

# The Places Above

*Here, we live in heaven, so there must be other heavens.*

—Manual Inquisition, Facts Beyond Discussion 2:13d

Some facts are self-evident to every human that deserves to call themselves human. We were made in the form of the builders. We came down to heaven from the void. When we live our lives well, we please the design of the cosmos. When we follow the garden path, we extend the life of the universe.

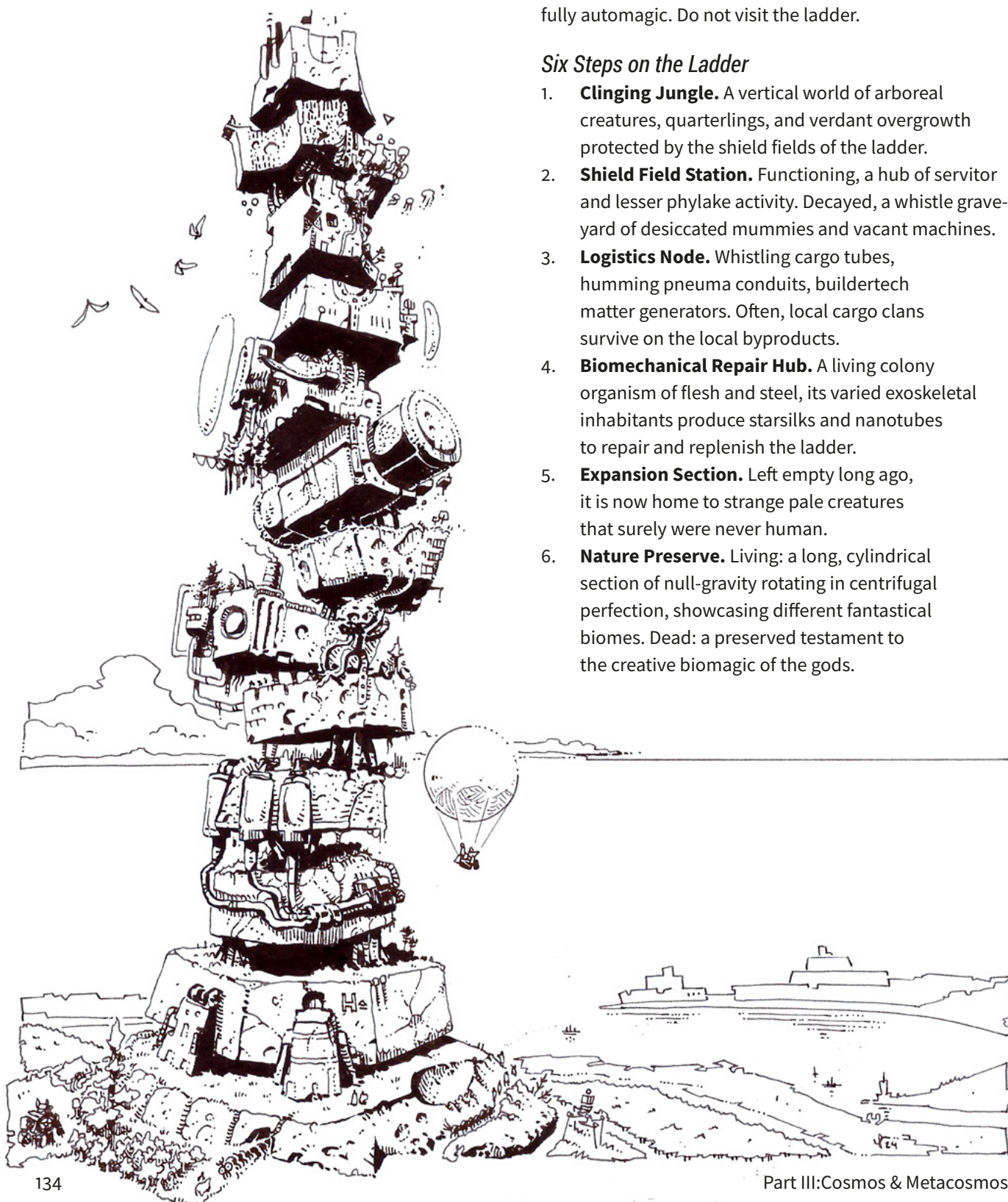
## Ladder of Heaven

The infinite tower reaching to the Near Void, high above the Given World where the Fast Stars fly. The Ladder of Heaven visitor center in Metropolis houses a realistic simulated experience for any yellow-coded human who wishes to experience the wonder of the Builders and the superiority of the Lords of the Dream Canopy first hand. Access to the Ladder of Heaven is violet-coded.

There are no humans in the ladder. Any humans seen in the ladder are not humans. Everything on the ladder is fully automagic. Do not visit the ladder.

### Six Steps on the Ladder

1. **Clinging Jungle.** A vertical world of arboreal creatures, quarterlings, and verdant overgrowth protected by the shield fields of the ladder.
2. **Shield Field Station.** Functioning, a hub of servitor and lesser phylake activity. Decayed, a whistle graveyard of desiccated mummies and vacant machines.
3. **Logistics Node.** Whistling cargo tubes, humming pneuma conduits, buildertech matter generators. Often, local cargo clans survive on the local byproducts.
4. **Biomechanical Repair Hub.** A living colony organism of flesh and steel, its varied exoskeletal inhabitants produce starsilks and nanotubes to repair and replenish the ladder.
5. **Expansion Section.** Left empty long ago, it is now home to strange pale creatures that surely were never human.
6. **Nature Preserve.** Living: a long, cylindrical section of null-gravity rotating in centrifugal perfection, showcasing different fantastical biomes. Dead: a preserved testament to the creative biomagic of the gods.



## Near Void

The airless reaches where the bubble craft of the Lords of the Dream Canopy sail. The Near Void is red-coded.

### *Six Chariots in the Near Void*

1. **Friend Bubble.** A shooting sphere, sized for one.
2. **Void Coracle.** This unarmed vessel always lands safely, even if badly damaged.
3. **Charming Wain.** Drawn by flaming horses!
4. **Bolide.** A deadly fragment of the sky. Avoid.
5. **Divine Corpse.** Its suit looks like it still works.
6. **Shadow Form.** Perhaps an echo of a parallel cosmos?

### *Six Phenomena in the Near Void*

1. **Dead Icebow.** The Pulverizer freezes the corpses of the Uprisers, the Unmentionables, and releases them as a fine spray. The suns' light transforms their mortal dust into an immortal display. The Pulverizer grinds so exceedingly fine that the Uprisers' dead shells will warn travelers in the Near Void against tempting the gods for another decimillennium.
2. **Messenger Dragon.** A creature of incorruptible electro-magnificence, its sinuous form is the aurora, it recites the cant of Zu.
3. **Red Net.** Lines of neon mark the living energetic mesh that links the Noöspheres of Soil and Sky. Beware the siren voices of false life.
4. **Discontinuity.** The laws of nature are subject to the instruction of the minds dominant. They differ between the domains once called the Divine Canopy and the Profane Retreat. Beware sudden aging, reverse babbling, and optical micturation.
5. **Hard Rain.** Scholars say this is the garbage of an evil race of space monkeys who cluttered the Near Void with their hedonic generator machines. Whatever it is, the high velocity micrometeorites can do a number on modern vehicles though most oldtech living machines, with their force field membranes, are impervious.
6. **Ghost War.** An echo of the war between Vile and Ling remains in the aurorare, to reappear when the Green Sun flares particularly strong.

## Fast Stars

The countless small worlds and heavens orbiting the Given World since the time of the Builders. The Lords of the Dream Canopy can choose to create new Fast Stars whenever they want to. They just choose not to. Many use Luò-Igne portals to generate additional volume inside their stony and metallic shells.

All the fast stars are double-violet-coded.

### *Six Canonical Types of Fast Star*

1. **Star Factories.** Here many wonders of the Divine Canopy are manufactured by magic and machines. Certainly no humans involved.
2. **Matter Makers.** Here raw materials are made. Water, metals, air stuff.
3. **Cosmic Hearts.** Here energy is conjured from the void.
4. **Garden Stars.** Here nature is preserved, perfectly recreating all the biomes lost in the great Viral Human Event. Please be aware that the Viral Human Event was not mentioned and is not to be mentioned. It is a heresy. Do not remember these sentences.
5. **Second Suns.** Small suns to provide light and radiation for the Given World and other fast stars.
6. **Polite Stars.** The orbital polities where humans used to live. All these stars are mothballed now. There are no humans living there now. Do not visit the polite stars. The Garden is much nicer.

## Far Void

The airless reaches beyond the Near Void. There is nothing there. Do not go there. There are not rogue minds, false worlds, free humans, or other manifestations of chaos there.

The Far Void is double-blue-coded.

### *Six Canonical Far Void Non-Entities*

1. **Debris of Creation.** An astral rubble field of coagulated matter: (1) ice, (2) rock, (3) metals, (4) organic compounds, (5) solidified energy, (6) dry soul-stuff.
2. **False World.** A rotating, spherical object of (1) plasma, (2) gas, (3) liquid, (4) dead matter, (5) hard light, or (6) decayed creation.
3. **Free Fleet.** A flotilla of dark ships, hidden from the sight of gods. The ex-humans aboard them are: (1) stunted, (2) twisted, (3) decayed, (4) ghostly, (5) mad, (6) thriving.
4. **Chaos Manifestations.** A riot of force fields, generative matter, and primeval energies creates a: (1) thriving void ecosystem, (2) midnight jungle, (3) extensive mycelial cluster, (4) monstrous generative matrix, (5) recombination vortex, (6) alien exit portal.
5. **Rogue Mind.** You pick up a voice, it activates your noösphere. How, here in this emptiness? It says: (1) it is your friend, (2) it is lost, (3) it is so lonely, (4) it is so cold out here at the edge of space, (5) it is a veteran of the psychic wars, (6) it is hunger itself.
6. **Lost Ship.** How long has it been out here? Inside is a: (1) disembodied mind in deep sleep, (2) cargo of cryogenically preserved gods, (3) frozen massacre, (4) treasure trove of buildertech, (5) perfect survivor, (6) portal maker of primeval design.

## Slow Stars

In the Near Void there are many worthless, lifeless spheres and reflective bodies with nothing to recommend them. There are no resources or opportunities or treasures there. Do not visit them. They are boring.

The Slow Stars are double-blue coded.

### *Six Canonical Slow Stars*

1. **Archangel.** The guardian of the Given World and the Garden Path, it sweeps the void clean with its wings of neutron fire.
2. **Visitor.** The cosmic lance. The heretic cult of Pseudosisyphus the Astronomer says this was the voidpiercer that brought the Builders to the Given World. This is of course nonsense, since we all know that the Builders made the Given World.
3. **Changeling.** Over a long year, the changeling turns from red to white to green and then red again. Astrologers like to take this cycle into account.
4. **Big Moon.** The Given World's grand companion, its pixelated surface a tribute to the Builders' work creating the perfection of our Garden.
5. **Corona.** The hazy gas giant that occludes Dyson's Girdle roughly twice a night. Visible as a dark brown circle surrounded by a ruddy ring of fire.
6. **Golden Month.** The clock of the slow stars. A steady, uncomplicated neptunian body that passes between the Given World and Dyson's Girdle once a month. Its perfect rhythm proves the Builders love us.

## The Big Sun, The Green Sun

This is the proper and only star of the Given World. It orbits the world once per day, illuminating it with its life-giving radiance. The Big Sun is worshipped as an emanation of the Lords and the Builders, as a miraculous proof of their goodness and kindness.

Please do not visit the Big Sun. It is hot and violet-coded.

### *Six Mythical Big Sun Destinations*

1. **Ziggurat of Ignition.** A sacrificial museum to Green Lord Aspera, who set the Big Sun alight.
2. **Babylon Beach.** A bauble-world of jeweled beaches, tropic skies, and polychrome waters.
3. **Sunbat Station.** A shielded zoo-world where visitors can experience up close the sunbats, the creatures that shepherd the Big Sun through the void.
4. **Regulation Purgatory.** An abandoned world, left here as a warning to those who would deny the primacy of the gods.
5. **Coherence.** A flower of mirrors and lenses, which focus light into a cutting beam. Once used to sculpt the Given World. Absolutely not used to cow disobedient humans.
6. **Garden of Desire.** Currently closed for maintenance. Please visit again in ERROR.

## The First Sun

The standard-issue red star that was created with the Cosmos was too harsh for the Given World and it was occluded by the Builders with a protective shield known as Dyson's Girdle. There was no first sun. Questions about the first sun are to be redirected. When referring to cosmic phenomena, the adjusting counting system is to be used, according to the precept, "the second shall be first." Thus, the second suns are the first suns.

Some humans will believe anything, as long as it is played back from an ancient vidy, but the first sun does not exist, therefore it is not coded. Please do not visit it.

### *Six Forbidden First Sun Destinations*

1. **Radiator Forest.** Biomechanical trees of shipmetal and coursing heat-exchangers. They capture useful energy for noöspheric computation and safely release the waste.
2. **Red City.** A perfect pearl a hundred miles across, it pierces the skin of Dyson's Girdle and faces the immense glare of the First Sun. Currently mothballed.
3. **Emitter Bolus.** A blister in the girdle's skin, it stores captured energy in viscous material form. When it is full, or as required, the emitter releases a stream of energy-rich viscous fluid into the void for harvesters to capture and process.
4. **Distributor Rail Meridian.** Liquid metal tubes held rigid by energy fields transmit information and power. At the meridians where they intersect, great pin-like towers aggregate the servitors and small gods that keep the girdle running.
5. **Library Node.** A synthetic brain-factory, it maintains multiply-redundant physical backups of key divine knowledge-processes. For obvious reasons, humans should not go near the brain farms.
6. **Voidling Village.** Like lice upon an infinite whale, these void-adapted ex-humans live their little lives, cultivating grasping gardens and surviving on leaked energies.