

UNITED SYSTEMS OF THE FEDERATION



The United Systems of the Federation is a multiracial interstellar nation found primarily in the Orion Arm of the Milky Way Galaxy. Originally founded on the principles of freedom and mutual defense when it was first established, the Federation is one of the few nations in the galaxy based on the concept of democracy where government officials are elected to their positions for a set number of years or terms. While many of the races and cultures are different from one another, most of these worlds have accepted and assimilated the culture and governmental structure of Humans who were responsible for freeing the founding races from Liekan and Dexigalian enslavers and conquerors. While some worlds have not taken to Human culture as others have, there are no pressures from Humans or the rest of Federation to do so nor was this a requirement to begin with. To do so would make the Federation no different from the enslavers.

Despite the freedoms and liberties Federation citizens have experienced since the Federation was founded, many of the Federation's critics (along with their detractors from hostile nations) are quick to point out that the Federation is still a relatively new nation, only recently established more than 20 years ago. Many feel that when pushed, the Federation's member races would look more towards protecting themselves than the nation if under attack. Others feel that eventually the Human concept of democracy would start to overtake or pressure the local planetary governments of the Federation that are governed by non-democratic means into conforming. While many in the Federation Senate denounce these statements as "vile rumors" from "instigators," critics still feel it is only a matter of time before the Federation makes a wrong political move that results in its own destruction.

While many of the Federation's citizens have found security and a level of prosperity within the nation's borders, a great mystery still surrounds the powerful Federation fleet. Many analysts both outside the Federation and within to this day cannot understand how Humans, one of the founding races of the Federation, managed to achieve a technological leap over the Liekan and Dexigalian forces in the form of the Phase-Induction Transition Graviton Engine Drive, or PITGED for short, as well as the energy weapon resistant nano-laminate armor. Neither the Liekan nor the Dexigalian forces whose ships were salvaged during the First Interstellar War by Humans had such technology, and yet the technology suddenly came into existence on the first Human-built faster-than-light capable ships. The information involving the research and development of the technology has been a closely guarded secret, and safeguards are in place on every Federation ship to prevent the capture of the technology should a ship fall into enemy hands. The level of security involved has led many to wonder about the technologies' origins, a secret that has not seen the veil slip yet.

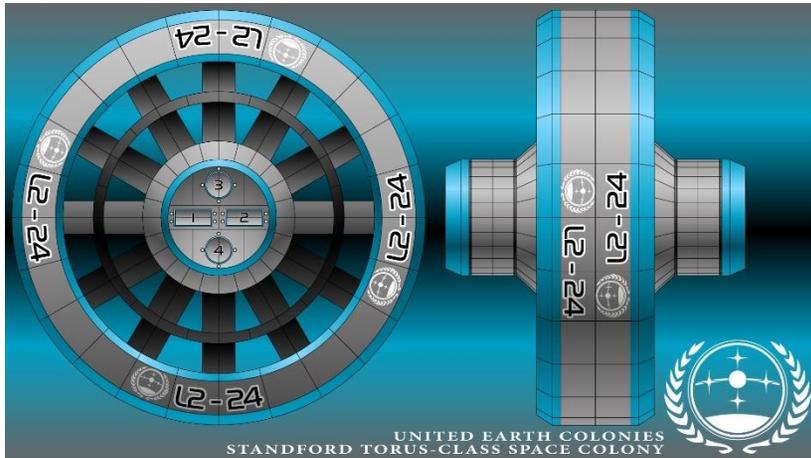
HISTORY

FROM THE ASHES OF WAR

The origins of the United Systems of the Federation started on a planet in the Sol System called Earth. The native species of the planet, known as Humans, had fought their third "World War," but used highly destructive devices called nuclear warheads or the slang term "nukes." The multiple detonations of these warheads across the planet had not only killed a third of their entire population, but also resulted in the nuclear fallout generating thick clouds over the entire planet causing temperatures to drop rapidly. As the planet began to plunge into its second recorded "Ice Age," Humans had quickly built domes over existing cities and began construction of underground cities as well. This was not enough to allow everyone on the planet to take shelter from the pending sub-zero temperatures, and those that could not find shelter froze to death three months later after the war. A few brave parties had begun construction of small space habitats to get away from the planet, initially in the design of small rings that rotated to produce gravity. These individuals created a new calendar to commemorate the start of a new age of space habitation known as the Galactic Era. Those still on the planet did not take too kindly to those in space creating a new calendar for the "elite" who were able to escape into space and refused to accept the new calendar until many years later.

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While those who lived on the planet were forced to establish laws limiting the population growth due to limited space and resources available, those in the space colonies continued to grow, building more colonies as needed. While the space colonies were originally in orbit over the earth, later larger colonies were built in points of stable gravity involving the moon's orbit called Lagrange points. The first set of large colonies were at the Lagrange point between the Earth and moon, using metals mined and constructed from the moon due to ease of mining and proximity to the moon. A second set of colonies were constructed in 22 GE at the Lagrange point ahead of the moon's orbit. Once those colonies were constructed, all but one of the colonies in Earth's orbit were moved to the Lagrange point trailing the moon's orbit. The remaining colony in Earth's orbit was meant as a go-between should any of the Earth's population made it into space. This did not happen however for many years.



The United Earth Colonies, the new government established to govern the colonies, began to flourish and prosper better than their terrestrial counterparts. Around 23 GE, a plan was proposed to provide genetic alterations to Human DNA to allow for better adaptability to living in the harsh conditions of space. The research fielded its first child 2 years later who showed greater resiliency and intelligence than the average Human. Codenaming them "Enhanced" more than 10 percent of Human babies born in the following year were Enhanced with the percentage increasing over the years. The Enhanced were able to use their high intellect to help solve solutions to existing problems, including producing colonies through automated methods and ways to either bring Humanity from the planet into space or to quickly end the Second Ice Age. The first colonies build by

their method were of a different design and housed Enhanced Humans only, located at the Lagrange point on the opposite side of the moon from Earth. Once of age, all the Enhanced moved to their colonies to be with their own. Many in the UEC viewed the colonies like a "think tank" where the most brilliant minds come up with solutions to their problems.

However, this way of thinking was not the case when those from Earth eventually made it to the colonies using an orbital elevator the Enhanced had designed. Viewing the Enhanced as abominations, their way of thinking began to spread throughout the colonies over the next 5 years, with only the colonies trailing the moon being unaffected by the amount of support for the Enhanced project. However, this movement had decreased the number of Enhanced born by natural Humans to only 5 percent and those are only coming from colonies trailing the moon. By this time, the oldest Enhanced began to give birth to their own children, a second generation of Enhanced, in their own colonies. Seeing a potential of hostilities between the colonies, the Enhanced initially tried through diplomacy in the UEC Senate in 47 GE to defuse the situation and show the benefits the Enhanced have to offer Humanity. However, the representative for the Enhanced was shot during his speech by a member of the "Naturalist" group, the fanatical group from Earth that opposed genetic manipulation. This act enraged the Enhanced and they began to create weapons of war to use against most of the colonies (except for the colonies trailing the moon who still supported the Enhanced). At the same time, those colonies who opposed the Enhanced began to develop their own combat craft to destroy the Enhanced colonies. The two sides ended up in open warfare at the Enhanced colonies' defensive line with the Enhanced automated combat units winning over the Naturalists' forces.

The conflict lasted over a year as the Naturalists were losing due to the Enhanced abilities to not only use automated forces but cyber hacking of the Naturalists computer systems resulting in ship-wide disruptions and loss of combat capabilities. It was only after the Naturalists resorted to isolating key ship systems that the tide began to turn in their favor of pushing the Enhanced front lines back due to their numbers and adaptability over AI units. The war came to an end when the Enhanced defensive lines were breached, forcing the Enhanced to use a weapon that brought both fleets to a halt: an electromagnetic pulse bomb. Both forces were hit, frying their electronics, bringing their war to a standstill while recovery teams were deployed to recover the crews of the disabled ships, namely the Naturalist fleet.

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Realizing the situation was getting out of hand, the colonists located at the Lagrange point trailing the moon who had been neutral at this point offered to serve as mediators for any possible negotiations. While the Enhanced were willing to negotiate as they have respect for those same colonists that supported them, the Naturalists were not inclined to negotiate. However, the loss of life from the war had caused the party to lose their influence in the UEC Senate, and they were removed after being identified by more peaceful members of the Senate. Two months later, laws were passed that made it illegal for Enhanced Humans to be discriminated against and any violent action will be met with severe punishment.

THE WAR FROM BEYOND

Over the next six months after the war ended, peace had returned to Humans in the colonies and on Earth, but this peace would not last long. On the morning of June 10, 49 GE, Humans were visited by aliens for the first time in Human history. The aliens called themselves the Liekans, a race of bipedal wolf-like beings who had an air of nobility about them. They had come to the Sol System to establish a base for which to deploy their forces against their enemies, the amphibious Dexigalians, who they have been at war with for a few years. Neither race was aware of the Humans who lived in the Sol System, though. Instead, the Liekans chose to befriend Humanity and offered some a few technological advances such as artificial gravity and sublight engines that were easily mountable on current ships. However, they did not give Humanity their faster-than-light

engine, the Fold Drive. Humanity believed at the time that this was because the Liekans and Dexigalians were fighting outside the Sol System and the Liekans were trying to protect Humanity from getting too involved. Also, no Human ship could survive using such a drive considering how Human ships were made and built.

Not long after, Humanity got involved in the Liekans' war when Dexigalian forces soon invaded the Sol System in the following month of July. Human forces fought alongside Liekan forces against an outnumbered and unprepared Dexigalian fleet. After a few months and battles across the Sol System, the two alien forces both left the Sol System to fight in nearby star systems. By the start of the following year, there have been no signs of either race returning to the Sol System.

During that time, it was discovered that while the Liekans had given Humanity enhanced sublight engines and inertia dampeners before the war came to the Sol System, the Liekans had embedded a backdoor code into the technology provided that could effectively disable Human ships. The system was reworked from the ground up without the backdoor, but this raised several questions at the time about whether this backdoor was accidental or intentional.

Afterwards and unbeknownst to the Liekans, a Human salvage team managed to retrieve a working Fold Drive from both a destroyed Liekan ship and a Dexigalian ship in October of Galactic Era 49. The addition of a Fold Drive to a new ship of Human design to utilize those systems would not be a problem from an engineering standpoint. The problem came with powering the drive due to the amount of energy needed to activate and maintain energy to the Fold Drive. There were also concerns raised about ship defenses should enemy vessels come into mid to close-range combat based on the combat experiences of ship commanding officers. Liekan and Dexigalian ships had shield systems but none were salvageable from their wreckage as their shield systems would be fried long before the target vessel was destroyed. Without a resolution to either the energy problem for the Fold Drive or ship defensive systems outside of point defense cannons, any initial designs that were created remained on the drawing board.

A technological breakthrough had soon occurred in late January of 50 GE. A drive system was developed that could power both the Fold Drive and use that same energy to empower the armor on ships to the same level of strength as a shield system. This drive was called the Phase-Induction Transition Graviton Engine Drive, or PITGED for short. The drive generated graviton particles that both powered the Fold Drive and were infused in the armor, the latter being later called nano-laminate armor. This armor was capable of deflecting energy-based weapons that impact the hull, which meant that the weapons of both the Liekan and Dexigalian ships use would be worthless against Human ships. However, while the

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new drive was powerful, it would not be able to provide enough power to use as an effective weapon. Therefore, Humanity chose to keep with artillery and missile weapons which were still effective even against the shields the two alien races use. Weapons such as those are also what can affect the nano-laminate armor, but the armor can take several hits before the rounds can break through depending on the thickness of the armor.

Where or how these breakthroughs in technology came to be remained a mystery at that time. Some had speculated that it came from researching the wreckage of the alien vessels, but there was no evidence to support that claim nor had the aliens ever used such technology.

THE FIRST INTERSTELLAR WAR



The first ten ships that rolled out of assembly with the new technology were known as the Tanken-Class Destroyers. Equipped with this “revolutionary” technology, these ships made their first journey out of the Sol System to the nearest star systems of both Proxima Centauri and Alpha Centauri with five ships going to each system. When the ships that went to Alpha Centauri arrived at their destination, they found in orbit over the third planet which was a habitable world a three-way battle in space between the forces of the Liekans, the Dexigalians, and the Centauri (later identified as resembling a feline/Human hybrid like characters found in old Japanese animation shows). The Centauri were losing the fight as their forces were completely outmatched in both numbers and technology against not

only the Dexigalians but also the Liekans. The Humans who were present were now seeing the Liekans who they thought were an honorable race were just as ruthless as the Dexigalians against anyone other than themselves.

Seeing the Liekans attacking without remorse against an inferior force, it raised a lot of questions as to why the Liekans did not pull the same move with Humanity. It soon became apparent to the fleet commander that the answer lies in the “backdoor code” that was discovered in the technology the Liekans had given Humanity as well as the lack of providing Humanity with anything more than a speed boost short of a faster-than-light drive. By not providing Humanity with advance weapons and defenses, Humans would still be effective in repelling the Dexigalians, but that trust would make it easy for the Liekans to conquer Humanity when the time was right. All the Liekans had to do was “flip a switch” and every Human ship would be disabled, making invasion and conquest easy for the Liekans. Unfortunately for the Liekans, they were not aware that Humans had found their trap with the backdoor code and closed it, nor were they aware that Humans salvaged the Fold Drives from the wreckage left behind in Sol.

While the Human forces that were present at Alpha Centauri were outnumbered, the fleet commander after realizing the elaborate ruse the Liekans had done chose to engage in a surprise attack on both the Liekan and Dexigalian forces, a move that forced the stunned alien invaders to withdraw and regroup as the Human ships were not recognizable to either of the invading forces. Upon the news of the battle reaching the UEC and what the Liekans had planned for Humanity, it was decided that both alien nations were hostile and to mass produce the Tanken destroyers with other designs to follow soon.

The Centauri after diplomatic talks were initiated with the UEC volunteered to join the Humans in a coalition against the Liekans and Dexigalians. Despite their superior numbers, the Liekan and Dexigalian forces were pushed back due to the defensive capabilities of the Human ships and inability to use their backdoor code. They were forced to withdraw from surrounding star systems including the Vega System, the home system of the bipedal lizard race known as the Zaurions who later joined the coalition. The campaign against the Liekan and Dexigalian forces continued for nearly two years as more systems were liberated from their oppressors. The war ended when the King of the Monarchy of Lieka and the Emperor of the Dexigalian Empire announced their surrender and call for an armistice after their forces were pushed back almost three hundred Light-years from the Sol System. The coalition agreed to the armistice and wanted to see about maintaining diplomatic (thought uneasy) relations, but soon afterward the Liekan and Dexigalian nations went into self-isolation and had not been heard from since. This ended what was later called the First Interstellar.

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A NEW INTERSTELLAR NATION

On March 15, 52 GE, one month after the war, a grand ceremony was held as the races that were liberated celebrated their freedom thanks to the efforts of the Humans who started the campaign along with the rest of the coalition. To secure their newfound freedom and to defend themselves against any future aggressors, all the races agreed to form a new nation in the interests of mutual defense and protection of their worlds. After much discussion for over a week, it was decided to form the new nation based on the Human's democracy based on elected representatives. Upon drafting and signing the constitution by the leaders of all the races on March 30, the new nation came to be known as the United Systems of the Federation. Thanks to this new nation and the sharing of some advance science among some of the races, Earth's Second Ice Age also ended allowing those who were on the planet to join those among the stars and colonize other systems.

The new Federation in its early years did have some growing pains in the form of additional races discovered and early colonization efforts. Most Humans who still resided on Earth wanted nothing to do with the reconstruction efforts of their devastated planet. Instead, many chose to leave Earth and colonize other habitable worlds that were discovered during the war that were not inhabited. One such planet was in the Vega System on the more hospitable world next to the Zaurions home planet. While the Supreme Court rules of joint ownership as the best solution, many Humans on the planet keep to themselves and away from the Zaurion colonies. Thankfully for the Federation, this was the only case of this nature to appear in their courts. Other colonies that Humans established were more cosmopolitan in nature as the colonies grew.

Some races that were discovered by the Federation were initially resistant to the idea of joining the new nation. Those races feared that joining an interstellar nation would result in a forced replacement of their own ruling party or government. Thankfully, the Federation does not force these changes, instead making it clear that if Federation citizens do not like their local governments, they can move to a planet that has a government they prefer. The stipulation however is that local governments cannot stop someone who is legally moving to or from the planet. The races that have joined thus far have agreed with this so long as any immigrants to their worlds abide by local laws and customs.

In the 20 years after the First Interstellar War, the only race the Federation has come across that was an interstellar nation was the Cantarian Republic, and the Republic forces are hostile to other races on sight including the

Federation. The Republic is an isolationist nation that is also very territorial and highly secretive using stealth technology for their entire fleet. When a Federation exploration vessel entered their space unknowingly, one such vessel immediately attacked without warning. However, the Cantarian vessel was unable to damage the Federation ship, resulting in the Cantarians finally making contact to direct the exploration ship to leave their space. The Federation has tried to open a dialogue with the Cantarians since then to get a better understanding of the Republic and its people, but every attempt has been met with silence.

While the space the Federation occupies is quite large at less than 600 Light-years at its largest, patrolling and enforcing the law in systems including those that have little to no settlements or colonies present has become unfeasible. Instead, satellites have been placed in multiple systems to monitor activities and alert the nearest ship or fleet of suspicious or criminal activity. A more specialized satellite system called TRIPWIRE monitors not only systems on the edge of Federation space, but also beyond the border for any activity approaching Federation space. The TRIPWIRE surveillance satellites were first deployed on the border with the Liekan and Dexigalian nations to monitor their activities near the border, but for nearly 20 years there have been no activities and relatively few transmissions of any importance.

GRAND ALLIANCE OF IMPERIAL NATIONS

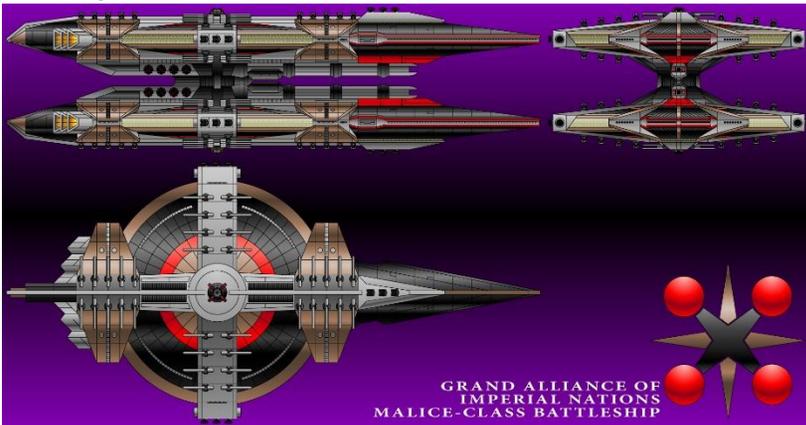
On June 20, 72 GE, a transmission was suddenly detected by the TRIPWIRE system on the Liekan border. The transmission came from the former Fulari/Corimei Alliance, two races that joined forces to fight a common enemy a long time ago. The Federation is familiar with the Alliance from data records recovered from the salvaged Liekan and Dexigalian vessels during the First Interstellar War. The Fulari are large "demon"-looking warriors and troopers with great physical strength and stamina while the Corimei are known for their highly advanced unmanned or mostly automated combat vessels (at least at the time of the Federation's formation). Before the start of the First Interstellar War, the Alliance was more than capable of fighting off the Liekan and Dexigalian forces who tried to invade their territory before the aggressors looked elsewhere to conquer.

However, while the information was either brief or vague on how it happened, the Liekans and Dexigalians succeeded in invading and conquering the Alliance a few years after the First Interstellar War concluded. Members of the Fulari Royal Family and Corimei Parliament had been in hiding since until they risked sending coordinates and a request for asylum within the Federation. Federation President Natalia responded by deploying two fleets to each border

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according to the coordinates provided. While a specific time was provided for the refugees' arrival, a shuttle appeared on the opposite side of the Liekan border heading towards Federation space. Rear Admiral Deandre Bramwell, flag officer of the 21st Fleet aboard the battlecruiser *Kasagi*, sent his ship and one of his fleet's cruisers to intercept. The rest of his fleet would rendezvous at their position as his fleet was deployed to act like they were patrolling to prevent the Liekans from finding out what the fleet was doing.

Unfortunately, the shuttle would not make it to the rendezvous point much less crossing the border. An unknown vessel, larger than any Federation vessel, appeared between the fleet and the shuttle. Using a combination of design aesthetics from both Liekan and Dexigalians, it was clear that the two aggressors had somehow put aside their own differences and joined forces. The Fulari/Corimei Alliance falling to such a combined force makes more sense, but it was also evident that their weapons were different as they no longer appeared to be energy based. Instead, their primary weapons consisted of railguns, one of the few weapons that can damage the nano-laminate armor of the Federation.



The vessel's Liekan commanding officer contacted the *Kasagi* shortly after the vessel appeared. According to the ship's captain, the Liekans and Dexigalians overthrew and killed their leaders for their "incompetence" and banded together to form the Grand Alliance of Imperial Nations, or GAIN for short. Shortly after explaining what happened within their nations and the actions they took against the Alliance, the vessel fired one of its railguns towards the shuttle and destroyed it. The Liekan then announced that the Federation's peace was coming to an end in one week. The GAIN declared war on the Federation, vowing to return their "slaves" to their rightful place under the rule of the GAIN. The vessel

folded away after the declaration, leaving little time for the Federation to prepare for the pending war.

The only good news from the mission was that the shuttle that was destroyed was a decoy. The shuttle containing the Fulari and Corimei refugees was recovered at the Dexigalian border by the second fleet that was deployed. While the mission itself was successful, the declaration of war by the gain made their victory bittersweet.

THE SECOND INTERSTELLAR WAR

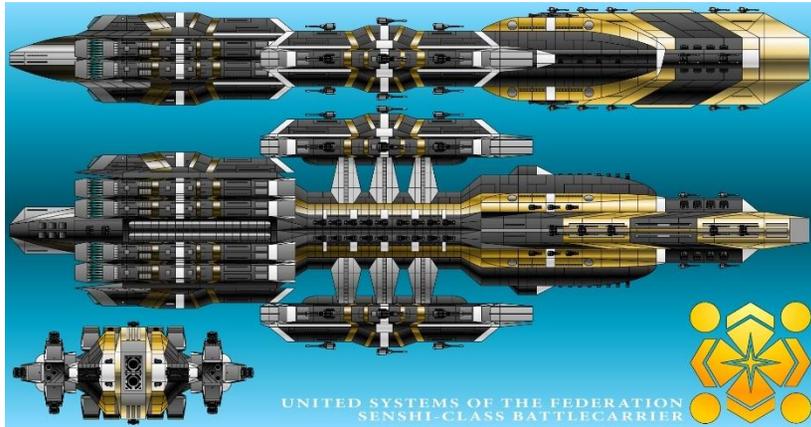
The first three months of the Second Interstellar War saw the Federation losing ground against the GAIN war machine. The GAIN had spent years researching and analyzing Federation vessels, and in that time, they found a very serious weakness in their design. The failsafe PITGED ejection system can be made to react to a direct strike with a high-velocity round right at the point where the engine connects to the target vessel's hull. By striking that spot, the connections are knocked loose from the impact, forcing the computer to think that the engine is compromised and ejecting it from the hull. The self-destruct would then activate in the engine, destroying it to prevent capture. There are no overrides to this failsafe. Forcing the engines to eject affect both the nano-laminate armor and the Fold Drive as both are powered by those engines. Losing the engines meant that the target vessel had less than 10 minutes of reserve power to focus on either defense if in combat or quickly using the Fold Drive to get away. Afterwards, the ship would rely on auxiliary power, but the armor's effectiveness is severely reduced.

The GAIN's warship (the only vessel the GAIN designed and deployed) by comparison were not only larger, but the GAIN took the time to improve the shield strength of their vessels as well as the armor, allowing them to remain in battle for prolonged periods of time. Analysts have determined that it would take between 4 to 6 Federation battlecruisers to effectively take down a single GAIN warship, and that is provided the GAIN do not use their strategy against Federation forces. While Federation commanding officers make every effort to not give GAIN vessels a clear shot at the PITGED connection points, it was clear that Proxima Industries, the primary manufacture of all the Federation's combat vessels, would need to come up with a solution to the current design flaw or the Federation would have to look at other ship manufactures to develop new ships to combat the GAIN before the Federation loses either too much territory or is defeated entirely.

Unbeknownst to many, Gallonigher Industries, the government-owned company responsible for the PITGED engines that is under the authority of Admiral Thaddeus Amarr, contacted Barnard Star Shipyards with a proposition as the war

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began to develop a completely new warship design to combat the GAIN vessels. After nearly three months of development, Barnard Star Shipyards developed the Senshi-Class Battle Carrier, a massive warship that could hold hundreds of fighters while sporting new battleship-grade artillery cannons to go toe-to-toe and then some against GAIN warships. The Senshi also sported a twin heavy graviton cannon, the first of its kind, as the primary weapon by drawing on the power of the two larger high-output PITGED Mark III drives Gallonigher Industries designed specifically for the battle carrier. The Senshi's thicker armor and nano-machine armor repairer system allowed the vessel to endure high levels of punishment to the nano-laminate armor before the armor can even be compromised. The Senshi also sported a new sublight drive system in conjunction with the PITGED drives which are now powered by a pair of fusion reactors. These reactors can be used as a backup power source for the Fold Drive in case of emergency. The PITGED drives are now recessed within armor plating surrounded by the sublight drives, removing the prominent weakness in Proxima Industries' design. The engine design elements from the Senshi would eventually be proposed by Barnard Star Shipyards to modify the remaining vessels to remove their weaknesses as well. The first Senshi was deployed to the Japizuel System initially for trial runs but engaged in a surprise GAIN attack in the system, destroying three GAIN warships single-handedly.



The first Senshi in that battle was not the only vessel present, however. Gallonigher Industries also developed new stealth support vessels to disrupt the GAIN's targeting, navigation, and communications systems through electronic warfare. This is possible thanks to the one race that are citizens of the Federation that fought the races of both the GAIN and the Alliance in the past known as the Minions, an advance artificial cybernetic race that were on the verge of extinction

after fighting those 4 races many years ago before being discovered by the Federation when it was first created (more under "Races"). The support vessels are completely unmanned save for the Minion brain that is installed in them by those who volunteered to command them. Three of these vessels accompanied the first Senshi to Japizuel where their electronic countermeasures were highly effective against the three GAIN vessels that appeared in the system in a failed attempt to capture a Federation senator.

The Japizuel incident also brought to light a very real security risk to future Federation campaigns as well as explain past losses early in the war. The GAIN has resorted to using select Corimei, the closest race to looking Human, and utilizing face-altering procedures on their feline-looking faces to look Human. These altered Corimei, under threat or presented with the promise of freedom, would infiltrate Federation locations by posing as either combat survivors or civilian evacuees. There is word that some Corimei had infiltrated the Federation before the war began, resulting in not only gaps in the TRIPWIRE system that they snuck through into the Federation, but the disabling of the system in star systems not occupied by the GAIN. One Corimei who managed to infiltrate the Japizuel defense force is responsible for disable the TRIPWIRE system in that star system, allowing the three GAIN warships to enter the system from just outside Federation space. This Corimei was later captured when the kidnapping of the Federation senator failed, and the warships were destroyed with the unexpected arrival of the Senshi Battle Carrier and its ECM-equipped unmanned escorts. Scanners and tests have since been conducted on anyone that was rescued since the war began, but with the possibility of infiltrators prior to the war, bio-scanners are now placed in sensitive and restricted areas to detect the Corimei DNA before any more harm can be done.

Since the introduction of the Senshi and the rapid redesign/remodel of existing Federation ships, the Federation began to push GAIN forces back to the original borders after a few months. However, the Federation did not stop there. Under the approval of the Senate, the Federation forces began to push into GAIN territory with the goal of taking out military targets and crippling the GAIN war effort, making their way to the home planets of the Liekans and the Dexigalians. With the tide of war turning against the GAIN due to their inability to counter the new Federation battle carriers and the weakness of earlier designs no longer being available to exploit, the GAIN decided to pull a desperation move in the hopes that the Federation's advance into their territory would come to a halt before it is too late. The GAIN pulled as many of the warships they could spare for an all-out attack on the target they felt would be the most vulnerable right now: The Human home planet of Earth in the Sol System.

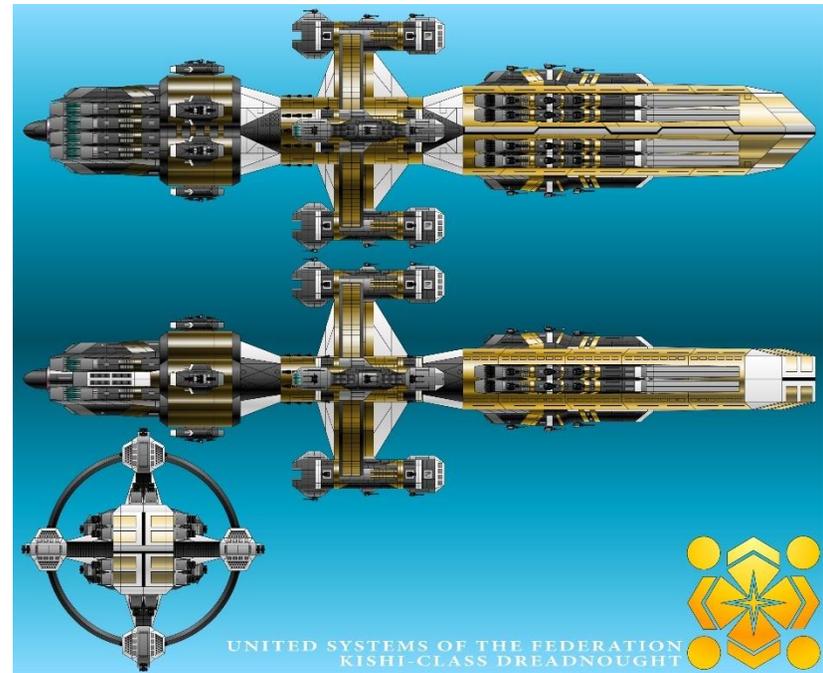
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THE LOST GAMBLE OF THE GAIN

The attack on the Earth Sphere was sudden as the GAIN fleet approached undetected. Without warning from early detection systems, no doubt the result of Corimei infiltrators that went undetected still, almost two hundred GAIN ships appeared near the space colonies as well as Luna and Earth orbit. While the GAIN had underestimated the strength of the Sol System defense fleet and weapons platforms, the Federation forces were still struggling to take out a military force that was intent on attacking civilian structures, stations, and cities. As GAIN ships were approaching orbital bombardment range of New York City, the rebuilt city that serves as the location of the Federation Senate, three new Federation vessels appeared that were larger than the Senshi Battle Carriers. One of these ships opened fire on the GAIN fleet approaching Earth with a larger, more powerful graviton beam cannon. The shot, being lined up to hit most of the GAIN ships, destroyed twenty-four vessels with another ten being destroyed as the new warship turned its bow mounted weapon in a sweeping motion. The other two vessels of the same class also destroyed most of the invading fleet. Less than thirty GAIN vessels managed to escape.

The new vessels that arrived were identified as the Kishi-Class Dreadnoughts, a massive class of warship that is more heavily armed than the Senshi Battle Carriers. Admiral Thaddeus who commanded the dreadnought that stopped the orbital bombardment had read the actions of the GAIN correctly. Developed at the same time as the Senshi but in total secrecy at Gallonigher Industries, the vessel uses a single Mark IV PITGED engine, but this engine was massive and specifically designed for use on the Kishi. Many design elements of the vessel are new for any Federation vessel but the “game-changer” the Kishi brings are the nano-laminate battleship-grade ammo rounds. These rounds are energized by gravitons before being fired, making them capable of piercing the shields of GAIN ships along with their armor, allowing the Kishi to destroy enemy warships with ease.

After the battle, Admiral Thaddeus called a meeting of senators, politicians, and select military commanders from only those races that looked to be Human based as well as a few organic Minions to meet with him on Earth. The location they were to meet was one of legend and lore when it came to the existence of extraterrestrial life before the Second Ice Age. That location was known as “Area 51.”



LIFE STARTED OUT THERE

The secret construction and deployment of such vessels without the approval of the Senate would normally have ended the Admiral’s career and position with Gallonigher Industries, but two matters prevent this from happening with the first being the successful defense of the Sol System. The other matter required the presence of races that showed Human-based genetics in their DNA at the long-abandoned base formerly known as “Area 51” prior to the Second Ice Age. Located under the base is a massive facility known as Columna Lumen, a top-secret advance technology research facility responsible for the leap in technology in the Federation. The source of this research was at the base of the facility: An ancient vessel of unknown origin that was responsible for seeding worlds with DNA like that of Humans. The wreckage was found by then-Captain Thaddeus in the Kepler Belt on the outskirts of the Sol System during the period in the First Interstellar War prior to Humans developing Fold Drive-equipped vessels. It was brought back to Earth in secret to learn more about the vessel and its origins.

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Found within the wreckage was the ancient ancestor of the PITGED drives, explaining their sudden appearance and use on the first interstellar vessels. Also discovered was the star charts showing where the vessel came from and where it has been. Based on the galactic drift and position of the stars at the time as the vessel could not be carbon dated, the map and vessel are estimated to be more than one hundred thousand years old. The vessel came from the far side of the galaxy and began to seed the DNA it was transporting to various worlds with Corimej, Cantaria, Centauri Prime, and Earth being among its stops. Somehow, it ran into some technical problems and ended up adrift in the Kepler Belt. Three of the stops on the vessel's trip have not been explored, one of which was not far from Federation space from Japizuel. The other two stops were found in the next arm of the galaxy towards the direction of the galactic core.

Admiral Thaddeus proposed two plans near the end of the tour of the facility. The first would be to launch an immediate direct assault on the home planets of the Liekans and the Dexigalians to end the war quickly. One of the Kishi Dreadnoughts would remain at Earth to protect the capital while the other dreadnoughts would each command the fleets heading to the two GAIN planets. The other plan is to deploy two Shisu-Class Exploration Vessels, one towards the stop past Japizuel and the other towards the two in the next galactic arm. By the time the exploration ships return from their missions, the Second Interstellar War will hopefully be over.



THE GAIN LOST AND THE LOST GAINED

Deployed within hours of Thaddeus' proposal, two fleets with a dreadnought commanding them were deployed to the Liekan and Dexigalian home planets, reaching them within two-days' time. While the initial intent of the mission was the destruction of military assets in both systems, Thaddeus had another option to achieve victory after finding out a few details that were not known until the GAIN assaulted Earth. It is a known fact that the Corimej and the Fulari are being promised "freedom" for their actions in achieving victory for the GAIN, though what this freedom entails was unknown until recently. According to the Corimej spy that was captured during the Japizuel conflict, the ships that protect the Liekan and Dexigalian home planets are commanded and controlled from a station that orbits each world. While neither race is found on board the remotely controlled ships, the ships are filled with Corimej and Fulari families to serve as a form of "living shields." To destroy those ships is to kill all the families found on board, and any attempt to board and rescue the families on those vessels will result in the vessel self-destructing. The "freedom" that is promised to those that cooperate is the removal of their family from those vessels. Failure would result in their removal via the vacuum of space. While the spy did not know if his family is safe, he warned the Federation about what an attack on the GAIN capital would result in the deaths of thousands of families.

The Japizuel conflict also revealed that the GAIN used the Corimej to modify and use the brain modules of Minions that were shut down during their campaign against organic beings more than fifty years ago. These modules no longer had any sentient consciousness and were used as the central computers of every GAIN ship made. When this was discovered by the three support vessels that assisted the first Senshi to victory during that campaign, Thaddeus had his Minion researchers find ways to bring those modules online again or reprogram them to not follow the orders of the GAIN when needed. The researchers succeeded in finding a way to hack their fallen people's brain modules, but they warned that the GAIN might be able to find a means to counter the hacks once it has been done. Thaddeus requested that the necessary equipment to perform this hack on several targets at once be applied to the Kishi Dreadnoughts in preparation for an attack on the GAIN home planets. At the same time, he requested that once the modules are hacked that they would activate the audio on board the ships with the intent of letting those families on board know that they are safe. Instead of transmitting the same message multiple times across every hacked ship, he requested the services of the popular Centauri pop singer "MuMuKat" to perform during the battle as her music would put those families at ease.

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As the fleets arrived and the battle began at both worlds, the Minions on both the dreadnoughts and the support ships began to hack the GAIN vessels while support vessels jammed their communications with their GAIN remote operators from their orbital stations along with their targeting systems. As they began, MuMuKat began her mini concert onboard Thaddeus' dreadnought at Lieka, transmitting it to both the Liekan and Dexigalian fleets, the latter of the two being relayed by the Federation Fleet at Dexigal. The strategy worked as the GAIN fleets came under the control of Federation forces, leaving GAIN orbital military stations, shipyards, and defense platforms to combat before moving on to surface strikes against military assets. While the orbital railguns and missile platforms were powerful enough to overcome the nano-laminate armor on most Federation ships, the ECM support vessels neutralized those platforms' targeting systems, preventing them from being effective against Federation Forces.

When faced without adequate defenses to repel the Federation forces and no means to call for reinforcements due to communications jamming from ECM vessels, the GAIN leadership to save face, fired off a white flare from both planets, aware that this is the Federation signal for surrendering. Upon seeing the flares, the Federation forces ceased their attacks on the orbital platforms. Troops were sent to the headquarters or capitals of both planets to arrest the GAIN leadership for war crimes. The war would soon be over.

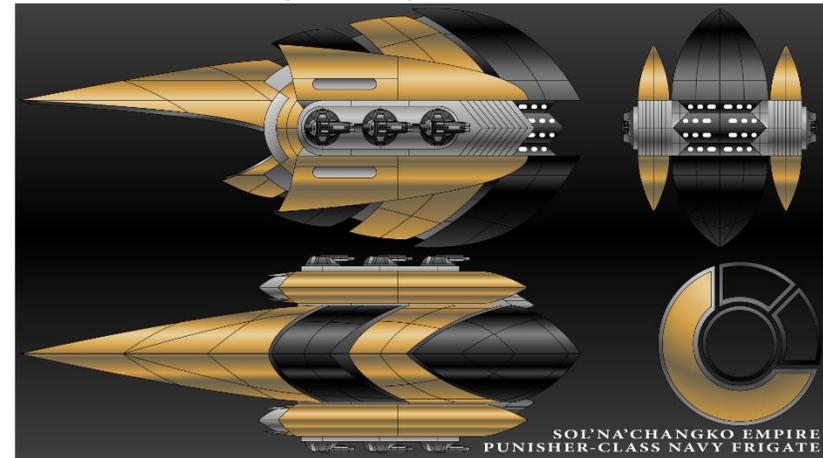
Reports from the troops indicated that the civilian population was living mostly in poverty, indicating that the GAIN was running a more totalitarian government that anticipated where the military held the power instead of the civilian population. Without an effective civilian government in place on both planets and to prevent conflict from happening again, the Federation Senate voted to annex the territories of the now former GAIN. The Fulari and Corimei would be free to reestablish their Alliance once again after the Federation secured the former GAIN's assets.

THE EMPIRE OF PEACE

The *Orion*, the Shisu-Class Exploration vessel sent to search for the world that was seeded by the ancient vessel Light-years from Japizuel, defolded on the edge of the target star system to get a sense of the development level of the race found in the system. It quickly became evident that the race in question had reached the level of interstellar travel as subspace transmissions were coming in and out of the system. While monitoring the transmissions, a news broadcast was intercepted covering a debate within the government about the decision to establish a larger military presence. The crew and the senator that traveled on

board as an ambassador in case of first contact were puzzled by the nation's sudden need to establish a larger military presence. During that broadcast, the news showed footage of three GAIN ships stating that they were close to their border. It did not take long for the *Orion's* commanding officer to realize that those three GAIN ships were the same ones that were destroyed at Japizuel. Based on the stellar positions of the stars in the broadcast and the fact that the news broadcast stated these were near their borders, this nation the *Orion* discovered was within a few Light-years of the border with Federation space.

While the *Orion* was in silent running, the senator on board made the recommendation to initialize contact with this new nation in order to explain the situation and the war between the GAIN and the Federation. The senator made the point that their war should not be the cause of an increased military in a nation that apparently had not done so before. The *Orion's* commanding officer agreed with the senator and ordered that all detection evading systems to be deactivated. To get the attention of this new nation immediately, he also ordered an active scan of the system as it would also be detected. Once the *Orion* was visible to local scanners, it did not take long for local frigates to find and hail the *Orion*.



The frigates identified themselves as part as part of the Sol'Na'Changko Empire, a multi-racial interstellar nation under the rule of Empress Shaina III. The Sol'Na are Human with no apparent differences from Humans from Earth. The initial shock of the Sol'Na to see other beings like themselves from another nation was quite profound. Much like Humans before discovering other races with Human characteristics, they believed that they were unique in the universe. Once the senator had requested an audience with the Empress, the senator stated that she

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would explain everything about the shared origin of the Sol'Na and other Human-based races. After less than an hour for the request to go through the proper channels, the request for an audience with the Empress was approved.

Shuttled down to the Imperial palace directly to avoid being noticed by the general public, both the senator and the *Orion's* captain met with the Empress to explain their origins and the current state of the Federation in relation to the sighting of the GAIN vessels in the news broadcast. The Empress, while both in shock and in distraught about hearing this news, could not refute the information and the evidence that supports the connection between the Sol'Na and the other Human-based races as well as their origins. The Empress expressed concern about this information being released to the rest of her nation without seeing the ancient vessel that seeded her world with her own eyes. She requested to visit Earth where the ancient vessel is located aboard her personal vessel. The senator sent a message via the *Orion* back to Earth to get authorization for the Empress to visit from President Natalia and the Senate, who approved the Empress' visit. The *Orion* and the Empress' vessel left for Earth the following day.

THE FIVE WORLDS OF FREEDOM

The *Ursa*, the second Shisu-Class Exploration Vessel that was deployed on the same mission as the *Orion*, arrived around the same time in the Sagittarius Arm of the galaxy in the direction of the galactic core. The closer of the two stops the ancient vessel seeded was on the edge of the arm, which also made it the second stop for the ancient vessel. Upon reaching its destination, local transmissions were being detected by the *Ursa*, and these transmissions were not civilian in nature. Many of the transmissions were military in terms of encryption (which the Minions on board were able to crack with ease) and the orders that were being sent. While the senator on board was concerned about getting involved with any conflicts that were currently happening in the system, the *Ursa's* captain did not feel compelled to return to Federation space emptyhanded and ordered the ship to within visual range of the battle.

As the *Ursa* moved closer to the fourth planet that was habitable and towards the battle that was taken place, the captain was surprised at the tactical display he was viewing. The ships involved in the conflict were firing at extreme ranges, more than twice as far than a Federation vessel's effective optimal range. It was also surprising to see that there were ships of the same classes on both sides of the battle. However, the ships that looked to be the aggressors that were in orange and gray had three classes of vessels but the largest numbers at almost twice the size of the defense fleet. The fleet that appeared to be on the defense

had the same three classes of vessels, but they along with the other classes of ships present were in fewer numbers and were painted in a blue camouflage paint job which served no tactical purpose in space. However, the defense fleet's other classes of vessels were able to bring more firepower than the other ships that were found on both sides of the battle.

The *Ursa* continued to watch the battle from afar while running silent as the captain and the senator tried to determine what the situation was between these two factions. They monitored not only on the tactical display, but also the military communications as well as civilian broadcasts being transmitted to get a clearer understanding to the conflict. According to the broadcasts, the orange and gray ships were identified as the Ekitsunian Empire, a nation built on slavery while their own race had a caste system. Unfortunately, none of the broadcasts had images of what an Ekitsunian looked like. The defense fleet consists of races from five worlds who managed to liberate themselves from the Empire and joined forces, but they have yet to push the Empire any further back than outside their home systems. It was not made clear how they were liberated based on the broadcasts but considering this Free Worlds Coalition as the defenders called themselves managed to have former Imperial ships among their fleets, they somehow got control of those ships and used it against their oppressors. The other classes of ships among their fleets looked like new ships that were both based on and improvements to the imperial designs.



It was also during the monitoring of those broadcasts that the Human-based race that was within this star system is one of the five races defending their worlds. This race appeared to be combined with bovine attributes including the

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horns, ears, and tails. Their society appeared to be female dominant based on what could be determined, though the males are highly muscular in nature while the females were very voluptuous. How or why they were based on bovine traits when the ancient vessel seeded their world was unknown unless that was the dominant species at the time. The rest of the species involved in the Free Worlds Coalition did not share any Human traits, and none of them look to be the “dominant” race within the coalition, leading to a possibility of equal footing within their ranks. It was evident that they all had one thing in common: the defense and protection of their worlds from the imperial slavers.



The battle continued for another twenty minutes with neither side getting the advantage over the other. Finally, the senator had seen enough and requested the captain open a hailing frequency to both factions to hear what the true cause of this conflict is, not to mention buy some time to get more info about these Human-bovine hybrids to report back to the Federation with. The captain, while hesitant at first, complied with the senator’s request if to end the fighting. While the fighting did stop between the two factions, it did not fall on blind eyes that the Imperial fleet had turned their railguns, a weapon used by both sides in their battle, were turned towards the *Ursa*.

A visual transmission came in from both parties were displayed, with a male Human-bovine representing the defense fleet. The shock came when the Imperial fleet’s transmission came through. It was another Human-based race, but this one had traits of a fox in the ears and tails, the latter in plural form because this individual had three tails. The two fleet commanders were equally surprised to someone with similar traits to their own in the senator as she took advantage of

that surprise to begin their talks while acting as a mediator for the two factions. Thanks to those talks, she was able to get more information about the conflict and their nations.

The capital and home planet of the Ekitsunian Empire was the first world seeded by the ancient vessel, which saved the *Ursa* the effort of traveling to that planet. However, they achieved interstellar travel roughly 300 years ago as social and cultural pressures had hindered their progress for many years. The Empire had a caste system based on the number of tails they were born with, where one tail is the most common and the lowest. Nobility consisted of those with seven and eight tails. Very rarely, one would be born with nine tails and that individual would be the next emperor or empress. Genetics were not always a guarantee, however, as it was possible for a couple with eight tails to have a child with one tail. This has resulted in the child either being outcasted, exiles, or euthanized depending on the mood the parents are in.

The Empire also once shared their world with another indigenous race, but they were often at war with one another until the Empire became the clear victor. This other race was enslaved by the Ekitsunians and remained that way for so long that the name of their race and culture have long since been forgotten. This cultural preference for slavery continued when the Empire went into space as they found other “savage” races, bringing them into the fold of slaves for the Empire’s workforce.

This enslavement “policy” of the Empire continued when they enslaved four of the five worlds that consisted of the current Free Worlds Coalition. When the Empire reached the home planet of the Evoans, a race of advanced highly evolved translucent energy beings, the Evoans managed to infiltrate the Imperial ships’ computer systems of the fleet not only at their world but the other four worlds that were recently enslaved. They vented the entire crew of those ships into space, leaving the ships without any occupants. The Evoans as well as the other races including the Muulians, the name of the bovine-human race, took possession of the Imperial ships and used their communication systems to contact each other. From there, the five races came together to form the Free Worlds Coalition to fight back and oppose the Empire.

Unfortunately for the Coalition, while they were able to reverse engineer the weapons on the captured vessels to maintain and keep them armed, repairing and maintaining the ships themselves much less building new ones based on their designs and materials without training and knowledge of the mechanics was next to impossible. Also, the Empire knows their ships better than the Coalition when it came to the vessels’ weaknesses. This became apparent when two captured battleships suffered enough damage to compromise their structural integrity,

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rendering them no longer capable of combat. To compensate for this growing issue and to remove the advantage of the Empire's knowledge of the captured vessels, the Coalition tore down one ship each of the captured ships for study of their systems and designed three new classes of ships based on that knowledge. These were quickly built and deployed, turning the tide in favor of the Coalition if only to keep the imperial ships at bay. It is worth noting that the Evoans do not take an active part in the battles, but they do contribute to increasing the defenses of Coalition computers to prevent hacking from imperial computers and looking for ways to improve Coalition technology. The Coalition has been fighting the Empire for almost a year with neither side making any grounds.

Personal feelings aside about the Empire's use of slavery for races it has conquered, the senator was willing to offer her services to put an end to the fighting between the factions. Considering Human-based races were involved on both sides, their conflict felt more in line with the wars of the past on Earth between Humans. How the matter with slavery would be addressed after things have settled between these factions and the war with the Federation was in against the GAIN. The Imperial officer, however, stated he cannot speak for his Empress on this matter and needed time to go through the proper channels to either have her speak with the senator or have a duly appointed representative do so in her place. The Coalition officer also stated that he will have to speak with his superiors and the Council of Five, the governing body of the Coalition, who will address the matter with the senator shortly. Both transmissions ended as the senator and the *Ursa's* captain waited patiently to speak with each factions' leader.

Two hours later, a transmission from the Coalition came through showing a half-circle table and five figures seated at the table. The figure to the left was a Muulian female in a rather ornate formfitting dress while the one in the middle was a translucent energy being believed to be an Evoan with a masculine-looking figure. The other three races being represented from left to right that could not be easily identified looked to be avian with clawed hands, a rather large amphibian that looked almost like a frog or toad, and a large insectoid like a preying mantis but with two fingers and two thumbs at the end of its two arms and a cybernetic helmet, likely an air breather helmet. There was no means to identify gender in the other three, if it even applied.

The Muulian female at the table identified herself as Queen Emiliana while the Evoan, in a deep masculine tone, called itself Zo'ah. The other three spoke in chirps, clicks, and grunts that the Emiliana and Zo'ah could understand, but the senator and the *Ursa's* captain could not. Emiliana offered to translate on their behalf if needed. Since the Imperial forces had yet to responded to an audience with someone with authority be it the Empress or another to speak for

her, much of that time was spent explaining a brief history of both the Coalition and the Federation. Seeing a potential powerful ally, the Coalition leadership asked about either an alliance with the Federation or a possible membership to secure their planets and their people. The senator chose not to accept their request just yet as she needed to hear from all parties involved and speak with her government before such a decision could be made. The Coalition leadership understood the senator's position and agreed it was best to wait for the Empress or her liaison to make contact before such discussions could be had.

After nearly 30 minutes of waiting, the Empress herself contacted the *Ursa*. Her presence on screen was quite regal in white and golden robes, her nine white tails fanned out like a peacock to emphasis her presence and position of power. She was quite young as she looked to be in her early twenties, though the life expectancy of an Ekitsunian is unknown meaning she could be older than she appears by Human standards. Despite how young she looked, her demeanor and expressions were that of someone who spoke with confidence and authority. It was almost too overwhelming for the senator.

Despite her demeanor, Empress Rohana as she identified herself was a little surprised to see races like her own in the Humans and Muulians. She was fully aware of the war with the Coalition, but she was not aware of the connection or link between her people and the Muulians until the *Ursa* had first made contact. Rohana's demeanor changed to someone who was very curious about the link her people and other Human-based races shared. After hearing more of the ancient vessel and the Federation where most of the worlds that were seeded resided, she asked for a brief recess while she consulted with her advisors.

After more than five minutes where the audio was muted on her end as she spoke with her advisors that were off camera, she unmuted herself and addressed the Coalition leadership directly. The Empress called for a cease-fire with the Coalition, stating she wished to visit and see for herself the ancient ship that seeded their worlds. If the senator spoke the truth, she will officially call for an end to the war with the Coalition on the premise that those "related" to her people were among their population.

Rohana then ordered her forces to withdraw and stated that she will leave immediately to rendezvous with the *Ursa* which will serve as her vessel's escort to the Federation's capital. Queen Emiliana volunteered at that moment as the Coalition's representative on one of their battleships to go to the capital as well. All parties agreed to this arrangement and would wait for the Empress to arrive at Muulia before they head to Earth. It would take the Empress less than two days for her ship to arrive, but once her battleship arrived, the *Ursa* along with the Empress' and the Queen's battleships proceeded to head to Earth.

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THE CHILDREN OF THE PAST

With the arrival of Empress Rohana, Queen Emiliana, and Empress Shaina III at Earth, as well as a Corimei representative of the new Alliance and a representative from the Cantaria Republic (who finally agreed to send a representative after transmitting the info on the ancient vessel directly into their space), a member of every known race that the ancient vessel had seeded was brought to the vessel at Columna Lumen to witness the ship for themselves. To the surprise of all those present, the vessel ran a program from its computer banks showing a male holographic figure whose physical traits were like those who were present who inherited said traits. The hologram was fully aware of those present displaying a level of sentience from an artificial lifeform on par with the Minions.

The hologram, which expressed happiness from seeing all its “children” being present, proceeded to tell them all the reason why they existed and why the “seed ship” was built in the first place. Recorders were quickly deployed to record the hologram’s record.

On the far side of the galaxy existed a planet called Altora, the fifth planet of a binary star system. The native sentience race of the planet known simply as Altorans were divided into four factions based on philosophical and cultural differences between them. These differences had led to long-term conflicts between these factions to the point that irreparable damage was done to their planet. One faction known as the Yudesing Faction believed that the Altoran race was doomed to extinction, and the near obliteration of their faction from the current war only contributed to this outcome. Wanting their genetic code to continue to exist but not their philosophy or the philosophy of the other factions, they deployed the “seed ship” as covertly as possible to seed worlds with their genetic code as far away from their home system as possible.

When the seed ship reached the Orion Arm of the galaxy after seeding Ekitsuni and Muulia, the ship moved in a random pattern in case any of the other factions were following the vessel. After seeding Earth, the vessel attempted to use the Kuiper Belt when exiting the Sol System to hide its trail but was impacted by several of the asteroids in the belt, disabling the vessel permanently. It was not until it was found by Humans more than 20 years ago that the vessel was moved from the Kuiper Belt.

The artificial intelligence on board remained dormant, allowing the Humans to study its drive system that would become the PITGED drives found in Federation vessels. The nano-laminate armor was later developed using this technology. The AI was programed to remain dormant until it detected the genetic code it infused in all the worlds it had seeded. The AI admitted though that the fate

of the planet Altora, the dwindling Yugesing Faction that built the seed ship, and the other three factions that waged war against each other is unknown. The fact that the fate of their predecessors is unknown led those present to be concerned if they still existed and how much they would have changed and/or developed in the thousands of years since their worlds were seeded. The AI returned to dormancy but stated that it will continue to remain active in case its “children” had any more questions for it.

The knowledge of their beginnings now made apparent, the leaders and representatives of the known nations held a summit. The knowledge of their origins was agreed to be too dangerous to become widespread among their populations as it would unravel their societies from a political, cultural, and religious standpoint. Until such time as a means became available to distribute this information to the public safely, the knowledge would remain with those in power and those that are trusted to retain it.

REFORMS AND REFUGEES

Upon their return to their nations, the leaders of the Coalition and Empress Rohana entered peace talks to end the conflict between their nations. Upon finalization of those talks, more information about the Ekitsunian Empire became known in relation to the caste system among the Ekitsuni based on the number of tails they have. After her visit to the Federation and hearing about the different nations and cultures, Empress Rohana was concerned about her own nation after hearing the accounts of the Corimei and the Fulari that were enslaved by the Liekans and Dexigalians prior to the Second Interstellar War with the Federation. Having her eyes opened to the horrors of slavery, she vowed to make reforms to her nation by freeing and educating the races that were enslaved into full-fledge citizens of her Empire.

The process of making those reforms happen proved more troubling for the Empress than expected. Many of those among her advisors and governors expressed concerns and issues with releasing the slaves, though the Empress was quick to express the fact that those with concerns are more worried about losing their free labor force than the impact of having to educate and pay their workers for their services.

The reform to free the slaves also affected the lower-level castes among the Ekitsuni as the influx of former slaves that are highly proficient in the same skills would threaten their own businesses or jobs. The fear of losing their jobs and business to the slave reforms saw a sudden spike in immigration rates for those leaving the Empire and heading to the Federation, the only other known nation

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after the Free Worlds Coalition became the newest members of the Federation. While those worlds still had a large amount of animosity towards their former enslavers, they served as “gateway” worlds for Ekitsuni immigrants to travel to the main part of the Federation. These immigrants would take up residence on either existing Federation worlds or starting new colony worlds on the Federation border. While these immigrants would have to compete for business with those that are already established on existing worlds, the colony worlds showed better promise as those worlds started to become populated with new colonists and immigrants. Former Imperial slaves also immigrated to the Federation, seeing many of the freedoms granted to Federation citizens a breath of fresh air to the prejudice and hostile work environments within the Empire from the Ekitsuni.

This reduction in citizens and workers to the Federation was seen by many in the upper echelons and castes as a sign of incompetence in the Empress and her sudden “reformational” way of thinking. While the Empress tried to express to the people the need for such reforms in the Empire to better itself, it was not enough to curb the actions of the highest caste and the military into removing her from power forcibly. The Empress went into hiding and she would eventually manage to find her way to Muulia to seek political asylum. Within days, the Royal Court nominated Prime Minister Antinot to lead the Empire until a new Emperor or Empress is born, preferably one they can manipulate to their will. The Prime Minister was quick to reverse every reform the Empress did and enslaved all the former slaves again. The only matter left to attend to according to the Prime Minister was not only retrieving the “wayward” citizens that fled to the Federation, but also the Federation as a whole for its “dangerous” ideals that almost ruined the Empire by polluting the former Empress’ mind.

News of the coup in the Empire and subsequent reversion involving the re-enslavement of the slave population was quick to reach the Federation capital. Just as quickly was the decree from the Empire’s current leadership stating that the Federation was a threat to their way of life and that the Empire wanted its “lost” citizens returned through forced deportation. Because of the pending increase in hostilities, the Federation sent surveyors sent to those neighborhoods that contained Ekitsuni immigrants for them to decide if they wanted to return or not.

The results of those that were surveyed revealed that none wanted to return to the Empire for two reasons. The personal freedoms of the Federation allowed “outdated” systems like castes based on the number of tails one had to become irrelevant, presenting equal opportunities to everyone regardless of physical traits. The second reason was one mostly found among more of the traditionalists of the Ekitsuni, but the forced removal of the Empress had been unheard of in the history of the Empire. By their traditions, those born with nine

tails were privileged with the right to rule, regardless of whether their rule is pious and just or capricious and tyrannical. To them, the forced removal of the Empress from power and abolishment of the slave reforms she decreed is just as bad if not worse of a reform by the Royal Court’s actions than the changes the Empress had imposed on the Empire.

Seeing the forced deportation of unwilling Ekitsuni immigrants to a nation that has now become hostile to the Federation without a crime to warrant that measure was against the principles and laws of the Federation. The Empire even went so far to say that the immigrants illegally left the Empire, yet the immigrants were legally allowed to move while the Empress was in power. Without any just cause other than voluntary means on the part of the immigrants, the Federation denied the Empire’s request for the return of its people as no Ekitsuni wanted to leave.

THE EMPIRE’S INCURSIONS

The Federation government was not oblivious to the possibility of the Empire’s military response for denying their request for the deportation of Ekitsuni citizens. President Natalia and the Senate both knew that the Empire would take such an action against the Federation especially once it was known the Rohana had managed to flee to the Federation via Muulia. The Federation sent two fleets to bolster the former Coalition’s defense forces in anticipation of an attack on those worlds. The actual response from the Empire was not as expected as it was bold and covert.

At four of the colony worlds in the Orion Arm where planetary defenses and detection systems had not been installed yet, Imperial forces appeared and kidnapped every Ekitsuni they found while killing all other colonists in the process. A fleet was sent to investigate after receiving a distress call from a shuttle that managed to escape from one of the planets, though it was destroyed by Imperial pursuers before transmitting who was attacking them. The investigation concluded that the worlds were attacked by weapons consistent with Imperial ordinance and firearms. This was confirmed when a fifth colony world that managed to get its proximity sensor system online alerted to another Imperial attack. The fleet managed to arrive in the middle of the Imperial raid but was unable to stop Imperial transports that were loaded with kidnapped Ekitsuni from escaping as Federation forces were unwilling to fire due to hostages being on board.

In a bold move, a large Imperial fleet emboldened by the lack of response from the Federation forces made its way to planet Sakura in the Epsilon Eridani system where the largest number of Ekitsuni resided due the similarities between it

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and the Ekitsuni home planet of Ekitsuni Prime. While their fleet was detected by Tripwire once in established Federation space, the fleet was allowed unhindered to reach Sakura at the request of Admiral Thaddeus aboard the Dreadnought *Kishi* along with four Senshi Battle Carriers and Minion support ships who lied in wait for their arrival. When the Imperial fleet arrived, Minion support ships established a jamming field for communications and targeting systems against the invading fleet while also deploying subspace interdiction fields that prevent their Fold Drives from working. The dreadnought and battle carriers proceeded to lay waste to the entire Imperial invading force. Due to Imperial military doctrine, no Imperial vessel transmitted a surrender despite being lured into a trapped and being helpless against Federation forces.

The Empire, shocked at the Federation's military capabilities, did not send any further incursions into Federation space as they reevaluated their plans to retrieve their "disillusioned" people. At the same time, they knew a response from the Federation was coming, and knowing what the Federation was capable of, they began to try and bolster their military might.

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE

President Natalia and the Senate agreed that the Ekitsuni Empire's current leadership was a threat to the Federation and its people after the Empire's incursions, kidnappings, and murders on its colony worlds. After the attack at Sakura and the public outcry from citizens immediately afterwards, the Federation government weighed in on its options for responding to the Empire. The Federation only recently finished one war and was not eager to start another if it could be helped.

Instead, it was decided to first deploy the Tripwire observation system in the colony systems that were attacked to prevent the Empire from developing bases on those planets. The second was to deploy a covert strike unit to either capture and arrest or terminate the Prime Minister and the Royal Court who were responsible for the assault. Rohana, when asked by President Natalia to provide any information involving the Imperial Palace and where to strike, volunteered to go on the mission to reclaim her throne. While Natalia was reluctant to agree to her request, she approved it since the Empress would know where to go and may have knowledge of any surprises that could aid them.

Using a modified Minion stealth support ship designed to accommodate passengers covertly, the vessel made its way to Ekitsuni Prime undetected. The strike team departed the vessel on the edge of the atmosphere at night and skydived with anti-gravity packs towards the capital landing just outside the city.

Rohana guided the team through an old tunnel she used to escape the city when she was being removed from power. Upon entering the palace, the team stunned or incapacitated the palace guards, making their way to Prime Minister Antinot's room. Upon his capture by the strike team, the shocked and bewildered Antinot refused to back down from staging another attack on the Federation. Revealing herself to a shocked Antinot, Rohana with a gun in hand pointing at Antinot's head gave him one last chance to retract the order willingly or she would shoot him. Antinot laughed at Rohana's threat, stating she did not have the courage to shoot him and take back her throne after spilling his blood. Rohana proved him wrong by firing a round right through his head.

Seeing firsthand the corruption that power has over an individual and the way of life a democracy has compared to her Empire, Rohana made a decree to the entire nation the next day. She would be the last Empress of the Empire as it would be converted into the Ekitsuni Republic. The caste system and slavery would be abolished completely, and the Royal Court's hold in any political affairs would be voided. She would remain as the de facto leader until the people elect a new leader and government at which point, she will stand down from her position of authority.

Many in the Empire were surprised by her decree to make such drastic changes again after what happened when she tried to reform the nation's stance on slavery. However, the change in government where the caste system was no longer in place meant that even those in the lower castes can now hold a position of power within said government. While many in the upper castes were opposed to the idea because of their privileged positions being threatened, the larger number of those in the lower castes when the first vote was made including the former slaves won the majority in favor of the change.

Over the course of the next several months with the help of advisors from the Federation, the Ekitsuni Republic was firmly established. With a firm handshake with the new Chancellor in a momentous ceremony to signify the final moment of the Empire, Rohana stepped down from her position of authority as Empress. However, the new Republic Parliament unanimously agreed that she will continue to serve the Republic as their Ambassador to the Federation. Rohana graciously accepted the position and left for Earth not long after.

While the Republic's first year was a bit rough as the nation continued to adjust to the changes that came with becoming a democratic nation, the growth that came from those early years brought about a better people and sense of national pride in the process. The former slaves were now being educated like the Ekitsuni, and efforts have been made by the Ekitsuni to assist in the retrieval of any possible historical records of the slaves that survived destruction when their worlds were first enslaved many years ago.

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THE PAST RETURNS

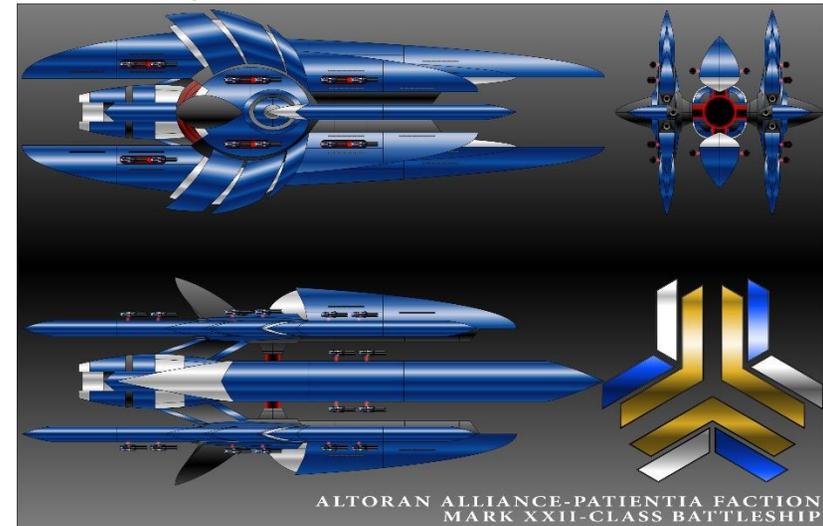
Five years since the Ekitsuni Republic was formed, the Federation began to send out exploration vessels to surrounding systems in both the Orion Arm and the Sagittarius Arm that are not claimed by any known nation. While many in the civilian population believe this was to increase the knowledge of the Federation involving nearby systems, the real reason was to gain tactical knowledge and to ensure there are no possible signs of the Altorans from the ancient ship's message. With every Human-based race now in good standing with each other including the Cantarians, the leaders of each nation hoped that if they show a unified front against the Altorans should they be hostile, they will leave them be in peace. They had also hoped that since it has been thousands of years since the ancient seed vessel visited their worlds that either the Altorans had died out from their wars or would not be in their part of the galaxy.

Neither of those cases happened as one of the exploration vessels came across a red and black ship whose design shared many elements with the ancient vessel in a star system more than 150 Light-years away from Federation space. Once the exploration vessel detected the unknown ship, the computers alerted the commanding officer to a top-secret document for their eyes only. Upon review of the document that specified about the ancient vessel and the similar design elements with the discovered vessel, the captain ordered his crew to log the location of where the possible Altoran vessel was found and to leave the system.

Unfortunately, the Altoran vessel also detected the exploration vessel and attempted to intercept. The exploration vessel managed to leave the star system, but they were unaware that the Altoran vessel was in pursuit. Once the exploration ship re-entered Federation space, the Altoran vessel detected the Tripwire system and turned around. It was not known why at the time, but it is believed that once it detected Tripwire, the Altoran vessel broke off because it would possibly be facing greater odds and wanted to inform their superiors. Regardless, the Altorans were still alive somehow, and now they know there is a nation in the Orion Arm. Whether they detected Human-based lifeforms like them was not known, but it was quickly apparent that the Altorans would be coming to the Federation very soon.

Three months later, the Tripwire system detected the presence of another vessel near the border in the same star system that the first Altoran vessel turned away from. While larger in size, the new vessel was blue and silver in color, though it was quickly apparent that it was the same race by the one key design feature they both shared: A singularity core that looked to serve as the vessel's power source. The technology was advanced enough that the weapon turrets were

completely detached, connected to the vessel using only energy beams that also look to power the weapons on board. Thankfully no weapons were targeting the U.S.F.S. *Edwin G Forberg*, the Senshi-Class Battle Carrier under the command of Rear Admiral Morgana that was sent to establish contact with the vessel.



Attempts at communication through audio only took an hour for the Federation to decipher since the language had barely changed from the language stored on the ancient vessel. It was best to keep it audio only as it was not known how the Altorans would react upon seeing beings based on their genetic code from the Yudesing Faction. The vessel identified themselves as a ship of the Patientia Faction of the Altoran Alliance. That alone brought good news as the Patientia were recorded as being the most diplomatic of the factions while also being the most partisan of the Altorans. Hearing that they had also formed an Alliance with either one or both remaining factions meant that something had occurred for them to finally be unified.

The Altorans also stated that the Alliance is a nomadic spacefaring race that had been roaming all over the galaxy for all that time. Their home planet was destroyed completely due to the use of "doomsday" weapons they all deployed against each other. Only three factions had remained: the diplomatic Patientia, the scientific Flagranti, and the militant Ferox. When asked why during all their travels they had not found a new planet to make their own, the response was that no planet they came across was suitable for them to live on, they did not possess the technology to terraform those worlds, and genetic manipulation was taboo.

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It became increasingly clear why the Yudesing Faction who were later identified as historians sent a seed ship and not themselves to the far reaches of space. Without the means to convert a planet to one that is habitable by their standards, venturing out on their own to find a world would have been futile. To allow their kind to live on other planets would require gene manipulation which was best to perform in the earliest stages of artificial incubation. The Yudesing Faction did what the other factions disapproved of, and every known Human-based race is the result of that “rebellious” legacy.

By that point in the conversation, with no visuals and the Patientia crew becoming suspicious as they have been the only ones speaking, they requested a visual of those who they were speaking with. While hesitant at first, Rear Admiral Morgana chose to establish visual contact with the Altoran vessel. While the Altorans looked much like the hologram from the ancient seed vessel, their skin tone was practically albino in nature, clear evidence that they have not experienced any form of ultraviolet radiation that normally tans or darkens skin. Whether this was what was added to all the Human-based races depending on the DNA found on the planets that was mixed with their genetic code or just a lack of any exposure to a star on a planet was unknown.

The Altorans however were in complete shock to see races like their own, which was to be expected. Rear Admiral Morgana explained to the Altorans who and what the Human-based races were, and only became aware of their origins in recent years when the vessel the Yudesing Faction built seeded their worlds thousands of years ago. The Patientia captain was a bit concerned to hear the name Yudesing again, saying that they were recorded as being the most liberal and rebellious faction among them all with their predictions of extinction for their race. Unfortunately for the other factions, the Yudesing were correct not long after they were wiped out.

While the Human-based races that were created by the ancient vessel were clear evidence that the Yudesing had performed the taboo of genetic manipulation and even disrupted the natural order of those worlds, the Patientia captain made it clear that those that were the product of those actions should not be held accountable for the Yudesing’s actions. However, the captain would have to confirm with the leaders of his faction, and they would also have to speak with the rest of the Alliance Council on their stance with this information. Morgana decided to bring one item to their attention if it helped to smooth relations with the Alliance. The Federation has developed terraforming devices that can convert a world to the desired environment. If the Alliance is willing to be cooperative with the Federation and its allies, a world can be found and converted to be a new home planet for the Altorans for the first time in thousands of years. The Patientia

captain was very intrigued with the idea, almost joyous, and said that he will forward the offer to his leaders as well. Because of the time it takes for the faction leaders to gather and converse with one another, it would be a while before they would have a response. Morgana understood, stating she needed to talk to her superiors as well to let them know what is going on and the offer she provided. The Patientia captain said they will contact the Federation again in one week’s time based on the Human calendar. With that, the Patientia ship left to return while Morgana ordered her ship to also return to port.

THE SHATTERED ALLIANCE

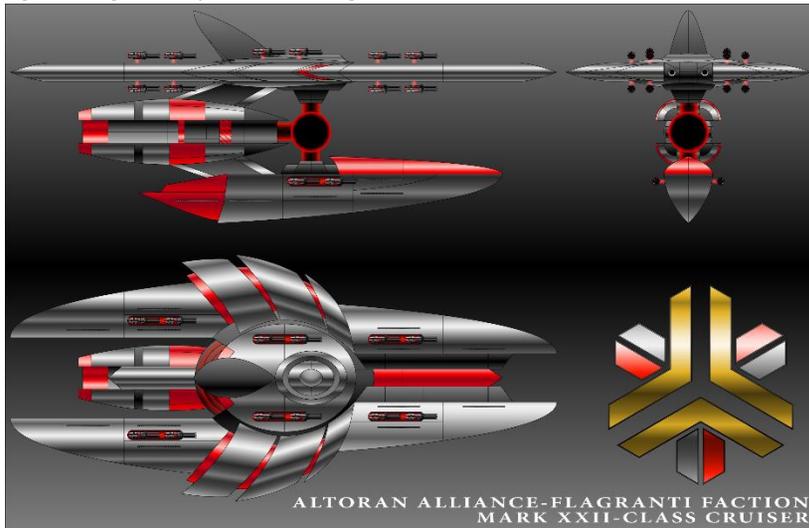
The first interaction with the Patientia Faction of Altorans was a positive and hopeful one. When Rear Admiral Morgana gave her report, many believed that conflict was avoided with their ancient ancestors. However, 3 days later, Tripwire detected several fleets that correspond to the red and black color scheme of the militant Ferox Faction appearing along the Federation border. Because of the size of the fleets that were appearing, the Federation sent up to five fleets to the borders with the largest concentrations of Ferox vessels for defensive purposes in case of attack. The moment the Federation fleets arrived at their destinations on the border, the Ferox Faction vessels opened fire in an unprovoked attack. While the fleet commanders believed that the Altoran energy weaponry would not work against the Federation’s nano-laminate armor, that was far from the truth.



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Altoran beam weapons utilize a combination of both gravitons and charged particles. This proved to be partially effective against the Federation's nano-laminate armor as the gravitons from the beams pushed or opposed the gravitons used in the armor, leaving the charged particles to impact directly into the armor. Thankfully, because of the anti-beam laminated coating in the armor, the charged particles did not instantly vaporize the armor. However, continuous fire on the same spot started to cause the armor to heat up. The nano-machines used to repair the armor, quickly developed heat sinks during the engagement to help draw the heat away as much as possible, but areas near the armor saw spikes in the internal temperatures reach higher than most lifeforms can tolerate.

The Federation artillery cannons with nano-laminate rounds that were introduced late in the Second Interstellar War by comparison could pierce the Altoran shields, but their molecular-bonded armor was as effective as the nano-laminate armor in enduring multiple heavy impacts from the rounds. Both sides were able to trade blows with each other but neither side were making any significant gains or quick victories against the other.



After several minutes, ships belonging to both the Patientia and Flagranti Altoran Factions arrived at each battle. They were not there to fight, but rather to stop the fighting that was started by the Ferox Faction. The leaders of the Ferox Faction were highly orthodox in the Altoran ways and traditions. The moment they heard about the races that contained their genetic code that was manipulated by the Yudesing's ancient seed ship, they sent their fleets without informing the rest

of the Alliance to the Federation's known border to wipe out what they consider to be "abominations" regardless if they had terraforming technology or not. Human-based races to them would be a constant reminder of how right the Yudesing Faction was in their predictions, a pride that aggravates the Ferox any time they are reminded about their destroyed home planet. The Ferox at that time took special pleasure in insuring that one of their doomsday weapons wiped out the remaining Yudesing thousands of years ago. The Federation and any other nation that had races whose genes were manipulated would also feel like the Yudesing were haunting them from the afterlife.

The Patientia and Flagranti Faction vessels were not about to open fire on the Ferox ships without breaking up the Alliance, but they did report the Ferox's actions to their leaders. In the meantime, the Federation and Ferox forces were continuing to fire upon each other until Minion support ships arrived. Because of the information on the scanning systems of the ancient seed vessel, they were able to jam the Ferox vessels' targeting systems rendering them useless. Once the Ferox vessels' ability to engage was rendered inactive, the Federation forces stopped firing to give the Ferox ships a chance to either retreat or surrender. Seeing that the Federation can neutralize their ability to fight, the Patientia and Flagranti forces once again informed the Ferox to leave as they can no longer achieve their goal under the circumstances. The Ferox forces silently left the Federation border.

The Patientia and the Flagranti forces that remained stated that they have no quarrel with any of the races that were seeded with the Yudesing Faction's genetic code, and right now both of their factions were in agreeance that there will be no hostilities with the Federation and its allies. They also agreed to the generous offer of providing terraforming technology to finally be able to settle on a planet once again. Any diplomatic ties that either side wish to begin can be discussed once the Altorans have a home again. However, all factions within the Alliance must agree for such a major decision to be made, and right now the Ferox with their orthodox methods and ideology are opposed to this decision. They instead are insisting on the extinction of all worlds the Yudesing have seeded. This level of extremism had not been seen by the Ferox since the final years of their war that destroyed their planet. It would take a lot of work for the Patientia and Flagranti Faction leaders to convince the Ferox leaders to agree as well. Their forces would remain near the borders to help deter the Ferox from attacking again while their leaders were still in deliberations. The Federation fleets were also ordered by the current President Cassandra to remain at the borders as well.

Three more days had passed without any further attacks by the Ferox Faction by the time the appointed date for a decision had been reached. A communication was transmitted from the Alliance Council and forwarded to

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President Cassandra. Despite their best efforts neither the Patientia Faction nor the Flagranti Faction were able to change the minds of the Ferox Faction to agree to having peaceful relations with the Federation and its allies. When Cassandra asked what that meant between the Alliance and the Federation, the Patientia and the Flagranti leaders were not sure. While decisions are made based on having a unanimous from all three factions, the Patientia and Flagranti Factions want to stop wandering the galaxy and finally have a planet of their own. It is the first time they came across an interstellar nation with the means to convert planets to their home planet's environment, and they do not want to squander their only opportunity they have had in the pasts hundreds of thousands of years. They believe that upon finding the Federation that the extinct Yudesing Faction had the foresight to know what it took for their kind to survive and should have listened to them thousands of years ago. The Ferox Faction in their opinion is being too stubborn to accept help from the "children" of their ancient rivals, even though the rivalry should have died when the Yudesing did.

One of the Patientia leaders than asked President Cassandra how the Federation deals with such matters if everyone does not agree to the same decision. Cassandra informed them that the Federation, namely the Senate, decides on matters by majority rule of more than two-thirds of all Senators. While it means not everyone is satisfied, deliberations are made prior to the vote to plead their case and try to persuade as many as possible that their issue or matter needs to be agreed upon. Those that are the minority may not be satisfied with the decision based on the majority, it will be up to the minority to either work with the majority or show evidence later that the decision was made in error where it can be voted again.

The Patientia and Flagranti leaders took this to heart, stating that there have been a multitude of matters that were turned down because not all factions agreed. The last thing they wanted was to anger a single faction resulting in the Alliance breaking up and open warfare erupting between them again. However, in this matter, they felt the Ferox are in error as their decision is based on millennia-old rivalry and prejudices rather than reason and rational. Deciding that the Ferox Faction's decision is not impartial based on feelings instead of facts, the Patientia and Flagranti leaders ruled the Ferox vote as "invalid" making the decision a "win" in favor of working with the Federation.

The Ferox Faction was displeased with this move made by the Patientia and Flagranti Factions to invalidate the Ferox's vote. The Ferox accused the other two factions of letting their own emotions and hopes of a new home planet cloud their judgement of seeing that this was nothing more than a "handout" by "freaks" created by the extinct Yudesing to avoid being wiped out for even existing. These

accusations by the Ferox did not deter the Patientia and Flagranti Factions as they were tired of being Altorans without a home. Seeing that there was no resolution in the "rebellious" actions of the Patientia and Flagranti Factions of invalidating their vote based on a ludicrous dream of finally having a home planet, the Ferox Faction made the decision to leave the Alliance.

THE BATTLE OF THE BORDER

The Ferox Faction leaders made one final decree as they left the Council: the "freaks" of the Yudesing and those that ally or follow them are now the enemies of the Ferox, and the Ferox will not stop until every trace of the long-dead Yudesing is gone from existence. After the Ferox Faction leaders made their decree, President Cassandra ordered the Federation Fleet on high alert for any possible attacks or incursions by Ferox Faction ships. She also sent the same warning to Federation forces located in the Sagittarius Arm at the former Coalition star systems, the Ekitsuni Republic, the Cantarian Republic, the Sol'Na'Changko Empire, and the Fulari/Corimei Alliance. Whether the Ferox were aware of the other nations or not was unclear, but it was best they were made ready in case any Ferox ships appeared within their territories.

In the meantime, studies were done with the permission of the Patientia and Flagranti Factions on volunteers from their factions in sterile environments to understand the needs of the Altorans to find a close suitable world to terraform in the shortest time to their atmosphere. The Altorans were aware that they have been isolated from others for so long that their immune systems may not be able to tolerate any foreign diseases no matter how close to the original air quality of Altora Prime the terraforming devices get. Therefore, research was also conducted into vaccines of known diseases from any of the Human-based races that would be safe for Altorans to use. The Minions who are masters of artificially creating organs that are safe for transplants also researched blood transfusions with the necessary antibodies for all known diseases. This would allow the Altorans to broaden their parameters for planetary candidates for terraforming if at all and allow them to intermingle with other races without the need of protective gear.

In the meantime, hundreds of ships from the Patientia and Flagranti Factions continued to come into the Federation. Many of their ships alongside Federation ships conducted scans on potential worlds that could be terraformed including worlds that were devoid of life should the research into vaccines and blood transfusions not be feasible. The Patientia and Flagranti Factions showed interest in the worlds of either Venus or Mars as potential candidates to terraform, despite the conditions of both planets. With Mars already having bases established

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on the surface, the prospect of terraforming Venus was an intriguing notion and endeavor for Federation scientists of all races along with the two Altoran factions. Nevertheless, research and development were well underway.

As the Venus Terraforming Project was underway, reports from the Tripwire system began to detect Ferox Faction ships amassing near the Federation border in several locations. Federation forces along with Patientia and Flagranti ships positioned themselves on the defensive for an upcoming attack when the allied Altoran vessels detected objects within the Ferox Faction forces. These objects were quickly identified as the same “doomsday” missiles used in the final moments of the planet Altoran, but these were larger and included Fold Drives. The Patientia and Flagranti Factions were appalled that the Ferox possessed the weapons after the destruction of Altoran and demanded an explanation. The Ferox leadership responded with an ultimatum: help in the extinction of the Yudesing Faction’s “legacy,” or die along with them and the hopes of a new home planet.

When word of the Ferox’s Fold Drive-capable “doomsday” weapons had reached President Cassandra, she quickly ordered any if not all Minion ships that could deploy interdiction fields to as many habitable worlds in the Federation as possible, including the terraforming Venus. Whether the Ferox were aware that the Federation possessed Fold Drive interdiction technology was unknown, but no one wanted to test the possibility when it came to the possible destructive nature of the Ferox Faction’s “doomsday” weapons. The Ferox also did not give the Patientia and Flagranti Factions much time to think about their decision, which also meant there was not a lot of time for Federation forces to get into position to intercept said weapons. Cassandra could only hope that either the missiles could be intercepted before they activated their Fold Drives, or that they take just as long if not longer to reach their destinations.

The Patientia and Flagranti Factions’ leaders did not back down from their decision to join the Federation in establishing a new home planet, stating that the Ferox’s obsession over a past feud from thousands of years ago should have died with the loss of Altoran. One of the Patientia leaders spoke up even further, stating that their ancestors made the mistake of siding with the Ferox against the Yudesing because they did not want to accept the truth of what the Yudesing had preached about destroying their planet with their wars. They were blinded to the fact that the Ferox were obsessed with power and combat to the point that the ancient Patientia and Flagranti leaders were too scared to oppose the Ferox and their destructive ways. If their leaders had joined with the Yudesing, they would have been able to oppose the Ferox and found a way to collectively fix their planet. While it was far too late to make up the mistake they made after Altoran was no

more, they can join with the offspring of the Yudesing to bring life to a world that is inhospitable, to make their own again.

The Ferox leadership remained silent, but it was clear that their brethren were not going to join their cause. They immediately launched their “doomsday” missiles, setting them on courses to every planet seeded and colonized in the Federation. Somehow, the Ferox were able to get the coordinates of those worlds, though it appeared that they did not get the coordinates for the Federation’s allies or the worlds of the former Coalition. How they got the information was not as important as the missiles that used their Fold Drives to head towards their targets. Seeing the launch of those weapons as an act of war, the Federation Forces along with their Altoran allies engaged the Ferox Faction ships on every front.

While the President had ordered every Minion ship that can deploy interdiction fields to every populated planet they could, the Minions had gathered some of their ships in key areas where the Ferox’s missiles would pass, deploying their fields in advance to intercept them long before they could reach any Federation planet. Nearby Federation ships also gathered at the interdiction locations in case additional firepower was needed since the capabilities of the warheads were unknown. The gamble worked out in the Minions’ favor along with Federation ships that gathered to help as all the missiles dropped out of Fold space to be intercepted and destroyed. The wreckage was later examined to research the payload of the missiles. They all possessed enough gravitons to form nothing short of a micro black hole, designed to be injected into the planet’s core and expand to eventually envelope the entire planet before dispersing.

While the Ferox forces were the most militaristic of the Altoran factions, they had found themselves highly outnumbered, outgunned, and outmatched against the Federation/Minions’ Fold interdiction fields making retreat impossible. As Ferox reinforcements continued to arrive on every front against the Federation and Altoran allies, it was unclear whether they were fighting to exterminate the descendants of their nemesis’ legacy, or just trying to overwhelm their defenses and push through to populated Federation worlds. Federation ships had to withdraw from the front on rotation to resupply their ammo from supply vessels and take time to repair their armor. Their Altoran allies rotated ships to repair damaged vessels while fresh vessels from other postings arrived to take their place. The Battle on the Border as it was called lasted for more than 24 hours, and it also marked the first time since the Second Interstellar War that the Federation also deployed the Kishi Dreadnoughts to three of the fronts to coordinate their forces. Signs began to appear several hours into the conflict that the Ferox Faction were not able to replenish their forces as quickly as they were being destroyed. For that matter, none of the Ferox ships ever withdrew to resupply or repair.

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The Altoran allies soon sent word to the Federation forces as to what the Ferox were doing. Despite how powerful they were among the four factions of Altor, they knew their ancient conflict with the Yudesing had costed all of them their planet. Historically, the Ferox were always reluctant to admit their mistakes, much less apologize for them. Their stance was that the fall and destruction of Altor was laid squarely at the feet of the Yudesing, and their strength was so great that the Patientia and the Flagranti were hardly able to argue with them. However, this animosity between the factions continued to fester despite the formation of the Altoran Alliance to keep the peace between them. The Ferox leadership knew without a doubt that the other two factions regret siding with their faction after Altor was destroyed. All they needed was the strength and confidence to fight the Ferox when the time came. That finally happened when the Federation was discovered and that they were the product of the Yudesing seeding their worlds with their DNA. In essence, while several thousand years later, this battle was judgement on the Ferox for their actions as they were effectively fighting the equivalent of the Yudesing, Patientia, and Flagranti. Maybe the Ferox were hoping their “doomsday” weapons would spare them such judgement, but due to them being intercepted and destroyed, the Ferox resorted to their last option to avoid judgement: dying in a suicide mission.

As much as the Federation forces wanted to open communications and have the Ferox surrender, their Altoran allies made it clear that the Ferox have not once surrendered in battle and this was no different. They were here to die by their hands as their own form of atonement. Once the last of the Ferox Factions vessels were destroyed, no one celebrated that day among the Federation forces or their Altoran allies. It was a bittersweet victory for all involved. While the Federation and the remaining Altoran factions managed to avoid heavy losses with only 5 percent of their fleets either heavily damaged or destroyed, the extent of the wreckage from the Ferox forces was extensive and could not be left behind. It would take several months before all the wreckage and dead bodies would be gathered to clean up those areas of space. While the day would go down in history books and texts, it was decided it was best not to make a holiday out of it.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

The efforts taken to provide immunizations to the remaining Altorans and terraform Venus were successful less than a year after the Battle of the Border. During that time, the reestablished Altoran Alliance had become a state of the Federation and their ships serve alongside Federation forces, filling in the roles of interstellar law enforcement and long-range explorers. They also became aware of

the other nations that have worlds seeded by the Yudesing. Word about the origins of these races soon got out to the general public of these nations as there was no way to hide the fact now that the Altorans were a member state of the Federation. While this caused a great deal of issues on the social level within each of the nations, it answered many questions that people had about the similarities between Human-based races that the truth could not be denied, especially with the Altorans confirming the Yudesing seed vessel which was also made public.



Regardless, for the Altorans, seeing their DNA spread across so many races made them feel more at home and no longer alone in the galaxy. Having the terraformed Venus (which they kept the name out of respect for the Humans from Earth that named it) becoming their new home filled them with hope of a brighter future with so many to share it with. Those Altorans who wanted to spread their knowledge in various fields of science and technology established institutions to teach others, no matter what the race. Altoran culture centers also began to spring up on different worlds for those wanting to learn about their ancient ancestors. For the first time in thousands of years, the Altorans were a part of a community again.

Where the future lies with everyone both in the Federation and its allies going forward will be up to future generations to decide. For the first time in many recent years, Altorans, Humans, races seeded by the Yudesing ship, and completely foreign races have established a long-lasting peace. It would be up to all of them to ensure that wars that have caused devastation and destruction of planets never happen again for the foreseeable future.

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GOVERNMENT

The United Systems of the Federation is a representative democracy composed of several semiautonomous states in a pluralistic union. While originally based on the democratic nations of Earth, it was better to allow the “states” or rather the individual systems or planets to keep their original governments intact so to not be as intrusive on their existing governmental structure after some of said planets fell victim to Liekan and/or Dexigalian occupation. On the federal level, the Federation has split many of the star systems into 54 districts a few years after the Battle of the Border. These districts are further subdivided into subdistricts that may further encompass any number of individual governments composed of planets, colonies, megalopolises, or other political entities. The most important governmental bodies of the Federation are based on prior Human democracies: The President (Executive), the Senate (Legislative), and Supreme Court (Judicial). However, in an era of interstellar combat, having all three branches of the government in the same location or even the same planet is considered unwise as the destruction of all three at once would severely cripple the Federation’s political structure.

EXECUTIVE

The executive branch is headed by the President, an elected official who is responsible for overseeing the enforcement of the Federation’s laws. A single term is five years with a single president serving a maximum of two terms. The President is often referred to as the most powerful individual in the Federation and is certainly the most visible personage. They are expected to represent the Federation both domestically and internationally and must serve equally as a legislator, a diplomat, and as a national symbol.

Additionally, the President is commander in chief of the Federation armed forces, putting them in control of one of the largest and most powerful militaries in this part of the Milky Way Galaxy. Such civilian oversight of the military is seen as a key component in ensuring the Federation adheres to its ideals and remains a free, liberal, democratic nation.

The President has limited lawmaking powers; they are able to pass executive orders which pertain to the operation of the federal government as a whole. The President can also propose legislation to the Senate or member states, putting such proposals to public vote, but has no role in the deliberative process. They can also force deadlocked senatorial proposals to go to public vote in order to

ensure important issues do not get bogged down in bureaucracy. The President can also veto bills passed by the Senate, sending them back to be potentially reworked and voted on a second time.

While the processes to run for the Office of the President is open to all the races of the Federation, the position even after the Battle of the Border has historically been held by a Human from Earth or one of its colonies both orbital and terrestrial. It is hoped that in the years ahead that other races will represent the President in order to show the Federation people and its allies that while Humans of Earth were responsible for turning the tide during the First Interstellar War, they are not the only ones running the government.

LEGISLATIVE

The Federation Senate is the primary body of the Federation’s legislative branch. The Senate is composed of 162 individual members after the Battle of the Border with 3 senators per district. They serve terms of 6 years with a single senator serving a maximum of two terms. A third of all seats are up for elections every three years. Each senator is elected in their district by popular vote. Every district has 3 senators representing them, regardless of the size of the district or its population. This is to allow all districts to have an equal voice in representation, instead of districts with more representatives due to its size and/or population.

The Vice President who shares the same terms as the President serves as the Senate Leader. The Senate Leader acts as an arbitrator and facilitator of the legislature’s proceedings. They also serve to bring important matters to and from the President and present said matters to the Senate for deliberation. They also serve as the public figure and voice for the Senate in the public eye, though not in the same level of popularity or degree as the President.

The Senate’s primary responsibility is to create new laws and eliminate old ones, with an emphasis on projecting or protecting the ideals of the Federal Charter and the Constitution. Any senator can propose a bill, which typically passes through several stages of committees before being put forward for a vote. These committees are composed of senators with personal experience in a specific area of policy, such as internal security, international trade, or immigration.

Depending on the nature of the bill, the Senate can either vote on it internally or put it to public referendum. The President or Vice President can force any bill to be put to public vote, but this measure is rarely used. Instead, the Senate votes, requiring a simple majority for proposed bills or a two-thirds majority for amendments or to overturn a presidential veto. Once a bill has been passed, it must be signed into law by the President.

UNITED SYSTEMS OF THE FEDERATION

The Senate also sets the annual federal budget and taxation. Senatorial committees have immense sway in determining the budget. Different committees exist to oversee every aspect of the federal administration, including the military and intelligence agencies. Wrangling over the finer points of the budget can occupy much senatorial time.

JUDICIAL

The Supreme Court serves as the highest court in the Federation and is the head of the judicial branch. It comprises of thirteen justices, all appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The justices serve for life, with the Chief Justice being the most senior.

The primary concern of the Supreme Court is to interpret federal law. This typically implies hearing cases which are related to the conduct of member states, megacorporations, and other interstellar bodies. Most of these cases involve disputes between these entities, or ones which fall outside or transcend their jurisdictions. Though it reserves the right to hear appeals from any lesser court in the Federation, it rarely does so, preferring to follow the high courts of the Federation's constituents to rule on cases which occur entirely within their jurisdictions.

The Supreme Court can declare any law to be in violation of the Federal Charter or the Constitution, nullifying it completely. It never does this without a case challenging the law being brought before it, but these rulings are considered binding and cannot be overruled by either the President or the Senate.

MEMBER STATES

While not nearly as important in a galactic sense from the viewpoint of the other nations, to those with a keen interest in politics, the Federation's constituent governments can be far more fascinating than anything else in the known galaxy. While all governments under the umbrella must follow a few specific rules (they must be democracies and have universal suffrage, and slavery is forbidden), they are allowed great latitude in how they are run. This is to prevent a great deal of change to their governments without replacing them entirely, a measure that would be no different than under Liekan and/or Dexigalian occupation.

One example are the Dulians, one of the Human-based races with canine ears and tails, continue to have a caste-based society, with a government almost completely dominated by the traditional ruling class. While they technically allow

anyone to run for office, cultural pressures keep the Du-Nia rulers firmly in power in the more traditional cities on the planet. Appointed officials remain the domain of the Du-Tor cast, while the Du-Cey continue to work towards less prestigious ends. The main exception to this trend are the few cosmopolitan cities found on the planet where the caste system does not apply.

Other unique variations include one planet ruled by a diplomatic monarchy where a king and/or queen are elected every ten years, another where the governor is the winner of (now non-lethal) hand-to-hand combat, and yet another where all its government officials are to be ordained members of a religion. Of course, these are the exceptions, tending to be viewed as rustic and even somewhat silly by the Federation at large. It is reasoned, however, that if anyone disapproves of living that way, they can easily relocate to somewhere with a government more to their liking.

The majority of local governments in the Federation are much more aligned with the federal government than the fringe cases mentioned above including the recently joined Altora Alliance, and the maneuvering between politicians as they attempt to garner votes can provide great theater. Because Federation voter turnout tends to be decent to low (between 50 percent to as low as 10 percent in places), motivating the electorate by whatever means necessary is tantamount to victory. This can lead to some fairly underhanded campaigns, where every speck of dirt on a candidate's profile comes under a microscope.



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