**THE PLANET**

Anzif (a combination of the Ctho words anll meaning ray and ziful meaning riches) is an Earth-sized world with Earth-level gravity orbiting the blue giant star Frlo (maker), with an atmosphere composing 50% H2, 40% O2, and 10% HE.

Anzif's unstable core is due to a mix of conductive and non-conductive materials and its physical shape, resulting in a fluctuating magnetic field, earthquakes, land terraforming, and electrical weather. Around the planet is a ring composed of matter from asteroids, its once-three moons, and Anzif itself.

The star Frlo also suffers some instability due to intermediate surges in energy from Birkeland currents, which cause radiation bursts, increased light emissions, disrupting double layers, solar flares, auroras, and electric discharges.

Combined with Frlo and Anzif's core, gravitational anomalies rapidly shift the star's axial tilt, causing severe and disruptive seasons. This is followed by a perpendicular orbit around the star, creating varied light intake and extremes of heat and cold.

Anzif was once an ocean world, with coverage of roughly 95% and little to no landmass, until it was affected by the effects of its unstable core and the star Frlo.

When struck by intense cosmic storms of radiation and Birkeland currents from its star and core, water broke into hydrogen and oxygen gas and launched into the atmosphere by electrostatic effects; followed by said electrical phenomena reforming the landscape, moving stone upwards, changing their shape, and opening vast underground caves. Any water not processed into hydrogen and oxygen ran into such fissures or converted into other elements.

Now, the surface is composed of barren rocky areas, followed by mountainous regions with spires measuring up to twelve kilometers in height; one such mountain range is the aptly nicknamed Flight of the Navigator, for its long winding pathways kilometers long, and tight spaces barely a few meters wide.

In one area lies the Zurglellion Gorge, a web-like network of channels etched into the ground by electrical arcs lined with various ore deposits; originally a mining settlement, it is now made into an artificial river with sea life.

Along the land of Zelnesif is the shimmering shroud, a ten-kilometer-tall field of cosmic energies, resulting from an electric field stimulating radiation within materials in the area.

To the west is the maw of Frlo, a land filled with deformed surfaces resulting from material ripped from the planet and launched into the sky.

Across the planet, particle storms rage, creating auroras with dazzling colors, converting rock into other elements, and spectacular explosions from the breakdown of matter.

Additionally, Anzif has a high propensity for spiritual activity resulting from fluctuating energies; the most common source of such phenomena are thick miasma-like clouds of dimensional energy.

Below the surface holds a different story; life began in the subterranean depths of Anzif due to the access to resources (such as water) and the kilometers of rock as a natural shield against the dangers of above, allowing for the initial survival of organisms.

Even with such a helpful setup, life was not easy for the first organisms here; little light reaches the area, materials (including water) are radioactive, prevalent geological activity, strange climates, and low soil quality.

One of the first lifeforms were plant-like sessile organisms that feed on nuclear energy and use a developed form of the transmutation capabilities of most living things; many species have evolved along similar lines or came from species of these organic power plants, including the Ctho themselves. The Ctho and several other sentient species use them in terraforming, food, alchemic, and powerplant applications.

On the other end, species have evolved to feed on these entities, whether on their energy-rich flesh or directly on the nuclear energy within, followed by consuming the raw materials from them for nutrients, with other creatures feeding on these exotic herbivores like carnivores.

Throughout the sub-lands are the abyssal seas, remnants of water from the surface now comprising the oceans filled partly with metals and radioactives.

Across the sub-lands are hundreds of islands of various sizes; most are unremarkable, but there are outliers.

One is the forge-fire gorge, a land of brimstone, lava, and assorted geothermal and volcanic activity.

To the northeast are the Belaiant caves, massive cavernous entrances supported by gigantic rock pillars.

Over time, the lifeforms that started underground began to migrate to the surface and live within the rocky landscape. While life is not as widespread or diverse as their subterranean cousins, they thrive here, having evolved to withstand the harsh climate, radiation, and dense rocky landscape; one method of resisting radioactivity is an electromagnetic field.

Every fifty years, a major event called the great light occurs, where a powerful energy burst emits from the star Frlo, producing numerous wavelengths of light (primarily x-rays and gamma-rays) with electrical, Etheric, and extradimensional effects. Aside from killing or mutating life outright and irradiating the area, it converts the outer crust into various elements, shockwaves, and reforming the geology and shape of the land; this event and the materials made from it give the planet its name and further influence the psychology of the Ctho.

**BIOLOGY**

The Ctho are nitrogen and boron-based lifeforms 11.5 meters tall and weigh over 2.150 kilograms.

The Ctho evolved from extremely solitary omnivorous scavengers/hunters that feed on anything around them, including the ground itself, for nourishment. Over time, especially once industry came about, the Ctho began forming semi-socialist societies based on pack cooperation, with multiple individuals working together to create more elements from their biology and develop the land around them.

The general body plan of the Ctho resembles that of flatworms, incredibly elongated and thin, with the front being thicker and raised vertically, the back stays roughly at a horizontal level.

Along the body are overlapping cords of superconductive materials that produce an electromagnetic field to protect the individual from radiation and particle storms on the planet. As a side effect, this field partially negates a Ctho's weight, assisting their massive size.

The dermal layer consists of a thick metal-sulfate compound with a honeycomb lattice that insulates body temperature and protects against physical and electrical effects, keeping its organs and electromagnetic systems safe from the sun. Unfortunately, their skin flakes and falls apart from even mild acidic and chemical reactions, requiring a constant source of sulfuric-rich material for their regenerating skin or alkaline solutions to mitigate such effects; any Ctho with a pungent odor is a sign of healthy skin.

Across the body are three pairs of limbs arranged evenly to distribute the weight of its size. The ones towards the front act as hands, while those in the middle act as feet; both have four digits with diamond claws. At the very back is a pair of limbs acting as territorial displays against aggression.

In both the arms and body are muscles of a boron-nitrogen mix that behave like hydraulics, allowing for extreme strength.

The skeleton is within the body. It is made of a highly flexible and compressible carbon graphite material, allowing the body to move and squeeze through tight, elaborate angles.

Towards the front are four pairs of eyes arranged in a diamond pattern, each capable of seeing up to the gamma-ray spectrum. Their coloration yellow or blue to detect stellar phenomena within their star.

Below the eyes is the mouth, filled with rows of teeth akin to sharks made of diamonds with a metal center for channeling harmonic fields, when combined with their muscles, gives them the strength of a hydraulic press, allowing for the consumption of any material. Additionally, the esophagus behaves like a lung, sucking in massive volumes of air.

The Ctho also use these harmonic fields to communicate by manipulating the air to produce any desired sound, though they also use guttural growls and roars from their throats.

The most defining feature of the Ctho is their metabolism, designed to feed off nuclear fusion and fission. Placed roughly in the center is the stomach acting as a magnetic bottle and a resonant organ that, when ingesting matter, converts into nuclear fusion (if lighter than iron) or fission (if heavier than iron), up to iron, which it feeds on and stores using a radioisotopic membrane. Any excess or waste energy gets vented as heat or plasma through tubular sections on either end of the body, giving the iconic fire-like effect at the head and tail, giving them the term torch-heads.

Connected to the throat and stomach are nodules similar to the resonant organ, designed to transmute elements into other ones and make soluble using enzyme-rich liquids, which are transported throughout the body using veins filled with blood-like ichor and heart-like organs. Such a process is for nutrients necessary for Ctho biology and development.

Such an exotic method of energy gathering comes from the theory that, due to the rampant changes in the environment, radiation, and energy-intensive life functions, relying on chemical energy or a natural source of nutrients is impossible, leading to nuclear and transmutation methods.

Around the front vent tube is the brain, shaped like a fluorescent lightbulb. Beyond the brain, the nervous system is decentralized, spreading into web-like patterns with bulbous sections connecting them. The nervous system intersects with the magnetic field array, giving it the same electric channels and allowing faster reactions for such massive bodies.

Along the body are another set of veins meant for transporting coolant for any waste heat not vented through the torch tubes into folds of radiator vents.

While unable to fly, a Ctho can glide using their magnetic field and launch themselves upwards by concentrating vented plasma in their tails; additionally, one can modify themselves to fly using particle technology.

The Ctho, by default, are sexless but can develop hermaphroditic processes to reproduce; said reproduction works when a pair of Ctho grow one of two sex organs, the genurrow resembling three orange orbs and the resalx resembling a tail-like tendril. The resalx-bearing Ctho connects itself to the genurrow-bearing one, providing DNA energy and materials, bound together for several months until their young burrow out of the orbs. At this point, the parents rip their genitalia off to free themselves and isolate from each other until calming down from their sexual ire. During this process, a third Ctho, called a mediator, guides and watches over the pair and their children until they reside from their state of passion.

The young resemble eyeless and limbless versions of their adult counterparts. They are unable to produce energy or material themselves, relying on the processes of their parents and their mediator to sustain their bodies until they grow their own reactor. Over time, the young Ctho will grow their limbs, eyes, and organs, officially becoming adults after ten years of rearing by the three caretakers.

**CULTURE PSYCHOLOGY AND GOVERNMENT**

With their ability to procure energy and material from nearly any source, they can almost survive in any environment, giving them a survival and independent mindset. One story tells of an individual lost in a dead world for twenty years who survived by eating the rocks before being discovered and saved.

To help increase their independence or ability to acquire professional relationships, the Ctho strive to learn and perform anything they can find, making them almost like the jack-of-all-trades of the galaxy.

The Ctho themselves do not believe in monopolies or holding resources for oneself for the sake of it. They believe every element, material, and resource has an inherent spirit or was once a living being, making it the equivalent of involuntary servitude. Individuals can take materials to create various objects or goods that they can exchange or hold, as the act of shaping resources is viewed as an unspoken contract or legal code both groups follow.

The Ctho obsess over contracts and adhering to them; an individual Ctho will refuse to perform any action or sudden alteration unless a formal meeting takes place to make a new one.

The Ctho believe in a cyclic nature to existence, where it goes through four distinct ages, called the Grulin, Zazsen, Diswacay, and Frlocarefir, respectively.

The Grulin age revolves around the start of existence and its struggle to make something of itself.

The Zazsen age revolves around reaching the peak, becoming everything it set out to be.

The Diswacay age revolves around the decay and weakening of existence.

The Frlocarefir age revolves around violence, destruction, death, and rebirth, repeating the cycle.

These ages and what they represent are associated with Anzif and Frlo and particular objects and aspects of the Ctho spirit, such as buildings being part of the Zazsen age or reproduction with the Frlocarefir age.

The Ctho believe that all things change and reshape themselves; nothing is eternal, whether living things, materials, or the soul itself. One can only delay the inevitable. Because of this, the Ctho are one of the few species that have little to no life-extension procedures, preferring to live their natural lifespan of 250 years.

Such a belief extends and propels them towards recycling; they recycle everything from and into anything from structures, sculptures, and weapons, extending to their dead. They take body parts of the dead in their medicine, devices, and clothing, with wills dictating which body part or organ goes to a family member or organization, followed by members of professions automatically having part of their bodies used in items (assuming they have no will next of kin or special privilege), with the use dependant on the individual and their accomplishments.

For example, the body of a priest in religious objects, with the body used in a shrine meant as the highest honor, the same for astronauts in spaceships, soldiers in weapons, and doctors in medical equipment. They believe the body parts hold fragments of their souls, possessing aspects that give power to what they bond to, such as soldiers making weapons more powerful and reliant or priests amplifying the spiritual energies of temples.

Regardless, a ceremony takes place for the deceased; the body is presented on an iron throne, given a prayer and sermon by an e-cyclic priest before slowly cutting it apart, starting with the brain, down to the skull fragment containing their eyes.

The chosen members receive the brain, as it holds the fragment of knowledge and wisdom.

The chosen members receive the mouth and throat, creating something with it for the fragment of charisma and speech.

The chosen members receive the limbs, hands, and muscles, creating fragments of craftsmanship and strength.

The chosen members receive the organs, particularly the stomach, creating from the fragment of health, endurance, and power.

The chosen members receive the skeleton, muscles, and skin, creating with it the fragment of growth, bravery, and building a foundation.

This process goes on for an hour until nothing except the eyes and skull fragments remain, bound to a pillar in the center of the room, watching over the socialization and banquet after the ceremony, for they believe it connects with their ghost, allowing them to see the living world. After the funeral, the chosen members will take the deceased's body parts and do what they will, either commissioning others to make something of them, making it themselves, or donating it to an organization; for the latter, they are encouraged and advised to keep the fragments within their family. As to the eyes and partial skull, they are made into ghost oracles and taken to overseer tombs, the closest thing to a Ctho graveyard or mausoleum.

The Ctho also donate and use parts of their bodies while alive, using their skin, nails, organs, and genitalia for creating various items; one example was the donation of an artificial womb to a human colony made from the remains of a genurrow. There are also jobs centered around their nuclear stomachs and transmutational organs, such as powering devices with their bodies or creating rare elements for industry; this gave them an industrial and technological edge early in their history, at the expense of their mining and most of their energy tech.

Due to their ceremonies and use of body parts, the Ctho engage in cannibalism and the eating of sentient beings, though outside of cultural practices, it is a rare sight. The most prevalent being in combat used as an intimidation tactic and as a way to fight the enemy, such as in tearing vehicles and limbs apart and using the dead comrades and enemies to refuel their supplies; if a Ctho used an enemy's body to make or repair a weapon or device, it is a sign of honor and respect.

The Ctho have two positions around the spiritual and reproductive natures called mediators and ghost voxels.

Mediators handle any Ctho couple engaged in reproduction, such as guiding, calming, and providing medical care for this aggressive and dangerous period. Mediators are trained in anatomy, medicine, and psychology and equipped with equipment and armor for protection.

Many couples come to a mediator for relationship advice and assistance, even hiring them to watch over the sexual act, and will hire them for the same process for their children when the time comes as well.

Ghost voxels are individuals who communicate and reach out to the dead via a piece of a dead body belonging to the entity, such as a ghost oracle; the Ctho rely on them to talk with their ancestors and ask for guidance from the past.

The Ctho have a religion around Craw'Elemon, the god of elements, resembling orbs with symbols for periodic table elements, representing resourcefulness, the cyclic and transient nature of matter, and change.

In ancient mythology, the universe had entities called the Fendacal that were immortal and powerful, never changing shape or form until the universe sent Craw'Elemon to destroy them. By using its powers, Craw'Elemon took the essence of the Fendacal to create energy, matter, stellar bodies, and the soul.

When a Ctho dies, their soul reincarnates into another lifeform, object, or material, dependant on what they did in life and by Craw'Elemon; being reincarnated into the realm of the spiritual is the highest achievable state one obtains, considered an impossible task for the living. By using certain recreational drugs in a Jepflleflute, one can gain insight into these varying states and how to achieve them.

Every object, material, and living thing has an innate spirit with its personality, traits, desires, and needs; in chemistry, materials, elements, and properties are represented by these spirits.

During the solar event called the Great Light, a festival takes place where the Ctho celebrate the reforming of their homeworld by eating, drinking, playing games, and depositing an item on the surface to transform. Festivals for similar events also occur.

The Ctho have a wide array of foods made from multiple materials, some of which are inedible or harmful to organic life; an example is the u-burger, a meat sandwich with uranium in the center in the style of the human dish.

They also have various fashions, clothes with colors unperceivable to unaugmented senses, accessories using bones, chemicals, and gases that change torch color, and hats that shape the flames in different forms.

As stated before, the Ctho are an advanced species, using computers, energy weapons, and space travel for thousands of years before Earth humans have, with some techs unique to them, like bio-energy cords, designed to use a Ctho's body to power devices.

The government of the Ctho consists of a system called the oujiux, a collection of machines that gather resources and administrative figures that divert them to its citizens.

Ruling as the central authority is the Emroi Craloi, a constitutional monarch elected by the Ziful net to harvest resources, allocate them, decide laws, and appoint officials.

The Emroi Craloi works until death or impeachment, and so long as they work within the confines of the natural codes, they can administrate or lead their people in any way deemed fit.

The Emroi Craloi becomes nominated and elected via looking through forums, recommendations, Erdriay, sortition, and the Ziful net, with the Ziful net itself having the final word on the next Emroi.

At the heart of the oujiux lies the Ziful net, an interstellar-scale mining operation consisting of powerful machines, drone swarms, and interstellar communications/transmitters that harvest resources and energy for Ctho consumption and production and hosting online forums for collaboration and investment to occur.

The Ziful net comes from raw materials and the remains of its previous rulers, including the computers running the system, which have fragments of their souls via digital and thaumaturgic means.

Though capable of influencing or directing the Ziful net, the computer within ultimately follows and decides what to do independently of the Emroi. It also affects or influences the ruler by compelling them to be like the previous rulers, creating a feedback loop as it copies and absorbs the aspects, personality, and morphic emissions of its soul upon the death of the new monarch. Some scholars outside of Ctho space have speculated if the Emroi Craloi has any purpose beyond a head of state or for replenishing or adding to the mental pool of the Ziful computer.

In the majority of cases, the Ziful net will remain passive or remain under the command of the Emroi Craloi until they begin to become increasingly tyrannical and go against the primordial contract. In this case, not only will they show more autonomy and undermine the Emroi, but will actively interfere with every aspect of the oujiux to inspire revolt and impeachment of the Emroi, considered the Ctho equivalent of losing the mandate of heaven.

How the Emroi Craloi connects with the Ziful net and transmits his morphic emissions comes from a crown called the infinite void torch, a headpiece symbolizing their status and rulership, and a vital device for allowing control of the oujiux. If the Emroi refuses to wear the crown, they are automatically disqualified to rule.

Surrounding the Emroi and Ziful net are the Erdriay, individuals who maintain or work on the oujiux in various ways, including maintenance, repair, moderation, defense, and construction of key infrastructure.

Much like the Emroi, the Erdriay connect to the Ziful net via headwear, which gives an alert or update on what is happening and what work needs to be done. Depending on the labor and severity, Erdriay and their support staff have to come to the location to inspect and perform repairs.

Every member involved in these top government positions follows the primordial contract, the Ctho equivalent of the constitution.

Every Ctho civilian can take part in the oujiux by signing up, receiving materials, rights, connections, traveling nearly for free, and support services. So long as they provide goods and services and follow the laws of the oujiux, they can do whatever they desire or please.

Though the Ziful Net provides materials to its citizens, everything else must come from the civilian population itself, either through crafting or ordering from others through forums.

If one were to violate or choose not to sign the primordial contract, the individual would become an Erdriay. Once removed from the oujiux and Ctho society to a lesser extent that must gather resources and a life of their own, acting as ronin or nomads of old.