



F

Stories of a galactic Time Traveller...



Dedicated
to the misfits and
extremely creative of this world,
those whose diversity pushes them
to the sidelines of a conservative world!

F

Stories of a galactic Time Traveller...



X-Mechanica

The Seven Generals

Thanos Alpino Vasilakis

- Book 01 -



TIME TRAVELLER

F

Stories of a galactic Time Traveller...

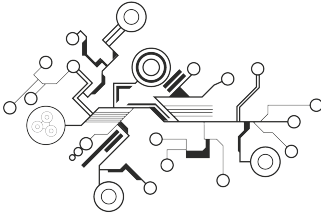


Chapters:

01. The Solitude of a Brilliant Mind.....
02. The Riddle of Mechanics.....
03. The Twelve Atlantian Warlords.....
04. The Enchiridion of Mechanics.....
05. The Promise.....
06. Costigar Society.....
07. Seeking his Origin.....
08. Two Almost Identical Copies.....
09. The Magicians of the Mountain.....
10. Abandoned Junkyard.....
11. Project "Silverhawk".....
12. The Key of Thousand Keys.....
13. The Taste of the Abyss.....
14. The Ancient Art of Alchemy.....
15. The Seven Generals.....

F

Stories of a galactic Time Traveller...



01. The Solitude of a Brilliant Mind

An alarm clock on a small metal nightstand started ringing ragingly, though its owner was already awake. Having not slept all night, he faced the first day of the New Year with anticipation. This year held special significance as he was set to commence his studies at Darkon Imperial University - the planet's largest university and a crucial step for those aspiring to join the Empire's upper echelons.

The year was called Laskun, marking the conclusion of the seven-year span known as Sevyear. This period held significance not only for the planet X-Mechanica but also for the Empire, as it heralded the culmination of a significant cycle of major events...

The name Laskun finds its origins in the seventh and largest sun of Alatlion galaxy, similar to the names of the other years: Helinor, Askanda, Zelila, Prestonia, Klamanta, and Takalum.

Planet X-Mechanica, the youngest in the Alatlion Galaxy, holds a unique distinction as it was meticulously engineered rather than naturally formed. Emerging from the crucible of science and engineering, its origins stretch back to a time when various tribes collaborated on its construction. Situated precisely at the heart of the Alatlion galaxy, it is encircled by its seven suns and two purpose-built satellites. On X-Mechanica, daylight perpetually prevails, except for its southern region where the suns' rays never penetrate. Time follows a unique quantification, distinguishing it from other places, while the passage of the year occurs without adhering to conventional months and seasons.



Fifty-seven days had elapsed since the boy's sixteenth birthday, marking the minimum age of acceptance into Darkon university. While the typical age of entry was eighteen, he stood out with his early enrolment. With ginger, curly hair cascading to his shoulders and striking gray eyes that gleamed in the room's dimness, he possessed a muscular build, tall for his age at six feet. His name, Atlantis Rarnello, held a powerful dream – to ascend to the role of head pilot within the Fantastic Armadda, the empire's admirable fleet.

He silenced the alarm clock and rose from his compact metal bed. His room resembled a prison cell, spanning almost six square meters in a narrow rectangular shape. The space housed a lone window, a private toilet, a small sink, and a diminutive metal nightstand.

He approached the window, pressing a button that promptly initiated its opening, welcoming the sharp sun-rays that flooded the room with warmth. He stood before the window, eyes wide open, as the sun-rays evoked tears - though these tears weren't of sadness, but rather a manifestation of his profound joy and a sense of freedom. The suns had a unique ability to provide him with a level of warmth that not only reached his body but also resonated deeply within his soul.

"Good morning, Helinor," he exclaimed with a wide smile, addressing the sun. "Today marks my first step toward you!"

Atlas pivoted and headed to the sink, turning the tap to wash his face. Despite the water's dirtiness and unpleasant odour, it was the only option available. He shed his pyjamas, using them to wipe his face before meticulously folding and placing them at the edge of his neatly arranged bed. Donning his sole set of attire - a tattered pair of jeans and a gray t-shirt, the latter adorned with the Armadda logo - he prepared for the day ahead.

As soon as he opened the door, a cacophony of voices and shouts flooded his ears. Before he could even set foot outside, a young girl emerged before him, sporting the same ginger hair, radiant smile, and a sparkling dress. She breezed past him, uttering, "Good morning, Atlas," as she went on her way.

"Good morning, Stassa," he replied, observing her running down the metal staircase.

Their abode served as an expansive dormitory, accommodating not only their family's five children but also a multitude of young students. A rectangular, four-story structure, it featured three rooms on each floor, with a spacious dining area situated on the ground level. This layout mirrored the arrangement of homes within their entire city block. This urban sector was characterised by such buildings - each city block housing over a thousand families and hosting around three thousand students. Situated in the Jaji region, one of X-Mechanica's most destitute and distant areas from the centre, these structures represented a unique facet of the city's architecture.

Atlas trailed his younger sister into the dining room, where the household's occupants were partaking in their morning meal. The fare was modest, as was the norm, reflecting the family's constrained circumstances. However, it was the only sustenance they could manage to afford.

"Good morning," he said cheerfully.

"We'll see..."his father promptly responded, catching up with the conversation.

Atlas stood motionless, his gaze fixed on his father. When he recognised the distant expression in his father's eyes, indicating he was stoned once more, he wordlessly took a seat in the only available chair. His mother began to rise to fetch him breakfast, but his father intercepted her, his tone tinged with mockery as he remarked, "He's no longer a damn child; he's a prodigy, a man destined for greatness!"

Atlas rose quietly and made his way to the kitchen, where he assembled a meal from leftover dishes, a slice of bread, bacon crumbs, and two eggs.

"I assume you've no problem with that, do you?" His father continued in the same, ironic manner.

"None," Atlas replied casually.

"Good! And you better be thankful to those who pay for it!" His father persisted, seemingly intent on provoking him without any particular reason, a familiar pattern for him.

"Thankx," the boy said vaguely.

His father abruptly rose from his seat, causing the table to nearly overturn. He forcefully shoved his wife and eldest son aside as they attempted to intervene and halt his actions.

"You must learn some respect, you piece of shit!" He began to say and continue. "When I speak to you, I demand you to look at me in the eyes!" He finished, his fury evident as he confronted Atlas directly.

"I'd a good teacher," Atlas replied instantly, turning to face him without the slightest of fear.

His father's remaining shreds of self-restraint dissolved in an instant - though there wasn't much to begin with. He raised his hand with the intention of delivering a slap, but Atlas refused to passively endure his father's behaviour. Swiftly sidestepping the impending blow, he pushed his father back. The force of the push toppled his father, causing him to lose his balance and tumble to the ground.

"You, bastard!" He uttered in hate, pushing away anyone who tried to help him.

"I wish I was!" Atlas retorted immediately, a surge of adrenaline coursing through his veins.

"How dare you!" His father shot back, rising and advancing toward Atlas. Yet, this time, his two older sons successfully intercepted him, a development he clearly disapproved of. "Release me," he spat, his voice seething with intense animosity.

"Calm down, father," said the oldest son.

"I said, let, the fuck, go, of me!"

Atlas recognised that his father's anger wasn't about to abate. His father seemed akin to a charging bull, reacting more on instinct than rationality. Realising that further confrontation might be futile, he abandoned his plate in the kitchen and made his way towards the exit. A heavy silence hung in the air, broken only by his father's continued heavy breathing, fuelled by his intense animosity.

Right after he grasped the door's handle, he heard him saying once again: "I'll deal with you when you come back and then, there won't be anyone to protect you!"

"I don't think so," he answered in the same tone.

"What did you just say?"

"You won't see me again! I won't come back. I prefer to die in some alley rather than seeing your face again!"

"Do you think that-"

"It makes me sad that I won't see the rest of my family again, I'm going to miss you all, but I've nothing good to expect here especially as long as, *YOU*, are alive!"

"You think you are so great, huh?" His father's demeanour took an unsettling turn, a deranged smile stretching across his face, as if he had recalled something momentous - or perhaps his sanity had completely slipped away. "You think you'll become better than us? Your acceptance at the university means nothing! You'll never be a member of the Armadda you so much desire!"

"This is my goal, and I'll pursue it relentlessly!" Atlas declared firmly before swinging the door open and stepping out of the house. He couldn't bear to be around his father any longer.

Atlas embarked on a five-minute journey towards the building's exit. Tears streamed down his cheeks as he traversed the dim corridors, passing by other residences. He hurried down the stairs, even taking shortcuts by vaulting over railings in order to expedite his path. Upon finally arriving at the road, it felt as though eons had elapsed. Gazing upward, he met the sight of his cherished sun once more. His tear-streaked cheeks dried, replaced by a radiant smile that illuminated his face.

Atlas had arrived at a resolute choice. Despite recognizing that challenges would undoubtedly accompany his newfound freedom, he felt an unyielding determination. He embraced this liberating path, acknowledging that the road ahead might be arduous, yet he remained undeterred. He was willing to endure the trials of a hard-won freedom, for even a single day of autonomy was preferable to returning to a home that had become a source of overwhelming sorrow.

Inhaling deeply, Atlas's gaze briefly fixed on the neighbourhood's substantial clock. He then set off in a sprint toward the closest train station. His rapid footsteps resonated alongside the metallic streets, crisscrossed by rails, as he dashed past towering structures that intermittently blocked out the sunlight. Metal parks, replete with decrepit slides and swings, flitted by. Just prior to the station lay the local market, a cluster of makeshift stalls where vendors endeavoured to hawk a mishmash of odds and ends to make ends meet. Assorted machine parts, predominantly of negligible value, spoiled edibles,



tattered clothing, fractured toys - the market showcased the assortment of poverty that pervaded his district. Amidst his rapid sprint through the stalls, his urgency palpable, a mechanical hand abruptly snatched at his t-shirt, bringing him to an abrupt halt. Atlas's expression registered intense annoyance as he looked upon the source of interruption.

"Where are you off to, Rarnello?" An old-man with carious teeth, a mechanical arm and eye said with fake interest.

"I told you a thousand times not to grab me by the shirt, if it's ripped-"

"I'll give you another one," the old-man interrupted him immediately.

"Do you have?" The boy asked with his anger evaporated.

"Of course, I do. Do you have ten imperial crowns?"

"Come on, Reno," he complained, "you know I don't. But if you give it to me for free, I promise I'll pay you back ten times more immediately after I become a member of-"

"You'll forget about us!" he interrupted him again. "Like so many before you."

"Then why did you stopped me?" Atlas asked angrily, having in mind not to miss his train.

"Because I want you to help me with an android. My wife's servant broke down and-"

"I don't have time, Reno, I'm sorry, my train is leaving and I can't risk being late on my first day"

"Oh yes, first day at school! On your return, then?"

"Sure," the boy fibbed, fixing his t-shirt before acknowledging the old-man with a nod. With that, he recommenced his frenzied dash toward the train station.

As he entered deeper into the market, the crowds were suffocating. People and robots occupied almost every inch of the streets, but that couldn't stop Atlas or force him to reduce his speed. His mind was working like an absolutely tuned machine, calculating his movements within the crowd and the time he needed to reach the station. According to his calculations, he would get there on time as long as he followed the same rhythm. So, he continued manoeuvring among them, jumping over stalls and short people to make it on time.

Upon arriving at the station's entrance, he realised he had less than three minutes to get on board. He went in and pushed past everyone, forgetting about the ticket - either way, he had no money for that. He hoped, just like the previous times, to get lucky and pass the check. He walked to platform five and jumped into the coach seconds before the doors closed...

All trains on this planet were exclusively three-storey and exuded a super-luxurious aura. Remarkably swift, they often achieved speeds of up to three hundred miles per hour. Serving as the solitary long-distance transportation mode for the general populace, aircraft were reserved solely for members of the imperial circle and high-ranking individuals.

Every vehicle was under the auspices of the MechaRoad company, a subsidiary of the central imperial entity known as Galactic Rob. This corporate titan oversaw an array of machinery companies, orchestrating the production of parts, metals, and all essential components for construction and manufacturing.

The trains were invariably teeming with passengers whenever they headed for the planet's central station, which acted as the nexus for all lines originating from various regions. This arrangement aligned seamlessly with Atlas's ingenious scheme, one he had employed on numerous occasions to elude inspections. Accordingly, he positioned himself at the heart of the train, a vantage point affording him views of both exits.

The train surged forward, rapidly attaining its maximum velocity in under a minute. First-time passengers on such trains typically experienced nausea, dizziness, and even vomiting, but over time, they grew accustomed to these sensations as they became part of their daily routine.

After an hour had passed, Atlas began to feel overtaken by sleepiness, and with another three hours remaining until his destination, it was the least favourable situation for him. Having spent the entire night without sleep and weighed down by the tension his father had stirred, fatigue was beginning to take its toll. It seemed



rather foolish of him not to have rested on such a crucial day, but his enthusiasm had overridden his better judgment. Now, he found himself in a bind, seeking a way to extricate himself from this predicament.

The train came to a halt in yet another destitute area known as Frilcha. A throng of people hastily boarded the train at this stop. Atlas found a semblance of relief in the increased crowd, as it offered him more opportunities to blend in and go unnoticed. However, weariness began to creep over him, threatening to pull him into slumber. He knew he had to devise a solution, and swiftly.

The simplest course of action that came to his mind was striking up a conversation with someone. Yet, he harboured an aversion to engaging in small talk with strangers. Not out of fear, but rather due to the realisation that their interests would likely diverge significantly from his own. This inner reluctance to engage in idle conversations stemmed from his awareness that meaningful connections were a rarity in such chance encounters.

"Is this seat taken?" he heard a girl's voice over his head.

She possessed a slender figure adorned with delicate features, including thin lips and small black eyes. Her well-groomed hands were highlighted by carefully manicured nails, and her long, glossy brown hair flowed down gracefully. Her attire, also of note, was meticulously chosen and hinted at her elevated family status, despite her current circumstances.

"No," he answered as kindly as he could.

The girl sat down beside him and immediately turned her gaze out of the window, observing the landscapes distorted by the speed. "I always feel nauseous," she said a second later without looking at him.

"Yes," he answered vaguely.

"My name is Margarita Losiel," she said, looking at him this time, ready for a handshake.

"Atlas," he introduced himself shaking her hand casually, his attention divided as newcomers entered from both doors.

"Are you from around?"

"Look," he started abruptly as he kept staring at train's corridor, but the girl interrupted him almost immediately.

"I'll give you a ticket," she exclaimed happily.

"What?" He exhaled surprised turning his gaze at her.

"I'm bored and I could use some company. I don't venture far from the centre very often, and this journey feels endless. I'll give you a ticket if you're up for a chat. You strike me as a good guy, even though chatting doesn't seem to be one of your strong points!" She concluded with another broad and beautiful smile.

"All right," he said, without much thinking.

He might not have been willing to talk, but he managed to find a ticket - somehow - which was the most important thing to him. A bit of conversation in exchange for a secure trip seemed more than fair, almost like he was getting away with something! Either way, he might fall asleep, so he wouldn't have to listen to her.

"You look very young to head to the centre on your own."

"I'm starting classes at Darkon University."

"Really?" she exclaimed enthusiastically. "At such an early age?"

"Yeah."

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen."

"Wow! You are one of the few who entered Darkon University so young! But again, no one has ever reached Costigar's record, which is fifteen years of age!"

"What? How's this possible?" he exclaimed in shock.

"He's a brilliant mind, and anyone who knows him in person or has had the chance to meet him says he has a promising future! Perhaps you'll cross paths with him. I believe he's still studying there, but even if he is, it won't be for much longer!"

"How old is he now?"

"Eighteen, I think."

"And why it won't be for much longer?" Atlas wanted to know as he knew that eighteen years of age was also a record for graduation.

"It's rumoured he's been proposed by all his teachers for Klamanta higher education school."

"That's impossible!" he shouted at her totally annoyed.

"But that's what I've heard," she apologised.

"Fine," he replied and turned his head elsewhere.

"What are your goals?" She continued trying to fix the air around them.

"To become a pilot of Fantastic Armadda!"

"WOW! Really? You've to be very well-exercised, good in mathematics, sharp, determined, excellent in mechanics and... wait a minute," she interrupted herself. "What's your name?"

"I've already told you, Atlas."

"Rare name, but what is your full name?"

"Why does it matter?"

"Tell me!"

"Atlantas Rarnello."

"Entering Darkon University at such a young age and harbouring those kinds of dreams indicates that you've known what you wanted since childhood. So, I believe success is just a matter of time for you, and I'll proudly tell everyone that I met you on your first day before you became famous, witnessing your first step toward success!" She concluded with genuine happiness.

Atlas was shaken by her words, as it was the first time that words - any kind of words - had offered him such strength. He had always been the "dreamer", the "black sheep" at home and school. No one had ever believed in him, not even his brothers, who only protected him in case their father tried to harm him and tear apart their family.

"Your parents must be very proud of you and-"

"My parents are dead," he said instinctively.

"Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sure that-"

"You've no idea," he interrupted her once again.

The girl realised she shouldn't press the matter. Though her words may have been well-intentioned, that particular subject seemed to cause him pain. So, she opened her bag and handed him a ticket before turning her gaze back to the window. "May all your dreams come true," she said for the last time and closed her eyes to get some sleep, intending to leave him alone.

He was prepared to respond, to express his gratitude, but he refrained. Instead, he silently made a promise to himself that when the day arrived, he would seek her out and express his gratitude for being the first person to believe in him...



Nearly three hours later, the train reached its terminal: the Crossroad Station, the planet's largest and most renowned one. People from every corner were disembarking, whether for work or shopping, as all the major companies were situated in that vicinity around the imperial palace. The first emperors desired everything to be within their reach, a sentiment that remained unchanged...

The emperor's palace spanned a vast expanse of ninety-eight thousand acres, encompassing its courtyard that extended over an additional seventy and twenty-six thousand acres. Nestled within the palace grounds were the offices of state-owned companies and the seven esteemed institutions of higher learning. The tallest tower soared to an astonishing height of three hundred and sixty thousand feet, housing the emperor's inner sanctum. This tower cast a star-shaped shadow, enveloping the central clock with its seven needles - a structure dwarfed only by the adjacent tower, half its size. The palace's placement near the planet's centre, around which the world pivoted, meant that the core was situated roughly six hundred thousand and sixty hundred feet away, spanning a colossal expanse of about ten million acres. Yet, shrouded in mystery and known to only a select few, was the palace's sprawling basement. This hidden chamber extended to a depth nearly as immense as the planet's core - reaching three million and three hundred feet. Within its depths lay the heart of the imperial fleet, serving as the headquarters for the esteemed Fantastic Armada.

Atlas gazed at the station with a profound sense of awe, as it was his first time being there. Despite having seen pictures and knowing everything about it, he had never ventured this far before. The place was adorned in gold plating, and the marble floor gleamed immaculately. Majestic columns upheld the domes adorning the ceiling, and the walls bore the emblems and colours of all imperial sectors, with the emperor's emblem being the most prominent.

Suddenly, a few words reached Atlas's ears: "We don't have much time." This snapped him back to reality, as he too didn't have much



time left - roughly half an hour. His journey to the university would take at least twenty-five minutes.

He looked at the south exit of the station which was leading to Elmont square. Once he identified it, he run towards there to found himself outside - two minutes later.

Everything he had read about this square was far removed from reality! Nature's beauty reigned supreme. Trees, fountains, holders resembling altars with soft fires smouldering, and a gentle breeze caressing people's faces. After a brief glance, he took a deep breath and headed toward his destination, purposefully avoiding the store displays that would undoubtedly divert his attention and potentially delay him from reaching his first class...

Twenty minutes later, Atlas found himself at the entrance of the university. The name sign above was striking, and the door stood wide open. People from various tribes were streaming in, regardless of age or financial background, all sharing a common purpose: to learn and grow, securing their own place within imperial society. Atlas joined the throng, stepping through the entrance and coming to a halt at the reception, where he could obtain the information required for his class.

"Good morning."

"Name and surname," the old lady behind the counter stated immediately, her tone dripping with monotony.

"Oh, Atlantas Rarnello."

The old lady typed the name lazily and incredibly slowly on her computer screen, waiting for the results.

"I'm sorry but you're not registered, next." she said slothful.

"What? Uh, there must be a mistake, did you type it correctly?" Hastily said with grave anxiety.

The woman gazed at him with an even more dreary expression from behind her glasses, conveying that her patience was wearing thin.

"My surname has a double 'L'," he insisted, making a final desperate attempt before facing the possibility of being dismissed.

The woman glanced at the screen and realised she had spelled it incorrectly. "Second floor, right corridor, Antoine Chalkon's class," she said after rectifying her mistake and reading the correct result.

Atlas didn't even thank her. He simply turned and walked away, heading towards the nearest set of stairs. He hurriedly ascended and reached the second floor swiftly. Turning right immediately, he rushed to the end of the corridor where he found the door open, allowing him to enter.

The room was vast, as anticipated given the presence of all the freshmen. Approximately eight hundred students were seated, their gazes fixed on their professor. The instructor was an elderly man with long, dense hair and a beard. He was tall and robust, wearing a tired yet contented expression on his face.

"Come in, my child," he said politely.

Atlas entered and occupied one of the remaining empty seats, selecting the one nearest to him as he already felt self-conscious about being in the spotlight.

"Welcome to Darkon University," the old man began, glancing briefly at the electronic wall clock. "My name is Hugo Gomez, hailing from planet Akramanta, renowned as the realm of Soulsmiths, the skilled blacksmiths! I'm here to impart to you the fundamentals of our galaxy, encompassing tribes, history, and all that is vital for your forthcoming studies. In forty-five days, you will be prompted to select a specialised field of study, where you will delve deeper and initiate practical learning. You have three options: Science, Economics, and Engineering. Each of these branches features a minimum of two additional courses essential for your future, which will determine your eligibility to enter the imperial institutes of higher learning. The science field acquaints you with physics, chemistry, and medicine, granting you the chance to attend either Zelila or Klamanta colleges. The economics path delves into history, business management, economics, and the geography of our galaxy, offering entry to Askanda, Takalum, or Laskun colleges. Lastly, the engineering route unveils the secrets of technology, preparing you to seek one of the myriad positions available in various sectors. For those who excel, there are opportunities at Helinor and Prestonia schools."



When Atlas heard the name Helinor, his excitement was palpable. A genuine smile formed on his face, and he shifted slightly in his seat, a movement that didn't go unnoticed by many. Regrettably, he remained oblivious to their reactions, and his behaviour perturbed quite a few around him.

“As is customary for every new student,” Hugo continued, “the first lesson you will receive today pertains to the origins of our planet's formation, a topic that many of you may already be familiar with. However, it is crucial to have an accurate understanding of what transpired, as our history holds immense significance for us, particularly to our long-standing Emperor... Five thousand galactic years ago, our saga commenced with the cataclysmic explosion of one of our galaxy's seven suns, leading to the annihilation of planet Parmanon and the loss of three billion lives. Nearly a thousand years later, a team of engineers hailing from planet Ergon resolved to construct a world capable of surviving any catastrophe, thereby averting the risk of life's extinction. This endeavour, however, proved immensely challenging, as crafting an entire planet from scratch was a feat bordering on the impossible. The group, renowned as ‘The Builders,’ possessed the knowledge required for this monumental task, yet lacked the diverse skills of the various tribes and their territorial insights. To address this deficiency, the Builders embarked on a voyage across planets, seeking assistance. This cosmic odyssey spanned a hundred galactic years, during which they sojourned on numerous planets to comprehend the customs and capabilities of each tribe. Upon accomplishing this mission, they not only gained intimate knowledge of a substantial portion of the Alatlion galaxy - a feat unprecedented in history - but also amassed the resources to proceed with their undertaking. Fortunately, ninety-nine percent of the tribes willingly offered their aid, motivated primarily by a curiosity to learn about other cultures. Only a select few were capable of interstellar travel, and fewer still offered assistance with planet construction. Following the completion of their tasks, most of these tribes returned to their respective homes. However, to initiate and sustain progress, uniform regulations were indispensable. Given that each tribe adhered to distinct customs and traditions, the establishment of a fair system necessitated the formation of a council. Thus, a council of

seven members - mirroring our galaxy's seven suns - materialised, comprising representatives from different tribes. Their purpose was to forge agreements and make decisions for the collective. While our galaxy boasts twenty-two tribes, certain ones bore sufficient similarities, facilitating mutual understanding. Each planet appointed its chosen representative, and compatible tribes jointly elected their spokesperson. From this, 'The Seven Generals' emerged, a council that astonishingly endured until the culmination of our planet's construction and the ascension of the galaxy's inaugural emperor, Julius Darkon. Among these generals was Antoine Chalkon, who led the Builders and orchestrated the construction efforts. He was one of the three architects behind the concept of this planet's creation. Another was Jamal Polo, a distinguished geologist from planet Gelantium. Among the council's two female members was Ataesina Dominquez, representing planet Akramanta. Aeron Elmont, offspring of Natura's ruling monarch - the most ancient planet in our galaxy, where the elemental forces thrive - stood as another member. Gunnar Markku, a leader from the planet Thekhi, the homeland of the Keylords, was also part of the council. The second woman was Memphida Therso, one of the revered deities from planet Pyramid. Lastly, Oiolikos Kalcha, the head of the Magicians of the Mountain, completed the assembly."

These names elicited whispers among the students. Clearly, everyone was speculating about someone based on the fame of their planet, their origin, and their understanding of historical events. With numerous accounts written about the galaxy, tribes, and planets, each person held a distinct perspective, contributing to a diverse range of viewpoints.

"The primary construction of the planet X-Mechanica extended for one hundred and fifty galactic years," Professor Hugo continued, "with the anticipation of future enhancements in light of the evolving nature of science and technology, as was hoped and has come to pass. During its initial years, the planet welcomed inhabitants from all tribes across the galaxy. This occurrence was both captivating and intriguing, particularly for those who sought to explore the world. With X-Mechanica's emergence, individuals were no longer compelled to traverse the entire galaxy to learn about diverse regions, cultures,



customs, and traditions. Instead, they could journey across the planet, gathering insights from various corners. Within less than fifty galactic years, X-Mechanica evolved into the nucleus of scientific, engineering, artistic, economic, astrological, and historical endeavours. In essence, it achieved the vision initially conceived by its pioneers - the realisation of becoming the central hub of our galaxy."

The whispers ceased, yielding to complete silence. While many were acquainted with the information shared, and a good number were already aware of much of what had just been recounted, the professor's manner of presentation held a certain significance that captivated the room.

"Are there any questions?" he inquired, his gaze sweeping across the room. No one ventured to speak; instead, an air of anticipation prevailed as they sought to glean further insights. "Very well," he acknowledged, and proceeded with the lecture...

After a few hours had elapsed, the professor opted to take a break and rest. Most of the students left the classroom, yet a few remained - either to jot down notes or simply because they had no particular engagement outside.

Atlas chose to remain in the classroom, fuelled by a multitude of questions he was eager to ask. The history lesson had left him thoroughly enthralled, and he was keen to engage in conversation with anyone who was willing. His motivations were underpinned by a weighty concern: his impending future.

As Hugo made his way toward his office, his attention was drawn to the sight of the young man raising his hand. "Please..." he uttered kindly.

"I'd like to ask who was the first of the Seven Generals that took the place of Helinor's sector."

"High Helinor," Hugo corrected him at first, and continued, "You must be Atlantis Rarnello, correct?"

"Yes, sir." He replied proudly.

"The second youngest in seven years with the highest score in engineering! Are your skills as good as your grades?"

"Indeed, sir," Atlas said with confidence and passion.



"Wonderful! Minds like yours are always useful in our world!"

Atlas nodded his head with a sense of contentment, appreciating the positive remarks about his capabilities - a recognition he had rarely experienced before. In the past, he had been obligated to demonstrate his abilities constantly. However, not everyone in the room seemed to be pleased by the professor's comments or the notion that someone else shared their aspirations. For some, Atlas represented a potential threat.

"The answer you're seeking is Memphida Therso. She was a horrifying woman with tremendous powers!"

"What kind of powers, Professor?"

"I'm sorry, my child, but I can't share more. You can learn more if you pick the economic path and one of the higher colleges, where the entirety of the galaxy's knowledge from ancient times is stored. Not everyone is entitled to that knowledge!" With this, he concluded and made his way towards his office.

"Is there another way to get access to the imperial library?" He insisted.

"There's always a way," Professor Hugo Gomez replied nonchalantly, as if conversing with an old friend, and then left the classroom, disappearing from view...

A day on this planet comprises thirty-six hours, and a year spans five hundred and fifteen days. Nighttime doesn't exist here, although the concept is acknowledged due to its presence on other planets.

Every individual determines how to demarcate their day and hypothetical night according to personal requirements. Additionally, the planet employs the term 'Sevyear,' referring to a seven-year duration. Each of these years is assigned the name of one of the suns. These sun names hold significance beyond the context of time, as they are revered almost akin to deities - understandable, given that their boundless energy sustains perpetual life on planet X-Mechanica.

The lesson concluded six hours later, resuming after the break. Students dispersed, either returning home or filling the interval until

the next lesson, scheduled sixteen hours later. For those dwelling at a considerable distance, it often proved more sensible to abstain from spending money and time on extended travel. To cater to this need, numerous half-board hotels were positioned at the planet's centre.

Unfortunately, this arrangement didn't align with Atlas's circumstances, as he lacked the necessary funds. Departing from the university, he embarked on a quest to find a spot for some rest. Exiting the central Elmont square, he scoured the vicinity for a secluded park. After traversing a mile, he stumbled upon what seemed to be the ideal location.

He encountered a dilapidated and abandoned park, its features mirroring those of the parks in the area where he had grown up. Broken swings, rusted slides, and unfinished fences dominated the landscape. Despite its neglect, the park exuded an air of tranquility that rendered it suitable for his intentions.

He entered the premises and directed himself towards the most well-maintained bench. Settling in, he reclined and shut his eyes. Within his mind swirled a blend of the knowledge he had acquired and his aspirations for the future.

"Do you think that sucking up the teachers will get you higher scores?" He heard a voice next to him.

He reopened his eyes to find himself confronted by a group of five older and more physically imposing individuals. Instantly, he grasped the situation and began scanning for a potential means of escape.

"I had no such intentions," he said.

"We must teach you to respect," said a second boy. "Just because everyone's talking about you, it doesn't mean you can fuck us all!"

"I just wanted to know more..."

His attempt to speak was abruptly halted by a forceful kick to his stomach from a third boy, causing him to crumple to the ground. Struggling for breath, he found himself besieged by a barrage of blows targeting various parts of his body. Atlas made every effort to shield his head, but several strikes zeroed in on crucial organs, inflicting agonising pain. As the assault continued, his body's condition rapidly deteriorated. The culmination seemed imminent, with their bloodlust appearing far from quenched.

The sound of a gunshot pierced the air, prompting the assault to cease abruptly as the five young men dispersed in haste. Struggling to catch his breath, Atlas felt the warmth of his own blood smearing across his face. He managed to open his eyes, but his vision remained distorted. Subsequently, he detected footsteps, this time emanating from a lone individual.

“You must learn to embrace the solitude that accompanies a brilliant mind like yours,” were the initial words spoken by an unfamiliar voice. “People are daunted by that which they cannot conquer. They harbour an aversion to it.”

Atlas made a final effort to discern the identity of the speaker, but his faculties were feeble. Succumbing to his frailty, he shut his eyes and descended into a profound slumber, a state that might have marked the onset of eternal rest...