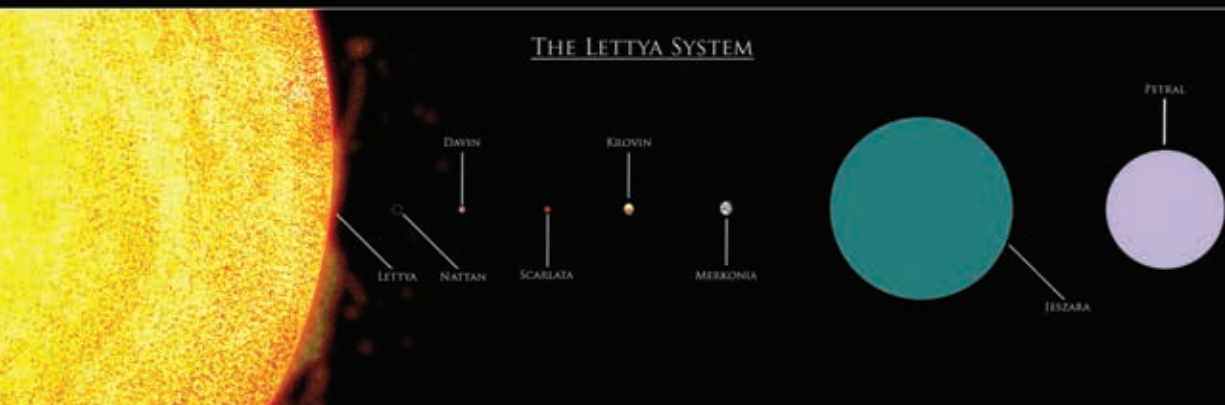
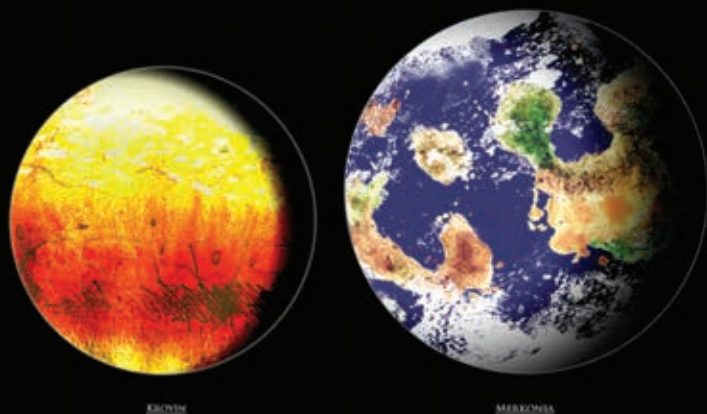


THE LAST FALL

THE LETTYA SYSTEM



A SHORT HISTORY...



THE LETTYA SYSTEM IS COMPRISED OF SEVEN ORBITING PLANETS, OF WHICH ONLY TWO ARE HABITABLE—KROVIN AND MERKONNIA.

KROVIN IS A PRIMARILY DESERT PLANET RICH IN NATURAL SUBTERRANEAN RESOURCES, ORIGINALLY OCCUPIED BY PRIMITIVE, PANTHEISTIC, TRIBE-BASED NATIVES. MERKONNIA IS LUSH AND ENVIRONMENTALLY DIVERSE, OCCUPIED BY A HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED CITIZENRY AND RULED BY A THEOCRACY.

LONG AGO, KROVIN WAS COLONIZED AND MINED BY MERKONNIA FOR ITS ABUNDANT GEOLOGICAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING A POWERFUL NATURAL ENERGY SOURCE FOUND ONLY ON KROVIN. THE MERKONNIANS UTILIZED THE PRIMITIVE INHABITANTS OF KROVIN—CALLED KROVINITES—AS SLAVE LABOR FOR THEIR MINING PURPOSES. IN TIME, THE MERKONNIAN EXPLOITATION OF KROVIN CAME (SEEMINGLY) TO AN END, AND THE MERKONNIANS ALL BUT ABANDONED THE DESERT PLANET, LEAVING BEHIND MUCH OF THEIR TECHNOLOGY, WHICH THE KROVINITES ULTIMATELY ADAPTED TO THEIR OWN EVOLVING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL NEEDS.

HOWEVER, WHEN MERKONNIAN SCIENTISTS DISCOVERED THAT LETTYA WAS ENTERING ITS RED GIANT PHASE, THEY QUICKLY REALIZED TIME WAS RUNNING OUT FOR THEIR OWN PLANET AND THAT THEY WOULD NEED TO DEVELOP AN ESCAPE PLAN TO ENSURE THE CONTINUATION OF THEIR PEOPLE. ANY PLAN HINGED ON ONCE AGAIN MINING THE ABUNDANT FUEL SOURCE FOUND ON KROVIN, THUS PROMPTING THE MERKONNIANS TO RETURN IN THE GUISE OF A RELIGIOUS WAR.

NOW, HOWEVER, THE KROVINITES—FAR MORE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED AND MILITARILY STRONGER—WOULD NOT HAND OVER THEIR HOME WORLD WITHOUT A FIGHT. AFTER YEARS OF FIERCE AND BLOODY WARFARE, AND NUMEROUS FAILED PEACE TALKS, TENS OF THOUSANDS HAVE DIED ON BOTH SIDES—AND CONTINUE TO DO SO—WITH ONLY ULTIMATE DOOM WAITING FOR BOTH PLANETS AS THEIR SHARED SUN BURNS HOTTER AND HOTTER.

SERGEANT MARCUS FALL, A MERKONNIAN SOLDIER FIGHTING IN THIS FUTILE WAR, HAS EXPERIENCED HIS FAIR SHARE OF TRAGEDY, BOTH ON THE BATTLEFIELD AND ON THE HOME FRONT. THIS IS HIS STORY...



PLANET KROVIN.

NOW.



ANSWERS. PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS
LOOKING FOR ANSWERS.



THEY ASK QUESTIONS LIKE,
"WHY ALL THE DEATH?" "WHY
ALL THE KILLING?"



"WHY ARE WE
FIGHTING THIS
WAR?"




ME?

I'M NO
DIFFERENT.




I WANT ANSWERS, TOO.



**CHAPTER FIVE:
THE LAST FALL**



THING IS, I'VE BEEN GIVEN SOME UNEXPECTED INFORMATION RECENTLY THAT HAS ME ASKING ALL NEW QUESTIONS.




NEW QUESTIONS DROWNING IN INNOCENT BLOOD.




HRRGK!

NEW ANSWERS TO BE RIPPED FROM GUILTY HEARTS.



—

AND SADLY...



... INNOCENT ONES, TOO.

KASHA WAS RIGHT.





"...TURNS OUT WE'VE BEEN KILLING THE WRONG ALL ALONG."

WHAT DO YOU MEAN THEY'RE NOT MERKONIAN, KASHA?

I MEAN WHAT I SAY, MARCUS—YOUR RED SOLDIERS ARE NOT OF YOUR OWN KIND.

THEY ARE OF MINE.



THAT... I'M SORRY, THAT JUST DOESN'T MAKE ANY DAMN SENSE. THE HOLY GUARD ARE BLITZIST, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, BUT KROVES?

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.

DO YOU KNOW OF THE LICTORAB MOON?

YEAH, SURE. BIG PRISONER-OF-WAR FACILITY ONCE UPON A TIME. MY DAD HELPED PUT DOWN AN UPRISING THERE BACK IN THE DAY.

AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED THERE AFTER THE UPRISING WAS QUELLED?



FAR AS I KNOW, THEY SHUT THE WHOLE THING DOWN.

IT WAS COSTING THE GOVERNMENT AN ARM AND A LEG TO KEEP IT RUNNING, AND THE ARMY REAL ARMS AND LEGS TO KEEP IT UNDER CONTROL, SO THE TAXPAYERS GOT FED UP WITH BOTH SITUATIONS AND THE BRASS FINALLY PULLED THE PLUG.



AND THE PRISONERS?



AMNESTY. THEY SENT THEM ALL BACK HERE TO KROVIN.

NO MORE WAR AND NO MORE PRISON, SO REALLY NO POINT IN HAVING PRISONERS OF WAR ANYMORE, I GUESS.



'CURSE THAT BACKFIRED BIG TIME WHEN THOSE TERRORIST BASTARDS STARTED POPPING UP EVERYWHERE ON MERKONIA WITH THEIR SUICIDE BOMBS.

WHICH ULTIMATELY LED BACK TO WAR, YES?

YEAH.