

*The one constant, of course, was the ship. It was there at the beginning, and it was there at the end.*

*In between, I'm sure a lot of people took it for granted. It's hard to think very deeply about facts you've known from birth, especially those guaranteed to not change within your lifetime.*



*I know these things, I've read a lot about them, but even so, it's easy to romanticize those first wayfarers...*



*The brave women who made up the first generation...*

*They stepped onto that ship knowing it would be their only home. They'd never see another.*

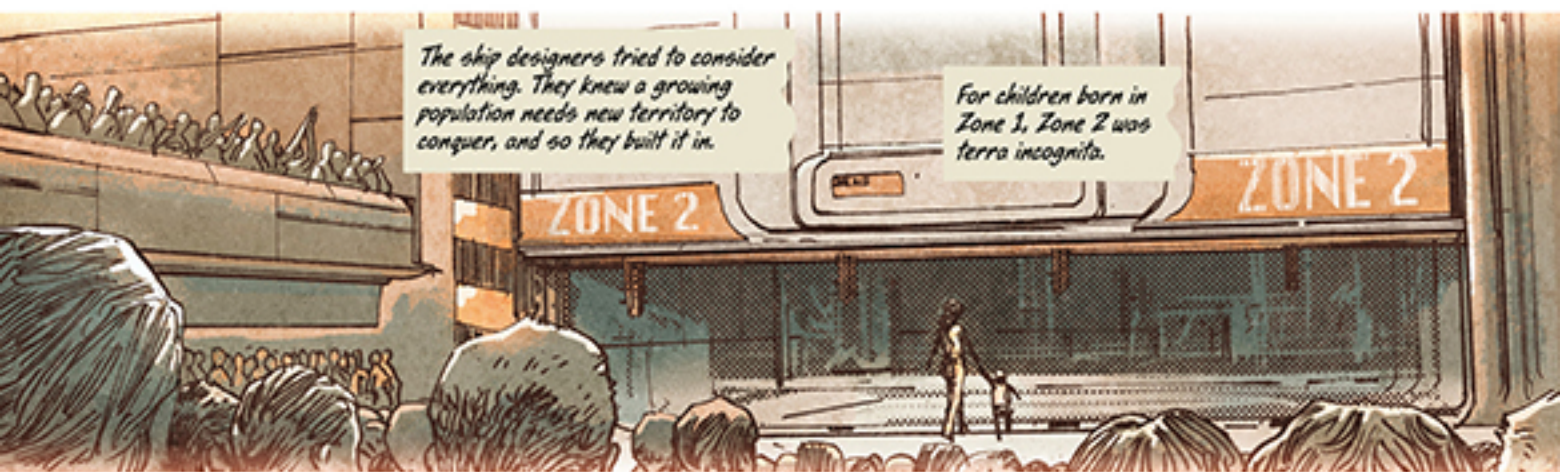
*Did they miss having men in their lives? Were some of them relieved?*



*It can't have been an accident that the first baby born was a boy.*

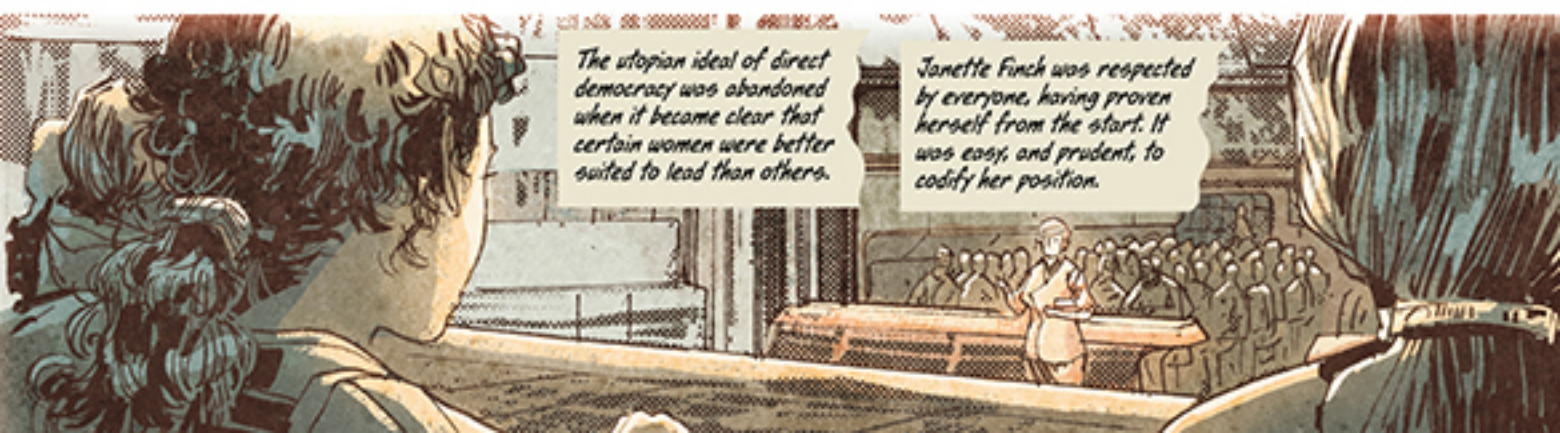
*Genetic diversity was important. The embryos had been picked before they left Earth.*

*Only the order of birth was left to their discretion.*




*The ship designers tried to consider everything. They knew a growing population needs new territory to conquer, and so they built it in.*

*For children born in Zone 1, Zone 2 was terra incognita.*




*The utopian ideal of direct democracy was abandoned when it became clear that certain women were better suited to lead than others.*

*Janette Finch was respected by everyone, having proven herself from the start. It was easy, and prudent, to codify her position.*




*But the problem with leaders is they create a focal point.*

*As the second generation grew, it became clear that no ship was big enough to hold the aspirations of those born without hope of fulfilling them.*



*Those children had not agreed to leave their ancestral world, or to sire a generation that might see another.*

*By the time Finch died, law and lore had become culture.*



*And by the time the ship locked into orbit above Asan, the people who disembarked were not at all the same as the people who left Earth.*

*Never forget that. Genetically, we are still all one species.*

*But we are not merely our genes.*

*As humans, it is our culture, our choices, that shape us.*



SO?

EXPLAIN NOW? OR EXPLAIN AFTER WE SHOOT?



YOU MAY ALSO ANSWER WITH KOONINGS.

BUT I WARN YOU, SILENCE IS EXPENSIVE.



MAA...

I CAN'T TALK TO THEM, YOU HAVE TO.

WHAT?



THESE PEOPLE, THEY'RE... TRADITIONALISTS.

I'M A GUY, IF I ADDRESS THEM THEY'LL TAKE IT AS AN INSULT.