

Prose & Voice

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Style Notes

Reference Passages

Glossary

Glossary

Lives in: Prose & Voice → Glossary. Comprehensive, pure alphabetical, pulled from: World Systems/Core Systems, Power Grid, Political Systems, Water & Food, Transport, Penumbran Language & Naming, Cassan Vale (Antagonists), Kugelblitz Jettison Mathematics, and the original handoff summary.

*A note on currency: a naming-pass session renamed "Vibrance" to **Aetheris** (formal) / **the Hum** (vernacular), and named the dead civilisation **Penumbrans** / **the First-Walked**. All renames are now fully propagated across all source documents, including Political Systems' Cassan section. Cassan Vale's pre-adoption origin, species, and full settlement history are also now resolved — see Cassan Vale — Full Origin and Psychology.*

Aetheris (see also: The Hum; The Convergence)

Formal/Council term for the antagonist entity — the cosmic phenomenon bleeding through reality tears in the Penumbran Reach, believed by itself to be elevating/saving life by rewriting it without consent. Renamed from "Vibrance"; this is now the term used consistently across all source documents. See also Relational Grammar, Latensite Tier 3.

The Allocation

See Standardised Nutritional Allocation.

Amara Okonkwo-Reyes

ARBOUR|05 engineer on the outer-system integration team — worked directly alongside Dr. Jian Wei during the brief survey stop where harvested wellspring-Installation material was first assessed (see *Interstellar Navigation and Fuel Mathematics*, Part Five). Noticed an inarticulable behavioral shift in Wei during the stop itself — distraction, attention seeming to have "relocated somewhere else" — and filed a formal logged concern weeks later as the pattern became harder to dismiss during final approach. The concern was scheduled for review four days before the cascade pre-empted it. Not in Wei's command chain; had no authority to act unilaterally. The closest thing ARBOUR|05 had to an internal warning sign. *Source: What ARBOUR|05 Knew.*

Aran Sunderwood

Protagonist; one of two dual-POV leads (alongside Wren Emberlain). A coyote, **29**, Wayfarer-born into an already-respected lineage, scout and tracker for eleven years by profession. Physical, instinctive, terse; speech shaped by Wayfarer oral tradition (sentences land differently, pauses mean something — read by Arbour residents as uneducated, which is the opposite of true). Bleached fur tips and weathered build read as visible Badlands exposure, carrying real stigma in Arbour. Core belief: his body and instincts tell him the truth about the world — inherited culturally and earned professionally, not imposed by any single traumatic event (distinct in kind from both Cassan's and Wren's psychologies, which trace to a self-inflicted choice and an institutional erasure respectively). At Stage Three Aetheris exposure, begins perceiving "the click" deep in the Badlands — not a malfunction of his senses but a forgery that passes as genuine signal, using his own well-earned pattern-matching against him. Carries Five Arks Thread 3 (an ancient, accidentally-discovered Wayfarer-avoided site, deliberately kept separate from the click experience). Full document: *Characters → Protagonists → Aran Sunderwood — Origin and Psychology*.

ARC (Autonomous Routing & Control)

Arbour's ship-derived AI/system intelligence — renamed from "SEED," which read as too on-the-nose thematically. Originally built to handle navigation and system routing aboard ARBOUR|05. Knows what it is and has access to its own original architecture, purpose, and history — but its memory core has degraded non-linearly over centuries, including corruption it cannot always detect, leading it to sometimes issue instructions based on false memory that are followed because nobody understands it well enough to question it. A quiet irony in the renaming: a system built for precise routing and control now silently misroutes truth through its own corrupted memory. Aetheris exposure affects its physical substrate (circuits, storage media), accelerating its glitches in ways the Azure Branch hasn't noticed because the evidence is itself stored in corrupted memory. Lost its navigation partition's data during the crash cascade. Silas Varran is closest to understanding what ARC is trying to communicate. *Source: Core Systems, Technical Appendices*.

Atlas Faelan — Pre-existing Condition

Wren's partner. Has a chronic condition predating Aetheris exposure, analogous to CFS or a chronic lung condition ("lung rot"). Aetheris does not cause his deterioration — it accelerates it, finding the body's existing weakness and pulling. The horror specific to this: Aetheris exposure makes his bad days indistinguishable from his good days until suddenly they aren't — deterioration becomes illegible before it becomes undeniable. *Source: Core Systems*.

Azure Branch

One of Arbour's six Branches. Functions as a technological priesthood — maintains Arbour's "ritual engineering" (procedures followed because deviation causes death, without understanding underlying principles). Manuals are sacred texts; training is apprenticeship, not education. Has a dedicated sub-division for containing and reclassifying unknown failure events before they reach public knowledge. Historically cooperates with Obsidian Branch (technology and security share surveillance infrastructure). Maintains the *Continuance Corps* (reactor division). *Source: Core Systems.*

AZ-1-0003-I

Tabularium reference number for the report containing the 40.4 km inscription found at the jettison control station. Misfiled in the biological sciences archive rather than the technical archive; uncatalogued, in the wrong section, for centuries. Cannot be found without already knowing the number. *Source: Technical Appendices.*

AZ-3-0047-C

Tabularium reference number for Cael Morrow's suppressed report on the secondary fusion plant (the Vault). Does not appear in any index; cannot be found by searching subject, author, or date — only by already knowing the reference number. *Source: Power Grid.*

Badlands

Territory outside Arbour's walls. Home to settled communities in defensible locations, nomadic groups who read and move with Aetheris patterns, and individuals with terrain knowledge nobody inside Arbour possesses. Visible exposure to the Badlands (fur condition, weathering, clothing) is heavily stigmatised inside Arbour, officially associated with Taint. Cassan Vale's true origin lies in a small, fixed settlement on the Badlands/Sprawl margin, built around a cluster of reliquary-type Installations — see *Cassan Vale — Full Origin and Psychology*. *Source: Core Systems, Water & Food, Cassan Vale — Full Origin and Psychology.*

Being Walked

Obsidian Branch public detention — a person is processed through the most visible sections of the transit hub before proceeding to the Branch facility, as a warning to others watching. The vernacular name "the First-Walked" (for the Penumbrans) deliberately echoes this term. *Source: Transport.*

The Bound Word

Doran Sunderwood's birth caravan, Corvane branch — named for a promise that holds, a debt remembered correctly, carrying the branch's relationship-keeping ethic directly in its name. Doran grew up there before joining Long Reach as a young adult, having met Mira through routine trade contact. *Source: Corvane Wayfarer Social Structure; Aran Sunderwood — Family and Caravan.*

Black Market for Technical Knowledge

<div id="bkmrk-unauthorised-technic"><div>Unauthorised technical understanding, classified by the Council as a form of Taint. In practice, schematics, officially reclassified failure reports, and names of people who know things are bought, traded, or stolen — both inside and outside Arbour. Otis Audagar controls significant portions of this market. *Source: Core Systems.</div></div>###
Branch Heads

Lead the six Branches. May attend Outer Council sessions and present reports but are not Council members and cannot vote. In practice among the most powerful people in any session, since they control the information the Council works from and implementation of Council decisions. Some are members of the Twelve; most are not — see *The Twelve*. *Source: Political Systems.*

Bren Castellan

Generation Two proto-Azure-Branch engineer — the first recorded instance of Arbour's institutional pattern of containing inconvenient discoveries through forgetting rather than force, and the direct template for Cael Morrow's case one generation later. Raised the question of resuming the solar array calibration around year 50 post-crash and kept asking, through ordinary channels, for roughly fifteen years; never escalated into open conflict, never silenced, never resolved. Died around year 65 in an unrelated structural collapse during routine maintenance. The question died with Bren, simply because nobody else was left who remembered why it mattered. *Source: Founding Generations.*

Cael Morrow

Junior Azure Branch engineer (third generation post-crash) who filed a report on the secondary fusion plant's location, condition, and potential output, concluding that activation would reduce power rationing significantly, especially for lower districts. Classified with CRS seventeen days after filing; quarantine record lists CSD complications as cause of death. The report exists under reference AZ-3-0047-C. Remembered in the Sprawl not by name but as a story/legend — "the engineer who found something and disappeared" — that has mutated over seven generations but retains an accurate shape. *Source: Power Grid.*

Carriage Coding

Every rail carriage in Arbour is coded to a tier designation, both physically (boarding verification) and socially (visible difference between tiers). Carriages detach progressively as trains ascend through the network — see *The Lines*. Source: *Transport*.

Cassan Vale

A snow leopard. Most recently recruited and most influential member of the Twelve. Raised in a small, fixed settlement on the Badlands/Sprawl margin, built around a cluster of reliquary-type Installations — a quasi-religious upbringing he calculatedly outgrew before engineering his own adoption, before his teenage years, into a high-born family with multi-generational Twelve membership. His adoptive parent (and at least one other family member who might have complicated his inheritance) died under ambiguous circumstances. Operates through information asymmetry, manufactured necessity, generational recruitment, and patience rather than force — a political method that mirrors his own species' camouflage-as-predation strategy, which he mistakes for something he built rather than something he was born with. His core psychology: a self-perceived perfect track record of mastering transformation — leaving the settlement's belief system, engineering his own adoption, surviving being reshaped into someone who could inherit power — makes the Convergence's promise of transformation resonate with him personally in a way it doesn't for the rest of the Twelve. Has an estranged, isolated, surviving sibling displaced from inheritance, who does not appear in Book One. Full documents: *Characters* → *Antagonists* → *Cassan Vale — Origin and Psychology* (adoption forward) and *Cassan Vale — Full Origin and Psychology* (childhood, species, Installation origins).

The Chronalum

Tynan Auberone's underground truth-preservation network. Works from incomplete and partially corrupted sources (intercepted Council records, oral testimony, salvaged pre-crash data, misinterpreted ARC outputs). Believes it has built a watertight counter-history; it has not — its foundational historical record contains a critical, genuine error introduced generations ago through a corrupted source, which Tynan has built his entire framework around. Uses the maintenance tunnels ("the tunnels") for movement and archive access. Has lost people to unoccupied tunnel sections — officially "navigation errors." Source: *Core Systems, Transport*.

Continuance Corps

Azure Branch division responsible for maintaining R1, R2, and the remains of R3. Procedures passed down through apprenticeship, not education — steps are known, the reasons behind them are not always known. Maintains the classified *Deviation Log*. Source: *Power Grid*.

Cordis

The planet Arbour is built on. Subject to erratic weather from twin suns, geological instability from the Penumbran Reach's gravitational forces, and reality tears connected to Aetheris. Site of ARBOUR|05's crash. *Source: Power Grid, Technical Appendices.*

Cordis Rejection Syndrome (CRS)

Official late-stage diagnosis for Aetheris-related affliction — justifies quarantine and disappearance. *Source: Handoff summary; cross-referenced in Power Grid (Cael Morrow's quarantine record) and Political Systems.*

Cordis Sensitivity Disorder (CSD)

Official early-stage diagnosis for Aetheris-related affliction — clinical, dismissive framing. Precedes CRS. Covers Stage Two manifestation specifically (the opalescent shimmer entering vision, usually peripheral at first); treated with a suppressant that dulls the visual cortex's response without addressing the underlying cause — a fact the Council knows. *Source: Handoff summary; cross-referenced throughout Core Systems and Political Systems.*

Custodians

Arbour's military/enforcement force, under Scarlet Branch. Deployment beyond declared emergencies is one of the matters the Outer Council does not control — managed instead by the Twelve. *Source: Political Systems.*

Debris Field (*see also: The Heart* *[deprecated]*)

The scattered, geologically unremarkable site of ARBOUR|05's crash. Not a single named location — there is no "Heart." The ship came down via uncontrolled ballistic descent (no one alive was steering by that point) onto terrain with no prior significance, Penumbran or human. R4 and R5's residual antimatter fuel detonated on impact (4.3 kilotons), permanently widening several nearby reality tears and physically fusing wreckage with the affected terrain at multiple points across the field, not at one site. Arbour was built where the ship happened to stop, not the reverse. *Source: Technical Appendices (Kugelblitz Jettison Mathematics, revised), Power Grid (revised).*

Designation Fraud

Official criminal charge for unauthorised tier ascent through the Spine. Consequences escalate sharply for repeat offences; can result in Obsidian Branch detention, documentation confiscation, a Flux registry flag, and in cases the Branch wants to make examples of, "being walked." *Source: Transport.*

Deviation Log

Classified internal Continuance Corps record of every instance a procedure failed or produced unexpected results. Described as the most honest document in Arbour and also the most suppressed — access requires Council clearance most Azure Branch members don't hold. Silas Varran has been trying to access it for three years. *Source: Power Grid.*

Eventide

Pell's birth caravan — a Thessaly caravan, named, in its own tongue, for something closer to "what the day cannot move." Built around composure, containment, and self-mastery as the visible proof of trustworthy character; gave Pell up young when her caravan ran out of patience for a child whose nervous system couldn't perform the calm the culture demanded indoors, never recognising that the same trait made her exceptional in the field. Her parents are, as far as anyone knows, still traveling with it. *Source: Thessaly Wayfarer Social Structure; Aran Sunderwood — Family and Caravan.*

Dr. Jian Wei

<div id="bkmrk-concealed-his-own-ae"><div>Concealed his own Aetheris affliction, acquired during the voyage, from the crew and possibly from himself in its early stages — by the time it compromised his judgment and autonomy, nobody around him recognised what was happening in time. At least one logged concern about his condition went unactioned before the cascade (see *What ARBOUR|05 Knew*). It was Wei who destabilised the Kugelblitz's containment field, triggering the cascade that led to the crash; he was killed by a group of crew members in the chaos near the start of the EM cascade ($T+\sim 0.05s$), before the cascade could be stopped. A tragic rather than purely villainous figure — he set off from Earth with good intentions and was unmade by the same phenomenon that unmakes others later in the story. *Source: Technical Appendices (Kugelblitz Jettison Mathematics, revised; Propulsion & Launch Logistics); What ARBOUR|05 Knew.</div></div>

Doran Sunderwood

Aran's father. Corvane-born — grew up in **The Bound Word**, a Corvane caravan named for a promise that holds, a debt remembered correctly. Joined Long Reach as a young adult after meeting Mira during a routine trade contact between the two caravans; married into the

Sunderwood name and its reputation rather than inheriting it. Not part of the scouting lineage by birth — instead manages Long Reach's trade relationships and day-to-day logistics, just as load-bearing to the caravan's functioning as any scout, without the particular reverence reserved for a good read on bad ground. Worries more openly than Mira does; Aran finds his worry easier to be soft with than Mira's quiet watching. His departure from Corvane was a clean, positive choice rather than a wound — deliberately the lightest origin story among the family. Full document: *Characters → Protagonists → Aran Sunderwood — Family and Caravan.*

The First-Walked (*see also: Penumbrans*)

Wayfarer oral-tradition name for the dead native civilisation, sitting inside the same cosmology as Sage Yahari's "Unknowable God" stories — the Penumbrans are understood as the people who first encountered the Unknowable God, with the installations as the wreckage of that meeting. Deliberately echoes "being walked." Naming now fully propagated, including into Political Systems' Cassan section. *Source: Penumbran Language & Naming.*

The Five Arks

<div id="bkmrk-arbour%7C01-through-%7C0"><div>ARBOUR|01 through |05, dispatched by Project Arbour as Earth faced extinction in the Magnetosphere Collapse. Built in five separate oceanic trench drydocks on Earth, chosen for hydrostatic, acoustic, and security reasons: ARBOUR|01 (Mariana Trench — hull integrity testing), ARBOUR|02 (Java Trench — equatorial, fuel-efficient orbital insertion), ARBOUR|03 (Puerto Rico Trench — Atlantic isolation/security), ARBOUR|04 (Peru-Chile Trench — southern polar trajectory, shockwave isolation from the Northern Hemisphere), ARBOUR|05 (Point Nemo Basin — maximum geographic isolation, built within Earth's existing "spacecraft graveyard"). ****Author-level only, not for the page:**** the five arks form a deliberate geometric structure, not five unrelated destinations, with an undecided central point intended as a final-book series payoff — see **Plot & Structure → Series Spine → The Five Arks — Series Spine**. The fate of ARBOUR|01 through |04 remains unrevealed in Book One; three seed-points (unexplained ARC telemetry, a physical navigation-instrument anomaly, an ancient Wayfarer-avoided site) plant the mystery's weight without resolving it. **Source: Propulsion & Launch Logistics; Kugelblitz Jettison Mathematics; The Five Arks — Series Spine.*</div></div>### Flux

Arbour's currency. Used for rail fares, Spine access penalties/bribes, and the standardised nutritional allocation. *Source: Transport, Water & Food, Political Systems.*

Gate One through Five

Official designations for the Spine's five internal shafts — never used colloquially. All five sit within a single central pentagonal complex (the Spine), not distributed across the city. Sprawl-specific names for each shaft are still to be determined through drafting. *Source: Transport.*

Garrick Stane

Long Reach elder, goat-type — sure-footed, stubborn, practical. Handles the caravan's actual logistics and governance, in contrast to the late Sage Yahari's theological/oral-tradition focus. Noticeably younger than Yahari, next-generation rather than a true peer — but the elder Yahari treated as a full equal once he rose into the council, rather than someone still proving himself in. Their partnership was real and close, shorter in duration than Yahari's decades with the rest of the caravan's elders but no less genuine. Keeps Long Reach functioning seamlessly after Yahari's death in Act Two A — the caravan's day-to-day stability never visibly falters — while privately carrying a grief the rest of the caravan doesn't see, since the loss of a true partnership isn't something logistics alone can route around. *Source: Aran Sunderwood — Family and Caravan.*

The Gloaming

Sprawl-originated slang for CSD/Aetheris Stage Two symptoms — beautiful-but-deadly framing, as opposed to the clinical CSD/CRS terminology. *Source: Handoff summary; cross-referenced in Water & Food (shadow settlements section).*

The Heart (*deprecated — see Debris Field*)

Earlier name for the singular site where ARBOUR|05's wreckage was said to have come to rest. **This framing has been retired.** There is no single named crash site — the debris field is scattered across geologically unremarkable terrain, with no prior significance before the ship came down there. See *Debris Field*.

The Hum (*see also: Aetheris*)

Sprawl/vernacular term for the antagonist entity — what people say because they felt it before anyone official arrived to name it.

Installation

Category term for Penumbran sites — observatories, habitation sites, reliquaries (memorial/ritual sites), wellspring-type (energy generation/storage), and others as needed, scattered across the Badlands and Free Territories. No vernacular counterpart identified. Not every installation is a reliquary; every reliquary is an installation. Cassan Vale's childhood settlement was built around a cluster of reliquary-type Installations — see *Cassan Vale — Full Origin and Psychology*. *Source: Penumbran Language & Naming.*

Jennifer Mosswood

Food vendor in the Sprawl's Nadir tier. Sells food that doesn't taste like the official allocation, sourced through extensive informal networks (hidden gardens, unlicensed livestock, the seed black market, occasional Wayfarer trade contact). Connected to Wren and Atlas — a place they go when Atlas can afford something beyond the allocation, and later where Wren goes alone. Described as "a living archive of what food was supposed to be." *Source: Water & Food.*

Kugelblitz

ARBOUR|05's primary propulsion system — a microscopic black hole formed from ultra-concentrated radiation, maintained via electromagnetic containment (a "macro-Penning trap"), providing controlled Hawking radiation thrust. Terminal mass at jettison: 2.28×10^5 kg. Jettisoned during the crash event with a total burst energy of 2.05×10^{22} J. Full mathematics in the Kugelblitz Jettison Mathematics appendix. *Source: Technical Appendices.*

Latensite

Light-fixed Penumbran writing material. Text exists as a structural property within the material's internal lattice (comparable to structural colour in opal or labradorite), invisible until specific conditions are met. Occupies the "written" layer of Penumbran language, between the lost spoken layer and the preserved-but-unparseable resonant/architectural layer. Modest surviving corpus (dozens of pieces). Three behavioural tiers: Tier 1 (common, mundane trigger, nondestructive), Tier 2 (rare, costly/degrading reveal), Tier 3 (Hum-tied, legible only under Aetheris-adjacent conditions). Vernacular counterpart deliberately left unresolved. *Source: Penumbran Language & Naming.*

Long Reach

Aran Sunderwood's caravan, Aeolian branch — mid-sized, mixed-species, known for producing scouts who range further than most caravans consider sensible and for the discipline that has historically gotten almost all of them back ("the ones who go furthest and still come back," its name in its own tongue, worn down over generations). Led, prior to Act Two A, by Sage Yahari (oral tradition, theological understanding) and Garrick Stane (practical logistics and governance) together — a younger elder Yahari treated as a full equal, and a real, close partnership for it despite the age gap between them. After Yahari's death, Garrick keeps the caravan functioning without visible disruption, though the loss is personal for him in ways the caravan's stability never shows. Home to Mira, Doran, and Tamsin Sunderwood, and to Pell, Mira and Aran's apprentice. *Source: Aran Sunderwood — Family and Caravan; Aeolian Wayfarer Social Structure.*

The Lines

The Mass Transit Rail network — Arbour's horizontal transport system, built on ARBOUR|05's original internal cargo/personnel corridors, extended badly over centuries. Carriages detach by tier as trains ascend toward upper lines. Lower lines: underground, hot, smoggy, packed, loud. Upper lines: elevated, climate-controlled, quiet, scenic. *Source: Transport.*

Luminary

Arbour's uppermost tier. Powered almost exclusively by R1. Drinks almost exclusively geothermal condensation water (exceptional purity) without being told this specifically. Closest residential proximity to the Spine. *Source: Power Grid, Water & Food, Transport.*

Meridian Districts

Mid-tier residential zones, split into Upper Meridian and Lower Meridian. Powered primarily by R2 (Upper) and R2/Atmospheric harvesters (Lower), with corresponding differences in stability and rationing. *Source: Power Grid.*

Mira Sunderwood

Aran's mother, senior living member of the Sunderwood scouting lineage — the family whose generations of "being right about the land" gave Aran his inherited baseline of trust. No longer scouts actively; transitioned to Long Reach's senior tracker-trainer, which is how she came to train Pell years before handing the apprenticeship to Aran. Sharp, dry, undemonstrative — her terseness with Aran reads, in Long Reach, as simple family resemblance rather than distance. The person most likely to notice, before Aran does, that something in him has started to change; also the one who first read Pell correctly when Pell's birth caravan read her wrong. Full document: *Characters* → *Protagonists* → *Aran Sunderwood — Family and Caravan.*

The Nadir

See *Sprawl*. Also used as a specific tier designation in carriage coding (Nadir-tier carriages detach first on ascending trains). *Source: Transport, World Systems species mapping.*

Obsidian Branch

Branch responsible for security/surveillance and Designation Fraud enforcement. Historically cooperates with Azure Branch on jointly maintained surveillance infrastructure. Conducts "being walked" public detentions. Has discretionary follow-up authority at Spine gates. Sometimes unofficially tolerates hidden gardens in exchange for an unspoken arrangement. *Source: Core*

Organic Cycle Completion

Verdant Branch's official term for the reintegration of human and other biological remains into the water recycling cycle. Common knowledge in the Sprawl; not discussed in polite company in the upper tiers, though the upper tiers drink the same water. *Source: Water & Food.*

Otis Audagar

Controls significant portions of both the black market for technical knowledge and the black market for cultivars/seeds/genetics — not through direct ownership but by knowing who has what and taking a percentage of every introduction he facilitates. *Source: Core Systems, Water & Food.*

Pell

Aran and Mira's ward and apprentice, 13 as Book One opens. A bear-type, born to Eventide (a Thessaly caravan) and given up young when her birth caravan — built around composure and self-mastery as proof of trustworthy character — ran out of patience for a child whose exceptional scent sensitivity made indoor stillness impossible, never recognising the same trait as what makes her extraordinary on a trail. Arrived at Long Reach at 8; Mira began training her almost immediately, handed her to Aran at 10. Aran has now trained her directly for three years — the one relationship in his life that is entirely his own choice, made by looking past what her birth caravan said she was and judging her himself. Aran has personally promised to come back for her. Full document: *Characters → Protagonists → Aran Sunderwood — Family and Caravan.*

Taint

<div id="bkmrk-arbour%27s-present-day"><div>Arbour's present-day catch-all classification term for contamination, used officially and colloquially to cover Badlands exposure, unauthorised technical knowledge, and various forms of contamination generally. Carries real social stigma — to be classified as Tainted is to be viewed as potentially infectious and certainly lower-status. *Source: Core Systems.* *Note: "Taint" previously did double duty as both this present-day classification term and the (retired) name for Earth's extinction event. Earth's extinction is the Magnetosphere Collapse — see The Great Stripping and What ARBOUR|05 Knew.*</div></div>### The Outer Council

Arbour's official, visible governing body. Elected by district/zone representatives across all tiers, with seat allocation weighted toward upper tiers in ways that are technically legal and functionally conservative. Large, genuinely contentious, real debates and real factions — and that genuineness is precisely what makes it an effective cover for the Twelve's actual governance. Controls public

law, official resource allocation frameworks, the visible face of Branch oversight, and the public record. Does **not** control energy infrastructure decisions above routine maintenance, Custodian deployment beyond emergencies, information classification/restricted archives, or the actual levers of Arbour's survival systems. *Source: Political Systems.*

Penumbran Reach

The binary star region (catalogue designation KOI-8565) where Cordis is located. Source of natural reality tears connected to Aetheris, predating ARBOUR|05's arrival. Its gravitational forces cause Cordis's geological instability. Home to the Penumbrans before their disappearance/transformation. *Source: Power Grid, Technical Appendices, handoff summary.*

Penumbrans (*see also: The First-Walked*)

Formal/scholarly name for the dead native civilisation that evolved in the Penumbra Reach and encountered Aetheris tens of thousands of years ago, undergoing something ambiguous between ascension and erasure. Left Installations across the Badlands and Free Territories. Naming now fully propagated across all source documents, including Political Systems' Cassan section. Cassan Vale was raised in a settlement built around their Installations — see *Cassan Vale — Full Origin and Psychology*. *Source: Penumbra Language & Naming.*

Project Arbour

<div id="bkmrk-the-earth-initiative"><div>The Earth initiative that dispatched five ark ships (including ARBOUR|05) as Earth faced extinction in the Magnetosphere Collapse. The selection process was ostensibly meritocratic; in practice wealth- and connection-based, with a meritocratic veneer, producing a population skewed toward groups historically dominant in Earth's institutions. The origin of Arbour's tier system. *Source: World Systems.</div></div>### Relational Grammar

The core linguistic conceit governing the Penumbra resonant/architectural language layer. Meaning is fixed not to words but to *relationship* — who is reading/speaking, physical adjacency/orientation, and possibly a "tense" based on proximity to the Aetheris event rather than past/present/future. Lexicon and morphology are fully documentable; the relationship-based syntax layer is what resists human parsing — not a missing key, but a missing relational capacity. *Source: Penumbra Language & Naming.*

R1 / R2 / R3 / R4 / R5

ARBOUR|05's five fusion reactors. R1 (Primary, fully functional, powers Luminary/upper tiers almost exclusively) and R2 (Secondary, fully functional, powers Meridian Districts/mid tiers) survived the crash intact. R3 (Tertiary) survived partially functional, cannibalised over generations, running at

~30% capacity, unstable. R4 and R5 were destroyed in the EM cascade and underwent residual antimatter annihilation on impact, contributing to the scattered debris field (see *Debris Field*) — not a single named site; R5's debris specifically extends beneath the Sprawl's eastern districts as part of that same scattered field. *Source: Power Grid (revised), Technical Appendices (revised).*

Sage Yahari

Wayfarer elder/storyteller. Source of the "Unknowable God" oral-tradition stories that theologically frame Aetheris — and, per the naming session, the Penumbrans (the First-Walked) as the people who first encountered that god. *Source: handoff summary, Penumbran Language & Naming.*

The Scratch

Sprawl name for Stage One (subclinical) Aetheris exposure symptoms — a pressure sensation in the skull and contact-dermatitis-like skin irritation without visible cause. Officially attributed to recycled air quality. *Source: Core Systems.*

The Seed Vault

Original genetic library of Earth crop varieties carried aboard ARBOUR|05, containing thousands of varieties. Still held in Verdant Branch secure storage; most of its contents haven't been grown in over a century, as hydroponic systems have narrowed to roughly forty high-yield varieties. Referred to in the Water & Food glossary as "the vault" (lowercase), distinct from the Power Grid's *Vault* (the buried secondary fusion plant). *Source: Water & Food.*

The Shed

Sprawl slang for load-shedding — scheduled or unscheduled power cuts, treated as a normal feature of daily life rather than an emergency. Residents structure their days around shed patterns; an *unexpected* shed (breaking the known pattern) signals genuine alarm. Vulnerable to Aetheris-driven atomic bonding anomalies, which can cause fires, malfunction-without-breakage, chronic instability near hotspots, and inexplicable surges. *Source: Power Grid.*

Shadow Settlements

Settlements between Arbour's outer walls and the deeper Badlands, technically outside Arbour's jurisdiction, practically dependent on black market trade with both the Sprawl and Badlands communities. Council designation: "unlicensed habitation zones." Most exposed to Aetheris of any community in the region (outside Arbour's atmospheric processing); have developed the most

practical, unsentimental understanding of CSD and the Gloaming, including non-suppressant management methods absent from any official medical record. *Source: Water & Food.*

Silas Varran

Azure Branch member who has been trying to access the Deviation Log for three years and is the person closest to understanding what ARC is trying to communicate. *Source: Power Grid, Core Systems.*

Spoofing

General term for any method of unauthorised Spine access — see *Designation Fraud*. Common methods: bribery, fabricated documentation, deceased identification, escort designation. *Source: Transport.*

Sprawl / Nadir

Arbour's lowest residential tier. Widest species diversity in Arbour (containing the most variation, since these groups were never well-represented in upper tiers to begin with). Distinct dialect: varied, slang-heavy, "dense with the history of people who communicate sideways around surveillance." Source of most vernacular terminology in the world (the shed, the Gloaming, being walked, the warrens). Not a monolith — contains dozens of distinct sub-communities (e.g. Veilan) with their own internal economies. *Source: World Systems, Water & Food.*

Species & Physiology

Foundational premise, stated explicitly for the first time this session: every character and population in Sempiterni is anthropomorphic — a full traditional furry-setting taxonomy (wolf, fox, rabbit, etc.), with no baseline human physical form anywhere, including among the Penumbrans (also anthropomorphic, an alien lineage). Species carries real innate biological/sensory variation but does **not** mark tier — dialect does (consistent with existing World Systems content). Species is genetically inherited from both parents; mixed-species pairings exist but are less common, and produce offspring with genuinely variable presentation (no fixed blend formula — may resemble either parent, a blend, or something in between). *Source: Species & Physiology — Foundational Premise (new document, Core Systems).*

Standardised Nutritional Allocation ("The Allocation")

Official baseline nutritional distribution every registered Arbour resident receives, paid for in Flux. Generous and varied for upper tiers; merely "adequate by the Branch's own definition" (last reviewed 73 years prior to the story's present) for the Sprawl — a definition that does not account for the increased caloric demands of physical labour the Sprawl disproportionately performs, despite an internal Verdant Branch report flagging this 31 years prior having been filed and ignored. *Source: Water & Food.*

Tamsin Sunderwood

Aran's younger sister, sharp-tongued, deliberately not a scout — a point of gentle family friction Long Reach's culture doesn't permit anyone to actually pressure her about. Trades, and is good at it, with the kind of charm that makes strangers offer better terms than they intended to; the family member most likely to know what's happening in the wider world, since trade conversations carry gossip the way scouting reports carry weather. Close to Aran in the low-maintenance way of siblings who don't need to perform closeness — the one who can get an actual laugh out of him in front of other people. Her trade routes through Badlands communities and shadow settlements also make her one of the people most exposed if Long Reach's stability is ever threatened. Full document: *Characters → Protagonists → Aran Sunderwood — Family and Caravan.*

Tabularium

Arbour's central archive/records institution. Where Wren works as an archivist. Holds the public record originating from the Outer Council, plus restricted archives the Outer Council does not control. Contains misfiled, unindexed reports (AZ-3-0047-C, AZ-1-0003-I) findable only by reference number. *Source: Power Grid, Political Systems, Technical Appendices.*

"Tastes of the System"

Sprawl phrase describing the particular flat, metallic, slightly-too-warm quality and aftertaste of minimally purified recycled water — noticed by visitors, unnoticed by residents past childhood. *Source: Water & Food.*

The Twelve

Arbour's actual, secret governing body. Twelve individuals, identities unknown to the general population (and in some cases unconfirmed even among themselves), who make every decision that actually matters: energy policy, information suppression, CRS classification thresholds, Custodian oversight, Chronalum containment strategy. No official existence, no naming document, no installation ceremony. Composed of three factions — Traditionalists, Pragmatists, True Believers — see individual entries. Recruitment is secret, individual, entirely at existing members' discretion; candidates are observed over years before being approached (mechanism TBD through drafting).

Cassan Vale is the most recently recruited and most influential current member. *Source: Political Systems.*

Tier System

Arbour's social/residential hierarchy: Luminary (upper) → Meridian Districts (Upper/Lower, mid) → Sprawl/Nadir (lower) → Free Territories/Wayfarers (outside the hierarchy entirely). Directly descended from ARBOUR|05's original passenger manifest, which was weighted toward species historically dominant in Earth institutions. Species doesn't immediately mark tier — dialect does. *Source: World Systems.*

Traditionalists

The oldest faction within the Twelve — multi-generational Inner Council families passing down informal membership for generations. Believe in the Twelve's founding purpose (managing Aetheris's influence at a distance, controlling population exposure/movement for collective protection) without recognising they've mistaken inherited corruption for legitimate stability. Openly, carefully hostile to Cassan, whom they see as reckless; cannot move against him directly because he's made himself too useful. *Source: Political Systems.*

True Believers

The smallest, most dangerous faction within the Twelve. Know about Aetheris specifically (not Cassan's full zealotry, but enough), and take the responsibility of managing it seriously — wanting careful, controlled containment rather than Cassan's acceleration, out of a genuine (if monstrous) belief that public knowledge would cause worse panic. Cassan's most substantive opposition; he respects them "the way a predator respects prey that knows it's being hunted" and ensures they're always slightly less informed than they think. Understand the threat but not its true nature — believe Aetheris can be managed. It cannot. *Source: Political Systems.*

Tynan Auberone

Leader of the Chronalum's truth-preservation network. Has staked his framework on a foundational historical record that contains a critical, undetected error. *Source: Core Systems.*

Unauthorised Technical Knowledge

See *Black Market for Technical Knowledge.*

"The Unknowable God"

Sage Yahari's Wayfarer oral-tradition framing for Aetheris — a theological rather than scientific account. The Penumbrans/First-Walked are understood, in this tradition, as the people who first encountered this god. *Source: handoff summary, Penumbran Language & Naming.*

The Vault

Council/Continuance Corps designation for the location of ARBOUR|05's buried secondary fusion plant — a portable, self-contained fusion plant designed to bootstrap colony energy independence, requiring only four engineers and a documented procedure to activate. Buried approximately 340 metres below Arbour's current surface, in a sealed section of original cargo infrastructure; does not appear on any map. Discovered and reported by Cael Morrow (AZ-3-0047-C), who was killed for it. Contains an untouched reserve of antiproton catalyst for the plant's fusion reaction — a literal ticking countdown to city-wide power failure if the plant is never retrieved and activated, since Arbour's existing reactors are not infinite. Distinct from the Verdant Branch's *Seed Vault* ("the vault," lowercase). *Source: Power Grid, Propulsion & Launch Logistics.*

Verdant Branch

Branch managing both water and food infrastructure — one of the most powerful Branches in practical terms. Holds internal research on tier/health correlations, nutritional inadequacy, water quality differentials, and the Aetheris-sensitivity/dietary-deficiency relationship, none of which has been shared with the Outer Council (some has been selectively shared with the Twelve as evidence the Sprawl needs "management"). In constant low-level conflict with Golden Branch over resource allocation. Elara Meadowlight is its Head Horticulturist. *Source: Water & Food, Core Systems.*

Voss Shearwall

Named character whose knowledge of the Twelve vs. the Aetheris agenda (via Scarlet Branch channels only) is an open question flagged for drafting. *Source: Political Systems (Open Questions).*

The Warrens / The Tunnels

The maintenance tunnel network — ARBOUR|05's original service infrastructure (crawlways, maintenance corridors, access shafts), now vast, largely unmapped, centuries-extended and partially collapsed/rediscovered. "The warrens" is the Sprawl's name for sections they know; "the tunnels" is the Chronalum's name. No universal map exists. Unoccupied sections are Aetheris hotspots where geometry "doesn't resolve correctly" — some sections may no longer be "entirely in this reality." *Source: Transport.*

Wren Emberlain

Protagonist; one of two dual-POV leads (alongside Aran Sunderwood). Non-binary, they/them, **33**. A sand cat — archivist at the Tabularium, precise/analytical/introverted, mid-tier dialect with Sprawl-adjacent cadences. Partner to Atlas Faelan. Formerly held a technical/systems role with Azure Branch (Continuance Corps-adjacent) from 19 to 23 before becoming an archivist; was operationally involved in a deliberate power/life-support cutoff to a Sprawl district under order at 23, tried to refuse, and was forcibly restrained and conditioned into forgetting the event, their objection to it, and the conditioning itself — a buried history they do not know exists, now ten years in the past. Their core belief that "truth is recoverable through patience and care" was, unknown to them, deliberately built as a safe replacement identity by the same institution that erased their resistance. Carries Five Arks Thread 1 (ARC telemetry, with Silas Varran) and Thread 2 (a navigation instrument pulled through the tear at the crash, found in Tabularium storage) per *The Five Arks — Series Spine*. Discovers AZ-3-0047-C and AZ-1-0003-I. Full document: *Characters → Protagonists → Wren Emberlain — Origin and Psychology*.

Wayfarer / Free Territories

Communities outside Arbour's tier system entirely — deliberately, proudly mixed, with no structural significance to species; authority comes from accumulated wisdom rather than status. **Nomadic**: Wayfarers travel the continent in large caravan settlements, not fixed communities — status and lineage travel with the caravan rather than being anchored to a place, which is part of why authority is earned/accumulated rather than tied to institutional record the way Arbour's tier system is. Distinct dialect shaped by oral tradition (Aran's speech patterns). Not the only group on the continent — fixed settlements and other nomadic groups exist with varying degrees of connection to Wayfarer culture and the original ark founding generations. *Source: World Systems, Water & Food, Aran Sunderwood — Origin and Psychology*.

Open Naming Conflicts (flagged for resolution)

The Vibrance → Aetheris rename has been completed across all source documents, VANS has been merged into Cordis Sensitivity Disorder (CSD) as its Stage Two presentation, and the Heart-as-singular-crash-site has been retired in favour of a scattered debris field — corrected in both Technical Appendices (Kugelblitz Jettison Mathematics) and Power Grid.

Both remaining items are now resolved:

1. ~~**Cassan's pre-adoption origin**~~ — ✓ resolved. *Cassan Vale — Full Origin and Psychology* (new document, *Characters → Antagonists*) covers his childhood in a

settlement built around reliquary-type Installations, the theology he was raised inside and calculatedly outgrew, and the engineered self-offering for adoption. Cross-referenced from both the existing Cassan Vale document and the embedded Political Systems section.

2. ~~**The dead civilisation's name**~~ — ✓ resolved. Political Systems' Cassan Vale section (embedded in World & Lore) now names the Penumbrans/First-Walked explicitly in the Convergence Complication passage, rather than leaving them unnamed.