

Characters

Elder Umarell

Summary

The Elder struggles with feelings of inadequacy because of their unpreparedness for the situation the expedition ends up in. Consequently, they act aloof and prideful. Ultimately, they come to realize the expedition needs a more flexible leader.



Traits

- 🔒 Cryptic: Good luck trying to get a straight answer out of this one! Every conversation takes effort, which is why sometimes it's easier for the MC to bend the rules than ask for the Elder's permission.
- 🪨 Dogmatic: There is little leeway with the Elder. Rules, instructions, protocol all exist because they work. There is certainty and safety in consistency.
- 🎵 Avid toothtoot lover: The Elder used to be in a band in their youth. They played traditional Alterian songs, but they were performed exclusively with toothtoots [alien bagpipes].
- 🙏 Spiritual: In the Plentiful we trust.
- 😞 Given to ill-health: Age has taken its toll and Umarell's body weakens by the day.

Role

The Elder's role in the expedition is to be the crew's guiding force in setting up their first settlement on this new planet. In truth, the Elder is out of their depth, but continuously tries to save face by avoiding questions and people. Therefore, the Elder's relationship with other NPCs consists of polite interactions lacking personal warmth.

For the player, the Elder is there, frankly, to make things difficult. The MC will have to find loopholes that bypass the Elder's rigid requirements.

But the Elder is also a source of knowledge. If you're willing to go through the effort of hearing them complain about everything, you might catch some important insight. Due to being the Elder's assistant, the MC is privy to some of their inner workings. It is the MC the Elder first confides in about their deteriorating health.

Emotional impact: challenge, insight

Imagery: an old tree. Its trunk is hardened and rigid. The lack of flexibility leaves it vulnerable to snapping. In opposition with the MC: a fresh sprout that bends with the wind.

Struggles & Development

"One day I reach the ripe old age of what, 40? And suddenly people look up to me, I am supposed to have the answers for running a nation. Am I really any wiser? I do not feel like I am, but I am here, in a room full of other Elders, so there

must be some truth to it. Before I know it, my words start holding more gravitas, my brow is always furrowed, and I cannot remember a time when I was not an Elder.

But now the Federation decided to put me on a rocket to fly through the vastness of space with a bunch of children. So, I have flown through space and slept for thousands of cycles, and I botched the landing, and I lost the children, and the planet is destroyed, and- and- and-.

Maybe I am losing my grip and the weakness of my body gets reflected in my ability to fulfil my role. Will they uncover it soon – that I am just as confused and scared as they are? But I cannot show it because I am the Elder.

So, I follow protocol. But protocol was not made for this chaos because no one else has had to confront anything like this. Our little experiment of an expedition is uniquely positioned through time and space. Maybe, if I were a younger Alter, I would have marveled at the prospect of being the first of my kind to do something. But I am not young.

Concerning myself with the way things should be rather than the way things are keeps me busy. As long as I do not have to answer questions, I can still maintain a semblance of normality. But these younglings are stirring things without realizing what it means to me – I will not know how to deal with it all, how to help them when they come to me with questions. I will not be their Elder anymore... and then what will I be?

While I may fear the impending approach of my death, I am not dead yet. Perhaps, I can still grow and change. Perhaps, it is not my duty alone to find all the answers. Perhaps, we can learn together and from each other, and by the Plentiful, these younglings are really good at learning!"

- Umarell's Diary Entry