



HISTORY

Despite the vastness of the 'Verse, all of its inhabitants actually originated on a single planet forty light-years from here. That planet, named Earth, was the cradle of human civilization and the beginning of our people's great journey across the stars.

For centuries, the people of Earth remained isolated on their planet, without the means for long-distance interstellar voyages. Their crude technology only allowed limited travel to nearby planets, often by unmanned craft. Despite being stuck on the ground, Earth's brightest minds kept their eyes on the stars.

In the year 2020, astronomers identified a cluster of stars, which they would designate 34 Tauri, that contained a number of planets that theoretically showed the proper conditions to sustain life. Though they did not yet have the means to reach these worlds, humanity would soon develop a great need to do so.

In the mid-twenty-first century, the damage that had been done to Earth by centuries of pollution and population growth reached the point where it could no longer be undone. The Earth had fewer than one hundred years before it would no longer be able to sustain human life. Thus, a plan had to be forged if the human race was to survive.

Working together, the nations of Earth formed an alliance and began to construct vast ships, known as Arks, to carry the population into the stars. Simultaneously, they developed technology capable of reshaping other worlds with unspoiled natural resources into habitable planets with the proper atmospheric and gravimetric conditions to allow humanity to thrive.

"Thrive" might be a bit of an exaggeration. —Zoë

While the people of Earth prepared to abandon their dying home, they sent this terraforming technology ahead of them to prepare their new worlds for habitation. Terraforming of planets in Earth's own solar system failed, so Earth turned its attention to the planets in the 34 Tauri cluster. The journey to those worlds would be a long one, taking over 120 years. Not a single inhabitant of Earth would live to call the 'Verse home, but their determination to survive would help chart the course for generations to come.

Over the last two hundred years since settlers initially arrived in the 'Verse, terraforming has been applied to nearly every planetary body in the system, offering the opportunity for settlers to claim their own place among the stars while still serving the greater good of the Alliance.

I always tend to forget about that last part... —Mal

Earth-That-Was may be nothing more than ancient history now, but with humanity no longer bound to one world, the possibilities are almost as endless as the universe itself.



THE CORE

When someone refers to the Core, they are referencing the Central Planets that revolve around the 'Verse's largest star, the White Sun (or Bai Hu). The Central Planets were some of the easiest to terraform and some of the earliest settled. They are viewed as the hub of civilization.

A view held primarily by those who have never bothered to venture beyond. —Book



THE BORDER

Beyond the last of the Central Planets, on the other side of the Halo asteroid belt, two stars share an orbit around the White Sun. Any planets that circle these two stars, the Red Sun (Zhu Que) and Georgia (Huang Long), are referred to as Border Planets. Because these planets are further removed from the Core worlds, they tend to be a bit less regulated.

And a lot less civilized. —Simon



THE RIM

Far beyond the Border, two more stars circle the White Sun—Kalidasa (Xuan Wu) and the Blue Sun (Qing Long). Because they are so far beyond the Core and Border, the worlds in the Rim have developed with little influence from outside forces.

That's what they want you to believe. —River



GETTING AROUND

The 'Verse is very large, and it is easy to become lost there. Small personal spacecraft are sufficient to make jumps between planets in the same system (or to a nearby moon), but they don't hold the fuel or supplies needed for longer journeys. And while large transports and luxury liners may seem better equipped for Core-to-Rim excursions, the cost of running them over such long distances has led to a drastic decrease in travel routes.

Fortunately, there is a mid-range option for travelers looking to explore the 'Verse freely without the constant fear of running out of fuel or money. A class of ship known as the mid-bulk transport was designed to deliver a small crew, its passengers, and its cargo safely between long-distance destinations. Although they may not be terribly pretty, mid-bulk transports (like the Allied Spacecraft Corporation's Firefly series) are the perfect answer for someone eager to explore the 'Verse.

You watch yourself, now. Serenity is perfectly lovely. —Kaylee



TERRAFORMING & HELIOFORMING

Terraforming is a process in which uninhabited planets are restructured to allow the possibility of human life. Terraforming uses advanced robotic equipment to dramatically alter a celestial body's ecological systems and physical traits, including composition of the atmosphere, temperature, gravitational pull, and availability of water.

The terraforming process can take decades to complete and can fail if a world lacks the required resources to fuel the process. The best results are found in worlds that are already close to habitable, like those found in the Core. These Earth-like planets only require subtle "tweaking" in their systems to allow human habitation.

Due to the needs of an ever-expanding population, all remaining planets and moons in the 'Verse have now been officially scheduled for terraforming.

Similar in concept to terraforming, **helioforming** is a process that condenses a brown dwarf and ignites it to create a miniature star known as a protostar. These artificially created stars offer additional warmth and light to terraformed planets that are a bit too far from their system's central star. There are seven of these man-made protostars located throughout the 'Verse.



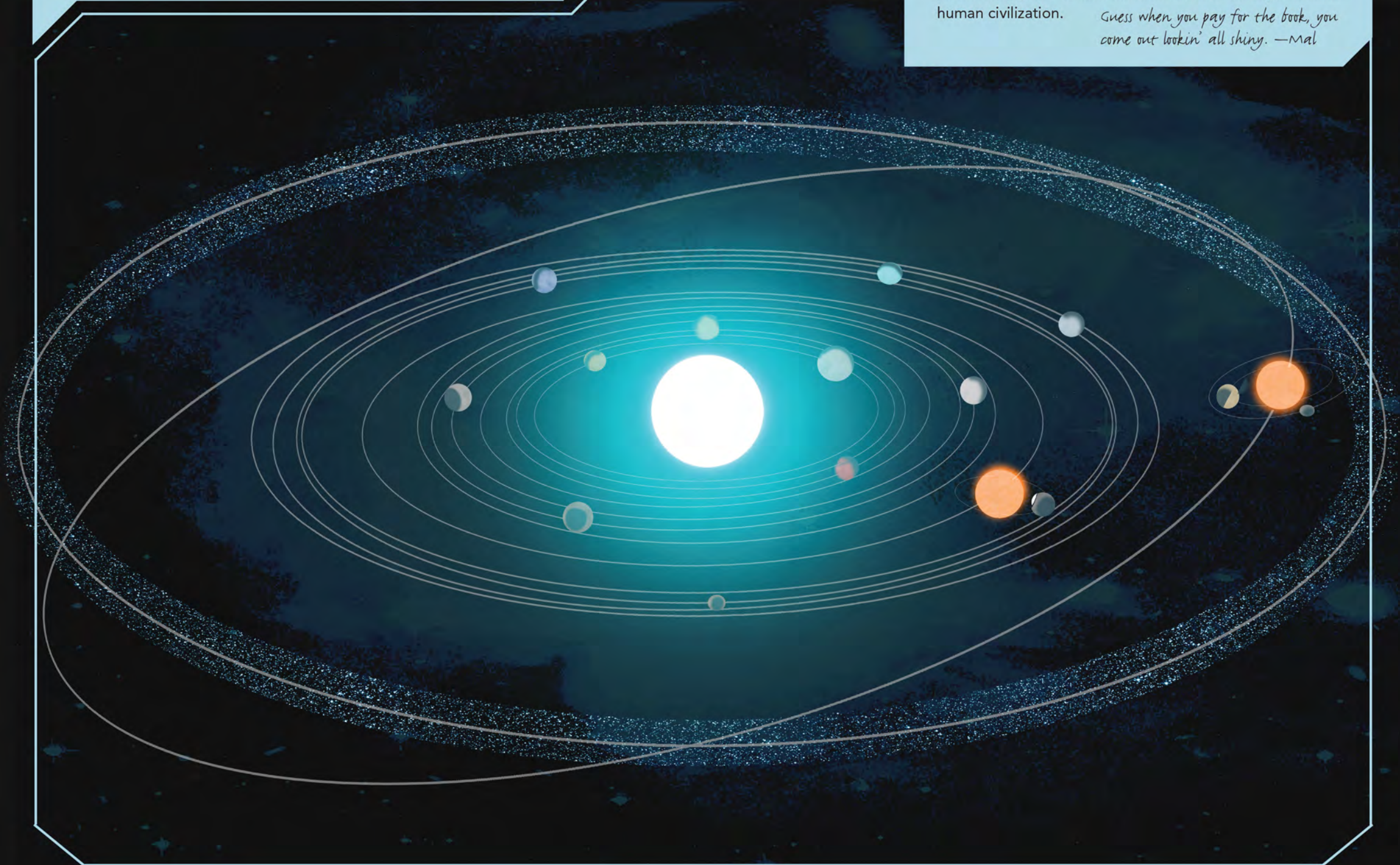
Did You Know?

- On Earth-That-Was, two nations led the charge when it came to the planet's mass evacuation—the United States of America and China. Their unique influences can still be found throughout much of the 'Verse's modern culture.
- Each of the five main stars in the 'Verse has two formal names, one Anglo (English) and one Sino (Chinese).
- A world on which terraforming has failed and is not capable of sustaining life is referred to as a "blackrock."

THE WHITE SUN SYSTEM (BAI HU)

The White Sun is the central star around which the entirety of the 'Verse revolves. It makes sense, then, that the Central Planets orbiting closest to Bai Hu are considered some of the most important and influential worlds throughout all of human civilization.

Guess when you pay for the book, you come out lookin' all shiny. —Mal





HISTORY AND CULTURE

The White Sun system was initially selected for settlement due to the fact that many of its planets shared similarities with Earth-That-Was. However, Bai Hu itself is quite different from Sol, the star around which our planet of origin orbited. The White Sun's radius is two and a half times larger than Sol's, and it generates eighty times the amount of light. Fortunately, the planets that revolve around Bai Hu are a safe distance away from the star, residing in what scientists consider a "habitable zone."

The planets in the White Sun system were some of the earliest to be terraformed, thanks to their aforementioned similarities with Earth. Once settled, these planets began to flourish with the help of the Alliance—the governing body that presides over all planets in the 'Verse.

Rapid technological and medical advancements gave citizens of these Core planets the means to elevate their new civilization toward a brighter future. At the same time, the deep cultural history that was brought to these worlds by their original settlers allowed them to respect the ancient traditions of the past. This juxtaposition of new and old truly makes the Core planets unique in all of the 'Verse.

Clearly, they ain't never seen River and Book together. Now that's a unique juxtaposition of new and old. —Zoë

Those who visit Core planets will find themselves surrounded by opportunity. These worlds are home to the 'Verse's most respected educational institutions and most affluent citizens. Food, shelter, and work are all readily available, and crime and disease are barely factors. The Alliance keeps a watchful eye on these planets to make sure that their peace and prosperity are properly maintained.

Londinium and Sihnon were the first planets to be settled and remain two of the most influential worlds in the White Sun system, yet a number of the other Core planets have made a name for themselves thanks to their contributions to the Alliance and the 'Verse as a whole. From the palatial estates of Bellerophon to the bioluminescent pools of Ariel, there is something for every traveler in the White Sun system. Once you've visited, you may never feel the urge to cross into the Border again.

*MORE THAN A COUPLE HOURS IN
THE CORE AND I'M ITCHIN' TO
GET OUT. —JAYNE*

*I'm almost certain the
feeling is mutual. —Inara*



TIPS FOR A FUN TRIP

DO: Follow the rules. Alliance military presence is heaviest on the Core planets of the White Sun system, so you'll want to be on your best behavior. If you are a traveler who tends to like to take risks and stray beyond accepted boundaries, these are not the planets for you.

You heard 'em, Captain! —Kaylee

DON'T: Stand out too much. The lower the profile you keep on a Core planet, the more likely you are to enjoy your visit. If you draw too much attention to yourself, even in ways that are not considered criminal, you may still find yourself paying an unplanned visit to an Alliance outpost for questioning.

Wouldn't be the first time. —Wash



DID YOU KNOW?

- The name "Bai Hu" means "white tiger," an ancient Chinese symbol representing the west, autumn, and metal.
- Two protostars, Qin Shi Huang and Lux, are helioformed brown dwarfs that orbit Bai Hu. They provide extra light and heat to the planets that orbit them.
- The Core planets of the White Sun system are surrounded by an asteroid belt called the Halo that separates them from Border worlds.

BERNADETTE

Bernadette was the first planet in the White Sun system, but it was not the first to be colonized. As mentioned, that honor falls to its neighboring worlds, Londinium and Sihnon. However, Bernadette has played a prominent role in the development of the 'Verse, serving as a staging ground for the Alliance's expansion operations for worlds located on the Border and in the Rim.



HISTORY AND CULTURE

Londinium and Sihnon developed extremely different cultures from one another, due to the decidedly different heritages of their original settlers. As those planets became overcrowded in their earliest days, though, many of their citizens decided to take their chances on another newly terraformed world nearby. Bernadette became a melting pot planet, offering a unique blend of traditions and religions from Earth-That-Was, both Eastern and Western in origin. In many ways, Bernadette's cultural combinations served as a model for other new worlds as settlers began to spread across the 'Verse.



SIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES

Alliance Colony and Settlement Authority: Although its proximity to the White Sun makes Bernadette the closest planet to the center of the 'Verse, it has become an essential stop for any settler looking to stake a claim on any outer world, as it is home to the Alliance Colony and Settlement Authority. If a little ranch on a moon in the Georgia system is calling your name, it's best to swing by Bernadette first to make sure the purchase is legal and sanctioned by the Alliance.

Or, you could just rush in, guns a-blayin', and take it for yourself. You know, like normal folks do. —JAYNE

LONDINIUM



Londinium is perhaps the planet that most closely resembles Earth-That-Was, so it's no wonder that it became home to one of the earliest settlements in the 'Verse. Since then, Londinium has evolved into one of the most prominent Core worlds and serves as the seat of government of the Union of Allied Planets.



HISTORY AND CULTURE

The second planet in the White Sun system, Londinium was one of the first in the 'Verse to be terraformed and populated (along with its sister planet Sihnon). The majority of Londinium's citizens are directly descended from settlers whose origins trace back to the Western civilizations on Earth-That-Was.

Londinium is home to the Alliance Parliament, the body that oversees the rule of law in the 'Verse. While each planet and moon in the 'Verse has its own governing officials and local laws, the Parliament administers the crucial policies that span from the White Sun all the way to the Blue Sun. With the 'Verse's governing body housed on the planet, it is only natural that Londinium would also have a heightened military presence to protect elected officials from those renegades foolish enough to rebel against Alliance rule.

Now who would go and do such a thing? —Mal

Much of the architecture on Londinium harkens back to the classic gothic architecture of Earth-That-Was, combining current technological advancements with ancient design techniques to create a stunning blend of classic and modern. This veneration for human history is also reflected in many of the cultural institutions found on Londinium that celebrate the 'Verse and its origins.



ETIQUETTE

Londinium is a frequent destination for visiting dignitaries and influential figures from throughout the system, making it one of the most formal planets in the 'Verse. If you're visiting Londinium from a Border world, be sure to brush up on your manners first.

Been practicin' my curtsy. —Kaylee



GETTING AROUND

There are twenty-six major metropolises on Londinium, including the capital city of New Cardiff, all connected by mass transit. Londinium is also home to five impressive spaceports that offer regular transport to destinations both on planet and off. The ports can get quite crowded during peak seasons, so be sure to confirm your travel plans before arrival.



SIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES

Londinium Museum: The fabled Londinium Museum is a repository of important artifacts, some of which are older than the 'Verse itself. The museum is divided into two sections, one focusing on human history and the other on classic art. While most of the items on display date back to Londinium's earliest settlers, some priceless artifacts have even survived from Earth-That-Was.

There's quite a secondary market for antiques like these. —Zoë

DON'T BOTHER WITH ANY PRICELESS ONES, THOUGH. ONLY STEAL THE ONES WORTH SOMETHIN'. —JAYNE

SIHNON



Another of the most significant Core Planets in the 'Verse, Sihnon is the third world to circle the White Sun. With approximately 5.3 billion inhabitants, Sihnon may seem overly crowded upon first visit, but it quickly becomes evident that its citizens have achieved a level of sophistication and technological advancement unimaginable on most Border worlds.



HISTORY AND CULTURE

Sihnon was one of the very first Core Planets to be terraformed by the Alliance's robotic crews, circa 2220, in advance of settlers arriving in the White Sun system. The process took years to complete but eventually created a world that many travelers have since dubbed the most beautiful in the 'Verse.

Sihnon is covered with glorious mountains, peaceful valleys, gentle rivers, and bubbling hot springs that make dusty Border worlds seem like desolate wastelands in comparison. The planet is easily recognizable from space due to its reddish hue, but as you enter atmo, you are bound to be dazzled by the gleaming capital city, Lu'Weng, which has been described by many travelers as "an ocean of light." This incandescent beauty sets the tone for the wide array of dazzling wonders found on Sihnon's surface.

if her home planet's so dang pretty, what's Inara doin' out here with us? —Mal
I ask myself that every day. —Inara

Sihnon's orbit lies just beyond that of Londinium, but despite their general proximity and equal prominence within the Bai Hu system, the two planets' cultures and origins could not be more different. Whereas Londinium was primarily settled by those who descended from the Western cultures of Earth-That-Was,