

Project 1 – Story Project

Word Count: 2175

Grade Level: A

-MORE- There is a lot of outline and background here, but it is clearly not finished.

When they first arrived, we thought everything would change. Well, I can't deny that everything did change, but it is remarkable how much everything has stayed the same. Aliens! The first we knew of them was when they dropped out of warp into orbit around Earth. A collective comprised of over 100 races, with thousands of planets under their control. Technology that we could only begin to comprehend the workings of. FTL travel, genetic editing, terraforming, the list goes on and on. They offered to uplift us, share their technology with us. How could we refuse? With their help, humanity finally truly launched itself off of its world and into space.

For a while, everything went amazingly. Humanity took a while to get its footing, find its niche, but hey, what do you expect? We mostly kept to ourselves for the first couple hundred years. We wanted to become a unified people before we tried to join the council. However, humans being humans, no one could agree on exactly how to do that. A few wars, a couple glassed planets, a diplomatic scandal or two, and one blown up star later (we're still not sure how they managed that), humanity finally united under the banner of the United Terran Government. Of course, even after all of the governments agreed to this, there were plenty of individuals and groups who rejected this, and it took another hundred years to get rid of all the insurgencies (mostly). Five hundred years after first contact, humanity finally felt that it had it together enough to join the galactic community as a whole.

That's not to say that humanity had zero contact with the Collective since contact, there was plenty of trade and exchange going on, it was all just unofficial up until that point. The Collective required all member states to have a united government to be able to join, but still allowed trade and communication with non-member species. Finally united, Humanity was ready to embrace The Collective and the promise of a perfect, united galaxy.

The process for joining The Collective was relatively short and painless, but it wasn't long after that the problems started. In uniting, Humanity had done their best to eliminate corruption, to become our ideals, to shy away from achieving only personal gain, and instead work and contribute to the good of our species. However, we quickly found out that this was not how the rest of the galaxy functioned. Instead of a free exchange of knowledge, we found jealously guarded secrets. Instead of loyalty and professionalism, we found that without leverage, be it money or force, it was hard to make headway anywhere. It was somewhat ironic. No matter how different we were, we were still the same.

A **small** station orbited a backwater planet. Once a hub for interstellar trading, now almost abandoned after the seat of galactic power had shifted. With little to draw anyone to the system, just a few, barren planets with little to no resources to speak of, the station had shrunk over the years. Previously massive, most of the station had been broken down and sold for scrap, or simply detached and allowed to burn up in the atmosphere below as they became increasingly decrepit and maintenance and repair costs

grew. Because of this, the station had a patchwork appearance with airlocks and plates welded over doors that had once connected parts of the station. The station's name was no longer fully visible, scored away after years of impact from space debris. Two words were still legible, pitted and faded though they were. "Glorious Retribution."

Although only a shadow of its former self, the *Retribution*, as its patrons called it, still buzzed with activity. Numerous smaller ships of varying designs were docked to the station, from boxy cargo transports, designed to cram in as much freight as physically possible to maximize profits, to sleek fighter craft, shiny with their dispersive coating, bulging on their sides with the extra fuel and life support tanks required to make it this far from the nearest station unassisted. Here and there a few pleasure craft were dotted, easy identifiable by their gaudy coats of paint and impractical and convoluted designs, with viewports dotting their exteriors. In addition to the smaller crafts, two large ships were also docked.

One, much like the station was a patchwork, with engines clearly pulled from a much larger ship awkwardly mated to the rear of what looked to have been in a previous life a large fast-transport ship. It had clearly been painted by grabbing whatever could be found, then opening a new can when the current one ran out, regardless of color. Splotches of blue, green, purple, silver, gold, brown, black, and orange could all be seen among others could all be seen. Mismatched gun emplacements were dotted around the ship, their design and type varying as much as the coats of paint under them did. Despite their differences, they all had a few things in common, they all gleamed in the dim light of the star, clearly functional well-maintained, and they were all massive. Their placement, which might at first look random, upon closer inspection was clearly planned, designed to provide the maximum amount of defense possible in the case of an attack.....or deal the maximum amount of damage. Large white lettering on either side of the bow read *Nova Mortis*, with tally marks underneath.

The second large ship could not be more different from appearance from the first. While the *Nova Mortis* was patchwork and stuck together, the second ship was clearly designed from the ground up. The engines fit perfectly within their housings, no odd shaped marred its even coat of flat grey paint. Its long sleek shape stood in sharp contrast to the brutal, blocky shape of the *Nova Mortis*. However, like the *Mortis*, the second ship was also heavily armed. Sleek, uniform emplacements dotted its skin, every bit as well-maintained and deadly looking as the rest of the ship. The only place the sharp silhouette was broken was near the bow. Each side of the bow came to a point, but there was a slit between them with a big fuggof railgun. The name of the ship, much like on the *Nova Mortis*, was stenciled in tall white letters near the bow, the color contrasting with the appearance as much as the name. The "Ms. Unicorn Fairy Sparkle Princess the Second," but most just referred to it as Princess. The somewhat unfortunate name stemmed from a contest held by the shipmakers who clearly hadn't learned from the past, where they allowed people to submit names to be voted on. Unicorn Fairy Princess was not actually the winning name, but as there were already over 500,000 ships with variations of "Spaceship McShipface" existing, the builders went down the list until they finally found a name that wasn't offensive, submitted by the eight-year-old daughter of one of the ships engineers. Due to the unusual name, the sailors on the ship referred to the massive railgun running the length of the ship as "the sparkle cannon." Instead of tally marks under the name, the *Princess* sported unicorns.

Commented [bp1]: Can't think of what to put. I just put this here to remind myself what should go here when I can actually think of something to say.

Commented [bp2]: Not sure if I want to go this route.

While the inside of the station had clearly seen better days, it was much better maintained than the exterior. Well-worn instead of falling apart. The station bustled with motion, people darting back and forth. In the center of the station was a large circular room. Once a luxury park, it was now home to a thriving market. The fringe nature of the station attracted all sorts of traders who would have to sell their wares from the shadows at any reputable station. Almost anywhere else it would've been called a black market. Here it was just a market. Almost anything one desired could be purchased here, and if it couldn't, someone was certainly willing to go and acquire it for you. For the right price of course. Describe market/stalls/etc. In the middle of the market stood a central spire. Despite their being no rules against it, no stalls were set up within a respectable distance of it. The owners of the station, having a vested interest in the continued operation of the station had installed the tower to maintain the security of the market and quickly shut down any fights that might start. Weapons, turrets, and sensors bristled from the tower, sweeping back and forth, vigilant for any sort of trouble. The patrons and traders were careful not to draw the ire of the guards, knowing that even if the tower wasn't needed, the guards had little patience for rowdy behavior, and starting trouble would mean being kicked out of the station, sometimes through an airlock.

The station's inhabitants and visitors were even more diverse than the ships docked outside.

Alien races in this story (I totally didn't just smack my keyboard for these names)

Xtas

Look like they're stereotypical "grey men" alien. Humanoid, grey skin, large black eyes, three long fingers on each hand. Two long arms, two legs. Highly intelligent, scientists of the galaxy. Crucial to weapon development and research. Look down on the humans for how they make what they consider "barbaric" weaponry. Human weaponry is crude but much more effective. (Wow, I am really starting to write trope fiction, aren't I?)

Q'tchk

Another humanoid species. Similar to humans, but more hierarchical with somewhat of a pack structure? Mercenaries and traders? Split mouths similar to the Sangheili. Destroyed home planet, now they live in space on massive migrating ships/fleets. The rest of the Council don't really trust them and shun them. No central government, the species is too shattered. This makes it difficult for them to get proper representation in the Council. Clan system. There is a clan council that tries to work together, but they don't really trust each other. How many clans? 6? Merchant fleets. Mercenary fleets. Some factions are friendly with humanity and want to help them, some don't trust them. "Lost" clan? Maybe a dishonored clan that got chased off for some reason? That clan the reason their home planet was destroyed? What destroyed their home planet?



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Warrior species of the council. Four arms, from a high-gravity world. Naturally armored with chitin plates. Kinda a lobster-human hybrid? (Side note: that's terrifying) Lobster tails? Eh, if I make them really lobstery they would have more than 4 arms. Maybe make another species basically an upright lobster? Lobster species would walk on 4 legs, have two arms they used for manipulation, then two claws for fighting.

?

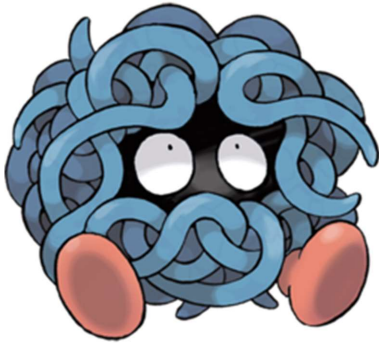
Look like chinchillas. Humans love them for obvious reasons and find them adorable. First human allies on the council. Niche? Do I actually want to say that every species is great at something?

?

Oooh, robotic "species"? No one knows where they came from or who created them. Maybe a race who got rid of their physical bodies and instead created synthetic ones that they put their consciousnesses into? Purely synthetic, or partially organic? Not trusted by the rest of the species because they were crazy enough to get rid of their bodies.

?

Mass of tentacles. Kinda like a tangela but with no feet or eyes. Hover through internal gas sacs? Communicate through rapid, complicated use of tentacles. Engineers of the galaxy? Great at building, but more the building than necessarily research. Quiet, don't really talk, just float around and fix/build stuff. Somewhat like the engineers from Halo.



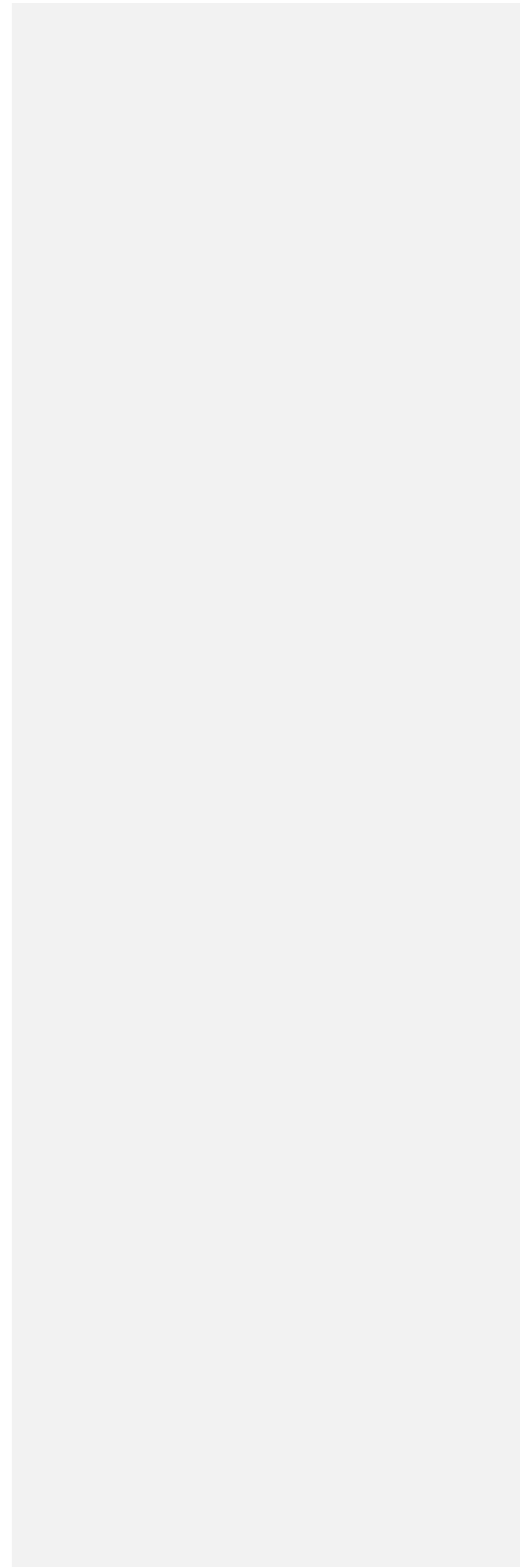
Plot outline?

Would I actually want to treat this as a single story with a plot, or more of a universe establishing story? I could have more stories set in the same universe if I did the second?

In-universe story ideas

Finish station story from above.

Smugglers on a run where something goes wrong and they crash on a deserted planet. Human on the crew helps them survive.



Notes:

Im thinking the beginning will provide a backdrop/introduction to the rest of the story. Not 100% sure were Ill go with it tho Maybe the intro just provides an overview of the universe the story is set in?

When will this story be set? It could be before Humanity is accepted in, or after with what I have now. Should I just expand on the details of the station for now? This might be easier than writing a scene. Set the station up as a major hub for whatever characters/organizations I have here. Pirates, mercs, smugglers, gov people? Human gov secretly runs/endorsees this station to try and undermine the Collective?

Places in the station to describe:

Bar/similar

Market/black market – Is it really a black market if its like the main thing of the station?

Districts of the station? – Can it have districts if I said it was small? Small is relative I

suppose

Slums

Nice place

Prison?

Shipyards?

Internal dock/general trade hub?

Generally describe stores and stuff?