

Glossary

Animat: A catch all term used to describe any artificially made Moreau species that is not a Chimera. They are very expensive and frequently, but not always, used as a sign of prestige.

Cult of the Silver Flower: a quasi-religious organisation of entertainers commonly referred to as 'the Cult'. The Cult doesn't worship a deity. Entertainment, frivolity, creativity, and all related concepts to the Cult are part of a singular abstract force without consciousness, personality, intent, or will. The Cult believes that this force can be tapped into when creating or simply being carefree.

Early Times (ET), Modern Times (MT): designations for the time period before and after the terraforming of Lantrei.

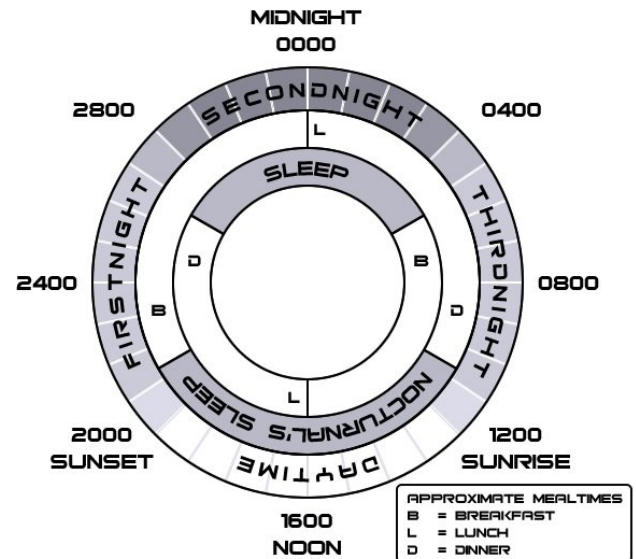
Firstquarter, Secondquarter, Thirdquarter, Lastquarter: designations for the four 90 day calendar periods on the Lantrei calendar. Each quarter is subdivided into three 30 day months; each month is divided into 6 weeks.

Firstnight, Secondnight, Thirdnight: designations for the three night-time periods experienced by the inhabitants of the planet (see illustration). Each period is roughly equivalent to the length of the day, or 8 hours (based on the timekeeping system used by the ancient colonists).

Regulatorium: A political philosophy which holds that power should be vested in individuals according to merit and scientific achievements. It may also refer to the Colonist governments from 53 to 107 ET

Seven scanned the various ads for work on the Cult's holographic message board while he waited for the AI to finish the search that he started a few moments earlier. The AI searches often took a while. There were so many plays that needed actors, films that needed extras, troupes that needed someone to take over for another who had been unexpectedly injured, nobles and rich citizens who wanted portraits painted, and everything else in between. Seven's searches took longer than most mainly due to the search parameters he used. Re-enactment fairs would be singled out, as would historical plays, and certain dances. Some of the dances were historical, but others were contemporary dance styles that he had enjoyed. Most of them were ones he had taken part in during his apprenticeship years, and they brought back fond memories of what the Cult of the Silver Flower had been like during his early years in the Amontil Chimera colony.

The Chimera sighed and shifted on his feet. He was stiff and sore from his training session at the gym the previous night. His legs ached, and his shoulder and neck muscles were stiff and tense. It wouldn't have been so bad if he was wearing his street clothes, but Cult protocol required him to wear his full Cult uniform when going to the temple. His emerald green lined silver mantle wasn't particularly heavy on its own, nor was his silver and black tunic, or his leather cross belt. But when all three were worn together they weighed quite a bit. And they all hung from the shoulders, which made the uniform uncomfortable to wear all for long periods, especially in the arid Northern Transvaal.



Seven's mood improved as he continued to find plays and re-enactment fairs that he would enjoy taking part. He moved them into a second holographic screen, and glanced across to see how his personalized search was going. It was part way through sorting the results into his premade, personalised categories. He waited patiently while the AI finished sorting the results and thanked the temple's AI when it was finished. He received a warm 'you're welcome young Chimera!' in reply. Most didn't bother to thank the temple's AI, but Seven was not most people. He felt good making someone else's day more pleasant, and he had a good idea why his search results were always unusually accurate compared to his fellow Cultists. He went through the re-enactment category. Two of the fair were not worth bothering with as they were medieval style fairs, which were outside his expertise and interests, one was too far away for him to get to, and another no longer had any places left for extras. That left one fair – the Colonist and Historical Militaria fair, which was being held two weeks from now in the first month of the Secondquarter. Seven had never heard of the place where it was being held, but a quick search on the net revealed that it was several hours north of the New African border in Hamua.

The fair's focus was on the early days of the settlement on Lantrei, back when it was called New Earth. Although it would be held in the open air in a mountainous region, a large disused building at the site had been converted so that people could go inside and get an impression of what it would have been like to have lived in the underground city of Marcadia back when the planet was still being terraformed. Chimeras were wanted as extras and to act as soldiers for the early syndicates. Seven quickly applied for a position, and made it his primary option. He was somewhat pessimistic about getting a part, and anxious to fulfil his obligations to the Cult, so he went through the other search results.

The dance folder has dozens of different styles to choose from, and that didn't include the ones he had found by himself! It wasn't often that he was this spoiled for choice when it came to the dances. The plays folder was a mixed bag. Some were really good, and almost on par with his primary choice, but others were dull or were ones that he had done several times before. Seven didn't worry about looking through the other folders. He was guaranteed to get something that he would enjoy doing this week, and possibly the next couple of weeks. After he finished his selections he thanked the AI once again, and got another cheerful reply. He smiled as he walked off down to one of the lounges. He was a little thirsty, but what he really wanted was a comfortable seat to sit down in. His feet were aching. As he made his way slowly down to the lounge he couldn't help but think about the Colonists and the early history of Lantrei. Seven had always been fascinated by the early history of the planet. Society was a democracy back then, and it evolved into a regulatorium during the Early Times. While he had reservations about the feudal contracts that most people and Chimeras were born or indentured into, he couldn't really comprehend a world where will of the majority were what counted. He was too old to day dream about democratic utopias, and he felt... no, *knew*, that there would have been just as many problems in democracy as there were in the current feudal society. They would just be different kinds of problems.

Seven took a moment to admire the abstract holographic projections that decorated the columns of the temple. He didn't like abstract art, but the current design was appealing. Probably because the square, scale like projections reminded him of ancient, scale armour that was apparently worn by the ancestors of the Architects millennia before they settled Lantrei after an unstable wormhole sent them off course while attempting to travel to another long since forgotten planet. He slowly walked down the corridor, and took a quick look inside one of the lounges. The seats were all taken, and everyone in there was from the Faye clan. Seven kept walking. The Faye clan were the founders of the Cult, and most of their members were elitist snobs who treated all non-Faye clan members in the Cult as second class citizens. He didn't know what they were so gloomy about. Nor did he care.

Seven came upon a second lounge. It was filled with Architects and Chimeras, but at least the people here were not from clan Faye. He got a drink of water from a nearby fountain and hoped that a chair would become available at some point. Alas, it wasn't to be and he soon found himself against the end of a bookcase while he listened to the chatter of the other people there. The chatter was electric, with most people having to shout to hear one another over the background noise.

One particularly loud Chimera could hardly contain her excitement. “I heard that the Grand Master has brought in an outsider, to clean things up. From what I have heard, Mast... *former* Master Marcus was audited. I have heard that he siphoned off 100,000 Rand from the temple.”

Seven listened carefully to an Architect. The softly spoken woman was drowned out by some of the other groups in the lounge, but seven managed to hear most of what she was saying. The corrupt Master of the temple, Marcus Faye, had been removed from office by order of the Grand Master of the Cult. Apparently the Cult had finally realized that Marcus was defrauding the Cult for his own personal gain, and was being replaced by a non-Cultist from the Takuna clan to make sure that this temple was thoroughly cleansed of all corruption. There was some disagreement about how much of a role the Grand Master played in the affair. Some were adamant that the Grand Master had personally overseen the investigation, while others believe that someone from the Council of High Elders did the investigation and that the Grand Master merely acted on what they uncovered. Some were incensed that an outsider, and a non-Cultist, was being brought in to clean things up. But Seven knew that an outsider with no loyalties to any faction was just what this temple needed. He would have to get into contact with this Johanna Fersen, sooner rather than later. Fortunately she would be very easy to find – she was a female Animat, a tan furred Raccoon with silver blue hair.

Seven was unsure how he should feel about all of this. While he was glad that the white haired Marcus was gone, he felt that he should pity the Faye clan’s folk. This would not reflect well on them, and while it probably wouldn’t taint the image of the whole clan, it would cast a shadow over the Faye cultists in this temple for many years to come. He didn’t dwell on it for long. His thoughts were filled with optimistic dreams and hopes for the future in this temple of the Cult. Johanna would face an uphill battle to remove the corrupt from the temple, but she was the best hope the temple had had in years.

While he was daydreaming, someone called out to him. It was Vera Karmel. He had met her back when they were initiates and they had been friends throughout their apprenticeship years. They never got past the friend stage; Seven wasn’t her type, and he had never given any thought to relationships, but that was starting to slowly change. It had been a while since they got a chance to catch up, but best of all, there was a free seat next to her! Seven moved as fast as his stiff, aching legs could take him and sat next to her.

“Long time no see! What have you been up to lately? I got a part in a holoflick! It’s not a main role mind you, but it is an important supporting role – I am almost a main character!”

Seven smiled warmly as he waited for a chance to reply. “Wow! You are really going places! I’m still stuck in re-enacting, which suits me. What kind of movie are you in?”

The red haired, white furred Chimera could barely contain her excitement. “I can’t say too much, but it’s a historical film about a nurse who is mobilized and goes to war. It’s set in the Silver War period. Do you know much about it? Or can you point me in the right direction in the library? It would be good to help me get in character for the role.”

Seven shook his head slowly. “I know that it was a factional war after the Architects left Marcadia once they had terraformed the planet. But other than that? No, not really. I know that one of the librarians specializes in that period, but I don’t know which one – or if they are still here.”

Vera was somewhat disappointed, but only for a brief period. “Oh well! It was worth a try! Have you heard about what happened to Master Faye? He’s gone!”

“I have heard what others here are saying, but I don’t know how accurate any of it is.”

Vera smiled and bounced up and down in her seat. “I know exactly what happened! It started with an audit seven years ago. Faye was siphoning money off from the Cult and putting it into his bank account. He made fake receipts and invoices to cover it up, but he made up names and addresses, so it was easy for the audit to figure out what was going on. The auditors reported it to the Council of Elders, but someone there was

as corrupt as Faye, and protected him. Fast forwards seven years, and some IT guy found the original audit in with a bunch of unsorted files on someone's computer they were trying to fix. So he sent it straight to the Grand Master! Who of course removed the councilman and Faye. He has even organized for a non-cultist to come in and check things out to make sure the temple is cleaned up good and proper!"

Vera's excitable mood started to rub off on Seven; he was unconsciously raising his voice to match hers. "Do you there will be a general assembly?"

A mature woman's voice answered his question. "Yes, I scheduled it for 2800. Didn't you get the message?"

Seven jumped in seat and squeaked in surprise. His heart was still racing as he turned around in his seat to see a Raccoon Animat who smelled faintly of rubber or latex.

Johanna chuckled at the boy's fright. "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to startle you. I'm Johanna Fersen."

Seven smiled wearily. "T-thanks... I don't get any messages... I..."

Johanna rested her arms on the back of the chair and lend down, sticking her butt out for the boys and girls standing behind her. Who knows, one of them might like the sight?

"Are you Seven Vester by any chance?"

One of Seven's ears flattened against his head. "Yes...?"

"I would like to speak to you about what it was like under Marcus Faye. It seems strange that you would be both ostracized by him and given an apartment. Could you meet me in my office after the assembly, please?"

The boy has started to calm down, but he was still a little nervous around someone he had never met before.

"Sure..."

Johanna smiled. He wasn't as shy as his file had suggested, and it was more of an endearing kind of shyness than anything else. She couldn't help but scruff up his hair while saying "Thank you! And don't be so shy. I don't bite. Not unless you want me to. I have to be going now, but I will see you later."

The Animat left as abruptly as she had appeared. Vera and Seven looked at each other.

Vera scratched behind her ears. "She's... very flirty..."

Seven sighed and smiled. "Is that a bad thing?"

Vera raised an eyebrow. "Are you finally discovering girls?"

Seven smirked coyly. "Perhaps..."