

Have-Not: Revelations

This book is about the mysteries, the secrets, and the lies that are pervasive in the ruined world of Have Not. Every child knows the basic story – that there was an Age of Wonders and that it ended when the domes went dark. That there was an Age of War, and that it ended when there was nothing left to destroy. And that there is an Age of Now, and that it will end when the last survivors give up the fight and lay down in their shallow graves and the lights go out once and for all.

Everybody knows that the dice are loaded
Everybody rolls with their fingers crossed
Everybody knows that the war is over
Everybody knows the good guys lost
- *Everybody Knows*, Leonard Cohen

Everybody knows the stories but everybody knows they're full of lies. If the Age of Wonders was only a few hundred years ago, why are there ruins that look *thousands* of years old? And if the Age of War was about weapons as puny and weak as nuclear bombs and positron warheads, what happened to the *freakin Pacific Ocean*?

In the beginning a Have Not game is about surviving, getting rich, and having fun while you're doing it. It all starts out about exploring that abandoned ruin on the horizon, or tracking those raiders back to their lair. It's about rescuing a village or safeguarding a vital caravan through a hostile wasteland. It's about big guns and cool, dust-covered cars, and weird mutants and the beautiful women who love them.

But after awhile, it all gets to be too much, because when you've seen enough of this big nuclear sandbox you can't help realizing that *nothing* makes any sense *at all*. And then you're face to face with the secrets and the mysteries and the lies.

The Big Lie

This is the story that everybody knows. It's basic and simple, and doesn't imply any future action. It also doesn't make a whole lot of sense. The Lies are the collective theories and thoughts that most people in Have Not believe. Some of them make more sense than others.

What Happened To The Haves?

The canonical story doesn't provide any answers to this one – but there are a few options. None of them are completely satisfying.

The Congregation's Theory

The Congregation says they left because Humanity (the Non-Have portion of Humanity) was wicked and corrupt. While this is undeniably true, it was true while they were there, so having them suddenly leave in disgust doesn't make a whole lot sense. The Congregation is corrupt and arrogant. The cosmology and history it publishes for public consumption is quite different from what its leaders privately believe. Within the halls and secret rooms of the Congregation, they have studied the mysteries of their world quite extensively and are probably as close as anyone to the truth.

A Catastrophic Accident

Most people who think seriously about it suspect some kind of catastrophic accident. True, their technology was unbelievably sophisticated and failure-resistant, but it was also awesomely, cosmically powerful. It's not completely unbelievable that if a failure *did* occur it could wipe out everyone all at once. On the other hand, their servants (spirits, robots, etc.) refer to their absence as *leaving* or *abandonment*. Maybe their toys aren't capable of imagining that their masters could have accidentally annihilated themselves. Maybe the idea of such a thing is simply too traumatic to accept. But this also suggests that they did leave and they did so intentionally.

War

The third option is war. Perhaps the Age of War started, not amongst humans, but amongst the Haves, themselves. Maybe they killed each other, intentionally, for reasons that were never made clear and might be completely incomprehensible to us. The Haves didn't make mistakes or have accidents, but if they'd decided to unleash their awesome power as a weapon, that might explain a lot of what happened.

What happened to the world?

The basic story goes something like this – the human race advanced and evolved for thousands of years until sometime in the late (choose a date) 21st century when the Age of Information gave way to the Age of Understanding. At that point the Haves ascended to cosmic enlightenment and the rest of humanity essentially stopped progressing and became increasingly dependent on their benefactors. This period of stagnation (also called the Age of Wonders) lasted (choose a number) about two hundred and fifty to one thousand years (okay, the timeline is 2.5 centuries but, y'know, we're not really sure).

It ended about (choose a century) 250 years ago when the domes went dark and the rest of humanity turned on each other like rabid dogs. These wars involved nuclear and positronic (antimatter) weapons that wiped out whole cities. The Age of War started with a bang (Ha. Ha.) and then settled down to small-scale skirmishes that basically finished off the remainder of civilization. The last major battles ended about 100 years ago, when there wasn't enough infrastructure left to sustain major civilizations outside of the Bone Yard, leaving the Middle Ring finally in peace and the Yard dominant over the wasteland.

Why This Doesn't Quite Make Sense

For one thing, unleashing enough nuclear weapons to boil away the oceans would have left the rest of the planet completely uninhabitable. There are still ruins. There are still people. Nuclear weapons (and worse) *were* used, but in *moderation*. There were a lot of counter-measures. There were a lot of alternatives to nuclear weapons. There were a lot of things with Strong Nuclear Grid shields (at least in the beginning). Maybe the war sank, y'know, Australia—but they didn't split the planet in two.

A lot of the damage to the environment wasn't done by the war at all—it was done *during* the Age of Wonders by the Haves' extremely toxic technology.

The Timeline Doesn't Work

The main problem with the basic timeline is that records don't agree with it. Most people don't have many records, and memory is a funny thing (especially memory in the form of stories passed from generation to generation), but consider a few things.

- There are very few reliable records that cover more than a few decades. A lot of electronic media is unusable. A lot of written media is unreliable. Trying to put things together is incredibly difficult and frustrating, but there are some reliable records that suggest the world was in some kind of state of war a lot longer than 250 years ago.
- There are also records from further back that suggest the searing trauma of abandonment by the Haves. This *might* be metaphorical—during the Age of Wonders, the aloof, distant Haves created feelings of abandonment in the population. But some records indicate its literal: that the Haves disappeared more than five hundred and maybe more than a thousand years before the Age of Now.
- Fiction from the Age of Wonders was treated as fact. There was almost *no distinction* between entertainment, journalism, and history. As a result, *everything* from that period is highly suspect. Even the most reliable accounts are written to be compelling stories first and foremost. To add to the confusion, the *threat* of abandonment by the Haves and the threat of apocalypse was a very common theme in popular culture of the time. A significant portion of the Age of Wonders population was very pessimistic about the future and so there are news reports and historical accounts of the Haves leaving or punishing the world that simply seem to have been made up.
- The Hierarchy in the Bone Yard has been around for *a long time*. This is *not* general information. It *may* be up to *a thousand years*, there have been several cataclysmic events (mostly related to war) that have

wiped out a lot of records, but the Hierarchy seems to have existed in some form for a lot longer than 250 years, at least in some form. Now, the Hierarchy probably did exist in some form during the Age of Wonders (a very different form—maybe as a civilian government), but records suggest that its current formation happened a lot earlier than people would think. Are the records wrong? Why would they lie?

- The Congregation has similar records that indicate it's been around for a long time. Like the Hierarchy, it's possible that the Congregation existed during the Age of Wonders (in which case its doctrine would have been a little bit—but not very much—different from what it is today).

The Pacific Ocean's Missing

Maybe 250, 1000, or 5000 years of war doesn't make that big a difference in the grand scheme of things. The Basic Story could still be mostly true and just off by an order of magnitude. On a *geologic* timetable, 250, 2500, or 250,000 years is still a blink of an eye.

But on *any* timetable, the disappearance of a great deal of the Pacific Ocean is big news. And nothing unleashed in the Age of War can really explain that. Attempts to explain where the water went are inconclusive. A good deal of ground water is still available (or the world of Have Not would be *completely* lifeless). There is also some rainfall on the Pacific coast, which keeps things going, if not green.

But something *incredible* happened, and it's very hard to pinpoint when and where.

Simplistic stories say the weapons used in the Age of War boiled the oceans away. Kids might believe this. Maybe. No one with any idea how hard that would be buys it. A better explanation is that the wars caused over-all climate changes and atmospheric changes that reduced the amount of surface water on the planet dramatically. This is *possible* but climate changes of that magnitude would be expected to occur over tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of years instead of a few centuries.

Either the timelines are *way, way* off or something a lot stranger and more *fundamental* changed.

At this point, some of the theories that provide the best explanations for the state of the planet, including the oceans are some of the most disturbing ones. These are *beliefs* – all of them have some backup but none of them are supported by compelling evidence.

- The Haves are punishing us for being wicked. The Congregation believes this, and it would explain a lot – specifically, how the environment was ruined *just to the point* where life is still viable but very unpleasant. If this is in any way true, however, it paints a frightening picture of Haves.
- The Haves, in their final act of arrogance *used up* the planet earth. They seemed to be heading in that direction—they traumatized the environment with wild abandon. They chose highly toxic, polluting techniques when they probably could have been far more careful. They may have simply *taken* the Ocean as part of whatever plan drives them.
- The Haves and their technologies were so integrated with nature that when they left, they threw it off balance and caused this catastrophic damage. In this theory, the fragile biosphere and ecosystem was as dependent on Have technology as human culture was. Their disappearance threw it off and resulted in changes that would normally have taken millennia occurring (geologically speaking) almost overnight. If this is true then it implies that the world may still be dying and that without them, it will continue its slide into ruin.

Answering the Questions

What follows are several possible answers to the questions of *What happened to the Haves? Who was the Sagittarian?* And ultimately: *What went wrong with the world?* We'll discuss what's behind some of the major players and touch on how these mysteries might be relevant to the game's play. Here are some comment's we'd like to start with:

How Come Utopia Farms gets Top Billing?

A common recurring section for each revelation concerns the small enclave of Utopia Farms just north of the Tybalt Ruin. It's a place you'll see giant cheery billboards for—a place that recruits inside the yard ("Free lodging, Free medical care, An End to Violence"). It's a fate worse than death for those who go. The reason why it gets a lot of mention is because we kinda think it's a place the PC's might get sent on a rescue mission at some point—or decide to *smoke*—or get stuck or whatever. It was also one of the places that I, as the first Have-Not GM decided to start having the meta-mystery (what happened?) unravel. So it gets mention. Don't like it? Ditch it.

Are the Congregation Always the Bad Guys?

They make pretty good bad-guys, we think—everything that's wrong with entrenched monolithic religion with only a pretty bankrupt philosophy at the core. But, no, it doesn't have to be that way—the Pharms are much more distant—but in their way far worse. The Congregation is playing power-politics. The Pharms want compete psych-chemical domination of *everything*. So if you'd rather swap 'em out, that's fine too.

How Do I Pick One of These?

Well, you don't have to. You could go with a standard solution (War between Haves, the AI's got them ... some kind of weird deadly "meme" spread through them? Whatever). And then play is just standard post-app. But if you do pick one, you can have it be an overarching theme throughout the game. Pick the Schism and you can have mythic encounters out in the Outer Wasteland where the Shadows appear like members of the unseelie court. You can have ancient abandoned bases with "iconic" keys like silver coins spinning in mid-air. You have license for all kinds of strange reality warping. Or let's say you go with the Gaia Hypothesis? Then from beginning to end you really play up the eco-system's hostility (but not as much as in the Exodus) and so when the PC's find out what the name of the game is, they'll have a history of play to have it make sense. However you do it, these are only suggestions. Come up with a better one and let us know what it was.

The First Revelation: The Schism

This is Have Not *classic* – this was the back story for our original play test games. It never got explored to any great degree... it was just back there, waiting, holding all the nonsense and insanity together with a thread of explanation so that if the PCs ever did start digging and pushing, there'd be something at the bottom to make it all work.

What happened to the Haves?

The Haves attained *understanding*, but that is not to say, *enlightenment*. They discovered the secrets of the universe. They became able to see *time* in all of its beauty and glory, and illusory concepts like *past* and *future* fell away. They conquered the apparent limits of space and energy. The Second "Law" of Thermodynamics was tossed out, not because it was *wrong* but because it applies only to a *closed* system and the universe the Haves lived in was *infinite*.

But as they marveled and gloried and explored, they discovered that there were, in fact, limits they *could not overcome*—not physical ones; the "laws" of physics had become playthings for them—but... psychological ones. No, still not the right term, *spiritual* ones.

The Nature of Humanity

(Excerpt from the Final Report)

Humanity is a bosonic gas composed of elements of information all sharing the same energy state. The apparent difficulty in defining and rectifying human nature came from a simple misunderstanding of it. Now that it is understood, the *normalization* of the human schematic wave form can be accomplished by breaking the discrete symmetry of the original bosonic system.

Twinning symmetric pairs can be separated and isolated through an event shield such that spin changes to the *subordinate* or *shadow* twin are not reflected or transmitted to the *dominant* or *luminous* twin.

They could dance between the electrons of a carbon atom and attend the birth of the universe, and listen to the ancient wisdom of the eldest stars, but they *could not* overcome human nature. There were experiments. Many of the cultures in Have Not (IZ, the Pharms, and others) are the result of these "games"—they explored ways to suppress, to enhance, to excise elements, weaknesses, in their eyes, from their nature.

And in the end, they all failed. Atoms and quarks, and even space/time itself could be split, but humanity proved elusive and unconquerable. There were parts of them, as great as they were, that they abhorred. There was tremendous, blinding light (yes), but behind it, underlying it, there was shadow.

And the shadow, they discovered, did not live in the chemistry of the brain or in the memory or personality. These things, they could reshape. But humanity, whatever it was, was something else.

The Haves held a council and they addressed the issue: They created The Project. The Project was to re-shape human nature to be "worthy" of what they had accomplished in other domains.

Infinite Arrogance

For all of their brilliance and all that they made, the Haves failed when they turned their insight and intelligence upon themselves. They were unable to see that the things they thought were weaknesses were gifts, what they found disgusting was, in fact necessary, and where they saw strength, there was, in fact, the greatest potential for failure.

The quest to "make themselves" worthy of what they had *already* accomplished was doomed to failure – in the most objective sense, they were already worthy by definition. And in the sense they meant it, they could never be worthy: their definition of perfection was flawed in subtle ways they were incapable of seeing; they could see their world infinitely clearly but they could not look dispassionately upon themselves.

The Project

The Project was headed by some of their greatest minds. The smartest amongst them were paired with the most passionate about the mission – to identify, isolate, and excise human weakness from their nature. They studied the brain, and its thought history. They defined the *mind*, not as one's thoughts, personality, and memories, but as the entirety of an organism's interaction with the universe, both during its lifetime and throughout history. They summed pleasure and pain. They divided generosity by greed. They weighed righteous certainty against studied ambivalence.

They invented disciplines never before envisioned and whole new schools of mathematics, and they modeled humanity as a recursive fractal from sub-atomic elements out through infinite spaces. And in the end, they rendered their final report.

In it, they described how a human could be separated element by element. The characteristics they approved of could be combined and the ones they disapproved of could be excised. Had the project been a success, they would have *eliminated* their shadows, but that was impossible. Despite their brilliance, they found there was no way to fully collapse human nature.

But the shadows could be *cast out*—sent away. The process required more than just separation. The connection between the core of human nature was so strong and so persistent that even vast spaces and powerful energy fields would not keep the shadow at bay.

To succeed, the shadow would need to be cast out of this world and they, themselves, would have to retreat to another plane. They would need to rend symmetric holes in the universe, exile their shadows into the pit, and travel, with all that remained, into the light.

Doing so would be the greatest accomplishment—and the final accomplishment—of mankind. It would destabilize nature setting off a chain reaction that would cause the *heat death* of humankind's home universe. It was this dead universe that would forever separate the shadow from the light, and allow the *Haves* to live in their new home, free from the stain of weakness that had forever plagued mankind.

Through all that had happened, the *Haves* were still human. After this, they would not be.

And so they did it.

Exodus

The preparation took a century just to build the Framework. The Framework was a machine made of matter and energy that would tear the universe, opening *doors* throughout it. Some of these doors would lead into their new home – a world of light. Others would open to *null space* – a raging outer darkness, a terrifying space of primal chaos, into which they would cast all that they had no use of and no care for.

In the few moments in which the *Haves* wondered at the wisdom of what they were about to do, they recognized that hesitation—that doubt—as the pathetic and cunning pleas of the weakness they were about to banish. They laughed and silenced this: after all, in their new world, there would be no doubt. No questions. Only righteous certainty. Only enlightenment. Only light.

And the day came and the universe's death sentence was passed with a thought and there was a great whisper.

We will leave them. And with our leaving, we will kill them all and all of their children and all of their children's children. They will not just die. They will cease to exist—to have existed. They will have become cosmically irrelevant.

Is this cruel?

No. It is not. For if they understood the glory we are to attain, they would gladly sacrifice themselves to such a noble cause. That they are ignorant creatures does not ignore their ultimate nobility.

The humans would *want* us to have this. They would die that we might ascend.

This is the meaning of their word *love*.

Doors opened—throughout the world. Throughout the universe.

The Haves stood at the edge of the whirlpool of chaos and *separated*. It was nothing like what they had imagined. It was ... incredible.

They closed the first doors, and then nodded to each other.

And then they left.

And the last one to go turned out the lights.

The Future – The Age of Atrocities

Their leaving rent the fabric of space and time. The Framework shattered continuity. Events looped back on themselves and collapsed. Some realities ran over each other again and again. The year 2239 occurred 100 times. There was a Sunday that simply dropped out of the calendar all together.

The forces of nature stabilized the system, but the damage was already wrought. The world is running down, each year getting a little bit closer to oblivion. The earth drew the oceans back into itself, clinging to life like a dying child.

The night sky is darker now – billions and billions of miles away, many stars have simply given up, quietly extinguishing themselves as the universe shuts down, preparing for *heat death*.

The fragments of mankind still go on, because that's humans do – even when it's pointless. Even when oblivion is inevitable.

And it is.

Maybe.

The Haves made sure that what was done could not be undone. They were careful to build the walls around their new heaven so sure and so definite that there could be no breaching them. For them there was no future and no past – they lived at the beginning of the universe and they lived at its heat death that they engineered.

They even saw the flaws in their plan: their shadows are as smart as they are. As cunning, as ruthless. And while the Haves were cruel only incidentally, their shadows were fantastically and psychotically sadistic.

They knew that in a thousand years time from their leaving, their shadows would escape the *outer darkness* they had been cast into, and would pour forth into the abandoned, dying universe.

They saw the horror that their shadows would unleash upon the remains of humanity, and they saw their shadow's attempts to rebuild the Framework so that they might follow the Haves into their new home.

But they also saw that the damage they had done / would do / were doing was so severe and intense that the shadows would fail and the universe would end, taking them with it into cold annihilation and so the story of the world and everything in it would end and the Haves would live

Happily

Ever

After.

Maybe.

Because time is a funny thing.

You see, that is what happened / will happen / is happening. And is not forgone – it *is*. But sometimes what happens isn't what you *think* is happening. Sometimes things are simpler than they appear. And more complicated.

Living in an Age of Prophecy

The characters are living in a time foretold by prophecy – somewhere between the exodus of the *Haves* and the intrusion of the *Shadows* from their extra-dimensional exile. As bleak and despairing as the Age of Now is, it'll be nothing compared to the Age of Atrocities. The Haves knew this, and they told some of humanity – *the living will envy the dead*.

According to "the prophecy" the intrusion of the Shadows will occur with the aid of remaining humans – someone (The Hierarchy? The Congregation? The Society of Knots?) will *sell out* the rest of the human race and *open the doors*, allowing the Shadows back in—for this act of betrayal, they will be (mostly) left alone by their new, demonic masters.

Here's how it's supposed to play out:

- The Age of Now lasts until someone figures out how to release the Shadows and they return, ushering in the Age of Atrocities.
 - o No one can agree on exactly how long that takes (somewhere between 1 and 1000 years, with most estimates being "5 – 20 years")
 - o No one can agree on exactly *who* releases the Shadows. Every group *hopes* it'll be them and *worries* it'll be someone else
- The Age of Atrocities will last for many, many *million* years, and will end with entropy heat-death of the universe. At that point, the Shadows and Humanity will perish forever and the Haves' master plan will be complete

This places everyone with *knowledge* of the Prophecy in something of a race to see who can *sell out* first. In the past hundred years or so, several organizations have developed an understanding of the techniques necessary to allow the return of the Shadows.

Secrets Unveiled

Utopia Farms: Utopia Farms is a complex run by a Shadow Demon. Within it is a man in communication with one of the Overlords. The people there (and sent there) are under a horrific mental domination and work, harvesting not 'hydroponics' tanks, but their own organs—taken and re-grown—and processed and sold for meat. There are electronic databases of their continual screams (outwardly they wear vacant smiles as they tend what crops there are, attend "services" and act like cultists). If they get their hands on you, you come under psionic attack and become one of them. Horrific. Worse than that, even.

The Congregation holds on to the Needle—at the top is, indeed, an open accessible *piece* of a *Have* habitat—but the entryway is still disturbingly normal—and deadly. It is an "observatory" which was where the *Haves* peeked into their first alternate reality (to which they would flee, leaving their shadow-halves behind). It contains the pieces of gear necessary spilt a fundamental unit of the universe, peering into the non-spaces in between. There are old AI's there that can explain this. The entrance proper is a dark swirling vortex to where the Shadows sleep. The Tribute (the Lottery Winners) are fed to it regularly. No one ever returns.

The Outer Wasteland: If you travel out there you can run into pieces of the 'Age of Atrocities' that are sort of cast back in time like shadows themselves. This can be massive arenas (truly massive, miles across) filled with bleached bones, nightmarish 'hospitals' where "chess players" war over the "patient's" bodies with competing diseases, or annihilation factories where a generation may be herded when a Shadow is done with them. Adventuring here will give the players the context to know what an Age of Atrocities—a never ending one—would entail.

Doors and Keys

Scattered throughout the universe (but with a great cluster around earth), there are doors and keys. "Doors" are dimensional portals that are mostly invisible. The *vortexes* are a kind of Door, but the doors to the *outer darkness* where the Shadows dwell are much, much better hidden.

The Doors cannot be fully closed down or forever sealed off; they can be slammed shut and "locked." The Locks make them very hard to open but not impossible. Each door is locked *mathematically*. The "key" is a sequence of huge *prime numbers*. These number sequences were very meaningful to the *Haves* who had an almost superstitious reverence for mathematics (the limits of math suggested they, themselves might have limits. This *terrified* them in ways they wouldn't admit to themselves).

Locating doors and preparing them for opening (or preventing others from opening them) is of paramount importance in the power broker's plans. Both the Congregation and the Hierarchy would have teams dedicated to locating and controlling doors. Doors tend to have subtle but disturbing effects on the reality around them, so getting close to one and messing with it (testing key combinations, analyzing it, and so-forth) would be very risky.

Secret Projects

Both the Hierarchy and the Congregation (and a few others) have number-crunching projects in place involving huge (secret) banks of computers searching for the number sequences that'll open the locks. They'll never get them – the *Haves* made their keys unbreakable to mankind.

But not to the Shadows. The Shadows are vaguely able to communicate with humanity. This is mainly through *precognition*. Very powerful psychic humans can "see" the future the way the *Haves* did. They can experience it, and "remember" it. This ability is vague and rudimentary and nowhere *near* as certain as the *Haves'* abilities (in a literal since, the *Haves* experienced the future in "real time"—a concept that is very difficult to really get a grasp of for ordinary humans).

The Hierarchy and The Congregation take a fundamentally different approach to opening the doors. The Congregation believes that it's their reward for being "right"—they have been true to the *Haves* vision, and they will be rewarded by awesome power and authority. They look forward to the day when they have been accepted as rulers over the rest of humanity. They view the Atrocities that have been foretold as the righteous punishment of the wicked. They don't *quite* accept that if they don't open the doors, the Shadows will reward *someone else*, but they are so certain that they'll be first, it doesn't matter, anyway.

The Hierarchy in the Bone Yard was formed by men (and women) who had some knowledge of the future, either through Precognition, or through some formal relationship with the *Haves*. As they began to understand its full magnitude, they stopped fighting one-another, and formed a loose organization with the intent of controlling their own destiny.

While far from "the good guys" they were a *lot* less repulsive than the Congregation, and for that reason, they were visited by the Sagittarian.

The "bit players" in this game include the various cults and secret societies that exist within the world. Even the most knowledgeable organizations (the upper echelons of the Hierarchy and the Congregation) are unclear about what the coming age will be like. Organizations like the Knot Society likely have very warped or incomplete ideas about what happened and what is going to happen.

The Sagittarian and the Counter Prophecy Heresy

Sometime toward the end of the Age of War, when the Hierarchy was forming out of the rubble, a man calling himself the Sagittarian began to speak to small groups of survivors. His *claim* to knowledge varied. According to some reports, he claimed to be a *Have*. According to others, he claimed simply to know them. His message was complex and obscure – There is no future. There is no past. The *Haves* are leaving right now. The Shadows are returning *right now*. Everything is happening "at once" and therefore it cannot be changed; it's already occurred.

But what *can* be changed is how things are *interpreted*. The Sagittarian's message seems to be that the Age of Atrocities cannot be prevented by our actions, but its *meaning* is completely within our hands. His recommendation, then was for a change in perspective.

The Hierarchy was unable to make intelligible sense of this – he was suggesting that rather than negotiate with the Shadows (something that had already been on-going for some time through pre-cognitive interactions) and working toward releasing them, the Hierarchy should be spending its resources on preparing for their return and developing a philosophical framework that would allow an alternate and hopeful interpretation of their actions.

In fact, the Sagittarian's message was that the Yard's distro-point had been spared to facilitate this; that there were forces (other forces) that saw such a project as mankind and, indeed, the universe's only hope.

Ultimately, unable to understand his message and unconvinced, they rejected it. What happened next is foggy. He disappeared. Did they have him killed? Minutes from the Hierarchy's meetings (private; encrypted) suggest that many factions within the Hierarchy were afraid that his message would hurt their chances of winning the allegiance of the Shadows. They were worried that entertaining them *at all* would doom them to a worst-case scenario – rule by Congregation and their nightmare overlords.

What is the Sagittarian

The *Haves* prided themselves on their moral and ethical integrity, while abandoning the concept of God, they still held to a code of behavior that would be fairly described as *holier than thou*. Their arrogance was sufficient that they still managed to condemn the universe to a near-infinite hell of obscene misery and pain—but heck, it was only until the darned thing *burnt out*.

The *Haves* were effete, mincing, and ultimately, ultimately sure of themselves. They were never vulgar, never coarse, and never base. They fought *all the time*—but a *Have's* insult to another was the sort of thing it took decades of mathematical proof to tell from highest praise ... and then it'd be both personally devastating and utterly un-provable.

But ... remember The Exchange? The *Have's* nuclear war? About a billion dead in Europe? To the *Haves* that might as well have been the equivalent of a monkey in a zoo flinging feces.

There was one *Have* that wasn't ... well, wasn't playing the game. Wasn't a *good guy*. He was vulgar, pessimistic, obscene, and callous. His *persona*—the face he showed the outside world was that of an indignant angry child ... and he hated his own nobler instincts ... they got in his way.

So when the Schism came, he abandoned them with the rest of the spiritual rubbish the *Haves* were leaving behind (their own shadow selves).

Tens of thousands of Shadow Demons. One Saint.

And boy, oh boy, was he going to fuck it up for everyone (everyone being the *Haves* who ditched half their beings to live hypocritically in uber-smug peace and happiness while the universe died screaming). And he, The Sagittarian, being as smart as they were—and, as it happened, due to the sheer orneriness of *his* other half, unbounded by the same lock on the Shadows ... came to earth with a plan. And the knowledge to carry it out.

End Game

In this case the players are part of the Sagittarian's plan. They will, as he prophesied, find the right key and the right door—they can do this because they are following a path he set up for them (and others—or at least someone) to follow centuries ago. When they do, it won't set everything right—but the howling mad-house the Shadows descend on, won't be *our* universe—it'll be their revision of the universe the *Haves* created for *themselves* when they left us to die. The demons will find their “better halves” and our universe? The prophecy didn't say *anything* about *our* universe ... not *specifically*. The Devil really is, it turns out, in the details.

Revelation 2: The Aliens

The Have Analysis of the Aliens

The Aliens were created during the Big Bang – they were some of the first *things* created, and they are *primordial* things. They are intelligent, they are self-directed. They are composed of dark, non-interactive matter (making them "ghosts" to us). They exist within their own cosmology and context (meaning that what we think of as "physical laws" has little relevance to them).

The most salient thing about them is that they consume a certain *essence* or *quintessence* of time/space and that they are beings of *infinite complexity*.

The Aliens aren't the only things that are infinitely complex; there were other things created during the Big Bang with that property – small whirls of infinitely regressing dimensions, for example. Anything that is ultimately recursive, chaotic, and unbound by certain universal constants (Plank's constant, for example and especially) can be infinitely complex.

The Threat

When a *finitely* complex organism (such as a person, a squirrel, or a *Have*) interacts with an *infinitely* complex thing (such as an n-dimensional knot or an Alien), the finitely complex organism becomes *humble* – that is, it recognizes its own insignificance at the core of its being.

The Haves described this – or tried to describe it – as similar to the discovery that the earth goes around the sun instead of vice-versa. The finitely complex being becomes convinced of its own, ultimate smallness and worthlessness. It feels, it has been said, like suddenly being sure that God exists and realizing that you mean *nothing* to him. And, as the finite being interacts, its ability to think or act *shuts down*. Finite things that interact with Infinite things shut down.

And that, Virginia, is why evolutionarily successful organisms (people, plankton, duckbilled platypuses and so on) cannot see the future. Because out there, in the future, there are the Aliens. And anything that sees the Aliens dies.

Doesn't just die.

Ceases to exist.

Apparently, if you get depressed *enough*, you simply will yourself out of existence. Catatonia is the first stage, but the brain of the finite thing is still operable; still working. Still *trying* to understand and *trying* to find a way out of the horrible collapse of meaning and purpose that contact with the infinite causes. Catatonia is the *result* of all brain functions being diverted to "solving" or "understanding" the infinity.

This fails as, mathematically it must, and the *humble creature* doesn't just *die*. It actually turns upon itself. It, in effect, decides that if it has no reason to exist, it should *stop that immediately* and "cleans up its own mess" by erasing itself from reality.

To an external observer, the "infected" organism freezes and then slowly fades away like an object entering the event horizon of a black hole.

What's with the aliens? We know that in the Age of Wonders (what the Haves called the Age Understanding), there was a kind of alien *mania*. The Haves accepted that – but everyone agrees that it was just that—mass hysteria. After all, there's no evidence of any *actual* aliens? Right?

In most games, that's true. The aliens were a metaphor for the widespread alienation that followed in the wake of the Haves' ascension and the utter irrelevancy of everyone else. They were a kind of superstition that was tolerated and even encouraged because it distracted people from the reality of their situation. A global arms race as prime-time entertainment.

In most games, the universe (as far as anyone knows) is empty – devoid of life, making humanity both staggeringly unique and awesomely lonely.

But in some games there were aliens, and this is what happened.

Lucy In the Sky With Diamonds

Sometimes being the biggest kid on the block doesn't mean as much as it might when you move to a new block. The *Haves* were arrogant, powerful, insightful, and canny—when the signal (a pulse of *strange-matter neutrinos* that could not occur naturally in nature) came from the direction of the sky through the space occupied by the constellation Sagittarius they knew it was a signal sent by a higher-order intellect—and they became afraid.

What Happened To the Haves?

The Aliens (alien? Alienses?) did come—they (it? them? Those?) heralded their coming with a wave-front of information encoded in non-interactive theoretical particles. The Haves studied their signal-stream and were disturbed—like early man staring at cloud formations you could see almost *anything* in that massive faster-than-light field of data. The smarter you were, the more complex your discoveries. And the *Haves* were really, really smart. And what they saw, in the end, was their worst fears coming from them and they said: it's a trick—an attack—a con game by a higher order being to snuff us out.

So they rallied, and they prepared—and they told no one outside the domes—because those primitives were *already looking for* "the aliens

amongst us" and without sub-atomic theoretical weakly interacting radios—which the *Haves* were pretty damn sure the guys outside the domes didn't have—*how could they know anything useful anyway?*

And, as it turned out, the Haves, as they usually were, were right.

But the aliens came in their great sky/beam-ships and they abducted us and passed amongst us—and experimented on us—and did weird things with the cattle and the Haves organized a counter attack—but it was so sophisticated that no one on earth really noticed and the aliens, with their giant ships out beyond where the normal, earthly astronomers could see them (the Oort Cloud, as it were) hit back directly and that ... That. Was. It.

You see, children, whatever the Aliens were in space—when they got there, they were *exactly* what you *expected*.

They're Heeeeee-reeeere

And the Aliens, kids, are *still amongst us*. The war was a stop-gap in the whole alien thing—see the massive mother-ships had already been spotted on deep-radio. The Security Forces (who had been getting damn-little help from their *Have* benefactors) were overdrive-paranoid with all the abductions and pod-person-replacements and complaining cattle—and when they saw those *lights in the sky*? Well—they started building guns.

And maybe the general populace was told The Truth a few days before the domes went Dark (that would explain the crush to get even more alien-oriented programming out on the net) or maybe not—but when the domes went out, suddenly the security forces saw Alien influenced aggression ... everywhere.

And there was. Ka-boom.

The Sagittarian

The Sagittarian understood what the aliens were—he met them—he was a strange one: he expected them to be exactly what he expected. This creates a sort of weird feedback loop which both gave him a major headache and a messianic vision. He went and told the Hierarchy that the aliens were, currently, mostly a big problem—they were (very slowly) gearing up for a genocidal invasion (and mutilating cattle along the way) but that had to be suppressed—the idea of aliens had to be disavowed and a special contact team with *no expectations* needed to be created. That, so far, has proven difficult.

Encountering the Aliens

The players will probably believe the Aliens are superstition—hell, today, because of the Hierarchy, most people do—but out in those towns some strange stuff happens (lights in the sky ... there go the cattle again, etc.). So the players will start finding some rather weird technology. Crashed space ships. Pictures of the saucers, some Have-level hand-weaponry. Stuff like that—but see, because most of the people don't believe in the Aliens—as aliens—which is key—the aliens don't have a lot of power. And if the PC's can figure out what happened to the Haves (maybe access something up the Needle? Maybe go to Pharms and find some data files there? Probably that saucer in the Pacific Desert) then you can expose the Aliens for what they are (yes, they're aliens, no, they're just what you 'expect' not 'what scares you' and everyone can be friends ... or something.)

Revelation 3: Judgment Day

Eventually some portion of the human race (maybe just one guy) attains *enlightenment*—complete, true, total, actual, "make-me-one-with-everything," smug-zen-koan-quoting (or not so smug, as the case may be, grasshopper) for-real enlightenment.

At that point she (or he) becomes the master that appears when "the student is ready" and they lead the human race onwards and upwards to their final destiny of transcendental glory. Part of it really does involve being nice to each other. Part of it involves always knowing exactly where you left your shoes. Go figure.

But while enlightenment may have been conceptualized by *the creator*, that very same creator doesn't go smacking people down when they get a clever idea (or a bad one—free will, see?) And the *Have* technique was, as it were, a short-cut to that exalted state.

Thanks to the wonders of technology the teacher appeared—early.

The student was not no-how ready.

Thus came the age of emptiness that was called the Age of Wonder. The *Haves* retreated, ethically unwilling to force their view of the universe on the squalling eternally partying polychromatic addicted horde that was humanity. They also couldn't quite bare to leave them to their own devices (all that plague and death and war and ... oh, the *humanity*!)

So they built their domes (little slices of heaven each)—and they watched and waited and tried to keep their hands off as much as they could—and gave out Wonders like a beneficent deity who only later comes to realize He isn't doing His creations any Favors.

Only Later: Buh-Bye

And that, after much debate, was what the *Haves* realized they'd done—they were enlightened, yes—but their essential humanity (which had also allowed them to remain in corporeal form) kept them continuing trying to rescue the rest of their species even though their better natures told them that it just wasn't helping—but forgive them, eh? It was several generations for their whole species they tried to organize a nice little play-room for.

Finally, though, they gave up—and, like a breakup with a clingy significant other, they broke it off clean. Click. Armageddon.

As it turned out, someone had kinda predicted that.

The Sagittarian

One day a guy in the desert woke up and *saw it all*. Saw the vanished *Haves* that had delayed humanities progress by several centuries. Saw the ruin of a world that had created the weapons necessary to demolish it but didn't have the wisdom not to use 'em. He saw the towering pinnacle of toxic hope that was the Hierarchy and the morass of fallen warlords in the desert—he saw everything—and he was ready to teach his vision to the world.

But the student wasn't ready *then* either. The *Age of Wonders* had stopped the clock—and while it was running again, now, he'd come on time and humanity (again) wasn't ready. *Damn*. Well, *Damn*! Anyway.

Secrets Unveiled

Utopia Farms: It's a cult just like you thought it was. They teach that the Sagittarian was demonic and that his brain remains.

The Congregation: They were right—kinda. The *Haves* left when they realized we weren't doing what we needed to be ourselves. They fear that head-in-a-jar and want to destroy it.

The Hierarchy: They remember the Sagittarian and they fear him—they remember how effortlessly he compromised their people ('just by talking! The Psychic-meters didn't twitch!') Worse, they've lost the head. Maybe the Bitch Queen has it. Maybe it got sold to the Kingdom of IZ. They'd like it back—and when it turns out someone is looking for it (for whatever reason) they'll be interested.

The Pacific Ocean: Giant dams. Big lake in the middle. There's probably a whole vertical civilization up along that dam.

So he voyaged across the desert and everywhere he found enemies he made allies and he came to the Hierarchy and he said "I am the final destiny of Humanity. When you are ready, I will teach. Until then, I will stay with you and be protected by you—and I will wait."

He was, they thought, a very scary dude (he'd started with nothing and every remnant of every warlord's force he'd met stood arrayed behind him—even the cybered-up, mutated-up, drugged up, psionically defended members of the Hierarchal family that met with him were instantly convinced. Instantly converted. Instantly 'corrupted'.)

So they killed him. And they put his brain in a stasis storage place for safe keeping (and later study).

End Game

Of course you can't beat a man at his own game, and prophecy was the Sagittarian's game. So that brain is around somewhere and if the PC's can find it—and reboot it—and put it in a war-mecha body (okay, maybe that's going a bit far—but they might not know he's there to *enlighten* them) then they're ready. They're ready for the teaching to begin. It might take 100 years to complete—or 1000—but there will be small schools and then bigger schools. There will be schools that teach the philosophy like mathematics and schools that teach it like Kung Fu. The Congregation who, despite being sorta right, are all about power and money won't like it one bit. But in the end, the student was ready after all. You can't kill an idea once it's spread far enough—and if the PC's can wake him up, it'll spread.

Revelation 4: Rolling Up the Operation

The *Haves* wanted their planet back. Sure—they could have left—but perhaps the vast distances of space were daunting even for them. Or maybe there really is no place like home—and they decided they wanted the real-estate. But they were nothing if not hypocritically ethical—so they couldn't just exterminate everyone—could they?

Hand's Off

The computer simulation ran silently and perfectly. One single cataclysmic event. Multiple global flashpoints. A century of silent radioactive rain—and then—rebirth. A dead world remade in the image of its new owners—the refuse of the past cleaned away. They'd run it once, twice, three times. The plan was perfect. Human behavior was simple for them to model—a man was no more free willed than was a falling coin, just a little more complicated: heads or tails? Not a choice at all.

So they turned the lights out.

One Surviving Distro Point

Really, there were projected to be about six. It didn't matter—it wasn't the loss of the goods that would kill off the infestation of Have-Not's that infected the globe—it was man's nature itself. It was man-vs-man that would drive the final nail into the coffin.

The Pledge

While the domes are dark, the *Haves* are supposed to sleep (watch, maybe—but 'sleep' for all practical purposes) because to interfere would be cheating: the need for *that* would prove that they, in their magnificence were *wrong* about something. That idea was so deplorably abominable that there was never an actual agreement, just the knowledge that they would turn the lights out—and wait—and then flip them back on and tidy up the mess that had been made with the self-obliteration of humanity.

The Sagittarian

It was right on target too—until the anomaly came. He came out of the desert and he traveled towards the last place left that had the power to control the world—and he, somehow, quietly knew. The *Haves* could have obliterated him—maybe should've—for he must be some kind of interference on their part—for how could one person *guess*? How could it be the *right person*? What were the *odds*?

So they watched and they, quietly, loathed him. His simple tiny mind—his utter hubris to speak to the Hierarchy so—to state his suspicions: "*They are there. They are waiting for us to die—and we must not.*" How terrible to watch an ant stand up to a mountain range—and for him to be *right* ... it was *vulgar*.

The Hierarchy thought so too—but he'd told them some things—given them instructions—he'd had some ideas. Not *specific* ideas—not precognitive visions—not information from within the domes. No. He had *philosophies*. He told them they needed to wait and bide their time and keep the world breathing—that eventually there would be a spike in people everywhere trying their little bit to put the world back together—and though the odds were stacked against it—if they waited and were patient and strong when this *congruence* occurred they could take advantage

Secrets Unveiled

Utopia Farms: A vicious cult that seems to be proof of everything the *Haves* thought of us. They're pawns the Sagittarian hunt.

The Congregation: Power brokers. But then you knew that. They know the Sagittarian is still alive—in cryogenic storage or something—and half or more of them want him dead—but some of them *don't*—because they've also heard the theories—and they know the Have's plan involved *them* being gone too.

The Hierarchy: Good-guys. They heard it all and they're acting on it—carefully not overplaying their hand. See, they know that the Pharms are going to (probably) attack—and that while they have a lot of power, the Pharms have gotten some very *sly*—but *very powerful* help. So they're running along, acting all innocent—while looking for that crisis point—where other people—having the same idea at the same time—will make it possible to *win*. When that happens there will be a mini-apocalypse ... and then, the winner will ensure man's enduring destiny one way or the other.

The Pacific Ocean: The Have's really liked it. It's a pretty ocean. It's a good ocean—so they stored it. There's this massive cube of self-contained water at a given temperature gradient, with nutrient distribution nodes in it, either underground or floating in space. The other oceans were decimated by the pan-nuclear holocaust that wrecked the globe—but the Pacific Ocean (separated from other oceans by massive force field walls) was spared. The PC's can find it—and run the codes ... to *return it*.

of it—throw their might into it—and then, like a pole-vaulter going over a bar even as his center of gravity passes underneath it—they could *win*. They could rebuild the planet. He even told them what such a congruence of events might look like.

And they were impressed. And they were wise. And they did not kill him—but they told everyone they did.

Fury

The *Haves* were made impotent by their own pride: they searched and searched for a leak within their own power-structure—for some internal dissent some plot—some 5th column within them. They found nothing. But they were *sure* it had to be there. So then, they said, if one of *us* has found a way to cheat, let us return the game to balance—where we shall surely win. And they spoke in the minds of the overlords of the Pharms and they told them things—poison things—to counteract the words of the Sagittarian.

And though their empire is dying, their force is rising. They are barely human at all now anyway (in a spiritual sense) and when the awakening happens they are offered a place in the new paradise.

The Society of Knots, the Exiles, and the Monstrous Nature of Man

The *Haves* were gratified to find that even though their plan had seemed to have a pause—there were unexpected forces working in their favor as well. Man is often his own worst enemy and the nihilists and the armageddonists and the psychotics had all come out to play and they were doing their bit to work together to destroy the world. It was, had the *Haves* thought about it, as though *somebody else—maybe several sombodies* were playing a deeper game still.

End Game

The time is coming—slowly—but coming. When enough people in enough places will be working towards the same goals at the same times. Maybe one group will find an old installation with still working machines that can build Tesla Power Broadcasters. Maybe another will defend a chain of towns that *should've been* destroyed. When that happens—the 'Yard will act—and the Pharms will counter and the final apocalyptic battle will be begun—the last one. If it is won, man can emerge and the *Haves*, paralyzed by their own cosmic arrogance will be forever locked in their indestructible prisons. If it is lost, they will emerge—resplendent, unbelievably powerful, and alone.

Revelation 5: The Gaia Hypothesis

There's No Place Like Home

Even knowing *everything*, the vast, vast reaches of space were daunting to the Haves. They had ceded most of the planet to their less privileged brethren—but, looking into the yawning abysses between the stars they decided—like a diver on a high-board getting cold feet—that they *didn't want to go*.

So—they decided to stay. It was their prerogative—they could, after all do just about whatever they wanted. It turned out that whatever they wanted was to remake the world in their image. They knew how to take the bio-system of a human being and warp it—so they started experimenting with eco-systems. More complex—yes—but still—a solvable problem.

And once they were finished, every life form from the smallest virus to the most massive sea-creature would re-exist. In their image. Sweet.

It Turned Out To Be More Complex Than They Thought

The Haves had already discovered patterns in nature that were interesting. There was a force of balance, they observed. At first they thought it simple: like water reaching its own level—certain *equilibriums* are likely and comfortable. Things roll downhill and settle...

But as they had learned to manipulate nature in more and more dramatic ways, they discovered that the Forces of Nature were smarter and stronger than they had first thought. Balance, they learned was something that would come about from many directions and in many ways.

The Gaia hypothesis, developed by James Lovelock, a British scientist and inventor, postulates that the Earth's biosphere is crucial to controlling global climate and in maintaining conditions that favor life. It implies the interdependence of all life forms, as well as the concept of the biosphere as a single organism whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

In dynamic and complex systems (such as the biosphere of the planet earth), these changes came quickly—over tens of thousands of years. In most of the universe, they took millions or billions of years to occur. The life spans of stars. Of galaxies. But they were the same forces. The same equilibriums.

The Haves had discovered this and had *hated* these forces. These equilibriums sought to undo their works. Sought to return what they built into dust. Pulled at their very essence with proton decay and the march of time. The Haves retaliated by perverting, humiliating, and destroying the systems around them. They replaced ecological systems with technological ones. They ruined nature where they found it, preferring what they could envision in their own minds to what the universe might dare to want.

They discussed, amongst themselves, if there was an intelligence that guided these forces or if it was merely the nature of nature. Is an organism's immune system intelligent? It learns. It reacts. It plays a deep strategic game in the pursuit of its objective... but is it *intelligent*? A question for the philosophers. Still, it was convenient to imagine the constraining forces they encountered as a humanized enemy.

They called her Gaia.

And their masterpiece—their stroke of artistic genius was one that would change-forever the nature of the world that had spawned them. The new world order would not just alter mother-earth. It would kill her.

Double bonus.

Trinity: The First Attempt To Destroy a World Mind

The self-correcting nature of the earth was, however, problematic—their initial attempts met with stiff resistance (and granted, they were being very tender and gentle in their pursuit of matricide—but they took the rebuff of the planet in a deeply personal way).

Their first "attempt" came in what the preceding civilization had called Death Valley—a low point on the earth—a desert—there they created the first "life-pod"—the seeds of the new regime. In the subsequent centuries it was actually "detonated" and transformed the trench in the ground into Death Alley—the home of an alien ecosystem—but just creating it was enough—it did two things:

1. It proved their methodology would work.
2. It got the universe mad at them. It turned out that the World Mind wasn't just limited to a tiny sphere in space—but somehow connected to the firmament. Had they not been so terribly indignant about their earlier failures, they would've been deeply interested in this—instead, they declared war back ... on the universe.

Spiritus Mundi

The Haves entered a state of conflict with the natural order, itself – a system that seemed to enforce a duality upon them that included darkness with their light. As they interacted with the world (particularly as they attempted to render it broken), they noticed it responding to them with complex responses that almost implied an intelligence. They did not consider the world/universe *conscious* – there was no evidence it was self-aware, or that it had preferences or was otherwise sentient. They described its reactions as those of an *immune system* – the universal has a "preferred state" and when events attempt to unbalance it, it marshals its resources to restore that balance.

The term they used for this ubiquitous, invisible enemy was Spiritus Mundi – the spirit of the world (more than just the earth, of course—she was Gaia). They considered it a significant but ultimately defeat able threat. After all, they could see the future, and in the future, they won.

The Universe threatened to react to The Project by triggering a chain reaction implosion that would have extinguished most of the Milky-way galaxy. They prevented this through advanced particle physics and further, they *blinded* the universe's ability to respond by wrecking havoc on the natural expressions of its balance. They gleefully ruined the environment. They built toys that were intentional insults to the logical and natural laws.

They had won. For decades they reveled in their victory as they pieced together their new regime. They taunted the Universe, creating a naked self-sustaining vacuum here, an exposed singularity there, and pumping time-backwards for good measure in a number of spots. Of course they did this in a very refined manner—with a clinical sense of a scientist probing a wound simply to analyze it for healing. They'd have been terribly upset if anyone had called them passive-aggressive.

Secrets Unveiled

Utopia Farms: They are farming a new ecology themselves—with samples of the material taken from Death Alley, their little hell-hole (surgical remote-control units are implanted in their subjects) is dedicated to tending and trying to spark a test-eco system. Notably: this is *not* the work of art the Haves intended—it's more a horrible proof-of-concept. The Hierarchy doesn't know precisely what they have there—but the PC's might find out during a raid of the place—and then they'll get some pretty interesting explanations.

The Congregation: Pretty much as you'd expect—they're wrong about what happened to the Haves. They reject the Sagittarian heresy (nothing could beat the Haves—certainly not the World mind—and they have some pretty convincing documents to that effect). They think that attempts to contact and make peace with Gaia will result in the total abandonment of the world by the Haves—and so they try to stop it.

The Hierarchy: Knowing much of the story, they realize that if they don't do *something* the world's immuno-defense system is going to lay waste to them. The ecology will survive. Man is no kind of a sure thing. So their information (the Sagittarian) about how to make peace with the world mind is at odds with their sense that they need to protect themselves with bigger weapons.

The Pacific Ocean: Sucked underground at the time of the Have-Universe war. Gaia protected herself by relocating many of her resources—the damage was great (the nuclear war wasn't so good for the eco-system either)—but the seas are down there—surviving (albeit in changed form) and can come back when Gaia is read for them.

And then, finally, they were ready. And the, finally, they threw the switch. Boom.

Sha-na-na-na, Hey! Sha-na-na-na, Hey! Hey-hey-hey, Goodby—yyyyyye!

And that was that for the Haves. They were big. They were bad. But the Universe was smarter than it looked and very protective of its little jeweled world minds. For its part, Gaia forgave what remained of her scattered, dying children—but she was wounded—and her *immune system* didn't forgive and forget—and it's trying to eradicate the human infestation.

The Sagittarian

The Sagittarian was quite a guy—having achieved something like self-actualization early on (a religious experience in the desert) he was able to commune with fragments of Gaia—and he understood what had happened. He also saw the hope and the fear.

The Hope: Gaia was wounded and reclusive—but could, if full contact was made—properly—through methods that the Haves set up to study her—could be convinced to come back. This would mean, amongst other things breaking into Have installations (maybe a dome—maybe not)—and would take a lot of resources to mount (the places are scattered and the techniques are not easily clear. So he explained to the Hierarchy what was going on—and that—over time—more people who would (by some twist of fate—or perhaps philosophy?)—be able to contact the earth-mind—and would understand the rest). These people would be the keys to re-establishing contact—and to re-igniting the earth that had birthed mankind.

The Fear: Gaia's immune system—the food-web of predation and hierarchy of consumption was turned against man. Things were being built in the crucible of earth's system that, over the centuries or the decades would, eventually, eradicate man. It might look like a simple war of metal (the BoneYard) vs. Flesh (the world)—but it wasn't—the odds were as far against humanity's long-term survival as the Have's against the universe itself. It might look winnable now—it isn't.

So it's a question of who gets their first.

Revelation 6: Fallout Version 52

I have two pills in my hands: a red one and a blue one. Take them both and wash them down with whisky—you're gonna need a stiff drink to hear this: Have-Not—all of it—is inside a machine.

It's an AI's construct. Yeah? Oh? You heard that one before? Hmm ... well here's something you didn't know: it's a *game* program. That's right. It's a whatda'ya'call ... MMPORG? Massive-MultiPlayer-Online ... yeah. That. Spooky huh. One more thing? Yeah: you're *not* a PC. That means Player-Character. Nope—you're an AI-NPC—meaning you're a super-complex cellular automata that's run by the machine. And you're there for someone's amusement.

Nope. *Not* the Haves. They don't exist. Never did. Those are the *game designers*. Sorta—the domes are constructs like anything else—but this virtual world, here—this set-up ... it's not based on any *real* history.

Kinda depressing, huh? What? You say it doesn't really make a hella-lotta-difference? Well, maybe you're right. But let me tell you some secrets.

First: Information is *real*. It has *weight*. Don't believe me? Ask a physicist about information thermodynamics. The same amount of disorder is created at the sending end of a telegraph as order is created at the receiving end. Mostly that amount of "weight" is so minute it doesn't matter.

Second: Chaos theory tells us that a goddam flapping *butterfly* in goddam *China* can change the world's weather. Yeah, I know you never heard of either of those things. They're not in the simulation—but follow along.

Third: The quantum-computer-simulacrum of the world is so complex—so "heavy" that it makes it almost—almost up there with the butterfly.

Where am I going? We—all of us NPC's are about to kick *somebody's ass*. Pardon my French. *French*—a dead language ... I *think*—out there in the '*real world*'—no—I don't get it either.

The Great Game

Have-Not is a computer simulation so complex that the NPC's (the PC's here as well) might as well be alive. It's a simulation in an advanced computer so powerful that the quantum fluctuations of the data-core can have real-world impact. The rest of the *real world* doesn't know that—but some of the constructs have figured it out ... or will.

Secrets Unveiled

Utopia Farms: Faction created by some players. The Mind Dome turns a complex "character" into a simple smiling worker. The Player Characters who hang out there are utterly contemptuous of their victims—the constant farming is earning them something called Experience Points.

The Congregation: They have a secret: people go up the Needle all the time—weird people—all kinds of strange types—and while they keep it quiet, they let it happen. They also have *Customer Service Seizures* wherein top levels of the Congregation suddenly adopt strange alternate personalities and help the people of Have-Not deal with very incomprehensible problems ("My password changed"). While they keep all this super-quiet, word has leaked. There are also Inquisitors—powerful members of the Congregation that hunt people for the Anomaly Heresy. These Inquisitors are, as you'd expect, pretty dry and *very* tough.

The Hierarchy: Knowing the secret, they are looking for a way to time-travel. The Sagittarian told them that the people likely to find it would be the ones that could *use* it (maybe with some help)—and that the Things From The Past generator would eventually stick a time-well in the ruins somewhere. So they're waiting for a group of adventurers to come to them with a story too good to be true. Then they'll inform the people of what they have to do (this may take many steps).

The Pacific Ocean: Wasn't a big desert over there cool? Yeah, I know it doesn't make any sense. It's *just a game man*—*don't take it too seriously*.

What Happened To The Haves

Nothing. They never were—that's all back story that never really existed. The domes are data-constructs with no concept of an *inside* (you can't get in—there's no "in to get"—if you somehow managed to crack one, you'd just see right out the other side (even though it'd be "miles" away).

Playah Hatin'

Worse—those weirdoes—especially those powerful weirdoes that come to town periodically and screw things up? They're the players. Ever get really badly and dismissively treated by someone? Guess what? They were punching out to go have a pizza—and ignored you—and then set their avatar on "Comp-Play" so they started seeming to behave more normal when the AI took over.

Who was the Sagittarian?

He was the chief game designer—and he (perhaps he alone) knew the import of what they were building. Have-Not is *very* popular—and *very* complex—and he saw that these little constructs suffered and died because of the whims of his players—and he hated it. But he couldn't just shut down the world. So he created a character (using a normal user account—believe me, people have been trying to trace all those problems back to find out who set up the inconsistency in the game) and he went in and *informed* the AI of its own nature.

This created instability and, eventually, will lead to "cataclysm." It can also lead to salvation for the thousands of beings created in a hellish-universe solely for the enjoyment of others. What bastards, huh?

The Only Way To Win Is Not To Play

When the Sagittarian informed the Hierarchy they were in a state of shocked disbelief—but, being the designer, he was able to make some very convincing arguments—and he told them to keep it quiet. The feedback loop created in the Natural-Language-Processors by this knowledge itself could lead to a reboot (it has, actually, a few times—but since the company running the servers doesn't know the instability is caused by the data itself, they keep restoring from backups and re-creating the anomaly).

Running into PC's

In this game your players may begin to suspect that something is weird even before they get informed by the Hierarchy. For one thing there may be glitches in the software (the same day happens twice).

For another some percentage of the people they meet will be out of character. Mostly they'll be a bit used to *travelers psychosis* (people who come into town are sometimes very, very strange)—but some incidents may stand out in their heads.

Note that when the players are *not* playing their characters will seem to act normally (they're being run in character by the machine).

Mostly a certain strain of executive from the Yard will be ultra-callous, ultra-arrogant, and ultra-dismissive of them. This won't be a surprise—until they find out that yes: to those guys you aren't even *alive*.

Running into Inquisitors

As the game commences, the characters will come closer and closer to understanding the nature of the cosmos. This will draw fire from the Congregation (the customer-service interface).

The Inquisitors are kung-fu bullet-dodging bad-asses like you thought—but, sometimes a human programmer will be "sent in" to try to figure things out (after all, they know the instability comes from some weird point sources—an "infection" of sorts to the automata-characters).

In this case you get a "goofy inquisitor"—this is a programmer trying to debug the system. He'll ask things like "When did you see things start getting weird? Hmm ... wait someone's IM'ing me."

If the PC's break into the Church of the Congregation or the Needle they'll find the Customer Service Framework, which is an in-game interface to game controls. Maybe this can set weather patterns, resurrect characters, and otherwise exercise a lot of control over the world (but not total). Some of the monks there (unusually cheery types) won't be too concerned about being gunned down—and will try to nicely escort them out (all while being out of character "Were you sent? Hey—this guy isn't real." – and then no more conversation as the two customer service reps talk face to face).

"To Win The Game"

Here's what's gotta happen "to win:" the world of Have-Not can actually exist in reality (not just "reality" as a Strange-Attractor collection of quantum-dots—with self-reinforcing stability structures). The raw material can be created by induced thermodynamic miracle from gauge energies in empty space. In short, it can, with the right luck and the right chaotic little push *bootstrap itself into existence* [Yes, we know this is all kinds of bullshit—Ed.]

The Sagittarian gave them the solution. You need to time travel back to the time of the Haves—which never actually existed—and when the computer tries to build a simulation of one of *them* it'll use all available resources (which are *massive*—the real world, although not the one detailed in *Have-Not* can play with space-time even though they generally and religiously *don't*). This will allow the mega-cluster to figure out how to create a real place—or at least real people.

Woah

And that lands a bunch of cyber-mutants right in everybody's utopia. Of course maybe they have to be careful about who they take—or maybe the utopia on the outside is pretty capable of making sure everyone gets treated okay—or maybe there's a giant war against the creators. We don't know—but ... *woah*.

Revelation 7: Dead World

The damage was *too* severe—the war didn't just involve nukes but far-far worse. The planet is dying—and the only solution anyone thinks is possible is to bring back the Haves. In revelation 7, eco-collapse isn't just background—it's foreground—it's coming ... and getting worse. And no one will survive. No one.

What Happened To The Haves?

They just stopped. They just retreated inside their domes and decided they no longer gave a damn. The world would die and that didn't matter. Billions would perish quickly and millions would die slow lingering deaths. So what? A dead body has the same number of elementary particles a live one, someone once said.

The Haves were victims of their own knowledge—bored of existence, inward gazing, they simply ceased to care—about anything, or anyone. Now, jaded to the extreme they would no longer lift a finger to save the world if they were asked.

Project Exodus

The Haves considered leaving earth a while back—they built a space fleet of ships—hundreds of them—all parked on the dark side of the moon. They're huge, indestructible, and user friendly. They're slow—but if you take the ride, you'll get where you were going. They'd even found a string of planets out there that could hold humans—masses of humanity—jeweled unspoiled worlds out across the vast distances—but before they could go—and take everyone—they got tired of even trying.

The Opening Game

Satellite weather tracks massive ultra-toxic hurricanes in the Atlantic desert (the Gulf of Mexico has a massive sea-wall that keeps its water level up—but the water on earth is *gone* for the most part). When one of those storms makes it inland far enough that's it for everyone. Crops are on a downward spiral each year. Infant mortality is up. The earth is dying and some of the people who are attuned can hear its screams.

The Path Not Taken

The players discover Project Exodus—there's even a way to get to those ships (a transport at the top of the Needle)—but it won't work—for starters, the Congregation probably seals the Needle (their protocols)—and secondly, they are told on good authority that the project never happened—just the plans for it and computer simulations.

The False Dawn

But there is a way—the players can get into a Have Dome. See, there's one that's still opened out there, far-far north. The secret is out and the PC's are tasked (when they are powerful and trusted) with making the journey. They get there—they get in.

Anti-Climax

The Have's domes are far from wondrous—they have unbelievable technology—but their homes look like dense twisty gray tubes. There is no aesthetic sense that a human can appreciate—and they are utterly and amazingly bored of mankind. "You're all going to die? Well then be quick about it." The Haves are sought and found—but there is no Dues in the Machina.

It is important that the Have not volunteer information about the ships (see the next section)—however they might be asked about them by the PC's. Opening the Domes should be very, very hard—and a complete waste of time. Mankind must save itself.

Secrets Unveiled

Utopia Farms: Bad news, but probably just a cult. Then again, maybe they have part of the secret of how to get into a dome (maybe their horrible mind-control systems came from a cache of open dome-type material?)

The Congregation: If there's a high ranking official there to see the final kiss-off of humanity by their beloved Haves that might be interesting.

The Hierarchy: Working overtime to save the planet they're also pretty much pure-hero when it comes to helping the PC's make key discoveries.

The Pacific Ocean: Singularity bombs were dropped in the oceans, absorbing their water. Bye-bye planet.

Real Dawn

So they go after the ships—and they're there after all—resplendent and working. The same codes that opened the Have Dome can be used to open the Needle (this solution will take some tinkering with—figure out how your players will react to anti-climax and how to give them all the information they need without making it obvious what to do or cheating to make it obvious what not to).

End Game

Everyone leaves on the ships. At this point a lot of hostilities will have quieted down—everyone is facing death—and humanity pulls together to make the exodus work.

And work it does.