

Abridged History of the Avians

Subject to change - revision 34.

- Pre-Ascendance (E0):
 - Avians languish as moderately-intelligent hunter-scavengers, near the top of their food chain, showing no interest in technological advancement. Over a quarter of Avos' surface area is barren scrublands due to the lack of sunlight, though the hazy hydrocarbon atmosphere provides ample sustenance for large, slow-growing plant life (which sustains the Avians).
- Ascendance (E0):
 - The automated robotic probes of an advanced alien race punch through Avos' atmosphere and run sweeps for intelligent life, finding only the Avians. Two orbital cycles later, a small fleet of the (unnamed) alien race's ships emerges from FTL travel and forms an orbiting base above the surface of the planet. As the terraforming machines go to work, samples of the Avian population are taken and studied.
 - After thirty lunar cycles, the hydrocarbon atmosphere's composition has been extensively modified to allow more light through without negatively impacting the currently-existing biosphere. The planet's moon (formerly dark and mostly inert) has also been changed: the inactive magma core is heated to the equivalent of Jovian core temperatures, and injected with millions of tons of slowly-decaying radioactive substances, with a half-life of 100,000 years, to ensure that it stays at those temperatures. The moon's molten surface now outputs as much radiation as a (very) young star, and will continue to do so for tens of thousands of years to come.
 - This is not the full extent of the alien race's terraforming, though: deserts are seeded with forests of trees that grow hundreds of metres tall, and small populations of various alien creatures are planted in locations that will support them.
 - Back on the orbital base, the sample population of Avians is being genetically enhanced and given knowledge of advanced alien technology - from simple combustion, to the art of constructing stable stone buildings, to sub-light particle acceleration (with the sole exception being the technology of space travel, though the building blocks for that particular field were supplied). This population, after just one orbital cycle, is taken back to the planet's surface with the technology required to build a society. Leading them is the Avian known as Kluex, chosen by the aliens for his above-average intelligence and physical prowess.
- Post-Ascendance: Kluex's Reign (E1R1):
 - Kluex leads his band of Avians to build the beginnings of a mighty civilization; they and their children build many temples for the express purpose of worshipping the alien culture that caused them to Ascend. However, the aliens' plan goes awry: instead of staying separate, the post-Ascendance Avians interbreed with the genetically distinct pre-Ascendance Avians, and the resulting half-breed, though still very much Avian, is not quite up to par with the original plan for the race.
 - After fifty years as the supreme leader of a budding civilization, Kluex retires his

seat (E1R1Y50/E1R2Y0) and styles himself as an arbiter of justice - as an Avian still in his prime, he cuts an imposing figure as he metes justice upon those who break his strict laws. He is loved, feared, and revered all at the same time, and even before his death, cults begin to form around him, worshipping the very ground he walks upon.

- (E1R2Y35) Sadly, all good things must come to an end, and Kluex's reign as the most advanced Avian to ever live is no exception. He suddenly disappears thirty-five years into the second ruler's reign (at this point, his life has lasted over 150% of the average Avian's life-span, 125 years), and after a brief mourning period, his life's achievements are celebrated in hundreds of ceremonies across Avos. Some say that he was chosen by the gods to ascend to the Aether and judge the souls entering the afterlife, but others dismiss those claims as mere rumour-mongering, and claim that Kluex was secretly killed by political rivals.
- Post-Kluex: Stargazing and Evangelization (E1R5Y15)
 - Decades after Kluex's death, following a long period of political and cultural instability, the Avians begin to turn their gaze towards the stars. As space travel was not one of the technologies given to the Avians by the aliens, they spend over two hundred years developing the technologies required to explore and sustain themselves amongst the cosmos. By the time their spacefaring technology has been perfected, the Avians have passed into their Second Era (E2R1), where Kluex (the winged Arbiter who controls access to the Aether) has long since left living memory and has been elevated to the status of a deity. All Avians perform observance ceremonies to Kluex daily, and his revered temples slowly become heavily-guarded places of worship.
 - In the fortieth year of the Second Era (E2R2Y15), the Avians finally find themselves starbound, sending out long-term scouting missions in an attempt to make contact with other spacefaring civilizations. Their preliminary efforts are unsuccessful, though they *do* succeed in placing shrines to Kluex on any habitable planets they find as a sort of interstellar cairn.
- Remainder of the Second Era: Reconsolidation (E2R4-R25)
 - After spending four centuries fruitlessly attempting to find sentient life among the stars, the Avians begin to re-consolidate, with the incumbent rulers starting the movement by recalling all starbound ships in what their critics dub as "The Great Withdrawal". The grand spaceports of Avos are inundated with hundreds of ships, and many are abandoned in stable orbits around the planet, to be reclaimed at a later date.
 - The next three centuries of the Avian civilization's history are spent in a state of political turmoil due to the sudden increase in planetary population: new rulers come at a greater rate than before, with their predecessors succumbing to "accidents", assassinations, and diplomatic backstabbing. Only one tenet unites one ruler from the next - that of xenophobia. However, throughout the fermenting troubles, Kluex's temples are protected and continue to survive as heavily-guarded sites of refuge and safety.
 - Thankfully, research centers, funded through taxation of the populace and manned

by the most intelligent Avians, continue to search the stars through the usage of remotely-controlled radio telescopes situated on foreign planets, abandoned during the Withdrawal. They are largely ignored and derided by those in power due to the rampant xenophobia plaguing the Avian populace, though they remain operational due to laws laid down by Kluex himself long ago.

- As the Second Era draws to its close, an announcement is made by the remaining stargazers via planet-wide information networks: **sentient beings have been discovered in outer space.**
- The Upheaval, Part 1: Politics (E3R1)
 - The discovery of sentient life sends the entirety of the Avian civilization into a deep shock - the xenophobia pervading the Avian psyche prevents any proper action being taken for years.
 - That is, until two factions begin to form under opposing philosophies, known as:
 - The Stargazers: with a name originally assigned to them in jest by their opponents, the Stargazers believe that the Avians should once again spread their (metaphorical) wings to the stars, where they will be able to accomplish deeds that will cause Kluex to look upon them favorably in the afterlife. Their faction rises in direct opposition to:
 - The Loyalists: a faction backed by the incumbent rulers and roughly 60% of the Avian population, especially the under-educated socio-economic working class roughly equivalent to the human *serfs*. They strongly believe that the Avian civilization should remain confined to a single star system, and that Avos must be defended vigorously against all invaders. In short, the Loyalists are only loyal to their ideals.
 - (E3R1Y9L93) The Stargazers attempt a non-violent political coup against the reigning Loyalist ruler, but are thwarted at the last moment by a quick-thinking Loyalist clerk when he notices discrepancies in some submitted paperwork. Unknown to the public, this incident only deepens the enmity between the factions, removing the possibility of a peaceful resolution to their conflict.
 - Almost immediately after the failed coup, the Loyalists begin a legislative crackdown on the Stargazer school of thought, attempting (but failing, by a small degree) to outlaw interstellar travel outright.
 - Thus begins a lengthy propaganda campaign by both factions, each striving to besmirch the other with accusations of wrongdoing of various sorts.
 - (E3R2) In the interests of keeping this document concise, the resolution of the political conflict happens accordingly: the Loyalists, upon a Stargazer ruler being elected, dispense with politics and undertake an attempt on the leader's life. They are foiled by the ruler's personal security personnel, and the Stargazers, though reluctant, are forced to declare war on the Loyalists.
- The Upheaval, Part 2: War (E3R2Y1)
 - The Stargazer-aligned research labs give the aforementioned a distinct advantage in weapons technology, which contrasts strongly with the Loyalist advantage: a larger standing army.

- In the brutal conflict which follows the attempted military coup, huge numbers of Avians are slain on hundreds of blood-soaked battlefields around the planet. Eventually, though, after years of back-and-forth skirmishing, the Stargazers gain the upper hand after an experimental Loyalist electromagnetic pulse (EMP) weapon accidentally detonates *en route* to a battle, and destroys the entire (electronically-stored) battle plan of the Loyalist leadership. Despite this setback, the Loyalists continue their aggression, and the war is eventually decided by a one-on-one duel between the leaders of the respective factions.
- (Y7L72H2) The duel takes place in the largest temple on Avos, and both generals are equipped with experimental wings built to give their wearers a greater freedom of movement. Coincidentally (or not), the wings also lend their wearers a visual similarity to Kluex, the winged arbiter of justice.
- (L72H15) Following a lengthy confrontation, the leader of the Stargazers emerges victorious, with her mechanical wings laying in tatters around her feathered shoulders. The Loyalists begin to lay down their arms, though isolated pockets of resistance remain (but are quickly wiped out).
- The Upheaval, Part 3: Peace (E3R2Y8)
 - The following years are spent by the Stargazers working towards two goals: reconstruction and reconsolidation. Behind the scenes, a third goal is set by the Stargazer leader: to continue communicating with the sentient life whose existence triggered the Upheaval (a term given to the event hundreds of years after the fact) in the first place. Unbeknownst to her, a research center in the far north of Avos had been compiling information on the spaceborne entities throughout the war.
 - Thousands upon thousands of lunar cycles pass, with the clandestine transmissions being sent at a snail's pace due to the limitations of the speed of light. Eventually, though, a sufficient amount of information about the alien race is collected for a dossier to be formed for the Avians' leader: they are a race of **sentient robots**, roaming the universe for no apparent reason. (See "**Dossier on Extraavosian Artificial Life**" under the Avian Literature subsection of this document)
 - Armed with this information, the ruler makes the executive decision to move forward with the construction of a research vessel, equipped with an experimental faster-than-light drive to shorten the journey. The engineers' preliminary estimate is that the assembly will take around two years, but difficulties with the manufacture and testing of the FTL drive stretch the assembly time to five years.
 - Upon the completion of the research vessel, dubbed the *Spirit of Avos*, a crew of young professional spacefarer Avians is selected. Each Avian on the ship's crew is given extensive training in both diplomacy and robot interaction.
 - Finally, launch day arrives, and the *Spirit of Avos* leaves from Avos' principal spaceport without much fuss, though several independent ship-watchers are baffled when the ship disappears from their sensor grids without a trace (upon entering FTL travel) about half a lightyear from the Avian star system.
 - The *Spirit of Avos* spends half a year in FTL space, and emerges near the local robot base. To its pilots' surprise, the vessel is quickly surrounded by a protective escort

and taken to an environmentally controlled sub-station where an emissary unit waits to greet the Avian representatives. (See “**An Account of the First Contact between the Avians and the Glitch**”)

- The Avians spend the local equivalent of approximately twenty lunar cycles with the robots, exchanging information about their language, history, and technology, and return to Avos with a huge amount of knowledge and information to process.
- Contact (E4)
 - After another half-year in FTL travel, cooped up in a (relatively) tiny metal capsule, the Avian envoys arrive back in the Avian star system (again, baffling independent ship-watchers upon the sudden appearance of their ship) and land home on Avos, where they are promptly pulled into a research station (the 5th, where the first transmissions were intercepted) for immediate debriefing.
 - (E4R1Y1L96) The information gathered by the diplomatic party immediately prompts the construction of several new research centers around Avos dedicated to data processing. Their usefulness is proven almost immediately, with analysis of the robots’ internal systems netting the Avian science efforts valuable information on technologies required by machines to process organic substances.
 - Despite the sudden opening of new research centers, and the strange new technologies emerging from them, the Avian public is still unaware that the *Spirit of Avos*’ mission ever happened - an intentional gambit by the incumbent ruling party to allow them to formulate a plan on how to inform the Avian race that they are not alone in the universe.
 - Their public relations strategists spend almost a year mulling over ideas, before deciding to run an intentional-leak scenario. To achieve this, every researcher on the planet is summoned to their local research center, where the planet’s leader (now nearly at the end of her term) informs them via video-link of the alien race’s existence (and their peaceful intentions), and advises them that the information they’re being told is privileged information - only the researchers must know. (See the “**Privileged Information**” series)
 - (E4R1Y2L113) The plan is a rousing success. Before long, barring some hiccups along the way, every Avian on the planet is aware of the robot race, and the pervasive Avian xenophobic attitude slowly fades away to one of curiosity and goodwill.
 - Upon the success of her plan, the current leader makes her final preparations to step down and, twenty lunar cycles after her address (detailed in “**Privileged Information, Part 2**”), finally takes her place among the ranks of the former leaders of the Avian civilization.
 - The next elected leader pushes, as a matter of principle, an aggressive-expansion strategy which, after 10 years, has resulted in a significantly increased Avian power base. The Avians are no longer restricted to their homeworld: given the proper life-support technology, any Avian can survive on any planet.
 - (R2Y10) As the number of settled planets rises, the amount of resources available for research and worship do too. The Word of Kluex is spread, if not across the

galaxy, across the areas populated by the Avians, and the robots' FTL drive design is dramatically overhauled. This allows further, quicker jumps, with higher precision. The new capabilities, however, are not used except for when liaisons with the robots are required.

- Second Contact (E4R23)
 - Time passes, and the Avians become interested in life other than themselves, much in the manner of the Ascendants - they begin to land probes on habitable planets, and observe many fascinating samples of life from across their small part of the galaxy. One particularly interesting lifeform that the Avians discover is a sentient plant which survives (and thrives) through a combination of photosynthesis and ingestion of biomatter. These Avian-sized, savage, aggressive lifeforms are labeled the **Florans**.
 - (R24Y7) Intrigued by the biological processes which allow Florans to exist, an Avian research centre undertakes an initiative to study the Florans, their culture, and their planet, dubbed "FL1-4" for its place in the Floran solar system.
 - No lack of discoveries hinders the research effort - in fact, the information gathered on FL1-4 is beyond fascinating to the researchers, and one discovery in particular sparks a small political crisis with the Avians' only known spaceborne contacts: the robots.
 - While scanning FL1-4, the orbiting Avian research vessel finds traces of robot habitation - in particular, a field near the equator strewn with parts of dismembered robots, adjacent to a large blast scar (partly overgrown).
 - Armed with this knowledge, the reigning Avian ruler contacts the nearest robot sub-station and demands to speak with their leading unit. Upon the ruler's arrival (the first off-world sojourn by an Avian ruler), the truth is revealed, though it was never specifically hidden: the robots conducted a research mission on the very same planet, but lost their entire research crew due to a surprise attack from the hyper-aggressive locals (who had been raiding them regularly). Their ship, after an unspecified period of time, engaged auto-pilot and left the planet of its own volition.
 - This is also the conflict that was referred to in the first intercepted robot transmission. ("**Dossier on Extraavosian Artificial Life**")
 - The Avians continue studying the Florans for hundreds of years, but never land on FL1-4 - the Florans exhibit an uncanny ability to break down and reverse-engineer foreign technology, subsume it into their already-existing technology. The technology they gained from salvaging robot bodies is, thankfully, limited (due to the robots' own design limitations).
 - Catastrophe strikes without notice or warning: a gas leak in a reserve ship re-supplying the Avian research vessel causes a huge explosion, instantly killing the crew and disabling the ship's autopilot. The supply ship burns through FL1-4's atmosphere and crashes on the surface - the secrets of space travel are suddenly laid bare for the Floran civilization to unearth (literally).
 - Observing this with some alarm, the Avian research vessel calls for military

intervention - a blockade of the planet to stop the Florans from spreading into space.

- The blockade arrives promptly, but is of little effect. The Florans, in a move which the Avians would have never considered, activate the FTL drive on their new ship while it is still within FL1-4's atmosphere, causing a gigantic explosion (razing approximately 3000km² of forest) and allowing the Florans to slip right through the Avian blockade.
 - This triggers an ongoing conflict between the Avians and the Florans, with the Avians only trying to restrict the Florans to their home system (and maybe convince them to worship Kluex). The Florans, on the other hand, wish only to spread, multiply, and consume.
- With the Floran-Avian conflict raging, the Avians once again turn their eyes to the stars; they tire of the robots' company. The remote radio telescopes are once more activated, and hundreds of automated probes are sent out in random directions in the hopes of finding someone - or anyone.

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