

settlement in the canyon, centered around the gate. Similar to Elysium, a short stretch of the canyon is walled and lidded to hold an atmosphere. Outside there is an airfield, maglev depot, and a long, lonely stretch of highway that connects after about 1,000 kilometers to a highway running into the Hellas basin. Few visitors arrive by road. No one enters the settlement without an invite from Pathfinder. The place is set up to efficiently support and deploy gatecrasher teams, with a new team ready to go every time a window opens up.

Herzog, Pathfinder's security contractor here, are smart and well-equipped. Infiltrators shouldn't expect meek resistance from their infosec specialists, and it's unwise to get in a stand-up firefight with them.

To support the logistics of the Pathfinder Colonization Initiative, Pathfinder has constructed a city about forty kilometers from the canyon mouth. People've been commenting on the distance—maybe these rumors that've been going around about massive energy releases from mishandled gates are more than hearsay. Dubbed Pathfinder City, numerous massive building projects are still underway, giving the settlement a lively but unfinished air. An arterial highway has been constructed between the city and the gate site in the canyon, along with a corresponding set of rail lines. In short, it's infrastructure for a full scale colonization effort—despite the fact that the number of actual colonies that have been economically viable so far has been extremely limited. Gotta have dreams, I guess.

The fact that the Martian Gate is just south of the Titan Quarantine Zone is a fact lost on no one. Though there has been no sign of TITAN machine activity or interest in the area, Herzog and Pathfinder pay particular attention to the stretch of land between the two.

KOROLEV CRATER

A deep impact basin located far in the northern plains, Korolev is sheltered enough that many sufi and maker nomad clans spend the harshest months of the Martian winter here. The crater's thus a semi-permanent settlement, with a small crew of clan wardens stationed here to do terraforming work year round. During winter, you might find as many as 10,000 nomads camped here. There's also a permanent ecology station that breeds lichens and microbes for seeding in the surrounding landscape. Dozens of wind turbines on high spars or on the basin rim provide a low-footprint power grid for the camps. Similar camps accompanied by terraforming or ecostations exist at Aggasiz, Burroughs, and Chamberlin craters in the southern hemisphere, and at Curie, Escorial, and Littleton craters in the north.

ORBIT

<Moxie Harper, Firewall Sentinel>

“ ... And you will have treasure in heaven.”—
Mark 10:21

Twenty million people live in Martian orbit, the majority of them in the areosynchronous zone near the equator. The space above Olympus Mons is especially crowded, with scores of immense orbital industrial parks and long haul shipping facilities situated to get goods and materials to and from the surface quickly. Further from the space elevator tether are corporate stations, research facilities, and the private sanctuaries of the mega-wealthy.

PROGRESS (DEIMOS)

Formerly the moon known as Deimos, Progress orbits Mars about every 30 hours. It's a cylindrical Cole habitat with immense windows cut into it, making it resemble an immense stone O'Neill cylinder that tapers somewhat toward the ends. The hab has busy spaceports at both of its rotational axes. This place is corp hell. My first gig as a driver, and my only long-term job offworld, was driving an air taxi for execs and their families around the cylinder. I'd hoped working around the vomitously rich might be a good angle for a cool hunter, but all I learned was that you cannot, repeat cannot, buy taste. The problem is that when you have enough money, no one is going to tell you that you can't wear hot orange with aquamarine or that your cosmetic surgery is not cute, but just makes your morph's face look all effed up. Insulated from how actual transhumans dress groundside, this place is a non-stop parade of high-markup fashion crimes.

Fortunately, for every stay-at-home spouse dressed like an inmate from a pre-genetic engineering home for the simple, there are three people in suits so sharp you could cut yourself on the creases. Yes, pretty. Be warned: there is nothing funky about these people; they are face-eating eels in exalt sleeves, no matter what kind of front they show. Progress is where the ambitious come to get powerful, and they are not fucking around.

Did I mention the entire fucking hab smells like an ashtray? Smoking is so popular here that you can almost spot an outsider by whether they're lighting up, and there are two large hydroponics installations orbiting with the hab that grow nothing but tobacco. What you smoke is a display of rank, and within corps, there are unspoken sumptuary customs. It's a major gaffe to smoke a mid-level executive brand if you're a junior exec, for instance. Smoking wears out your morph, sucks more resources out of recycling systems, and gives your life support system that not so fresh feeling ... so why do they do it? I'll go with unmitigated group megalomania on this one: you smoke to show that you don't care if you're morph's on its last leg at 40. You are a successful motherfucker, and you're going to buy a new one. That's the kind

PROGRESS DEMOGRAPHICS

Population:	8,500,000
Synths:	30%
Pods:	20%
Biomorphs:	40%
Infomorphs:	10%

of attitude that'll get the honchos admiring the cut of your jib up here.

So far in this report, we've all been saying something about how each city looks, maybe talking about the architecture. Well, it sucks. The place looks like the placenta left behind as the sleep of reason breeds monsters. The built landscape around here is one part Chinese New Imperial, one part executive desk toy, two parts high-end southern California shopping mall circa BF 65. The plant life is obsessively manicured. You know how if you want a relaxing atmosphere, greenery can help out a lot? Well, the people who laid out Progress must have been aliens who read that bit of wisdom in a book but didn't understand it at all.

CULTURE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Progress is home base for nearly two million vacworkers, most of whom are sleeved in synths. There is a higher proportion of pods and infomorphs as well, both commonly indentures. Exalts, sylphs, hibernoids, and mentons are all common morphs here; only proles sleeve in splicers. Pod morphs are common, especially for indentures, and many security details and bodyguard teams have novacrabs in them.

Progress is a polyglot town. You'll hear Mandarin, Hindi, English, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, and French commonly, and other languages frequently enough. Everyone here used to rule something, from Marathi technocrats to Uruguayan generals, and they're all eager to tell you about it in their own tongue.

NEIGHBORHOODS

On a lush stretch of parkland near the center of the cylinder is Planetary Consortium HQ, a white marble campus of administrative buildings and hypercorp consulates that serves as the administrative center for the Consortium. All of the Hypercorp Council corps have offices here, with the exception of Solaris, who avoid having offices on general principles. The immense phallic spires of the Consortium's Ministry are here, though they take backstage to the pleasant, airy domes that hold the halls of the Planetary Congress and the various media offices that focus

so intensely on the cyberdemocracy spectacle. Off to the side, the square blocks of Progress Bank are a monument to safe-like security, if you can avoid the neo-soviet architectural style.

Situated looking up toward HQ on the opposite side of the cylinder, Roycewoods is arguably the most exclusive neighborhood in the solar system. High-level execs, corp lobbyists, and officers of the Consortium live here on cobbled, tree-lined streets patrolled by armed ornithopters and elite PSS officers. Powerful people have lived in this neighborhood for some time now. The Roycewoods Country Club House, with its distinctive green peaked roof and clock tower, is constructed of stone from a medieval French abbey that was almost claimed by the Atlantic well before the Fall.

On one side of HQ are the Tangles—Nottingham, Bankside, and Franconia—three upscale neighborhoods, each housing an echelon of the Consortium hierarchy. These neighborhoods are primarily bedroom communities interspersed with small businesses. They're anonymous places, comfortable for the security minded. Have a good reason to be here at night, or the PSS will not leave you alone.

On the other side of HQ, past a wall of somber administrative buildings, is the Yards, the workers' district. The three main neighborhoods here are Al-Rashid, home to many vac and infrastructure workers; Friday Park, where a lot of service industry people live; and Bailey, where the cops and emergency personnel live.

LAW AND ORDER

Progress Station Security (PSS) is one of the best private security companies in the system. Their primary contract is to maintain order on Progress and to protect Consortium interests. Their tac squads train heavily for microgravity ops in hard suits. The station also has defense batteries and a small fleet of ships.

UNIVERSITY OF MARS. PROGRESS

Located between the Yards and HQ, this U-Mars campus is the most prestigious in the system. The Dowager School of Economics and the Friedman Institute of Management are both located here. You can't take a wild swing with a samurai sword in this place without decapitating an MBA. Of more concern is Dowager's Polymorphic Econometrics Lab, which has been alleged to use AGIs in developing and testing new economic models.

PHOBOS

Phobos orbits Mars about every 7 hours and would have destroyed the space elevator within a week of it going up if they hadn't done something about this sucker's chaotic orbit. Now Phobos orbits the straight and narrow and is crawling with Cognite employees.

SOL-MERCURY

VENUS

EARTH

EARTH ORBIT

LUNA

MARS

INNER FRINGE

PLANETARY CONSORTIUM

GAME INFORMATION