some of the best and worst elements of their enemies. They have the bureaucratic morass of the Alliance, the moral bankruptcy of the Coalition where they'll sell you *anything* (much to the excitement of the local garrisoned marines, but to their eventual disgust when the novelty wears off and shame creeps back in).

The Shil'vati have dumped considerable resources into Earth just to try and keep the population alive- hospitals, bridges, and manning the planet with a literal invasionary force-that-largely-never-left. This is much to the consternation of the more backwater troops, who feel a bit slighted. They live at the mercy of pirates, they don't have new resources like hospitals or carefully managed terraforming, or other things going for them. Earth has sort of leap-frogged even other recently-introduced races.

State-Level Governesses convene with a regional level Governess for progress reports.

Shil'vati to Humans (Who are the Shil'vati to Earth?)

On the one hand- massive improvements. Cancer is cured, as are all kinds of maladies and social ills- everything from Alzheimer's and poor vision is freely fixed. Homelessness was '[solved](#)', and they're sponsoring mental health and interventions for the mentally ill homeless and building them shelters now that the research has been done in secret.

On the other hand, Shil'vati are a nuisance to humans. They show up in outer orbit, bomb the infrastructure, then promptly start invading. After the surrender, they begin harassing people. Lots of mistakes were made culturally- missteps, errors, and more. While the material improvements are invaluable (curing all ailments, with a borderline panacea), they are a cultural disaster.

They have also earned an unsavory reputation that even the most proactive censorship teams can't keep under wraps. Everyone's either encountered it, or has had it shared to them through personal word of mouth. The Shil'vati don't respect marriages- (because the shil' are polygamous. A human man with a ring implies 'just one wife? Practically as good as single.') This is the root cause of a *lot* of the backlash against Shil'vati, but is also one that is almost unavoidable. To help mitigate effects, many of the governesses have proclaimed that a 'ring on the finger' (or whatever local effect is a signifier of marriage) is to treat them 'as if they were married to the Empress herself.' Ignoring this rule is to demand an apology to the head of the house and to invite other punishments.

Unescorted men without a ring are still seen as 'asking' to be flirted on- presumed to have given their parents the slip to find a partner for the evening. An uninitiated Marine stationed on Earth might see a man out on an errand as an invitation.

The Shil' are also telling people where they cannot live anymore, via the "Reforestation Project," and dictate which neighborhoods must be abandoned (swaths of suburbia, areas built in wildfire prone areas, areas built inside flood zones or marshes, anything not built to withstand a tornado if in tornado alley, etc.,) new housing is provided, along with compensation for the house sale at last valuation in dollars, and then those vacated neighborhoods are torn down and their materials recycled. People aren't happy about this, even if it is an important reform. (See: [Terraforming Terra](#), a.k.a. Reforestation Project).

The American government has largely been co-opted and no longer even pretends to serve humanity, instead preferring to serve the interests of the aliens. The lecturing tone from D.C. is: "If you don't like it, bad things do tend to happen to you, especially if you're too loud about how much you don't like it." So, while people may have legitimate reasons to both like and dislike the aliens, only one side gets the microphone- and it says that the aliens are *just great*. This broad dissatisfaction without an outlet is building tension.

Terraforming Terra:

They are doing their best to restore the earth's ecosystem by arresting climate change, supplying free/cheap clean energy. They are providing rare earth minerals (e.g., cobalt) which they can easily mine from asteroids, for example, but also pressing for habitat range restoration, better control of pesticides, and trying to utilize their own dropships to move food about the planet to solve global hunger more adequately- which, thanks to improved logistics, is now completely possible- (thus shrinking the amount of land needed to be kept for farming).

It remains yet-unclear what Earth has as a destiny. Military? Strategic outpost? Pleasure planet for the nobility? Tourism hotspot? Food producer for the whole sector? This is causing anxiety among humans, who do not know their own destiny, nor do they feel in control of it.

- Resistance- what was it

Resistance was originally die-hards of the government military. The last dregs of the former army, suffering high casualties and near-complete turnover began recruiting and impressing into service anyone they came across. The ill-equipped, ill-trained troops would band together, and then be either orbitally bombed or attacked by the aliens with

far superior coordination, equipment, and technology. There are pockets holding out in the Appalachian mountains.

A second batch, the LaMoes/preppers began to run out of resources, or to cause trouble. A fair number of disaffected, conspiracy theorists, and so on also formulated pockets.

To counter this, some of the more crafty, such as Delaware's Governess Ministriva, coordinated with the United States federal government to track all electronic communications. Cell phones, text messages, online comments left, and so on. Cell phones act as permanent 'wires,' and so do omni-pads. The system used to track terrorists is now turned against citizens. These cells were often disaffected humans banding together to vent their frustrations and anger at treatment from the Shil'vati, or outlaws attempting to prevent lawlessness from disappearing from the slums.

This was used to disrupt any serious threats that might emerge- if a cell discussed intentions to gain VBIEDs, for example, or other heavy weaponry, or began discussing striking 'soft' targets or infrastructure-critical pieces with intention (e.g. railway lines, bridges, refineries, power plants, substations, etc.,) which might be difficult or lengthy to repair with infrastructure already on shaky ground, then a counter-strike team would mobilize and neutralize. The overwhelmed insurgents would be taken by surprise and with no casualties or even injuries on the side of the Shil'vati.

Occasionally spearheaded by human police and later [Human Security Forces](#) for optics, these strikes were publicized as how humans were coming around to the new Shil' leadership and how the Shil' leadership took a hands-off approach. Shil'vati could also expect strikes and be informed of them ahead of time, drilling in advance for those- the "English Bomber ENIGMA problem." They couldn't show their hand so completely, so they had to let a strike go through occasionally, but would disrupt and destroy the insurgents utterly, while suffering very minor injuries themselves, if any. Then the word would be put out that someone had sold them out, in order to make it seem convincing, and they would offer plea bargains. (Inspiration: Rome's Genius/Prisoner's Dilemma, but with a twist.). **Emperor changed this.**

Other Factions

Other Races

There are other races within the Empire, the Other Major Factions, and 'Unaffiliated,' whose territories are beyond the grasp of the major factions, or who have not formally joined anyone.

Imperial Races:

Rakiri

Dog-like. Excellent sense of smell, fierce loyalty to the Empire. A few have been elevated to nobility, after almost half a millennia of subservience. They were a spacefaring race with a small collection of systems when discovered. They enjoy hunting, rending flesh with their powerful jaws, and can cross territories by leaps and bounds on all fours. Digitigrade legs. They like to file down their natural nails that grow over the tips of their fingers, to where it can tear into flesh and help them find purchase on soil. They are adept sprinters over rough terrain, and have thick fur that acts as a natural armor against brambles and other such obstacles. They have a tendency to drool when hungry or angered, and have a wet, extremely sensitive nose. Mace is extremely effective against them, but it is considered a 'targeted crime' to use it against them if you are not in immediate danger- other deterrents are preferred.

Unaligned Races:

Jsin'

-A symbiotic pair of organisms that are collectively referred to as Jsin'. Neither was ever parasitic- but the pair together are far more than the sum of their parts. One thinks quickly, but moves slowly. It is a plant-like organism, and has bark for skin. One half can move and uproot itself, and even traverse some distances in search of water or new nutrients after draining the soil. It can secrete helpful chemicals from these in a natural sort of alchemy. The other half of the species lives inside and is fast-moving, and does the bidding of the plant-like organism, living off what it generates, and in return, defending the organism. These are arguably the best traders in the galaxy, as they both exist through one another. Any trade made by them is guaranteed to be fairly executed and mutually beneficial. As species go, they seem to be well-liked, with home system that is unknown. They seem to be mistrustful of all the powerful factions, and are suspected to principally make deals with the Roaches. They are evasive at the best of times; their ships are not powerful, nor are they very well orchestrated as a faction.

The Roaches

Resisted until their territorial and terrestrial holdings were destroyed in a 'final act' of resistance against Shil' conquest. Now they live on as raiders, plundering cargo vessels and as pirates. They hold onto their culture well, and are surprisingly honorable opponents to other races, but are completely merciless to the Shil'vati, who they hate with a passion.

The Shil'vati fear that some of the resistant humans may be more like the Roaches than they want to admit. Roaches do trade, innovate, build, and are craftspeople. They are strong traditionalists who refuse to conform, which is ironic, given that each one is literally a hive-mind colony of wriggling goo-bodies. Shapeshifting in form is possible (allowing for infiltration while wearing armor), but they struggle with vocalization and coloration/fur/hair is impossible for them to emulate effectively. Putting one into captivity is extremely difficult, though they also cannot exist as bisected entities for long unless they are reproducing deliberately and take steps in advance. (e.g., bisecting one will functionally end its ability to resist in a coordinated fashion, but *might* not outright or immediately kill it.) Their morphology is one of the more 'unknown' aspects of the galaxy- because, again, see 'difficulty in holding one in captivity.'

The Coalition/Consortium

Coalition Races:

Nigh'Kru- Slender and tall, they have a variety of skin tones, and furthermore tend to decoratively color themselves with fluorescent lines that trace over their natural curves. With an even *more* uneven birth rate (approaching 10:1), they are known to be cutthroat traders. They form the backbone of the Coalition.

Coalition Society

The Consortium is the re-branded term for the Coalition, a loose confederation of races and people and business entities. There is no actual governing body for this faction. Whenever one tries to form to enforce contracts, it is either utterly toothless and is destroyed outright by the offending party's corporation, or is promptly bought out and serves whoever paid it, operating itself as a corporation, where it enforces the law for whoever pays it. This includes regulations, meeting certain standards (and then being paid to approve products that do not meet standard, etc.,).

Banks therefore operate as the sole arbiters of authority and are largely self-regulating. There is a specific group that do focus heavily on trade, but they are largely mistrusted to lead ships and by other factions in dealings, so they are relegated to accountancy or to a second-in-command role, to keep captains, etc., focused on profit during missions.

Contracts are offered, but generally unenforced. Nighkru stab each other in the back *constantly*, but there is no other choice. *Everything* is for sale- people, children, sex, performances, attendances, even alliances in war from mercenary bands.

Class mobility is extreme- in some cases, a person may go from rich, to slave, to rich and powerful again, to slave again, in the span of a lifetime. Queens are made and proclaimed, then overthrown just as quickly- if they survive, they may work their way back up to being a queen, or solidly-middle class. Therefore, negotiations with the Nighkru are generally difficult to be maintained- if the Empire pays, and the boardroom is overthrown in a violent coup, then the corporation may suddenly decide to no longer enforce the treaty and throw itself back at war. Or they may decide to violate it anyways and not risk the violent uprising.

They are cultural-less and soulless in a lot of ways. Multi-ethnic. Multi-lingual. Nothing really ‘holds the Coalition together,’ except the threat of invasion from the Shil’vati or Alliance. Traitors typically flee from one side to the other- a Coalition corporate executive or slave fleeing a boardroom coup or cruel master to the Shil’vati systems is not uncommon, nor is it uncommon for a corrupt Shil’vati to try and make a break for Coalition space when they suspect they’ve been caught, their illicit wares and money in tow in the hope they might enter the fierce melee to become a warlord of sorts.

No substances are illegal- as a matter of ‘drug policy,’ a master or employer may mandate that an employee take a drug in order to affect a worker’s performance. Everything is able to be bet on- including the stock market, which itself can be bought and sold to report false numbers.

The banks themselves operate without rules but as a system, *largely* works. There are no actual laws, no centralized currency, but rather exchanges. Customarily, if someone were to, say, skiff the money from a treaty agreement between two warring corporations, that person would be killed by the bank’s management with an apology.

Convincing soldiers to man their posts and face actual danger is extremely difficult, given that they feel as though they owe little to their own society (which itself is little more than common access to material goods), and if their masters die, then their debts are sometimes absolved and they are freed (though the direct master may simply be an employee of the debt-holder, and themselves a slave who is working for a wage which would see them freed within a couple years). As a result, there is a considerable amount of backstabbing. However, in exchange for honorable service, debts are forgiven. (Employers do often try to stiff their soldiers, however, the extent that they feel free to do so depends on their own risk assessment threshold, as again, they have armed the very people they are now ripping off- thus, the many, many coups.)

In other words, *complete dysfunction*. Highly innovative, and on paper, and individually, their ships and infantry armors are mightier than even the Shil'vati's. But it is unclear if this is *actually true*, or if they are just trying to sell ships, armor, and weapons.

They despise the Shil'vati as backward and incapable of free thought, and free expression, even as they are unable to say anything about the system they operate in or negative about their employers or masters. They despise the nobility system as being unmeritocratic. They despise the Alliance for largely the same reasons as not being meritocratic nor 'free,' which is ironic, given that the Nighkru practice informal slavery. They occasionally break ranks to deal trades with the Shil'vati, and might even try roping a system governess in to arbitrate agreements in lieu of a bank.

The Shil'vati fear human capitalism's tendency to sell anything- even near and dear, or sacrosanct (e.g., family members) for coin, even when all their immediate material needs are met, and see their enemies in the Coalition in that.

The Alliance

Complete compliance and submission, along with constant demands of sacrifice from a subservient, worshipful society whose only idol is 'the state.' Those who run it have a deep unwillingness to brook any back-talk and a love of total surveillance of the populace. They are largely ineffectual bureaucrats who bicker, far from the material or subject of their expertise. The government proceeds under the tonnage of its own weight and momentum. They set aside all of the self for the sake of all, and are quickly forgotten about and replaced when they die, akin to a machine. There are no monuments to individuals- only to vague moments, with the individual faces deliberately kept bland and indistinguishable, so as to not allow idolatry or to raise up any particular hero to be distinct enough as to take away from what is being celebrated- *the moment*, and the state's, and by extension, the witness's victories.

Their rate of innovation is somewhat low, and their industrial output is good, if extremely limited in efficacy. Design flaws are rarely corrected for by the factory. Improvements are only made in the name of improving production rates. Their mantra may be considered to be: *work harder, not smarter*.

Within their society, bureaucrats strive to ensure everyone is of the same background, the same upbringing, and no one is allowed to discuss any idea otherwise. There is no slavery, but also no privilege, no oppression, no dissent, and no opposition to be tolerated. The state mandates 'the way,' and it is up to the individual to cheer as loudly as possible. Or else.

Alliance citizens loathe the Shil'vati for their corruption, viewing it as being decadent, see their class-society as deeply unjust, and view the Coalition as utterly lawless, morally impure, and ripe for conquest, but know that destabilizing the peace would mean potentially facing down both factions.

If the Alliance were to absorb Earth, then Earth would materially benefit. However, almost every Earthling would be moved off the planet in the face of defiance. After being moved onto Alliance planets, distributed widely across the galaxy and occasionally shuffled between planets for the purposes of loveless procreation, a new generation would be re-forged. Upbringing would be performed in the same classrooms as every other individual of the very diverse state. Earth language would be forgotten, along with all religious totems destroyed, all articles of faith ground into their component materials, and then recycled into 'something more useful.'

The ecosystem of Earth would be evaluated for useful flora and fauna, and similarly distributed across Alliance Space, with Earth in turn seeded with 'useful' Alliance flora and fauna as well, destabilizing and altering Earth's atmosphere, soil composition, and so on, until Earth would resemble an Alliance planet, and be completely settled with small apartment blocks, as densely and effectively as possible, with a population hovering around 400 billion. All food would be grown under tightly controlled conditions. No hunting would be allowed, nor creation for the self. The state *must* provide all, for all resources are precious under the Alliance.

The Shil'vati fear the human government bureaucracy as indicative of humankind's tendency to coalesce into a bureaucratic morass, and worry over their tendency to destroy one another out of a fervent obedience to the Shil'vati, and a willingness to waste droves of human lives (particularly human *male* lives, which the Shil' find unsettling in how men are seen on Earth as borderline value-less, as a number to be uttered *after* 'the people who really matter' to round out the number of dead or wounded in a news story.) Human tendency to organize governments that throw bodies into a problem and then determine 'good enough' and set up a power structure on top of that which resists change is fundamentally unsettling to the Shil'vati, and does not inspire any sort of confidence in our ability to self-govern.

Battle Doctrine of the Alliance:

Primarily it's infantry wave tactics. They are to march lockstep even into massed artillery fire, because it is what the state said, and the state is never wrong. Ever. If one were to break ranks, charge ahead, and somehow avoid being shot in the back, and somehow shatter the enemy lines and slaughter a thousand enemies, at the conclusion of battle, they will be tried and executed for breaking ranks and executing independent action.

The state does not reward individual action nor behavior, but it does notice that there are *exceptional* people born. These form their special forces, who *do* act with some autonomy, but are restricted from any power, and whose mere existence is a matter of state secret.

Extinct Species and Ancient Civilizations

Human-Parity:

Almost all of them wiped themselves out around the time they got to the Human level of technological achievement, and most left so little behind that it's hard to find any trace of them. There's a whole genre of fiction, given that two thousand years of neglect can turn even NeoSteel into a dusty powder. Ten thousand, and most civilizational remains are buried. A hundred thousand, and they're almost impossible to find. It is the frequent subject/genre of popular Shil'vati fiction to speculate if a habitable world was once settled by an ancient and forgotten civilization that rises from either underneath, or is re-visited.

War:

Naval engagements lead, then those engagements determine who can land reinforcements easily and control the 'warp point,' typically located near the lagrange between celestial bodies, which is extremely difficult to calculate correctly. After conquering the Warp Point, an invader has to contend with an atmosphere that can absorb lasers, or planetary shields on developed worlds, and anti-orbital bombardment artillery that prevent orbital bombardment of planetary shields with mass rounds.

Those artillery pieces are then protected by small shields, about a city block wide, and anti-aircraft artillery preventing dropships and airstrikes from encroaching. They are guarded from ground assault by infantry and their own land-based armies.

This is how planets are typically held. They are taken by overwhelming the anti-aircraft at the far periphery of the planet, or by sending orbital projectiles to force the anti-aircraft artillery to prioritize targeting those, allowing drop pods and dropships interspersed with the shells to land. The shells are a higher priority for the targeting systems due to their ability to prevent mass casualties/destroy the value of the planet (which also is why most dropships are limited in size- so as to not tempt fire from AAA away from the orbital projectiles). Stealth dropships can also be a factor, along with other underhanded tricks. Weather also wreaks havoc on certain targeting systems, and can make a system harder to hold, or hard to land on, or hard to traverse, and so on.

There are also naval engagements that can alter who holds what- if the invading army finds their navy is pushed back, they do not have AAA with which to deflect orbital

bombardments, and can often be wiped out, while the enemy is safe behind their shields. Naval reinforcements from the defender will typically prompt a mass charge into the planetary shield (which can be safely passed through by objects traveling less than 70 mph- thus, able to deflect shrapnel and damage/debris from orbital bombardments.)

There are other hardpoints as well on a planet's surface, and siege warfare is not uncommon, either, often attempting to starve out defenders.

Shil'vati invasion battle doctrine:

When in absolute control: Bombard any large formation or infrastructure useful to the enemy. Take absolute air control. Provide civilian aid via drop pods and couple food and medical aid packages with requests for surrender.

Any enemy infantry formation that holds strategically important ground with light weaponry, despite bombardment, must be broken up by light mechanized formations or infantry, depending on their capabilities. They try to avoid ending up in an infantry-vs-mechanized opponent- when any serious opposition is encountered, pull any wounded out, request air support and strikes.

If unable to rely on that, deploy drones.

Electronic interference is exceedingly rare due to it hobbling the one deploying it as well, intensifying the fog-of-war, but it does interfere with drone warfare. Typically a measure of last-resort and more likely to spread dissent in enemy ranks than in Shil' ranks, particularly among the Coalition. Drones cannot be recalled once electronic warfare is on the field, and they might be hacked or turned against people, or unable to be called off of attacking a surrendering enemy, which is a war crime.

Suit-lock: Protects the wearer after they've taken critical damage, but seizes them in place. Traction Mode. Can also be used by superior officers.

If armor is unable to mobilize due to impassable terrain, and the enemy is in an entrenched position without AAA, land on top of the enemy with dropships and deploy shock troops. Marine coordination is extremely well-performed, practiced, and drilled, but it *relies* on good communication.

If AAA and Electronic Interference is present, and civilian casualties are acceptable after evacuation requests are made, request mobile artillery/tanks/exos, but they are

functionally just very mobile, very heavy artillery units, used to lay down artillery howitzer fire, mortar fire, and to blast apart hard points when civilian casualties are not a concern.

After that, it is up to mobile field commanders, and overall command, how to proceed. It is exceedingly rare to encounter stiff, well-financed, entrenched resistance that doesn't crumble into disorganized resistance, or surrender outright. Either the Alliance is poorly equipped and their battle doctrine is nonsensical but strictly adhered to well past the point of it doing any good (e.g., running supplies to a field artillery piece whose crew are dead. The unit in question will continue supplying it, because that is their job- no more, no less.) Or the Coalition, who surrender or fall apart the moment the Shil'vati look to be getting serious or show up with sufficient numbers and firepower to cause them to break ranks.

Doodads/Items and Technology:

Omni-pads

Sort of like space-iPads. The ones given out for humans to use are extremely basic and utterly antiquated by Shil'vati standards, almost equivalent to a landline phone (versus a modern smartphone). Omni-Pads on the Shil'vati commercial market do have various 'levels' (where nicer ones exist and can broadcast, record, and so on), and they can be made wearable (on a wrist), and some come with customized software modules for better translation, some of them advertising more seductive or commanding or otherwise artful voices, (for example), or translating archaic forms of a language. The antiquated omni-pads that humans use, however, severely limits human exposure to the Shil' DataNet, and vice-versa onto the human DataNet, allowing for a de facto censorship and control of the flow of information that is very useful to the Interior.

Shil'-owned Omni-Pads are connected to the broader Shil'vati Internet, called the DataNet.

Human-owned Omni-Pads are on their own, disconnected network and are centuries out of date. They don't communicate with the broader Shil' DataNet, are extremely stripped-down and simplified. This isolated network is colloquially known as the Human DataNet, and is not expected to be maintained forever.

It bears a mention that the human, computer-based internet still exists, and is kept limping along by volunteers, government, and other ISPs. It is extremely parsed

down in the number of sites available and there is no privacy to users. Therefore with low speed, and utility, it is not expected to last the decade.

Inertial Dampers

Inertial Dampers can restrict the g-forces that a craft might generally encounter in maneuvers. This can be done for comfort (e.g., a city bus not swaying while making a turn), or sheer necessity (g-forces that would turn organs to paste when leaving for space.) There are limits on the number of rapid maneuvers that can be done before it is overwhelmed. Open air breaks the inertial damper effect as a safety measure. Attempting high-G maneuvers with a compromised/incomplete field can rip apart the material, and the user apart. The more powerful the damper, the more expensive it is to make and to operate.

Shil'vati Anti-Gravity Technology and its Many Applications (also known as: "Fantastic Yeets and Where To Find Them")

Works by functionally just harnessing the power of gravity. Requires surprisingly little power to utilize. The closer one is to a source of gravity, the more powerful this form of locomotion can be. It tends to not be very useful in outer space, (as they are very far from sources of gravity.) However, for cargo 'lifters,' (freight) and dropships, drop pods, and worker safety harnesses, they are extremely useful and more commonly used than starship engines.

These devices can only move a craft 'up' and 'down', relative to a planet's (or moon's, or other celestial body's) surface. This saves space in Naval hangars by allowing the ships to be a square shape, which stacks without need for worrying about wings large enough to generate sufficient lift. The humans refer to cargo vessels as "flying bricks."

Dropships are generally shaped like a tuning fork, allowing for departure away from enemy fire, borderline regardless of the angle of deployment, also allowing them to use the vessel hull as a shield while they set up if they choose to egress via the center of the hull. Durable to laser-fire and quite mobile, they are oddly vulnerable to stinger missiles, and require considerable skill to evade or blast the missile out of the air.

Fortunately for pilots and crew, the same gravitic manipulation is useful even when things go wrong, because during a crash or hard maneuvering, inertia can be reduced greatly, preventing the crew from being turned into paste. Sometimes this is used to enhance passenger comforts.

For atmospheric movement along a horizontal plane, Void-tech comes in handy. They have an ability to turn a degree of gaseous air current into void, 'pulling' the craft forward, and then re-entering it out of the other end of the ship as the energy is re-materialized into stable atomic matter, generating a contrail of hydrogen, helium, and other light atoms in a close density that expands quickly out the back of a funnel-shaped rocket nozzle. Though no flames are generated, a sharp *hissing* sound can be heard. They also can utilize maneuvering jets or other means of conveyance along the horizontal plane, and can also store the hydrogen and collect oxygen to burn a conventional rocket for maneuvering in space. The "canister" drive contains hyper-densified fuel for this purpose.

The brick-shaped design and control of gravitic forces frees designers from needing to sacrifice cargo space by making the ship aerodynamic, sleek, and spares combat engineers and logisticians from needing to build lengthy takeoff-landing runways. Shil' craft are largely VTOL/STOL, and can raise-and-lower at will, even when in motion.

No need to add on wings large enough to generate sufficient lift for it to fly, allowing it to be squeezed into the hulls of larger, phase-capable vessels. Lots of advantages to incorporating the design. These are commonly used by Marines, but are used in only a few small command shuttles by the Navy.

Atmospheric craft are spaceworthy but not phase-worthy, and must transit between systems in the belly of larger Naval or Trade vessels.

Shields exist, but are barely able to deflect microprojectiles. Due to the intensity of space warfare and the energy needed to project a shield strong enough to repel enemy ship's fire, it is not practically feasible to upgrade shields to where it might be practical for deflecting shots from an enemy ship.

Hyperspace/Warp Travel/"Phasing":

Transit takes 'the speed of plot.' Depends how far the person traveling is going, but it should take at least a few hours to get between very nearby star systems (e.g., us to Alpha Centauri), a couple days to do a longer jump, weeks to do a very long jump. Jumps can *technically* be performed from point-to-point anywhere in the galaxy, but on-board food requirements and so on make stop-offs a borderline necessity, along with not having calculated the relative velocities and gravitic effects between destinations can absolutely throw off warp jumps.

Speed of a warp is in part determined by stellar drift- "the equivalent of firing a dart from one planet to another and hitting the bullseye, with both you and the target

moving." *Accidents can and do happen, and when they do, they're ugly.* Longer jumps are hard to perform accurately, and the price for 'getting it wrong' is very dear.

Therefore, a 'border' exists between the galactic factions, where worlds nearest the border are reinforced more heavily with armament.

Lagrange points (equal gravitic pull) serve as the most stable warp points.

So even if you know its general location you'd have to then pick it out from the stars, be able to position a satellite to view it, and then determine your own relative drift- and you also need to calculate for the drift not just of the star, but also the drift of several celestial bodies (e.g., Saturn, Jupiter, etc., which may have an effect.).

Gravity Belts/harnesses

Safety technology (think a life preserver)- miniaturized gravitic drives with a very small charge pack attached, intended to be use-and-recharge type devices. Used for space dock workers, EVA, or anyone working on a planetary surface from a great height (e.g. construction).

Drones:

Flying. Employed to swarm objects and combatants- can take a shaped charge and attack peoples' faces and then explode. Only used with clear communication lines due to inability to discern surrender or operate effectively. If a jamming field is deployed, they shut themselves down to avoid committing war crimes. Generally disliked by the Shil' rank-and-file as dishonorable and suspicious. Traces of long-extinct empires and races brought low during the Shil'vati's explorations of the galaxy has made them wary of genetic editing and robots that can act independently. The Shil'vati have no defect in innovation, but also prefer to be cautious and long-lived, having kept the lessons of the many fallen races they've encountered the tomb worlds of in mind.

Lasrifles:

Another key piece of kit in the Shil'vati Marine's arsenal is the Lasrifle.

Lasers work in far more environments than a gun, which is useless in vacuum, which Marines are expected to fight in, whether it's aboard a vessel, in space, or on the surface of a planet with no atmosphere.

Again, the Shil'vati have a perfectly reasonable understanding of chemical propellants and their benefits, as well as fighters with aerodynamic properties, but packing them aboard, on the chance where they're fighting has an atmosphere is a luxury they decide they cannot afford. Their military is one where 'Good Enough' is good enough.

Charge packs:

Used to power a variety of shil' devices that are portable (e.g., laser rifles). Humans have taken to retrofitting them to power other things- like railguns and Gravity Belts. The amount of energy contained is monumental, and can be released very quickly through its terminals to power things like, say, a rail gun or laser gun.

Neosteel

"Neosteel" (think of a new term for this eventually). The materials used by the Shil' commonly in everything from infrastructure to ship hull plating, to architecture and even interior design. Slightly purple in color/tint, can be brighter or dimmer depending on the alloy mixed in and on design aesthetic. Resists heat extremely well (thus good for re-entry vehicles and armor).

Armor:

Shil' Marine Armor (Standard):

The galactic standard. Extremely durable, able to take an entire clip of M16/AR-15 rifle fire to all areas without incapacitating the trooper (though they will be understandably annoyed.) Heavier caliber rifles can hurt more (e.g., more stopping power tends to pulverize the flesh).

The 'plate' isn't actually hard- it is soft to penetrative impacts and slowly arrests incoming projectiles, with a layer of hardplate underneath. *Sufficiently* large projectiles (e.g., .50 cal. And larger) will, depending on ammunition type (AP vs. normal, vs. explosive, vs. etc.,) will either penetrate, shatter bone and turn it into micro-projectiles, or blow a limb off.

The armor is resistant to projectiles. The wearer is somewhat less resistant, depending how close the impact is. Repetitive impacts does damage the armor, eventually. Overpressure cracks various protective systems.

Addendum:

The way that the standard-issue Marine armor works is best described by "Michealoftheclan" who wrote (loosely) the following:

'Flexifiber/flex fiber' isn't a 'fiber' per se, and is in fact a container for a pseudo-liquid plastic that can harden, and otherwise acts like a somewhat putty-like substance. (Think 'Space Oobleck'.) The joke in the community is that the armor looks like a latex gimp suit.

Similar to how water does at high speed impacts, the flex armor's specific chemical mixture and design protects in a very, very wide variety of ways. The standard Marine will be expected to fight in Vacuum. Repel boarders with lasguns. Endure harsh conditions such as micrometeorites, sandstorms on alien planets, and repel fast-moving projectiles. The armor is anywhere between 'good' and 'excellent' at helping them survive these tasks. It even protects against thermal and radiation damage.

This wide array of benefits and 'good enough' status ensures it is standard issue across the Empire, despite its shortcomings becoming apparent. It can be overwhelmed in certain situations. Fire will eventually burn through, if not extinguished, and its projectile and laser-resistant properties can be reduced by fire, well-below freezing temperatures, and pressure waves.

The Empire also gets to reap the benefits of a less complicated logistics chain, which is important when it spans most of the known galaxy and phase travel requires complex jumps to proceed from one end of to the other.

As to why sharp knives can work against the armor: These move slowly enough to displace the thin putty without compressing it with enough kinetic energy to trigger its hardening properties. Knives are standard issue for every Shil'vati Marine.

What matters isn't just whether the projectile is sharpened enough, it's also that they're entering with both force *and* displacing the material slowly, like how a dive works better than a belly flop at penetrating water, yet neither is survivable from the Golden Gate Bridge. The same basic principle applies here.

There are better armor sets available in the Empire, but this is not a post scarcity society. Just an abundant one, and logistics is one of the many limiting factors of the Shil'vati.

Its general ability to save lives, coupled with some ability to compress over wounds, sensors, tactical readouts, aim-assist HUD on the visor, and more features available all while simplifying logistics for a galaxy-spanning empire, means that the armor and helmet was always going to be one of the most effective tools the shil'vati have.

Armor also comes in a few varieties and flavors, further complicating the typical resistance's understanding of the capabilities of the armor. Some officers and minor nobility wear a breastplate and armor plate over their flex fiber, the latter from a private collection and is often ornate.

Patrol armor

Patrol Armor is a lighter armor variant for patrol troopers to allow them to try and chase down and investigate threats over a further distance. Capable of repelling light shrapnel, it has very small plates over most direct points of attack over vital spots, but is otherwise known to be the weakest form of armor and can be penetrated by even a shotgun with slugs. It offers significantly less protection.

Human Security Forces Armor-

Made of neosteel plating. While it can deflect human rifle rounds, and the textile underneath is meant to catch shrapnel and arrest it, it is very vulnerable to laser rounds by deliberate design (read: to prevent the human security forces from getting any ideas...). Their rifles are similarly detuned and scaled down slightly.

Commando Armor:

Interlocking plates. Heavier than Marine armor, stronger, yet lighter weight with exotic materials. Certain functions are stripped out to make room for this. Deployed in specific circumstances. Special forces/SWAT style.

Militia Armor:

Varies heavily depending on expense- can be better, can be worse. Usually features a lot more 'freedom' in choice of armament and armor. Some might wear a

muscle shirt and wield a projectile machine gun. Others might carry a standard rifle and tougher armor. Others might wear pure-standard marine outfits with a different design or bright pattern, and some might be armed with little more than a laser pistol and civilian dress.

Space Animals

Ooph

A beast meant for meat, notorious for being slow, dumb, and essentially helpless.

Turox

A stubborn and strong beast

Dramatis Personae

Shil'vati Leadership

- **Maj./Lt. Col. Amilita** - kindly mother, titanically tall and strong, the archetypical Shil' Marine Officer. A true lady of the Shil' Marines
- **Gov-Gen. Azraea** - #2 in charge of the Shil' Fleet over Earth. She is utterly devoted to service and servitude to the Shil'vati Empire and the Empress. Incorruptible, and stubborn. She is intelligent, creative, and crafty. She mistrusts bureaucrats and pushes officers to think of out-of-the-box solutions. Frequently called in for 'unsolvable' solutions, despises playing politics and power-games. Worships the Empress as a living deity.
- **Admiral Ra'los** - [REDACTED]
- **Lt. Goshen, Galatea** - Lanky, tries to be affable. Tends to go off on her hunches and 'off on her own,' without regard for orders and works outside the box too regularly for anyone to really trust or rely on her. Has a fast temper, too, and a tendency to over-promise beyond her capabilities or power to fulfill them. She's in her twenties. Wanted to be a detective when she grew up. Frustrated at lack of promotions, given her age.
- **Gov. Ministriva** - Puppetmaster. Elderly, kindly appearing, and has a long record of pushing peace and the rights of the underprivileged, and reigning in whatever General she is serving with. Deeply unpopular with the military, but highly popular and rides high on populism. Wealthy, but more importantly, her name and star power got her entire family appointed to dozens of systems. Seen as a reformer and 'new wave' of political representation of the Empress's will. Deliberately wiping out human culture within the state of Delaware. Seen as expansionist with her eyes on other state boundaries as her territory grows beyond Delaware's small borders, making overtures to the regional governess on potentially absorbing the 'greener' parts of Pennsylvania so the governess can focus on managing the more dangerous spaces.
- **Governess █ (Bal'Shir)** - Weak and ineffectual. They put out no public releases beyond the typical sanitized PR speak that no one believed for a moment. Not a leader. Just a bureaucrat. Afraid to rock the boat of profitability. [REDACTED]

- **General Zylkyn** - Was appointed by Ministriva precisely for inability to think outside the box. With an uncooperative Ministriva steering the ship and refusing to allow reprisals upon the civilian population and demanding Marines (for example) honor men in monogamous marriages as 'utterly unapproachable,' and even punishing Marines for violating this rule, the General accepted that their post was largely a cushy post and sat back- when Ministriva died, they were too far behind to ever understand the issue, and unable to innovate when faced with a new situation that pre-existing battle doctrine did not already account for. Made poor decisions.
- **Lt. Lesha, Jurilli** - A nice, somewhat rotund Shil' lieutenant, pleasantly disposed toward humans in general. Occasionally frustrated that the feelings aren't returned, but is also patient toward them. Loosely involved in training the [Human Security Forces](#). Friendly toward Elias [REDACTED].
- **Lt. Ryaiah** - Liaison officer from the Federal Government, in charge of coordinating propaganda and federal agents working in counter-terrorist operations. [REDACTED]

Shil'vati Interior

- **Agent Myrrah** - Kidnapped by Emperor's resistance cell during an attack on a historical sailing ship. Released by Emperor after gaining mutual trust with the knowledge she'll seek for and return kidnapped human children.

Shil'vati Rank and File

- **Data Officer Borzun** - waifish and tall. Weak. Poor scores in the army, but high mental aptitude had her assigned to the Data Teams. Marked 'borderline' for the service.
- **Private Selva** - Member of a pod bombed by Vaughn and Elias near the start of the story.
- **Sergeant Verrishi** - Member of a pod bombed by Vaughn and Elias near the start of the story. Calls in an airstrike on their suspected position.
- **Private Irvina** - Participated in the raid on Scott's home.
- **Sergeant T'New** - Noncommissioned officer serving as garrison watch squad patrol lead for the Data Center
- **Private Serenie** - Private serving in the garrison watch squad for the Data Center

- **Agent Myrrah** - Kidnapped by Emperor's resistance cell during an attack on a historical sailing ship. Released by Emperor after gaining mutual trust with the knowledge she'll seek for and return kidnapped human children
- **Garrison Commander Mikula** - leader of the Garrison at the Data Center. Demoted to enlisted.

Shil'vati Nobility

- House Fel'Ya - Rival noble house to the Raktens, newcomers to power. Ostentatious and climbers.
- House Rakten - An old family, was not especially wealthy prior to marriage to Brynmor, a young businessman who married Nive Rakten (scion, Rakten family) for access. Nive found his drive and ambition appealing, and has a sole daughter of the Rakten name, 'Natalie' (Nataliska).
- House of Masarie - Renowned for their shipcraft and foundaries
- House of Ministriva - Denobled household.
- House of Cre'sin - A thoroughly unremarkable mid-rim system of good wealth, these were added as a noble house fifty years ago

Shil'vati Civilians

- **Markail** - Husband of Amilita
- **Erzilia** - see [Talay staff](#)

Natalie's Household

- **Mrs. Rakten, Nive** - Natalie's Mom. Works a boring job. A noblewoman from an old but poor family, married Natalie's father as 3rd wife. Seems to be very close to Shil' political power, despite poverty. Not corrupt. Has a seemingly natural reluctance for ostentatious displays of power.
- **Brynmor Rakten** - Natalie's Father. Self-made man with a business empire in logistics. From the arrangement: He got a noble offspring and ability to swing deals in Shil' high society, she got access to money and offspring. True to her reputation, she does not use it unnecessarily, which assuaged any worries Natalie's father had in marrying a noblewoman, who might have burned through

money to try and advance even higher up the social ladder with extravagant parties, balls, etc.

- **Morsch** - Natalie's bodyguard. Tall, muscled, well-trained, and covered in scars from a dozen skirmishes and battles. How she came into the Rakten employ is unknown.
- **Natalie (Nataliska Rakten)** - Teenage geek-girl who was obsessive about Earth and having a hard time on the family home planet. Followed her mother on assignment to Earth, who settled in a nearby green zone (Delaware) while the mother periodically commuted around the local areas and Washington D.C. for work via the Chesapeake, Delaware, or broader Atlantic coastline, taking advantage of their location in NorthWestern Delaware. Younger than Tolan by a few weeks, youngest of all.
- Siblings
 - **Astarta Rakten** - Eldest, serving as a Marine
 - **Tolan Rakten** - Middle eldest, proud of herself. More outgoing than Natalie. Good student.
 - **Evaall Rakten** - Younger than Tolan by a week. Comparatively standoffish and aloof. She has a diary.

Washington D.C. High and Mighty

- **'Richard Weinberger'** - A very, very fat man. A man with connections, he tries to bring up those around him while gaining as much control over them as possible and exploiting them, before disposing of them. Tries to ingratiate himself to those he thinks he can take advantage of. Little moral qualms, doesn't seem to care about anything other than his own wealth and power. Knows very important secrets about the Raktens.

Emperor's Inner Cell

- **Emperor (Elias Sampson)** - M.C. Disaffected, neglected child who feels his culture and cultural touchstones are being eroded.
- **G-Man (George)** - Quiet. Verns's kid. Handy, superior skill at repair and design and engineering. Worked with his father to build the railguns according to their blueprints.
- **Hex (Holly)** - Militant, reliable, and driven. Outgoing. Has a slight crush on Emperor, less so on *Elias*. Silver Fox's daughter. Member of radio club at Talay. Acts as Emperor's bodyguard on occasion.

- **Binary (Bethany)** - Hex's Twin Sister. Slightly more withdrawn. Silver Fox's daughter. Likes playing with signals and joined the radio club. Has interest in Emperor as well, to a lesser extent than Hex. Acts as Emperor's bodyguard on occasion.
- **Radio ('Lewis' though in a later edition retconned to 'Ray')** - Built the vocoders, has a crush on Holly/Hex. Does the propaganda broadcasts, head of the Radio club at Talay, and carries a jammer.
- **Vendetta (Vaughn)** - Teenage Psychopath. Generally helps with recruitment, strategy management and tactics. Oversees discipline.
- **Sam** - Logistitian. Veteran, turned outlaw biker, smuggler, and then gray market fencer/arms supplier for the Delaware and Maryland resistance groups.
- **Lazarus (Larry)** - Kindly neighbor. Owns his own small chain of auto repair shops and salvage yard. Can disassemble a carburetor blindfolded. Veteran. Lost a nephew in the invasion, and his brother no longer speaks to him, as the nephew had joined to follow in Larry's footsteps but did not survive. Larry's shops are laundering resistance money.
- **Jules (Verne)** - G-Man's dad. A handyman and a landscaper by trade. Floating the money from operations and laundering cash back into it after Sam fences any acquired alien tech/goods, much as Larry does. Acquires fertilizer for more bombs which is used supposedly in the suburbanization projects.

Other Noteworthy Rebels

- **Grouper (Greg)** - Wears a group fish mask. Acts as a bodyguard for Emperor when the Twins aren't available. He mainly takes on a role as an enforcer, making sure resources aren't wasted.
- **Gray Mask [REDACTED]** - Initially a substitute bodyguard for the Twins after proving himself in Operation Rubicon. Leads a successful strike against a squad of Marines, despite casualties for his cell and human civilians. Unknowingly puts Emperor in danger.
- **Scott** - Kindly auto-enthusiast with his own tuning shop. Larry's friend. Early casualty of the resistance.
- **Silver Fox** - Mother of the Twins, works as a nurse. Early casualty of the resistance.
- **Maize** - Miskatonic-aligned Doctor, posing as little more than a far more common Nurse. Acts as a liaison and performs intelligence gathering for Miskatonic.

Out of State Rebels

- **Gavin** - Works for a mysterious *Office* from Silver Springs, Maryland. Family man. Intelligent, capable spy. Manipulated Goshen into supplying neosteel tubes, which become the barrels for the railguns.
- **Sullivan** - Gavin's 'Boss'. Works a different branch.

Old Side-Note on Sam's Origins:

When he was freshly discharged from his service after working in Logistics, Sam had taken a risk and checked in on the old crew. All the former members were back out from the revolving door that was Baltimore's justice system and embroiled in winning back their street corners. A bloody affair. As much as things changed, that part had stayed the same. They surprisingly didn't hold Sam's disappearance against him. Sam went into logistics, taking an easy corporate job, and watched as people stuck knives into each other for the sake of their own career advancement up the ladder with the same viciousness that he'd seen working the block. He'd even had direct comparison, supplying the gangs in his after hours for some extra cash and contacts.

When the Shil'vati Empire showed up, though, he knew it was time to move on. This time, he was dodging the military's desperate attempt to drum up reinforcements from veterans and sending them into the meat grinder en masse. A futile effort to try and stem the alien onslaught. All that for no gain, as far as Sam could see from the burning remains of Annapolis when he went to the shore the night it got hit.

Advertising his new skills and bona fides, Sam contracted himself again out to his old gang's suppliers and dealers, which in Baltimore were the outlaw motorcycle clubs. Moving products from the Port of Baltimore through the rural parts of the state. Sam didn't bother himself with whether it was guns, drugs, or 'anything else' in the trailer and sidecar, the irony that this time he was escaping the Military by joining a gang not lost on him either.

The tale of the war was told by the contents of what he hauled. It started off as panic buying. Foodstuffs, ammo, then medicine and uniforms, and then 'medicine.' He made contacts with suppliers, who seemed to have an inexhaustible need to move things quickly and quietly. Sam moved his way up and met other riders, quickly striking out freelance.

Then he got stuck in Delaware when the Government officially capitulated and the Shil' demanded all the states get broken up into little fiefdoms in all but name. Or, as one stars-and-bars tattooed redneck in Rising Sun had hollered loudly, 'the end of the republic, long live state's rights!' before launching into a caterwauling rendition of 'Dixie,' and proclaiming the regional Governess the second coming of Jefferson Davis. Not that Sam minds. He'll ride one day with that group, and the next day with the Black Panthers. He'll sell to anyone. But as he finds out, he happens to take a liking.

So he'd stuck his nose into a dissident bar to see where else business might be, when some 'Little Emperor' started making big talk in the motley bunch at a bar called 'Lucky's.' Sam had stuck around at first out of curiosity, sensing something new. It was an opportunity he hadn't seen before, and there was no crime in just-looking. Then he started coming around for profit, as the dissidents there became his leading customer in the state, not that it was an accomplishment in a green zone like Delaware.

Then, lastly, it was for the sheer spectacle. Eventually the first part of the name fell away when it came out that the leader himself had stuck a knife in the Governess's guts.

Family Members of Elias Sampson

- **Mother (Elias's mother, Mary-Anne Bonnette)** - Psychologist by trade, kept her last name, licks the boots of the invaders, sees them as akin to the angels/messengers of God. Dislikes her son- and even her husband to an extent. Views his deviances as un-rewardable, and therefore withholds all kinds of support- emotional, physical, material, and so on, until he shapes up and stops acting out. Is willing to ensure that he fails in all his ventures until that happens. Part of this comes from a place of love, as she feels she can't let him succeed despite acting out, and fears what will become of him if he acts out to the wrong person, one who has more power. But part of this is also coming from a place of desire to control him the way she failed to control her husband, who is a functioning alcoholic.
- **Father (Elias's father, "Bill" Sampson)** - Fat, drunk, and head of a lab in Philadelphia. Has one of the rather rare, hard-to-get inter-state passes for work. Veteran.

- **Jacqueline (Elias's older sister)** - Violent, physically abusive. Studies out of state in a boarding school. Attacked the Mother at one point, and was promptly sent out of state. Frequently spoiled by the father. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Talay Students

- **Jordan** - Elias's Bully at Talay, on the basketball team.
- **Nate** - Talay's Valedictorian, Elias's classmate and captain of the basketball team.
- **Lisse** - Student at Talay, bullies Elias. Daughter of a State Congressman.
- (Technically Hex, Binary, Radio, G-Man, and Vendetta are all classmates as well.)

Talay Staff

- **Mrs. Wormwood** - One of Elias's teachers at Talay. Sympathizes with Shil'Vati authority. Grows more lenient with Elias as the story progresses.
- **Erzilia** - Shil' language teacher. Kindly, suspects Elias is being abused and tried to intervene on his behalf.

Former Parker and Pierce Staff

- **Parker** - Showman, husband and former co-host to Pierce. Before being blacklisted and fired, helped produce a deeply anti-Shil'vati Imperium episode for his show. A comedian.
- **Pierce** - Showwoman, wife and former co-host to Parker. A comedian. Both are being holed up by Verns.
- **Alex** - Former head writer.
- **Janice** - Unspecified former staff.
- **Mister Goodreich** - CEO for the company that produced Parker and Pierce. Not associated with the show's anti-Shil'vati last episode.

Unaffiliated

- **'Dane'** - Utility worker, has his chainsaw upgraded by Azraea in an awkward attempt to woo him, before it is unceremoniously taken by **Myrrah** to be put to better use cutting through barriers in her quest to find the missing boys.
- **Dr. Harriet** - A therapist Elias is required to go to at various points in the story.
- **Mac** - Bartender of a VFW bar just outside of Delaware. Doesn't want to see Shil'vati or Resistance recruiting in his bar.
- **Scotty** - Veteran who frequents Mac's VFW bar. Was disabled before receiving prosthetic replacements. Friendly towards Shil'vati.
- **Wilcox** - Veteran who frequents Mac's VFW bar. Was disabled before receiving prosthetic replacements. Friendly towards Shil'vati.
- **Dale** - Veteran who frequents Mac's VFW bar. Was disabled before receiving prosthetic replacements. Friendly towards Shil'vati.
- **Julianne** - Girl attending Community College at DelTech that Elias was afraid was going to knife him on a bus, helps save passengers' lives. Studying Marine Biology.
- **Elias's Bodyguard** - A bodyguard assigned to Elias by the Hotel Elias is staying in, in the wake of the Coalition's attempted invasion of Earth. Escorted Elias as he explored DC, and warned him of potential dangers he might face in the city. Is hooking up with Morsh, and has caught feelings.
- **Brad** - A jock who is secretly fairly intelligent. Borzun's frat-boy boyfriend.
- **Jim** - One of Scott's neighbors, praised Scott during his final moments before he died in the raid on his home

Posthumous Characters (spoilers blanked out)

- **Ag** [REDACTED]
- **Private Elrih** - Killed by Scott during a raid on his home. (Might be retconned out).
- **Private Selva** - Bombed in the initial strike
- **Scott** - See [*Emperor's Outer Cell*](#)
- **Sergeant Verrishi** - Patrol. Bombed in the initial strike.
- **Silver Fox** - See [*Emperor's Outer Cell*](#)

Extremely Minor Characters- do not appear on-screen

*Llywolin- a Shil' boy that [*Astarta*](#) has a crush on and is serving with*