

## Environments.

### Astro-beacon Tiada, the lost frontiers of the Cradle.

That what lies on the third moon of Hares, Tiada lures space fairers like a moth into the flame. A broken world with a sleeping machine. The moon's surface is but black crystalline dust, beset with apocalyptic weather, a place of final destination. Pillars of black crystal rise above the scared lands. This breathing mineral is slowly crawling itself on top of the long-forsaken structures of the Cradle, creating grotesque monuments over the landscape.

The winds howl between the crystallite, almost as if pleading for redemption. Is it hollering? Is it a code? A distress signal? Is the wind giving off a faint radio signal that baits?

So far in the galactic rim, only one light ignites the dome of the heavens. The dying red star Excalibur shines with its vicious vermilion rays scouraging anything that feels bold enough to step in its presence. Tiada is always in a limbo of eternal dawn. Colors of black and red dominate, and only the image of the ancient Astro-beacon breaks the rule. Standing in the gigantic crater, the tower which tried to reach the heavens still pulses with demonic yellow light. The black crystal, as if terrified of the omnipotency of the structure, cowers away from its light. A beacon to guide the children of Cradle now is a twisted phalange reaching to the heavens. A tower of virgin jade seemingly split in places but mended cruelly like a broken bone. Veins run through it with living yellow light, which seems to flicker every time you set your eye on it.

In the shadow of the black crystal and the wailing storm, they live. The children of the Cradle, masked in dystopian tech gear, they survive, awaiting the messiahs to return to the beacon once again. Living in the scraps the Cradle left, they make a home in their black hive chimneys. Chanting data-mantras left behind eons ago, they quiver before Tiada. Like little moons, do they circle the structure; like planets, do they make their orbit around the beacon. Even in death do they become the crystalline to howl and plead for the return.

Excalibur sets for a long trembling moment to put the moon to darkness as the loudspeaker booms again on the beacon, and so do the children cry.

*"For I'm your Saviour that thee have imagined in your vision, I shall fair the stars and rejoin thou to restore the Cradle, for my light will lure me back."*

A dusty hologram quivers on the mosaic floor next to the Tiada:

**Sector X4123 - Astro-beacon "Tiada" project HERMES till fulfillment 34.789 Years of Lazarus. "**

## Short Story

### X-Carrier Garage 12th Floor Under-London

Smoke fills the room as the neon lights try to crawl through it. Loud music disturbs the thick atmosphere. All was decided. All was set. Only one push, and it is all over. How many credits did she spend on this? This was the only way to get out of these gutters. Moma' would have been proud. She finally made it. Only one push, and it is all over. Ivan's Sushi and Kebabs neon sign blinks to turn the room into darkness and back to bubble gum pink. She is in this chair again. Fucken binary prophets and all their bullshit. Their words messed with her head. Is she really thinking of uploading herself? Is she going to do it today and let all of this go? No more shooting with Ake-chan, no more beer brawls down the 7th, and no more Pinky. The neon sign blinks once again as she feels her fingers touching the launch pad. A perfect life in New London, all it takes is a click. Blinding white light fills the room as something drives by the building.

Goyi's gang, she thinks, could recognize those shitty two-cylinders from a mile. A click it is. The light from the motorcycle stop on Pinky, her German Luger P.08z. As suddenly it unlocks instantly as it feels her emotions, even before she understands them. F7 Balistic chip working wonders between weapon and its user's implant.

Goyi's gang! What the fuck! She disconnects the cables from her core, jumping instinctively for her companion, Pinky, and throwing herself on the ground as the first barrage of the submachine guns ricocheted all over the room.

She quickly glances at the upload screen. 99%..... one click. Fuck, fuck, Fuck it! Next time she will do it! Until then, time to take out the trash!

"Pinky, you ready?" shouts Slyera as she knocks down the door with her chrome arm.

***Welcome to the 12th floor of Under London.***

Warm Winds.

***A blog post on Enoa world lore.***

Lush green fig grove. Shadows that protect you from the blazing sun, how comfortable and relaxing are the lands of the east.

"How long have I been here?" - wondered Darma, taking comfort from the soft cushions under her back.

A little girl with morning ash skin runs outside to the balcony. Her hair is braided, and her smile is soft and genuine.

"It would be about time for her to go to the pits," thought Darma while looking at the little lady.

The girl's limp never went away from that night. She jumped on top of the rail, gracefully balancing, looking out to the bazaar and the newly arrived marakien caravan.

"Is it them?" - shouted the little girl, "Is it the legion?"

Darma looked at the girl with a wry smile.

"You know very well, dear, we don't talk about the legion in this household."

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Markar had no sons, for he was blessed with a daughter, which he prized more than anything. He stalled every year to give her to the pits, making up excuses of all sorts. Markar brought her with the legion to the North to fight the rebellion of Ur. He took her to sail to the first marakian colony. She was there when the hordes of gray were slaughtered and killed. Markar never thought love would find the girl in these wastelands, but it did. The morning smell of ash, the sounds of whistling scimitars, the taste of blood, the exhilarating feeling of victory, and the hot winds of the deserts, all of it she loved, for she fell in love with battle. Whatever Markar did, she never obeyed. She was primal, savage, and cunning, and he knew the time had come for her to travel to the pits. Thus, bleak sadness took over Markar, the Vizir of Steel, for no longer would he see his ever-smiling girl again.

The pits knew not of such a ferocious and vicious fighter. The girl became a woman, and the woman became a legend. She earned the 9th chariot of Shamas, the Tyrant of the Red Sands, and many other titles in her ever-burning quest to the top. She marched with the Burning Legion from dawn to dusk. Harkar was the Fist of the legion, but one and all knew that she bore the steel banner.

She rose closer to the top with every year and challenged him, the one who watches from the minarets. Were her ambitions too high? Had she no right for it? But on the night before the challenge. Everything changed.

Why was Harkar so weak? Had she not trained him well? Would she be here if he had fought like a man, not like a dog? They caught them under the rays of Manu, like cowards and jackals. They were about to string her up for treason. But is it treason to be the strongest? Was it fate or a grim joke of the gods? The Conqueror of the Bronze Peaks was not hanged due to the law of the seed, for no one shall kill one bearing a child. Instead, she was exiled forever. Everything was lost, the mother's bracelets taken, prideless and alone.

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Darma glanced out the window, and there they flew in the wind, the red flags of the legion. The smell of morning ash, the sounds of scimitars, the taste of blood, and the adrenaline rush came back in one sudden surge. She uncoiled her rich turban to let her hair fall to her shoulders. She still wore them braided.

"How many years has it been?" - she wondered.

Darma let the hot winds of the desert touch her face. Small bits of sand hit her skin. She was alive again, and she was once again with them in the wastes.

"Mother, why are you smiling? You look so funny?" - said the little girl curiously. Carefully fixing her turban, Darma looked at her girl for a long moment. And said,

"I see you have been practicing your moves; I'm so glad to see it."

Darma took one last breath of the hot desert wind and returned to the fig grove's calm sanctuary with a child's beaming smile.