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History of Mars

Eons before the rise of mankind, before any creature drew breath on any planet, there was a supreme Intellect, guarding the Void of Existence from the Dark Ones who would destroy the blanket-like folds of space and time. The Guardian Intellect existed, and waited, with nearly infinite patience, for unrecorded and unfathomable millennia, guarding against the Dark Ones. Yet that patience had limits, and the Guardian Intellect grew bored with the Void that was all existence. Being neither good nor evil in any classical sense, the Intellect thought nothing of using its vast power to manipulate existence itself, creating energy and matter within the Void with no more than a stray thought.

The burst of creation caught the attention of the Dark Ones. The Intellect began to concentrate on this new creation, this lack of Void. From the attention, form began to settle on the amorphous bubble of primordial matter. An avalanche of meaning began to shape the primordial matter, scattering it through the Void that now became the Aether of the universes. Planets formed, along with stars, asteroids, nebulae and all the other myriad celestial bodies that now inhabit reality. For a few more eons, the Intellect was occupied with its new hobby of Creation. Sensing this activity distracted the Guardian Intellect, the Dark Ones waited for an opportune moment to strike at the Creation, ending it, the Intellect, and all Existence, so that only they would remain, unquestioned masters of Entropy.

Though distracted, the Guardian Intellect maintained a constant watch on all parts of Existence, both the Aether and the Void. The Dark Ones used their power to create anomalies within the Aether to distract the Intellect further, but these minor irregularities were of no consequence to the Intellect. Indeed, it had begun to realize that something was missing in this marvelous Creation: companions. The Intellect began to realize it was alone but for the Devourers it guarded against. Thus, the Intellect created beings to inhabit its worlds.

Skvani

The first race born out of the Intellect were amphibious telepaths, the Skvani. The Skvani were an agrarian race who delighted in their advanced aquaculture, raising fish and other crops of the abundant seas. Being amphibious, they would venture into the land but they had little interest in the strange furry creatures that inhabited dry land. The Skvani became obsessed with the improvement of their technology and their culture began a scientific race toward finding better methods for farming the seas. The wealth that came to the Skvani through their advancing technology allowed them the time to form a great society deep in the primordial Martian oceans, and over time they dominated the other species on the lush planet with the exception of one: the vicious, shark-like Lalk.

The Skvani reached the height of their technology at a time before the dinosaurs rose on Earth. They began to splice the genetic material of the flora and fauna of their homeworld, creating relatively benign designs intended to make their lives easier, things such as bioengineered homes and improved production of their aquaculture. Then came their first encounters with the extremely xenophobic Lalk. Without warning, the Lalk attacked the peaceful Skvani in their homes, slaughtering the males and the young, and stealing the majority of the female Skvani for slave labor.

Enraged, the Skvani turned their bioengineering prowess to the development of devastating weapons and creatures of war. After a long and bloody war that exterminated the Lalk, the Skvani returned home to find they had been infected by a Lalk-designed plague and could no longer create offspring. This is when the Genetic Council was created. The remaining Skvani women and children were gathered together and placed in secured facilities for the protection of the race. Every individual underwent gene testing and genetic manipulation therapy, giving a part of themselves individually in order to improve the whole race. Their efforts began to pay off and soon their modified genetic code was producing the slave race known as the Grays.

Exile from Home

When the second sun of the Skvani’s home solar system began to expand and grow blue, it boiled away most of the seas and rivers on the planet. Despite their advanced technology, the Skvani were only able to watch as their home began to change from a lush, watery paradise to a barren desert. For the Skvani, it was only a matter of time before they would be forced to leave their home, a once beautiful paradise turned to desolate rock.

Once again, the Skvani turned to technology to save them. Anticipating the destruction of their home planet if it remained in its current location, the greatest scientists of the Skvani race developed an engine that would drive their entire planet through the folds of the Aether. Other scientists perfected a means of indefinite hibernation in perfect stasis. The travel would be slow, but the Skvani generations that were to come could hibernate safely in subterranean crèches, protected from the inhospitable surface until a new solar system could be reached. Only the Genetic Council, unquestioned rulers of the Skvani, would remain awake, handing down their titles from generation to generation.

Starship Mars

From deep inside their protected crèches the Skvani race drifted through the folds of the Aether for eons. The majority of their race waited silently, relieved from the basic needs of life through their hibernation, as the Genetic Council dispatched their Gray slaves to other worlds. The Grays spent millennia gathering data to find the solar system that would best suit the needs of their masters. The Grays
Sea Bottoms began to fill once more and the ground became saturated with the waters of life. The Skvani were awakened, and emerged upon the surface of their world for the first time since leaving their home galaxy.

For a few thousand years, life was good on Mars. Relying on their numerous slaves for all their needs, the Skvani became useless hedonists, craving stimulation and pleasure after being so long deprived of sensation while in stasis. Their drive for improved scientific knowledge gradually passed, and their experiments, both foul and noble, came to an end. The Skvani culture slipped into stagnation, relying on the relics of their formerly dynamic civilization.

A massive and totally unexpected solar flare caused a second Cataclysm. Radiation swept the planet, penetrating the thin atmosphere and killing most of the Skvani. The survivors retreated again to their ancient subterranean stasis chambers, and the Genetic Council called for their Gray slaves to move the planet once again. But the massive engines that were used to push Mars through the Void were mere wreckage after thousands of years of neglect in the moist atmosphere of the planet. At last, even the Genetic Council entered stasis, leaving their loyal Grays to watch over them until Mars could be made hospitable again.

Races of Mars
Abandoned by their Overlords, all of the slave races (except the ever-loyal Grays) spread across the surface, abandoning all posts. The former slaves made new civilizations across the dying planet. The four slave races that escaped the Skvani and survived the solar flare were the Ruan (Red Martians), the Gaal (Green Martians), the Balee (Beelzebenn) and the mysterious Askavaal (White Martians). The Ruan, assistant engineers to the Grays and heirs to the remaining fragments of Skvani technology built massive city-states, with towers that soared into the heavens and beautiful airships to travel between them. The Gaal, formerly a labor caste of slaves, carved their kingdoms into the rocks and eddies creating for themselves aviary homes deep in the Martian mountains. The Balee, once herders for the Skvani livestock started their world migration, a continual circumnavigation of the Red Planet over the Sea Bottom that continues to the present day. Finally, after a great war with the Ruan that almost destroyed the White Martians, the remaining Askavaal disappeared into the sands and are rumored to live deep within the bowels of the Red Planet itself.

After thousands of years, they even forgot their Skvani overlords, except as creation myths and ancient ruins. As the planet drifted through the Aether, orbiting a sun not really its own, their increasingly feral descendants waged nearly continuous wars with one another.

Earthly Colonization of Mars
The Great Powers came in Aetherships to colonize the other worlds of the Solar system, neither knowing nor caring that these worlds were already inhabited. The Powers came to take the land and to expand their power bases as well as to bring their religions and their cultures to foreign and (to them) more barbaric peoples.

The European empires of Great Britain and Germany that first arrived on the planet they called Mars, with its red skies and unpredictable storms, in 1915. The first attempts at interplanetary colonization nearly met with disaster, but after great hardship, the British colony of Victoriana and observed other cultures and species, taking genetic samples for examination and manipulation. They took livestock, minerals, raw materials, technology and machines and finally they took people of various races for their genetic material. The resources of a hundred planets fed the Genetic Council and the Grays and helped to keep the majority of the Skvani race in hibernation. People were used as slaves as well as for food and the various aliens eventually began to mutate under the influence of the Skvani. The Grays were faithful and served their purposes but the Skvani needed to know with certainty that they would be able to utilize the planets they found. Thus, they set about trying to create a hybrid race of themselves mixed with the genetic code of other races.

The Genetic Council conducted fell experiments on specimens from the various planets, resulting in mixed success at breeding hybrids. The majority of the creatures utterly failed, for the biochemical makeup of the Skvani was too alien to hold the monstrosities together. These failures were flushed out recycle jets and ejected into the Aether. Some of the new hybrids, however, survived to explore other worlds for their purebred masters.

After eons of drifting in the Void, Starship Mars came to a very young galaxy and set their sights on a solar system in the outer rim. Calculation of solar intensity dictated an orbit that would be interfered with by the fourth planet of the system. The Council did not hesitate: the Grays were sent to destroy the fourth planet. Planet-shattering explosions wrecked the lifeless rock, creating an asteroid belt. Debris from the planet scattered about the system, striking some asteroids, adding to the rings of the gas giants. One of those asteroids crashed into what is now the Gulf of Mexico on Earth, changing the planet's climate and dooming its dominant life forms, the dinosaurs. In their infinite wisdom, the Genetic Council repopulated the dinosaurs within the core of the Earth and on the surface of the swamp-like planet Venus. Finally, two more asteroids attached themselves as satellites of Mars.

The Gray engineers positioned the planet in its new orbit. They had exhausted the planet's resources but were delighted as their atmosphere machines began to pump forth new air, creating a thin atmosphere formed from the last materials of the scavenged planets. Comets were diverted and harvested for their life giving cargo of water, and it began to rain on Mars for the first time in millions of years. In a short time the Sea Bottoms began to fill once more and the ground became saturated with the waters of life. The Skvani were awakened, and emerged upon the surface of their world for the first time since leaving their home galaxy.

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