

Overview

Gardens of Tenebrae

Summary:

Set in the magical land of Tenebrae where magic sprouts from the ground as plants. In this whimsical land, where the sky is painted in hues of twilight and stardust is used as currency, the people live in large floating towns connected by shimmering bridges of light. All may seem well on the surface but when an outsider, Nova Sinclair, arrives things start to go amiss forcing the Princess to investigate the strange happenings in her kingdom.

GDD:

***Title:* Gardens of Tenebrae Episode 1: Heart of Night**

***Genre:* Fantasy Adventure / Yuri Romance Visual Novel**

***Art Style:* Ghibli-inspired (Hand-painted, whimsical yet grounded in realism)**

Tagline:

"Two hearts entwined. One world reborn."

Overview:

The story of Tenebrae is a fantastical one. Located on a tidally locked planet, where one half is suspended in eternal dawn and the other half in eternal twilight, we follow the adventures of Nova Sinclair, the daughter of a renowned imperial scientist as she embarks for the distant Kingdom of Tenebrae seeking out a way to stop the Withering which plagues her home land of Solandria.

Along the way Nova will make new friends, uncover the secrets of this world, and fall in love.

Key Features:

- **Rich Narrative & Emotional Depth:** A heartfelt story driven by character relationships, blending romance, adventure, and fantasy in a fully immersive visual novel experience. There will be 3 Episodes total (Heart of Night, Heart of Day, Heart of the Mother).
 - We are only focusing on Episode 1 for SWAK Jam.
- **Branching Paths & Player Choice:** Forge deep relationships and shape the outcome of the world through interactive decisions that influence the narrative and character arcs.
- **Ghibli-Inspired Art Style:** Beautifully digitally-painted environments and character designs bring the world of Nyxura to life, emphasizing nature, wonder, and emotional realism.
- **Dual-World Exploration:** Experience two contrasting yet interconnected realms—the industrial might of Solandria and the lush, nature-bound kingdom of Tenebrae—each with distinct cultures and mysteries.
- **Unique Magical System (Aether & Threads of Life):** Engage with a world built around the concept of balance and interconnected life forces, visually represented by glowing Aether threads woven throughout the environment.
- **A Timeless Epilogue:** Conclude the journey with a heartfelt glimpse into the world 14 years later through the eyes of a young girl who embarks on her own adventure, guided by the legacy of those who came before her.

Why This Story?

Gardens of Tenebrae is more than just a whimsical fantasy story. It's a story about love, found family, connection, sacrifice, and harmony. Following a vibrant cast of characters as they journey across the world of Nyxura in search of a way to stop the Withering before it destroys the world.

Target Audience:

- Fans of narrative-driven visual novels (Steins;Gate, Clannad, The House in Fata Morgana)
- Enthusiasts of Ghibli-inspired art and storytelling (Nausicaä, Castle in the Sky)
- Lovers of fantasy romance with strong, well-developed female protagonists
- Players who seek emotionally impactful stories with beautiful worldbuilding and a focus on relationships

Comparable Titles:

- *Ni no Kuni* (for world design and narrative tone)
- *Final Fantasy X* (for themes of sacrifice and love)

Notes:

- Episode 1 will be produced for [SWAK 2025](#) for free.
- Episode 2 - 3 will be released in the months to follow commercially via steam.
 - All team members will receive an equal split of profits.
- AI and gAI are banned. They will not be used in any way.

Characters

Protagonists

Nova Sinclair

Role: MC/Protag

Age: 24

Pronouns: she/her

Species: human

Gender: female

Hair Colour: Raven Black

Skin Colour: tanned

Sexuality: Lesbian

Eye Colour: fiery orange

Power: Can see the magic lines throughout the earth that connect all living things.

Personality: Extroverted, energetic, optimistic, a bit naive, friendly, curious

Flaws/Weaknesses: Naive, especially around politics.

Habits/Quirks:

- Fidgets with the necklace her mother gave her as a child.
- Talks to herself.
- Tends to hum and pace when nervous.

Hobbies/Pastimes/Likes:

- Being in nature
- Collecting flowers, rocks, and various trinkets
- Studying and experimenting with magic.
- She loves people, social events, and food.

Fav foods:

- Sweet fruits like mangos or peaches

- Herbal teas and homemade bake goods, especially cakes or pastries.
- Freshly picked vegetables, especially those from Tenebrae.

Dislikes:

- Cruelty or unnecessary harm done to nature or creatures.
- People who disregard the interconnectedness of all living things
- The cold nature of the Empire's Politics

Needs:

- A Sense of purpose and to prove herself, especially living up to her family's expectations.
- Needs to learn how to navigate complex political and social systems
- Needs to feel connected to nature and the balance of life around her.

Dreams:

- To understand the true power of the threads of life and how she can use them to help heal the world.
- To bridge the divide between Tenebrae's natural, peaceful way of life and the harsh, political Empire.

Goals:

- **Short-term:** Successfully retrieve a sample of the Vitalus Flower, proving her capability as a scientist and to help stop the withering.
- **Long-term:** Become a leading expert in geoscience and aether. Helping bring harmony to the planet and its people.

Backstory:

- **Birthplace:** Logos, the bustling capital of the Empire.
- **Where they grew up:** Nova grew up in a privileged, scientifically-inclined family in one of the empire's largest and wealthiest cities. Far from the harsh realities faced by the empire's more disenfranchised citizens. Her father, a renowned geo-scientist, instilled a deep fascination with the world's natural magic, while her mother encouraged her curiosity about the forces connecting all living things.
- **Traumatic events:** Growing up in the Empire, Nova witnessed the growing corruption and the disenfranchisement of the poorer regions, though she was shielded from much of it until her most recent missions.
- **Defining moments:**
 - Her defining moment was being selected by her father to undertake the mission of retrieving a sample of the Vitus flower from Tenebrae, a daunting task that pushed her out of her comfort zone and forced her to face the realities of the Empire.
- **Proudest accomplishment:**
 - Graduating university with perfect grades.
- **Biggest regret:**

- Her lack of awareness about the social and political struggles of the Empire's lower classes, especially in contrast to Tenebrae's more harmonious lifestyle.
- **First memory:**
 - Playing in the gardens of her family's estate, fascinated by the flowers and the ways they seemed to "respond" to her touch as though they were alive in a deeper sense.
- **Saddest memory:**
 - Witnessing a protest being shut down violently, and it stuck with her as a realization that the world wasn't as perfect as her family had made it seem.
- **Happiest memory:**
 - Her first journey into the forests of Tenebrae, feeling the magic of the land and seeing firsthand how it vibrantly connected to every living thing. The serenity and balance made her feel truly alive.

Motivations:

- **Want:** To prove herself worthy of her family's expectations and to be seen as a true expert in geo-science.
- **Need:** To understand the complexity of the political struggles and moral dilemmas surrounding her, particularly as she becomes more deeply involved with Tenebrae's way of life.
- **Problem:** Struggling with the growing realization that the Empire's politics are deeply corrupt and her family's involvement in the system.

Relationships:

- **Family members:**
 - **Father (Dr. Elias Sinclair):** A brilliant but emotionally distant geo-scientist. He loves Nova deeply but often treats her more as a potential heir to his scientific legacy than as a daughter.
 - **Mother (Lilia Sinclair):** A nurturing, kind-hearted woman who encouraged Nova's curiosity. She supports Nova's journey but is concerned for her safety in the current political climate.
- **Friendships/Rivalries:**
 - She has a close friend, Seraphine, from her studies who is more skeptical of the Empire's ways, and they often have heated debates about the direction of the nation.
 - **Rivalry:** Nova is becoming increasingly aware of a rivalry with Lord Voltaire, a high-ranking official in the Empire who views her mission as a political move and seeks to manipulate her actions.

- **Relationship Status:** Single, recently broke up with Seraphine.
- **Sexual orientation:** Lesbian
- **Closest confidante:** Her pet Starling Squirrel, Whisker, who she can communicate with through the Threads of Life.

Strengths:

- A deep connection with nature and its magical threads of life, giving her insight into the interconnectedness of all things.
- Her optimism and energy can be a source of strength for others in difficult situations.
- Her innate curiosity and intelligence make her a quick learner, especially in the fields of geo-science and magic.

Fears:

- **Most afraid of:** Losing her ability to help others and seeing the beauty of the world crumble due to the empire's corruption and neglect.
- **Most embarrassed by:** Her naive views about the Empire and its darker undercurrents, especially now that she's witnessing them firsthand.

Internal Conflicts: Struggling with the realization that the world she grew up in is not as perfect as she once thought. She must reconcile her family's values with the harsh political realities of the Empire.

External Conflicts:

- Navigating the dangerous political intrigue of the Empire while also striving to complete her mission in Tenebrae.
- Being forced to choose between her homeland and the princess she's fallen for.

Beliefs:

- **Political affiliation:** Initially, she was an advocate of the Empire's scientific progress, but she is becoming more disillusioned with the corrupt political system.
- **Spiritual Beliefs:** Nova believes deeply in the interconnectedness of all living things and feels a spiritual connection to the threads of life that bind everything together.
- **World view:** Nova sees the world as an interconnected web, where every action has consequences, and balance is key.
- **Personal motto:** "The world is alive, and it speaks to those who listen."

Home Life:

- **Type of Dwelling:** A luxurious but functional home in the heart of the Empire, a high-rise apartment with breathtaking views of the city and advanced technological amenities.
- **Who do they live with?:** Nova lives alone, though she frequently visits her family.
- **Pets:** A loyal starling squirrel companion she calls "Whiskers" who travels with her on

her journeys.

- **How clean is their living space?:** Immaculately clean but lived-in, with plants and nature-inspired décor scattered around the home.

Work Life:

- **Occupation:** Nova is an apprentice geo-scientist under her father's mentorship, but she is tasked with retrieving the Vitus flower for study.
- **Relationship with co-workers:** While well-liked, her colleagues sometimes feel she's more of a figurehead, given her family connections.
- **How do they feel about their job?:** Nova is passionate about her studies, but the political landscape makes her uncertain about the true purpose of her work.

Psychology:

- **Secrets:** Nova is hiding the fact that she's starting to question everything she's been taught about the Empire and her family's role in it.
- **Most important possession:** A journal given to her by her mother, filled with her thoughts on nature and the balance of life, which Nova often turns to for guidance.
- **Recurring nightmares:** She dreams of a dying world, where the threads of life are unraveling, and she cannot stop it.
- **Triggers for anxiety:** Sudden political decisions, news of conflict, or being reminded of the vast inequality in the Empire.
- **Responses to anxiety:** Nova tends to isolate herself when stressed but is learning to lean on others for support.
- **What makes them feel safe?:** The presence of nature and the familiar hum of the threads of life.
- **What makes them feel unsafe?:** Political unrest, violence, or when her personal beliefs are challenged by the harsh realities of the Empire.

Moodboard:

Princess Aurora Nyx Allum

Role: Second Protag

Age: 25

Pronouns: She/Her

Species: Human

Gender: Female

Hair Colour: Silver-White

Skin Colour: Fair, with slight ethereal glow

Sexuality: bisexual

Eye Colour: Deep Violet

Power: Diplomatic access to the collective consciousness (though she cannot communicate with animals like Nova can, something hates)

Personality: Introverted, regal, determined, prideful, a bit distant, sensitive under the surface

Flaws/Weaknesses: Struggles with self-worth, insecurity about her inability to connect with the land, can be overly controlling and authoritarian in her frustration

Habits/Quirks: Fiddles with her royal pendant when stressed, takes long walks through the forest alone to meditate

Hobbies/Pastimes/Likes: Playing the harp, reading philosophy and history, observing the stars, watching the sunset from her palace balcony

Fav foods: Sweet berries, honey pastries, and spiced wine

Dislikes: Disorganization, chaos, being undermined or ignored, disobedience

Needs: To find her true purpose as an ambassador, to feel like she belongs, to connect with Tenebrae in a more meaningful way

Dreams: To restore balance to Tenebrae, reconnect with the land on a deeper level, prove her worthiness as the “voice of the collective consciousness”

Goals:

- **Short-term:** To work with Nova and gather the sample of the vitals flower, hoping it will give her insight into the planet's health and her own role in its future
- **Long-term:** To unite the people of Tenebrae, establish true harmony with nature, and restore Tenebrae's relationship with the collective consciousness

Backstory:

- **Birthplace:** The Royal Palace in Tenebrae's central floating city
- **Where they grew up:** Aurora grew up in the palace surrounded by luxury, tutors, and an extensive education in diplomacy, culture, and Tenebrae's natural history. She was raised to be the ambassador to the collective consciousness.
- **Traumatic events:** Aurora witnessed the early signs of the Withering starting to infect Tenebrae, causing an immense strain on her sense of duty. The overwhelming pressure of being expected to "fix" the problem and her inability to do so left her with self-doubt.
- **Defining moments:**
 - When her father passed away, the royal mantle fell on her shoulders, and she was expected to take up his duties. The added pressure to succeed and to be the "voice of Nyxura" pushed her into a role she wasn't fully prepared for.
- **Proudest accomplishment:** Gaining the trust of the High Council, solidifying her role as the political figurehead of Tenebrae
- **Biggest regret:** Not being able to form a deeper connection with Tenebrae's natural world and people, watching Nova's effortless communication with animals only serves to remind her of her own inadequacies
- **First memory:** The first time she walked through the heart of the forest with her father, feeling the energy of the trees and a sense of unity with nature
- **Saddest memory:** The first sign of the Withering taking root in the northern forests, the devastation it caused her people, and the guilt she felt for not being able to prevent it
- **Happiest memory:** The day of her coronation as the official ambassador to the collective consciousness; she was so full of hope and determination

Motivations:

- **Want:** To find a way to truly connect with Tenebrae and its people, to prove she is worthy of her title
- **Need:** To understand the collective consciousness better, learn why she's unable to form the same bonds with the animals and nature as others like Nova
- **Problem:** Her inability to communicate with the collective consciousness through the threads of life, leaving her isolated and questioning her true purpose

Relationships:

- **Family members:**

- **King Orion (father):** Aurora's father was a wise and revered ruler, and his passing left a massive void in her life. She has a deep sense of duty to live up to his legacy but also feels immense pressure to do so.
- **Queen Celeste (mother):** A calm, serene woman who is supportive but often distant. Aurora feels like she has never quite met her mother's expectations, and there's a sense of unspoken tension between them.
- **Friendships/Rivalries:**
 - **Nova Sinclair:** Aurora has a complex relationship with Nova. She envies Nova's natural connection to the collective consciousness and animals. This jealousy may initially cause friction, but deep down, Aurora respects Nova's strength. As their journey progresses, Aurora may come to see Nova as more of an ally than a rival.
 - **High Councilors:** Most are supportive, but there's always the political tension of being young and female in a position of power. Some may doubt her ability to lead.
 - **Chance:** Her oldest and best friend. They've been together since childhood, never leaving each other's side.
- **Relationship Status:** Single (Aurora hasn't had the time or energy for romance due to her duties)
- **Sexual orientation:** Bisexual
- **Closest confidante:** Aurora has no one she can fully trust, as she believes no one can understand the immense responsibility on her shoulders. Though she is closest to her personal attendant, Lady Lyra, who serves as her emotional sounding board.
- **What do their friends think of them?:** Some view Aurora as distant and aloof, others as passionate but disconnected from reality. There is a mix of admiration and concern about her self-imposed isolation.
- **Relationship with family:** Complex. She loves her family deeply but often feels disconnected from them, particularly her mother, who seems to have little faith in her abilities.
- **Relationship with friends:** Aurora has very few close friends; her royal duties and intense focus on her responsibilities have kept her at arm's length from most.
- **Relationship with significant other:** None, though there might be an underlying attraction to Nova.
- **Relationship with peers:** Viewed as a competent but often misunderstood ruler. Some may respect her determination, but there's often an undercurrent of doubt due to her inability to connect with the collective consciousness.

Strengths:

- Strong leadership abilities
- Brilliant strategist and diplomat
- Persistent, determined to overcome any obstacle
- Empathetic, despite her struggles to connect with the land

Fears:

- **Most afraid of:** Failing Tenebrae and the collective consciousness, losing her sense of purpose
- **Most embarrassed by:** Her inability to connect with the animals, the Withering worsening on her watch

Internal Conflicts:

- Feeling inadequate in her role, especially compared to Nova
- Struggling with her guilt over the Withering
- Navigating the pressure of being the “voice of Nyxura” while feeling disconnected from it

External Conflicts:

- Struggling to unite Tenebrae against the threat of the Withering
- Balancing political intrigue and the fight for power within the High Council
- Developing a deeper connection with the land and collective consciousness while battling her insecurities

Beliefs:

- **Political affiliation:** Monarchist, but she’s coming to question how her family’s reign can best serve the people of Tenebrae
- **Spiritual Beliefs:** Sees the collective consciousness as a divine presence but struggles to connect with it on a personal level
- **World view:** Duty and service to the people, though she is beginning to understand that her approach might be flawed
- **Personal motto:** "Strength and unity, not by power alone but by connection."

Home Life:

- **Type of Dwelling:** The royal palace in the central floating city of Tenebrae
- **Who do they live with?:** Aurora lives alone for the most part, though her personal attendant, Lady Lyra, stays nearby.
- **Pets:** None (but has a deep fascination with animals and the possibility of understanding them)
- **How clean is their living space?:** Immaculately clean, reflective of her need for order in her life

Work Life:

- **Occupation:** Royal Princess, Ambassador to the Collective Consciousness, and member of the High Council
- **Relationship with co-workers:** Professional but distant

- **How do they feel about their job?:** The role is a heavy burden for Aurora; she feels immense pressure to perform but often doubts her own ability to fulfill her duties

Psychology:

- **Secrets:** Feels undeserving of her position and harbors deep insecurity about her connection to the world
- **Most important possession:** Her father's royal pendant, which serves as a reminder of her legacy and responsibility
- **Recurring nightmares:** Visions of the Withering spreading uncontrollably, her failure to stop it
- **Triggers for anxiety:** The increasing scope of the Withering, reminders of her father's passing
- **Responses to anxiety:** Clammy hands, heavy breathing, pacing
- **What makes them feel safe?:** The presence of those who believe in her, the peace of the forest when she can find time to visit
- **What makes them feel unsafe?:** The collapse of Tenebrae's relationship with the collective consciousness, the unraveling of everything she's worked to protect

Moodboard:

- She should look like royalty
- She can wear either a battle dress or outfit like bellow
 - The main thing is it should look functional, not just aesthetic.



Secondary Characters

Chance

Role: Supporting Character/Foil to Voltair

Age: 29

Pronouns: He/They

Species: Human

Gender: Male

Hair Colour: Sun-bleached Blonde

Skin Colour: Tan, often sun-kissed from traveling so much.

Sexuality: Pansexual

Eye Colour: Sea Green

Power: None

Personality: Eccentric, charismatic, carefree, self-aware, mischievous, loyal, dramatic, poetic

Flaws/Weaknesses: Reckless, impulsive, attention-seeking, self-absorbed, doesn't take things seriously when he should

Habits/Quirks: Walks in exaggerated, poetic ways, often makes grandiose declarations about himself. Frequently sings or hums a tune. Does exaggerated movements, like flipping his coat or striking dramatic poses. Always has a line ready for any situation.

Hobbies/Pastimes/Likes:

- Sailing his airship
- Collecting quirky treasures from his travels
- Making grand entrances

- Telling tall tales of his "pirate exploits" (even though they are mostly exaggerated or completely fabricated)
- Making friends and getting into trouble

Fav foods:

- Spicy dishes (particularly anything from Tenebrae's cuisine)
- Street food snacks
- Exotic fruit (the rarer, the better)
- Any food that can be eaten with his hands

Dislikes:

- Being underestimated
- Boredom
- People who take themselves too seriously
- Being confined to one place for too long

Needs:

- Constant stimulation (adventure, excitement, people)
- A sense of recognition, even if he pretends otherwise
- Freedom to do whatever he wants without consequences

Dreams:

- To live a life full of excitement and adventure, no matter the cost
- To finally settle down, if only to have a place to call his own (though he would never admit this)

Goals:

- **Short-term:** Get closer to Princess Aurora, continue his "pirate" lifestyle, and help the protagonists stop Voltair's reckless plans
- **Long-term:** Explore the world, live free, and eventually find a place to truly call home—perhaps after all the chaos is over

Backstory:

- **Birthplace:** A small coastal village in Tenebrae
- **Where they grew up:** Grew up on the streets, later worked as a deckhand on airships, before becoming a self-proclaimed pirate and captain of his own ship
- **Traumatic events:** Raised without much of a family, he learned to rely on himself. The lack of stability early on shaped his carefree, self-serving attitude.
- **Defining moments:** When he became the captain of his own airship and started calling

himself a pirate. The first time he actually helped someone in need, realizing he enjoyed the feeling but still wouldn't admit it.

- **Proudest accomplishment:** Becoming captain of his own airship, *The Wild Wave* (and keeping it in good condition, mostly).
- **Biggest regret:** Not spending more time with the few people who tried to teach him how to be responsible. He regrets not allowing them to be a bigger influence on his life.
- **First memory:** Running away from home as a child, sneaking aboard a ship with nothing but the clothes on his back and the feeling of freedom that came with it.
- **Saddest memory:** A time he lost a close friend during an airship raid that went wrong. The loss taught him that, despite his carefree nature, people can get hurt in the world he's made.
- **Happiest memory:** Being the hero of a pirate tale he told to a group of children at a local pub—his ego was at its highest point, but it was a brief, simple moment of joy.

Motivations:

- **Want:** To live life the way he wants, without rules or restrictions.
- **Need:** Deep down, he craves a sense of belonging and stability, though he would never admit it.
- **Problem:** His reckless behavior often causes trouble for those around him. He doesn't know how to truly live for anyone other than himself.

Relationships:

- **Family members:**
 - **Parents:** Unknown—his family disowned him at a young age, and Chance hasn't really made an effort to reconnect.
 - Has a complicated relationship with the idea of family, often jokingly calling the people he travels with "his family" as a way to fill the void.
- **Friendships/Rivalries:**
 - **Voltair:** They share a love-hate relationship. Chance sees Voltair as a pompous fool, though occasionally respects him when he gets things done, even if he does it for the wrong reasons.
 - **Princess Aurora:** He's known her since childhood, and his teasing of her is rooted in deep affection. He's fiercely protective of her in his own unique way. He also helps her grow and realize her own worth, even if he won't say it directly.
- **Relationship Status:** Single, though Chance loves to flirt and enjoys the thrill of romantic entanglements.
- **Sexual orientation:** Pansexual, though he rarely gets serious about his feelings.
- **Closest confidante:** Princess Aurora—he's known her since they were children and shares a special bond with her.

Strengths:

- Charismatic and able to talk his way out of (or into) anything.
- Incredibly resourceful, especially in tight situations.
- Good with people, making him an effective diplomat when he chooses to be.
- Great with airships and navigating tricky situations in the skies.

Fears:

- **Most afraid of:** Not being able to live a life of his own choosing, especially being forced into a "normal" life.
- **Most embarrassed by:** Any attempt at being serious or sincere. He is mortified when he has to show vulnerability.

Internal Conflicts: Wants to be more responsible but is afraid of what that would mean for his identity as the "irresponsible pirate."

External Conflicts: His desire for adventure constantly puts him in situations where he must choose between his ego and doing what's right for the group.

Beliefs:

- **Political affiliation:** Apolitical—Chance doesn't care for politics and only gets involved when his friends are directly affected.
- **Spiritual Beliefs:** No real spiritual beliefs, but he does have a strange reverence for the "freedom of the skies" and the unknown.
- **World view:** The world is chaotic, and that's fine by him. He believes that in the grand scheme of things, being yourself and living freely is the best way to be.
- **Personal motto:** "Why follow rules when you can make your own?"

Home Life:

- **Type of Dwelling:** Airship (The Wild Wave), though he occasionally stays in inns or pubs when he needs to.
- **Who do they live with?:** Often alone, but always surrounded by a crew of misfits and people who rely on him.
- **Pets:** It's a mess, but Chance insists it's "organized chaos."
- **How clean is their living space?:** It's a mess, but Chance insists it's "organized chaos."

Work Life:

- **Occupation:** Airship Captain and self-proclaimed pirate
- **Relationship with co-workers:** He's close with his crew but doesn't take authority seriously. They know he's unreliable, but they respect his skill and loyalty when it counts.
- **How do they feel about their job?:** Loves it. Being a captain means he's in charge of

his own destiny.

Psychology:

- **Secrets:** He secretly craves stability and will eventually have to face the consequences of his reckless behavior.
- **Most important possession:** His airship, *The Wild Wave*.
- **Recurring nightmares:** Nightmares of being tied down or stuck in one place forever, unable to escape.
- **Triggers for anxiety:** Being forced into responsibility or commitments.
- **Responses to anxiety:** Jokes, distracts others with humor, or takes risks to escape the pressure.
- **What makes them feel safe?:** Being on his airship, the open sky, and with his closest friends.
- **What makes them feel unsafe?:** Being trapped, or when his friends are in danger and he can't protect them.

Moodboard:



High-Council Woman (to be named)

Role: Secondary Character

Age: 40

Pronouns: She/Her

Species: Human

Gender: Female

Hair Colour: White

Skin Colour: white

Sexuality: bisexual

Eye Colour: Brown

Power:

Personality:

Flaws/Weaknesses:

Habits/Quirks:

Hobbies/Pastimes/Likes:

Fav foods:

Dislikes:

Needs:

Dreams:

Goals:

- **Short-term:**
- **Long-term:**

Backstory:

- Birthplace:
- Where they grew up:
- Traumatic events:
- Defining moments:
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- Proudest accomplishment:
- Biggest regret:
- First memory:
- Saddest memory:
- Happiest memory:

Motivations:

- Want:
- Need:
- Problem:

Relationships:

- Family members:
- Friendships/Rivalries:
- Relationship Status:
- Sexual orientation:
- Closest confidante:
- What do their friends think of them?:
- Relationship with family:
- Relationship with friends:
- Relationship with significant other:
- Relationship with peers:

Strengths:**Fears:**

- Most afraid of:
- Most embarrassed by:

Internal Conflicts:**External Conflicts:****Beliefs:**

- Political affiliation:

- **Spiritual Beliefs:**
- **World view:**
- **Personal motto:**

Home Life:

- **Type of Dwelling:**
- **Who do they live with?:**
- **Pets:**
- **How clean is their living space?:**

Work Life:

- **Occupation:**
- **Relationship with co-workers:**
- **How do they feel about their job?:**

Psychology:

- **Secrets:**
- **Most important possession:**
- **Recurring nightmares:**
- **Triggers for anxiety:**
- **Responses to anxiety:**
- **What makes them feel safe?:**
- **What makes them feel unsafe?:**

Moodboard:

- **Okay but make her older (40)**
- **Give her noble looking attire**
- **She's wise and direct, a fiery type.**



Dr. Elias Sinclair

Role: Nova's Father

Age: 65

Pronouns: He/Him

Species: Human

Gender: Male

Hair Colour: Black with some white/grey strands

Skin Colour: tanned

Sexuality: straight

Eye Colour: Golden

Ref:



TEMPLATE

Role:

Age:

Pronouns:

Species:

Gender:

Hair Colour:

Skin Colour:

Sexuality:

Eye Colour:

Power:

Personality:

Flaws/Weaknesses:

Habits/Quirks:

Hobbies/Pastimes/Likes:

Fav foods:

Dislikes:

Needs:

Dreams:

Goals:

- **Short-term:**
- **Long-term:**

Backstory:

- Birthplace:
- Where they grew up:
- Traumatic events:
- Defining moments:
 -
- Proudest accomplishment:
- Biggest regret:
- First memory:
- Saddest memory:
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Motivations:

- Want:
- Need:
- Problem:

Relationships:

- Family members:
- Friendships/Rivalries:
- Relationship Status:
- Sexual orientation:
- Closest confidante:
- What do their friends think of them?:
- Relationship with family:
- Relationship with friends:
- Relationship with significant other:
- Relationship with peers:

Strengths:

Fears:

- Most afraid of:
- Most embarrassed by:

Internal Conflicts:

External Conflicts:

Beliefs:

- Political affiliation:
- Spiritual Beliefs:
- World view:

- **Personal motto:**

Home Life:

- **Type of Dwelling:**
- **Who do they live with?:**
- **Pets:**
- **How clean is their living space?:**

Work Life:

- **Occupation:**
- **Relationship with co-workers:**
- **How do they feel about their job?:**

Psychology:

- **Secrets:**
- **Most important possession:**
- **Recurring nightmares:**
- **Triggers for anxiety:**
- **Responses to anxiety:**
- **What makes them feel safe?:**
- **What makes them feel unsafe?:**

Antagonists

Lord Voltair

Role: Antagonist (initially), later a redeemed character

Age: 32

Pronouns: he/him

Species: Human

Gender: Male

Hair Colour: Dark Brown (nearly black)

Skin Colour: Pale, with a slight olive undertone

Sexuality: Gay

Eye Colour: Dark blue, almost violet, with a sharp, piercing gaze

Power: Manipulation of Aether - Voltair can channel and control small amounts of Aether, though his power is mainly used for personal gain or to manipulate others. He is also highly adept at using his intellect and charm to sway people.

Personality: Ambitious, calculating, proud, charming, self-righteous, arrogant, confident, manipulative, intelligent, but with a soft spot for those he deems worthy

Flaws/Weaknesses: Overly self-absorbed, arrogant, blinded by his own ambitions, can be excessively proud, dismissive of others' worth

Habits/Quirks: Speaks in a measured and deliberate manner, often quoting philosophy or old stories to justify his actions. He can't help but assert his dominance in a room. Loves to engage in intellectual debates, though he tends to get frustrated when challenged.

Hobbies/Pastimes/Likes:

- Reading philosophy and strategy texts
- Engaging in intellectual debates

- Fine dining and wine tasting
- Collecting rare and valuable artifacts, particularly those related to Tenebrae's history and ancient technologies
- Spending time alone in quiet, luxurious spaces

Fav foods:

- Rich, savory dishes like roasted meats, fine cheeses, and decadent pastries
- A particular fondness for exotic spices and sauces
- Expensive wine, especially red varieties from far-off regions

Dislikes:

- People who challenge his authority
- Being underestimated or ignored
- Any form of weakness or failure
- The idea of being indebted to anyone

Needs:

- To feel validated and respected, particularly in his authority and intellect
- A sense of control over his environment and the people around him
- To prove that he is worthy of greatness and that he is destined for more

Dreams:

- To restore his noble title and power, which was stripped from him
- To gain eternal power and influence, believing it will validate his worth
- To leave a legacy that proves he was right all along

Goals:

- **Short-term:** To steal the Heart of Nyxura and place it in the Crystal Lake to gain eternal power
- **Long-term:** To become the undisputed ruler of the Empire, achieving godlike status and eternal influence over both the day and night

Backstory:

- **Birthplace:** Logos, lived within the Imperial Palace until his titles were stripped.
- **Where they grew up:** The Royal palace. Born into an aristocratic family that once held great power and influence in the Empire. He was groomed for leadership and trained in strategy, diplomacy, and philosophy.
- **Traumatic events:** His family's fall from grace, leading to the loss of his titles and privileges. His ambition to restore the family's power drove him to dark choices.
- **Defining moments:** The moment his family was stripped of their titles, forcing him into exile. This ignited his desire for power, and he began searching for ways to manipulate

the system and earn back his position.

- **Proudest accomplishment:** Managing to claw his way back into political favor, even if only through manipulation and deceit. His recent acquisition of the Heart of Nyxura and his plan to use it to restore his family's status is his crowning achievement—at least in his eyes.
- **Biggest regret:** His arrogance and self-righteousness led him to alienate his family and closest allies, costing him both personal relationships and his own humanity in pursuit of power.
- **First memory:** Sitting at the family table, listening to his parents discuss their plans for the future. He remembers feeling that everything was within his reach, and how he thought he would rule the Empire someday.
- **Saddest memory:** The day he lost his titles and status, being exiled from the court after a political scandal that was orchestrated to undermine his family's name.
- **Happiest memory:** As a young man, he remembers being praised for his academic achievements by his mentors. It was one of the rare times he felt truly respected and validated.

Motivations:

- **Want:** To restore his noble family's status, achieve ultimate power, and prove to the world that he was right all along.
- **Need:** To truly learn that power comes not from domination, but from understanding and cooperation—though it will take him time to realize this.
- **Problem:** His arrogance and manipulative nature have caused him to alienate potential allies and burn bridges. He believes he deserves everything, but his pride makes it difficult for him to accept the help of others.

Relationships:

- **Family members:**
 - His noble family, once influential but now disgraced. They no longer support him after his reckless actions led to their downfall.
 - **Parents:** Though he respects his parents' legacy, he holds a deep resentment for their inability to protect the family from the scandal that ruined them.
- **Friendships/Rivalries:**
 - **Princess Aurora:** Their relationship is complicated. He sees her as someone who represents what he has lost—a symbol of purity and grace. He feels threatened by her, but also intrigued.
 - **Chance:** He doesn't take Chance seriously at all, seeing him as a frivolous, childish nuisance. However, Chance's ability to charm people frustrates Voltair, as he prefers to be the one in control. He can't help but fall in love with chance however.
- **Relationship Status:** Single (though he admires power and beauty, and has used his charm in the past to manipulate individuals for his gain)
- **Sexual orientation:** gay

- **Closest confidante:** No one—Voltair trusts no one fully, as he believes others will betray him. However, he has a begrudging respect for certain allies.
- **What do their friends think of them?:** Most people view him as self-righteous and controlling. His arrogance and manipulative nature make it difficult for him to form true alliances. He is more feared than loved.

Strengths:

- Intelligent and highly strategic—Voltair is a master manipulator, able to read people and situations to his advantage.
- Highly ambitious and driven to succeed, often going to great lengths to get what he wants.
- Charismatic, with the ability to inspire loyalty or fear in others.

Fears:

- **Most afraid of:** Failure. The thought that his grand ambitions will come to nothing is his greatest fear.
- **Most embarrassed by:** His family's fall from grace, which still haunts him to this day.

Internal Conflicts: A constant battle between his desire for power and his growing awareness that his pursuit of it has cost him everything he once cared about. His pride keeps him from fully acknowledging this.

External Conflicts: The protagonists, who constantly foil his plans and expose his selfishness. His obsession with power also makes him a threat to the delicate balance of life on Nyxura.

Beliefs:

- **Political affiliation:** He believes in a meritocratic system, where only the strongest and most intelligent should rise to power. He's an ardent believer in the idea of natural order and destiny.
- **Spiritual Beliefs:** He views the idea of spiritual connection with the planet as naïve, though he will exploit the power of the Heart of Nyxura to achieve his own ends.
- **World view:** The world is a harsh place, and only the strong survive. Weakness must be eradicated, and power is the only true measure of worth.
- **Personal motto:** "Power is earned, not given. And I will earn it, whatever the cost."

Home Life:

- **Type of Dwelling:** A grand estate or manor in the heart of the Empire, now somewhat neglected due to his fall from grace.
- **Who do they live with?:** He lives alone, save for his servants and the occasional political ally who may come to seek his counsel.
- **Pets:** None, though he has a preference for rare and exotic creatures, often as trophies or symbols of his superiority.

- **How clean is their living space?:** Immaculate, though cold and sterile. Everything is in its place, meticulously organized for efficiency and control.

Work Life:

- **Occupation:** Nobleman, strategist, and manipulator. Has temporarily gained some influence within the Empire's political circles, though it is tenuous.
- **Relationship with co-workers:** He treats his allies as tools to be used and disposed of when no longer necessary.
- **How do they feel about their job?:** He sees his "work" as a means to an end—his true purpose is power, and he will do whatever it takes to secure it.

Psychology:

- **Secrets:** He hides the vulnerability of his past and the deeper longing for true connection. His manipulative nature is also a defense mechanism against his fear of weakness.
- **Most important possession:** His family's crest and title, which symbolize his claim to power and his desire to restore his family's legacy.
- **Recurring nightmares:** Dreams of being overthrown and powerless, losing everything he has worked for.
- **Triggers for anxiety:** Moments where he loses control or when he is outmaneuvered by others.
- **Responses to anxiety:** Becomes more calculating, perhaps even more ruthless in his pursuit of power.
- **What makes them feel safe?:** The feeling of control over others, the quiet solitude of his estate, and the ability to manipulate events to his advantage.
- **What makes them feel unsafe?:** The potential for loss, the possibility of someone stronger or more cunning than him.

Moodboard:

- These vibes but make it fit the time period lol So a bit more medieval/victorian style. The empire is more technological then Tenebrae so it can be a bit more modern looking.

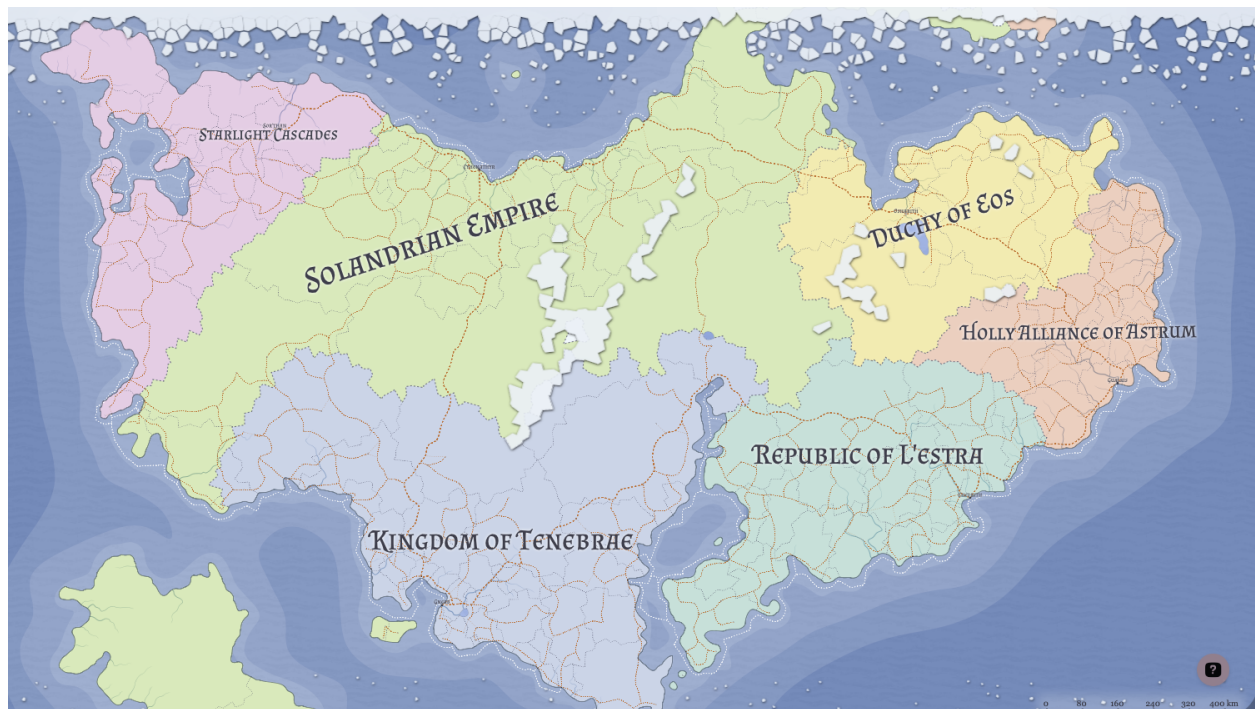


Worldbuilding

The World:

The world of Nyxura is a medium sized planet, home to 1 large continent and multiple smaller islands scattered throughout it's seas.

Nyxura is tidally locked with it's sun, leading to the northern hemisphere being stuck in eternal dawn and the southern hemisphere being trapped in eternal twilight. This has lead to unique fauna and flora evolving throughout each hemisphere.



Tenebrae - Kingdom of Eternal Night

Tenebrae is a beautiful and stunning floating kingdom, with cities seemingly suspended from the heavens themselves. These giant floating cities sit gently upon a bed of Starveil Trees. These trees grow extremely tall, normally ranging from 2,000 to 7,000 feet tall with the eldest of them reaching a maximum height of 10,000 feet.

Each tree sprouts giant lilypad like structures that span anywhere from a circumference of 500 feet to 4,000 feet. It is here, on these lilypad structures that the inhabitants of Tenebrae build their cities and homes. Each pad interconnected via bridges of starlight to enable travel between them.

Housing:

The people of tenebrae prefer to use natural materials for their housing as they believe these materials enable a stronger flow of aether through their homes and selves. Houses are typically build of wood these days, taken from the trees far below on the forest floor but plenty of older huts and houses still exist. These older homes are build from branches, clay, and other substances found in the canopy itself.

Technology:

Tenebrae is technologically advanced relying on steam and Aether crystals for the bulk of their power. The people having electricity, heating, and plenty of water. Lighting around cities is a mixture of electrical and plant based.

Aether Crystals are made by taking the nectar or sap from certain plants, filtering them through woven silk, and finally heating the purified nectar in a crystal basin. The basin is covered in magical runes which instill various properties into the final crystal. As a power source, one large crystal (roughly 6ft tall and 4ft wide) can power an entire city for 8 generations. Typically most people have at least a dozen smaller ones laying around.

Tenebrae's technology is mostly focused on making life more accessible and comfortable. Focusing on medical advancements, communication, harvest, and keeping people and animals safe.

Politics:

Tenebrae operates as a Democratic-Monarchy where the head of state is an elected official and while the royal family serve as figureheads and stewards of culture, tradition, and values.

At the top of the government is the elected High-Chancellor who runs the day-to-day. Under them is the High-Council, a body of elected officials who vote on legislative issues, followed by the Low-Council who deal with local matters and disputes between cities and people.

The Royal Family is duty bound to serve the people and promote communal well being. Often considered a ceremonial position they are still a vital support structure for the people and looked to for advice during times of need and crisis.

Transport:

Walking

The vast majority of transport is done via walking. The people of Tenebrae don't feel the need to rush places and often prefer a slow journey where they can experience nature as they travel.

Starlight Bridges

Starlight bridges connect most of the forest and pads together. Forming ramps to climb up and down the trees and paths between pads. These bridges are formed from solidified aether and seemingly appear as needed by the people. It is believed the trees themselves form them to assist the people in a sort of symbiotic relationship.

Elevators

Made from large leaves or starlight as the bridges, these pads can take people up and down the various layers of canopy quite quickly.

Birds

The people of tenebrae of long trained and bred various large bird species to aid them in travel. Often using them as a quick way to reach ground level which would otherwise take weeks of hiking.

Zeppelins

Powered via steam power, these mighty flying machines are vital to trade with other nations.

Spiritual/Religious Beliefs:

The Tenebraen people wholeheartedly believe in the interconnectedness of life. They believe all living things share a collective consciousness and this interconnectivity is vital to the life of the planet as well as it's inhabitants.

A core moto of the people is 'When something is taken, something of equal value must be given'. This is seen through their daily rituals and spiritual holidays.

Harvesting Rites:

Any time a plant, animal, or any resource is harvested from the environment the people of tenebrae pay their respects and, when possible, replace what was taken. For example: if a dying tree is taken as firewood, a new tree is planted in it's place.

The same goes for food, when the people of tenebrae harvest their crops they are sure to thank the crops and the planet's spirit for providing for them. Promising to plant new crops in the following season.

Economics:

Tenebrae uses stardust as a currency. Stardust is a magical crystalline substance found on the highest branches and pads in the forest. Long believed to be fallen stars, the crystalline dust is actually a byproduct of aether condensing as it coalleses in one place for an extended period of time. Starlight 'showers' can be seen throughout the year as this dust falls from the heavens itself and collects on the pads and branches above. Stardust Collectors then ascend the trees and collect as much as they can.

Tenebrae operates on a social capital system. The more an individual or company contributes to society and its people the higher social standing it has and the more 'bonus' perks it receives. These perks range from additional Stardust to priority access to know land.

Tenebrae provides a Universal Basic Infrastructure to it's people:

- Free education for all (including post-secondary school)
- Free Healthcare for all
- Free housing
- Free food
- Public Transport

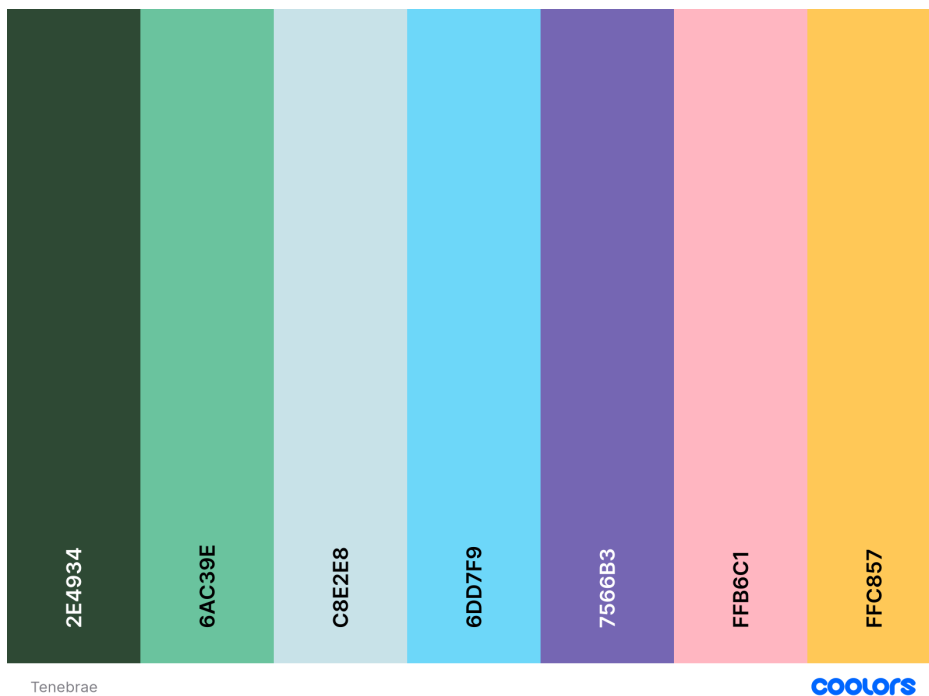
- Etc
- Basic Income

Additional services and items can be purchased, but all basic life necessities are provided for free. These are accompanied by a UBI to ensure the people of tenebrae can thrive and travel to other countries where currency is more important to livelihood.

Colour Palette:

- Nature based colours
- Gold as our accent color and the color of the threads of life

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Solandria - The Empyrean Empire

Located in the North and spanning across most of the continent, the Solandrian Empire is the largest nation on Nyxura. It is known for its advanced technologies, giant urban centres, and megastructures. Its buildings are built with precision and innovation in mind, while they may appear brutalist in nature this is a deliberate choice to optimize land usage and resources.

The Empire's towns and cities stretch across its vast territory, connected via roads and railways. These cities are far apart and often disconnected from each other. This has led to the empire's citizens forming sub-cultures within and a strong emphasis on independence over community.

The empire has developed an over-reliance on Aether and coal leading to wide-spread instability, economic downturn, and the rapid spread of the withering throughout its lands. The one great, powerful, and beautiful nation is now a rapidly decaying hot bed of distrust and fear.

Housing:

Housing is densely packed in most districts, with giant skyscrapers and apartment buildings being the primary housing in larger cities and urban centres. In small towns, enclaves are built creating a network of fully self-contained towns which are mostly isolated from the harsh environment.

Politics:

The Empire is an autocratic meritocracy that rewards those who contribute the most with higher social standing, higher salaries, and more opportunities. This often leaves those on the fringes of society with nothing or very little.

The Empire is solely ruled by the Imperial Royal Family. While a council of lords exists, it is rife with nepotism and in-fighting leaving the emperor to be the sole decision maker in most issues.

Technology:

The Solandrian Empire uses a mixture of Aetheric and Coal based technologies. Aether provides most of the power throughout the empire and connects to remote regions via underground and above ground powerlines.

Since the withering has greatly limited the availability of Aether in the region, the empire has slowly moved over to coal based power. Churning out massive coal factories and power plants across its northern regions.

Transport:

Horseback:

The primary mode of transport of most people is still horseback as cars are not affordable for 90% of people.

Cars:

Early (19th century style) cars exist and use a combination of Aether Crystals and coal for power. These vehicles are fairly inefficient and incredibly expensive, leading to them being seen as status symbols of the wealthy upper class.

Trains

Both ground and skytrains are used to connect cities for travel and trade. Inner-city trains also exist in urban centres.

Airships

The Empire has a vast fleet of airships which it uses for travel and trade to and from neighbouring nations. These ships are also powered via coal and aether crystals.

Economics:

In the Solandrian Empire, Stardust serves as the primary currency, just as it does throughout Nyxura. However, unlike the more communal regions like Tenebrae, the Empire provides no free services. Citizens must earn everything, including access to food, shelter, and health services.

This philosophy is deeply ingrained in the Empires culture, which sees handouts as a form of weakness.

- **Meritocratic Economy:** The Empire's economy is build around a meritocratic framework. Those who contribute the most—whether through financial success, military achievement, or scientific discover—are rewarded with higher wages, better living conditions, and access to elite social circles.
- **Lack of Social Services:** Despite the wealth of the Empire, many citizens struggle without basic services such as healthcare, education, or social welfare. This has led to growing discontent and inequality, especially in the more rural areas affected by the withering.

Spiritual/Religious Beliefs

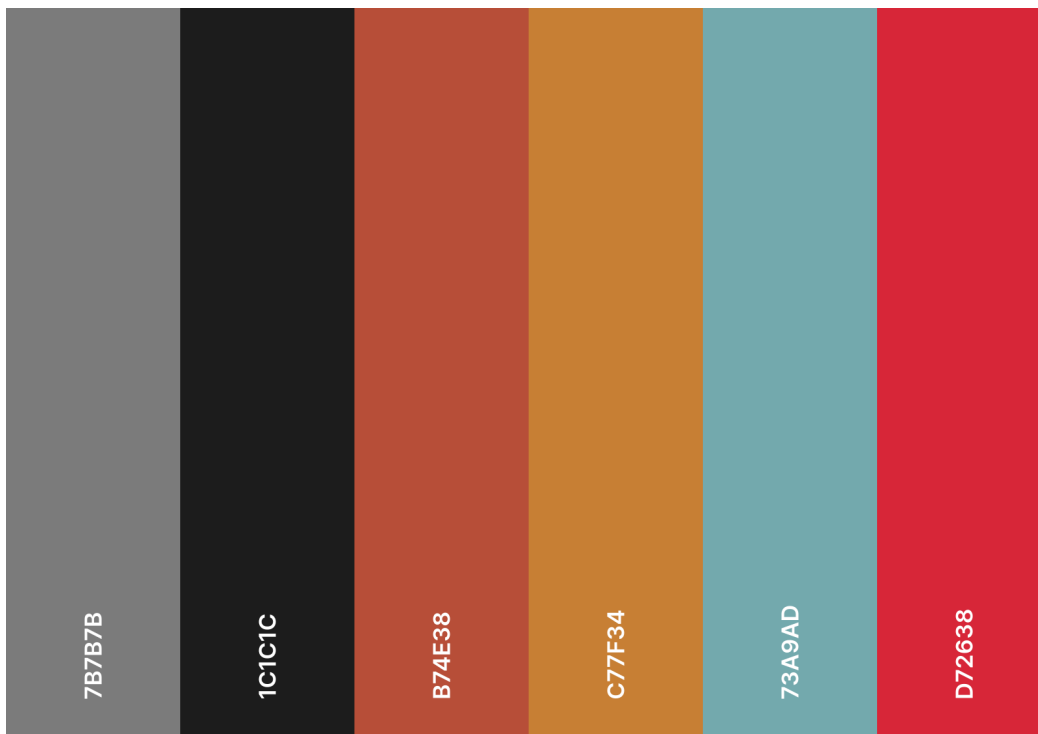
The Solandrian empire is a secular society, having long moved away from spiritual beliefs in favor of logic, science, and reasoning. While there are still a few who believe in the Will of Nyxura, the empire is primarily grounded in pragmatism and technological advancement, and most citizens grow up without strong ties to any faith.

Spiritualism: Although the general population has largely abandoned spiritual beliefs, pockets of people in more remote areas may still practice older faiths and revere the Will of Nyxura, viewing it as a living force that connects all life.

Colours:

- Coal Punk
- Heavy Industrialization

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Solandria

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Duchy of Eos:

- **Geography and Climate:** The **Duchy of Eos** lies in the highlands, with rugged, mountainous terrain dominating much of the region. The landscape is defined by steep cliffs, towering peaks, and deep valleys that are bathed in the perpetual brightness of the eternal daylight. The light in Eos is almost blindingly intense, creating an otherworldly glow around the landscape—where sunlight reflects off the snow-capped peaks and causes the mountains to shine like diamonds.
 - The mountains are rich in minerals, crystals, and precious metals, making the Duchy a valuable region for trade and mining.
 - Flora and fauna here are adapted to constant daylight, with many plants possessing reflective leaves to avoid burning under the intense light. Bright flowers and luminescent mosses line the cliffs, and animals have evolved to have larger eyes to handle the unyielding brightness.
 - **Climate:** Given its proximity to Astrum, Eos enjoys eternal daylight, though its mountainous nature creates microclimates in some regions. Lower valleys enjoy slightly cooler temperatures, while the higher peaks experience the brunt of the relentless sunlight. The sun doesn't set here, but the light shifts in intensity across the day.
 - **Notable Locations:**
 - **The Radiant Peaks:** The highest mountains of the Duchy, where the **Great Temple of Eos** is located. This temple is said to be the most sacred place in Eos, where the Duke and his court perform offerings and rituals for the Collective Consciousness and is the location of the Solar Falls.
 - **The Crystal Caverns:** A vast network of caves beneath the Duchy, famed for the crystals that glow with an ethereal light, believed to be connected to the power of the sun.
 - **The Sunward Fields:** These are the Duchy's agricultural heartlands, where the fields of golden wheat and sunflowers grow. The unending daylight gives the crops perpetual growth, but it also makes farming incredibly harsh since the crops are susceptible to overexposure without careful tending.
-

Government and Politics

- **Ruling House:** The Duchy of Eos is ruled by the **Duke of Eos**, who is a hereditary monarch but with an intense cult of personality tied to their relationship with the sun. The Duke is considered to be the living embodiment of the will of Nyxura and the people believe that the Duke can channel the threads of life for protection and prosperity.
- **Political Structure:** The Duchy has a feudal system of government. The Duke is at the top, but he is advised by noble lords who govern specific territories and mining operations across the land. Though the Duke holds ultimate authority, the lords often act independently to secure their own power, making it a loose coalition of powerful families.
- **Relationship with Neighbors:**

- With **Astrum** to the east, the Duchy shares a cultural bond and mutual respect for each other. The relationship is relatively cooperative but not without tension over resources and territory, especially in the mining areas.
 - To the west lies the Empire, which is in eternal dawn, leading to a more complex diplomatic relationship. Though they share the belief in technological advancement, the Duchy often finds the Empire's political methods and hierarchy a bit too rigid. This political tension often leads to border skirmishes and diplomatic negotiations regarding territorial rights and access to mountain passes.
-

Culture and Beliefs

- **Technological and Magical Advancements:** The Duchy has a reputation for solar-powered technology, with magic blending seamlessly with advanced mining techniques. The constant daylight provides a unique advantage for daylight-based magic that can harness solar energy, which is used for everything from heating homes to propelling airships.
-

Economy and Trade

- **Mining and Resources:** The mountainous region is rich in minerals, gems, and precious metals. These resources make the Duchy a key player in trade with neighboring regions, particularly **Astrum** and the **Empire**, who rely on Eosian resources for their own industries.
 - **Solar-Based Industries:** Eos has become a leader in solar-powered energy technologies, including everything from solar lamps to airships. This technology is highly coveted by neighboring nations, and the Duchy's trade secrets surrounding solar energy are fiercely protected.
-

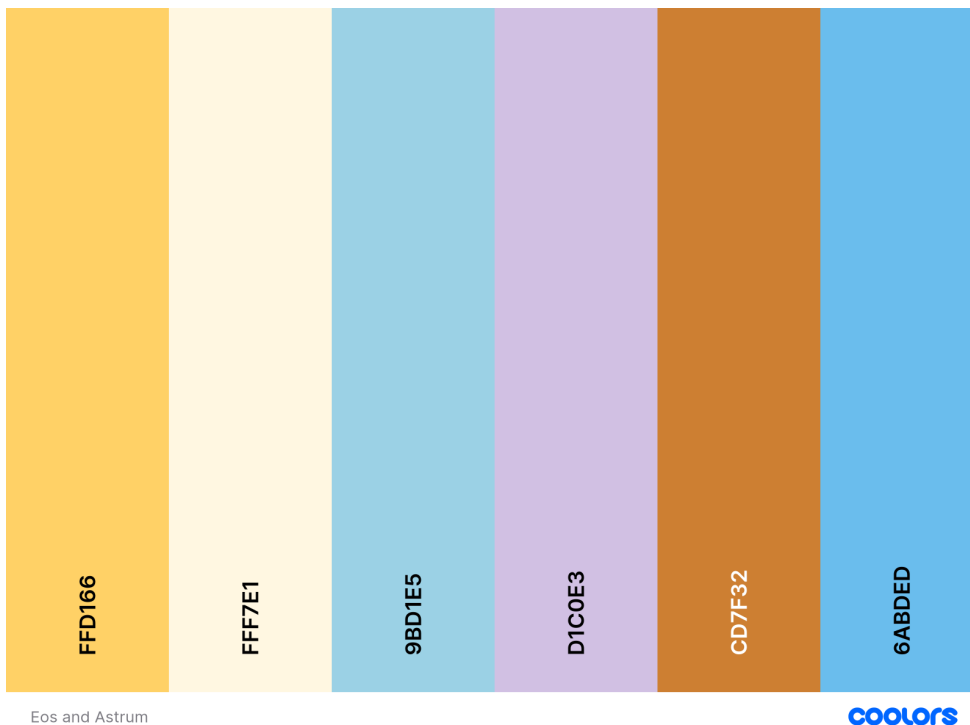
Relationship with Other Nations

- **With Astrum:** The **Duchy of Eos** and **Astrum** share the sun worship belief, but the **Duchy** is more stoic and hierarchical, while Astrum's eternal daylight is celebrated with more flamboyance. This creates both a respectful rivalry and a shared history of working together on technological advancements like solar energy. However, the Duchy's mineral wealth and craftsmanship often create competition with Astrum for resources.
- **With the Empire:** The relationship with the Empire is a bit more strained, as the **Duchy of Eos** views the Empire's authoritarian rule as too rigid and archaic, while the Empire views the Duchy as disorganized and overly obsessed with individual power. There have

been border disputes over territory, especially around the mountain passes that lead into the Duchy. This friction could escalate into potential conflicts or even secret alliances to secure resources.

Colours:

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Eos and Astrum

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Magic System:

The world Nyxura is a living ecosystem connected via the 'threads of life'. These invisible threads are the lanes in which Aether travel. Connecting all living things to the planet itself. Both giving life and recycling energy from those that have passed on.

Aether is the energetic force that creates this world and universe. It is the fundamental building block of all things. Nothing can exist without aether on the quantum level. On the macro-level, aether is the sustaining life force of all living beings.

It is often called the 'Collective Consciousness' or 'Will of Nyxura'. Some believe it to be a Goddess, while others believe it is all – every living and breathing thing as one.

Blossoms

One of the main ways aether is gathered and stored is through blossoming flowers. As aether is pulled through the roots of these flowers it fills their petals and nectar with rich and pure aetheric energy. These can be harvested in many ways: one can simply take the nectar or pollen to create crystals, or they can take the petals and use mortar and pestle to create topical rubs, teas, and other substances.

At the heart of tenebrae, in the middle of the densely packed forests is the 'Heart of the Mother'. This flower is a beautifully radiant red flower with 11 petals. The flower releases aether spores which flow out and protect the entire forest from negative energies and disease.

It is considered to be the source of all life by the people of Tenebrae and is the sole follower of its kind. Cherished and protected by all who dwell in the Tenebrae forests.

Spells/Rituals

Spells use etched runes. These runes change how Aether flows through the vessel (or ground) creating unique effects. The most common of these are protection and healing runes. When etched into a home or a circle on the ground Aether is channeled through the rituals creating a translucent barrier. Protecting those within from environment and attackers in kind.

Due to the nature of the collective consciousness, intention is a massively important part of all spells and rituals. By focusing on your intention and desired outcome, the spell will manifest specially to achieve those goals.

For example: A barrier around a house created with the intention of keeping out all who may harm you would still allow through peaceful people and animals. The collective consciousness, will of Nyxura, knows the intentions of all living things.

Threads of Life

The threads of life connect all living things on Nyxura. Through them an exchange of both unconscious thought/emotion and energy takes place. Connecting all life in a mycelium like network.

Through these threads, animals and human alike can communicate. Often times animals and plants aid each other by providing nutrients or other life sustaining knowledge and energy through the interconnected web.

Withering

The exact cause of the withering is unknown. What is known is that it originated in the far northern regions of the Solandrian Empire. Believed by many to be a blight, it is far more than that.

The empire's overreliance on aether and coal, their disconnected cities and unkempt spaces have led to a deterioration in the thread of life. Thus creating aether sparse regions throughout the empire's lands.

This deterioration is actually the collective consciousness trying to protect itself from the negative emotions, hatred, and anger being bred within the Empire itself. These negative emotions threaten to contaminate all living things, including Nyxura itself. To slow this withering the will of Nyxura slowly diminished its connections to these lands. Withdrawing its threads as much as it could.

As the threads of life are a core part of the world itself, they can never be fully severed so the withering continues to spread as the hatred and anger of the empire's people continues to grow along with their desperation for survival.

Outline

The Gardens Of Tenebrae

by Ashe Lucia

Act 1: Eternal Twilight

Chapter 1: Chapter 1: Bleak Mornings

Scene 1

We open on Nova waking to her alarm clock going off. Her room is flanked by stone, dark grey, concrete walls on all sides. Her bed sheets are a vibrant purple, the only colour in this otherwise bleak room.

She gets out of bed and walks over to the window, pulling back the grey curtains which had been blocking out the sunlight. It's dawn. It's always dawn in Solandria. It's the Empire of Endless Dawn. The sun, peaking above the horizon but never reaching any higher. She takes in the view from her apartment on the 100th floor. The skyline is blanketed by concrete skyscrapers. Off in the distance, the jet black smoke from coal

refineries stretch into the sky, mixing with the pinkish hues cast by the sun.

She yawns as her phone rings. It's her father. He wants her to come see him as he has an important mission for her. She leaves her room, heading towards an elevator at the end of a concrete hall.

In the empire, housing complexes are divided into sections for living quarters, work, and eating. People living in the same buildings they work in, only leaving when they have to.

Scene 2

As Nova arrives on the research level, she greets the security officer and approaches her father who is working on something. She attempts to get his attention but he's too engrossed in work. Internal monologue about how he's always been this way, followed by him finally noticing Nova.

Dr. Elias Sinclair explains to Nova that he needs her to travel to Tenebrae and secure a sample of the Vitalis Blossom for his research. He believes it holds the key to reversing the Withering. We get some insight into the Withering from the perspective of the empire.

Nova is super excited about visiting Tenebrae as she's always dreamed of visiting since childhood. The thought of seeing the Twilight skies and floating cities brings a smile to her face.

Her father notices this and tries to get her to focus, this is an important mission — not a vacation. Nova brushes him off and assures her father that she will succeed in getting a sample of the flower.

She is then informed she leaves immediately and has only a couple hours to prepare. Lord Voltair will be around to pick her up.

Scene 3

Nova returns to her room and begins to pack clothes and necessities for the trip. Through inner monologue we get to see her excitement.

As she's packing she gets call on her Aether Slate, it's her best friend Seraphine, Nova tells her about her trip and Seraphine returns her excitement is wary about Lord Voltair accompanying her as he is considered an outcast since he had his titles mostly stripped.

Nova doesn't care and is under the impression he is merely an escort who won't be part of the mission.

The conversation shifts to discussing the current state of the Empire and Withering before Voltair shows up and rushes Nova out the door.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: Tenebrae - Kingdom of Eternal Night

Scene 1

Nova Sinclair arrives in Tenebrae upon a state of the art imperial airship. From the sky she marvels the floating cities of the kingdom and how they shine against the twilight sky.

Scene 2

Since disembarking from the airship, Nova begins to explore the port town of Umbra. She wonders around, checks out various shops. Takes in the vibrant people and the glowing plants that cover the the streets. As she wonders, she finds herself drawn to a light bridge far off on the other side of the pad she's standing on. She notices how dense the Threads of Life art and comments how this place is much more lively then the empire.

Scene 3

As she strolls through the town, she passes through a large market. Asking a shop keep what this place is, they explain it's a market for

those coming and going to pick up supplies and food for their journey. Nova remarks the empire doesn't have anything like this, their markets are gloomy and indoor. She loves the open air market and how connected it is with nature. Commenting on how it feels almost symbiotic. Shortly after, she runs into a young girl (9) who appears to be very excited about something. The girl stumbles and an older woman, around Nova's age rushes over. Apologizing to Nova and scolding the younger girl for being reckless.

Scene 4

Nova assures her it's no big deal and asks what she's so excited. The older girl explains there's a festival happening on the upper level, the younger girl excitedly grabs Nova's hand begging her to drag her over to the levepad. The older woman tries to intervene but Nova wants to see the festival.

The 3 of them end up on the upper level. They are just in time to see the fireworks begin. They look stunning against the twilight sky. Nova comments on how much Aether is in the sky here, marveling and taking in the atmosphere.

The older woman asks where Nova is from, Nova introduces herself as Nova Sinclair daughter of Dr. Elias Sinclair. She explains she's from the Solandrian Empire on a quest to find a way to stop the Withering. The older woman is taken aback by this. There have been fewer and fewer imperial citizens visiting the Kingdom ever since the Withering began. Nova explains her father believes the secret to curing the withering could be located within the heart of the Tenebraen forests.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: The Withering

Scene 1

The older woman takes Nova's hand and explains that she needs to come with her right away. The younger girl is saddened by this since she wants to stay for the rest of the festival but the older girl insists.

The trio make their way back down to the market and head over a starlit bridge (something Nova marvels over again). They make their way through wandering crowds and people celebrating before arriving in front of a large wooden house which is partially embedded in the side of the giant tree this town rests upon.

Scene 2

Inside the house, the older woman is revealed to be Princess Aurora Nyx Allum. The house belongs to the High-Chancellor, the elected official who runs the nation.

The High-Chancellor isn't here. Nova asks why it's so important to find her, Aurora explains that if Nova is here about the withering then they must speak with the High-Council at once. They find a note on the table, the Chancellor has left for the Capital City of Luminos. Aurora explains they will have to head there immediately but it's a 5 day trip on foot.

Nova is confused, foot? Why would you walk when you can ride a horse? Aurora shakes her head and explains that horses don't do well this high up. Typically Tenebraen's use winged beats to fly around but she left hers back home not thinking she'd need to make the journey all the way there so soon.

Nova finds it odd, but Aurora explains her people enjoy the journey. They like being with nature unlike the empire.

Scene 3

Nova and Aurora agree to set out on their journey to the capital. Aurora tells the young girl to stay in the house and sends a message to Chance (not mentioned in the scene) via touch-stone. [to be continued]