

Schismatrix Plus Study Guide

Schismatrix Plus by Bruce Sterling

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Plot Summary

Schismatrix Plus by Bruce Sterling is a glimpse of what the future might hold for Earth and its inhabitants. Schismatrix Plus begins when Earth is dividing.

The desire for longevity and immortality gives the Mechanists a great deal of power as they artificially reproduce the portions that refuse to last as long as the mind. Eventually, this extends to the mind as well. Mechanists become wired, trading their organic minds for a wired version that no longer requires the body to survive.

For Shapers, it is the final blasphemy, and the stage is set for a struggle that will last lifetimes, pitting one side against the other. Shapers are the alternative to natural birth. Created in sterile environments, Shaper children are brought to life using DNA cloning techniques and are raised by inorganic instructors who see to their educational needs. Their genes are maximized for intelligence and will one day spawn the first of the ReShapers, whose inception is a product of a desire for even more intellect. Both sides are convinced that their way is the key to humanity's future and their ongoing feud lasts until the first visit from the Investors.

The Investors are the first of nineteen other intelligent beings who make their presence known. They are one of only two species that are capable of faster than light travel, and they are the only intelligent species with this advantage. As such, it is a closely guarded secret. The self-named Investors travel from one species to another, trading trinkets and small gadgets for minerals and valuables. They are reptilian in appearance, and seem to have unlimited powers. They are ancient, and in fact are so old that they remember nothing before the starships they now travel in. They give just enough to amuse but not enough to ensure a future threat.

Despite this, factions compete for their favor, and all rejoice that the Investors are a benign race. Trade flourishes, and war becomes crass and vulgar. Years pass.

Schismatrix Plus follows the life and times of one man, a Shaper who is sent into exile and is given political asylum on Zaibatsu. Abelard Lindsay takes on the first of many identities here, and prospers. His adventures will include many cliques and many roads to riches, but none as ambitious as the one he takes on as his finale.

Towards the end of his life, Lindsay finally understands the value of life itself. His final project involves a covert trip to the planet Earth, where the oceans teem with life forms undisturbed for centuries. With a generous sampling of as many living forms as can be collected, they return to Mars, where oceans now await. Then, old and tired, he sets out on his last adventure, shedding his mortal body for a union with a Presence as yet unknown by almost all.



Part One: Sundog Zones: Chapter One

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Lindsay is shipped into exile in a cheap Mechanist drogue after being indicted. He smiles into the camera, acknowledging that he is seeking political asylum and has no explosives or software attack systems. On Zaibatsu, political asylum is granted and his single right is explained - the right to death which can be claimed simply by requesting it out loud.

Lindsay dons a pair of Zaibatsu coveralls and uses the credit card he is given to activate an old electric aircraft with fabric wings. He flies south and takes a closer look at the sterilized zone surrounded by walls and forbidden to sundogs like himself. The weapons bunkers swivel, tracking him. Further to the north, sundogs strip portions of the industrial sector and use it to create crude airtight domes ranging from inflated plastic to one large, isolated hemisphere. Lindsay recognizes it, and calling on his Shaper training, spies the airlock and lands.

The Nephrite Black Medicals are criminal biochemists and are not partial to visitors. He knows of them from his former days in the Ring Council. Lindsay tells the woman that he would like to come in, but she says he is not worth the cost of disinfectant. Claiming to be disappointed, he starts to leave, but she stops him. He introduces himself as Lindsay, which Doctor Prager hears as Lin Dze. He does not correct her. Pretending to be a representative of Kabuki Intrasolar, he tells her he is arranging a production and is recruiting a cast, but if they never leave their dome, they are of no use to him. She talks to someone off screen and the vault door opens.



Fyodor Ryumin tells him to get into a decontamination suit, urging haste as he may be under surveillance. Lindsay goes through an airlock door, and when it opens, a mobile camera follows him through a dead orchard and a decaying teahouse. Ryumin invites him into his dome, recommending he breathe shallowly as the pure air inside brings on a coughing fit.

Lindsay recognizes he is a Mechanist and struggles against his indoctrination by the Ring Council. Ryumin is 142 years of age, and moves slowly. Lindsay strips off the coveralls and opening a new bag, dons creased white trousers and a cream colored medical jacket. Ryumin asks him how old he is, and Lindsay tells him three hours, adding that Mr. Dze has no past. Ryumin asks him if he truly intends to put on a play and Lindsay claims that not only will he do so, but the Black Medicals will finance it for him. Ryumin gives him an overview of the services the Geishas provide as Lindsay adversely reacts to the drugs he was given, vomiting and losing consciousness.

When he comes to, Ryumin gives him a protein-based broth. Ryumin tells him that the Geisha bank wants money, power and the ruin of the rivals. Lindsay acknowledges what Ryumin already knows. He has dysentery and will be out of commission for a few days.

Part One: Sundog Zones: Chapter One Analysis

The lunar neighborhood has become a backwater and the alliance between Earth and their Concatenate world has broken off after a hundred years of lunar alliance. Of the ten of these worlds that exist, they are the first to break off all relations with Earth and they are in technical decline and seclusion. Having trusted the Shapers, Lindsay had signed up for diplomatic training while Constantine was put into biotechnology. When the Mechanists overwhelmed the Republic, Lindsay and Constantine were disgraced.

Vera Kelland, the first Preservationist martyr came between them. She was the first Preservationist martyr. When all else was hopeless, it was thought that an act of suicide would make a difference. With deadly resolve, she had flown her plane into the ground. Now, disgraced, Lindsay is exiled to the Zaibatsu. He is deaf and blind for two days, after being drugged into a stupor and packed in deceleration paste for travel. A feed cable revives him with the help of stimulants.

Lindsay uses the credit card issued him upon acceptance to Zaibatsu to power an old electric aircraft and flies until he finds the large, isolated hemisphere he is seeking. He had known it would be there, and yet is still fearful of it. He calls on his Shaper training and ten years of discipline and feels himself slip into another mode of consciousness. His movements are smooth, his posture improves and his mind is sharp. Now he is ready to manipulate and twist without guilt.

The Nephrite Black Medicals are criminal biochemists with black laboratories like this one, scattered throughout the System. He pretends to be surprised that they never leave the security and safety of their dome. Doctor Prager accuses him of having dealt with the Geisha Bank, implying that they are all liars. Although Lindsay doesn't know the



Geishas, he claims his communication with them is confidential. He is threatening to leave when he is given a decontamination suit and ushered into the airlock.

Fyodor Ryumin welcomes Lindsay and expresses his admiration for Lindsay's daring as he takes Lindsay's mud covered shoes and puts them in the microwave for safety. Lindsay has been injected with Vasopressin and his brain feels incredibly keen. He answers Fyodor in Russian, surprising the man again. Ryumin expresses interest in the training Lindsay received as a Shaper. Lindsay thinks about the manner in which Constantine had tried to kill him, and Ryumin's description of the Geishas' double suicide service has him retching.

The next time he opens his eyes, over three hours has passed, and Ryumin has had enough time to edit the tape he made of Lindsay's visit so far. When Lindsay is awake, Ryumin gives him a bowl of synthetic protein, but nothing will stave off the illness that is inescapable - dysentery.



Part One: Sundog Zones: Chapter Two

Part One: Sundog Zones: Chapter Two Summary

Ryumin is patient while Lindsay recuperates. He patrols the Zaibatsu with a camera robot, always seeking the next story. Loud beeping signifies something and Lindsay offers to go out and have a closer look. Ryumin wires him for sound and video, and Lindsay confirms that pirates are towing a meteorite to the Sterilized Zone.

The Eighth Orbital Army sends a harpoon into the air and causes the crash of the airship. Lindsay counts eighteen dead. Two airship pirates arrive in Ultralights and Lindsay tells them that spyplanes killed their friends after they determined the habitat was endangered, and then offers them time at the Geisha Bank to get the yarite's attention. They give Lindsay the title "Secretary of State" in return.

Once at the Geisha Bank, he is taken carefully past the traps that keep her safe and makes the yarite an offer to participate in his play in return for a chance to ambush the Nephrite Medicals. Lindsay manages to convince her, and she in turn reveals herself. The yarite is really Kitsune, who poses as her courtesan and uses the old woman mannequin as a front for safety sake. Kitsune and Lindsay, both Shapers, become intimate.

Lindsay begins by reciting compositions of Romeo and Juliet as well as other classics, but Ryumin believes he can do better. He also recommends they construct a geodesic bubble they decide to call the Kabuki Bubble. Lindsay hires the Fortuna Miners' Democracy to handle security and construct the bubble. His relationship with Kitsune continues.

As they are about to seal the structure, a surveillance plane forces its way in. Despite their intentions, Kabuki Intrasolar is becoming legitimate. Lindsay is already thinking about the next swindle before the opening act. The Black Medicals sell their stock in time to insulate themselves from the Geisha Bank. An assassin who is his mirror image approaches him and gives him a tape that reveals a message from Constantine. He is offered a deal that can only end badly for him and decides to turn the tables on him. He will pose as the assassin and commit a crime so the assassin will be blamed. He decides to free Kitsune and let the enemy pay the price.

Part One: Sundog Zones: Chapter Two Analysis

Lindsay repays Ryumin for his kindness as he recuperates by getting him video and audio close ups of the arrival and subsequent crash of a pirate airship. The airship is shot down, and Lindsay uses the opportunity to get to know the Fortuna Miners' Democracy (FMD) a little better. Lindsay is orchestrating a scam that will involve all parties and will make him rich in the process. All he has to do to make it all work is offer each group an opportunity to look in the mirror. It begins with promise. He manages to



enlist Ryumin's help, and forms the basis of a relationship with the FMD and uses that to get the attention of the yarite at the Geisha Bank. When he outlines his plan to the old woman for approval and endorsement, the true yarite reveals herself. Kitsune is a Shaper like Lindsay, and they are soon involved personally as well.

All goes according to plan, more or less, and Lindsay watches as a play is written by Ryumin; the FMD build the Kabuki Bubble; the financial support comes from the Geisha Bank; and stock under the Kabuki Intrasolar name goes up. He is already thinking about the next deal when he is approached by a man who is his mirror image. He is given a tape, and the assassin with his face promises to see him soon. Lindsay watches the tape and listens to the recording made by Constantine, putting him in an untenable position. He decides to eliminate the assassin by impersonating him and committing a crime he can be punished for. At the same time, he decides to give Kitsune the gift of freedom. He will kill the old woman she uses as a front.



Part One: Sundog Zones: Chapter Three

Part One: Sundog Zones: Chapter Three Summary

Lindsay begins to think he is safe once the Red Consensus take them away from Zaibatsu. The President asks him what kind of loot he made off with and asks if for a price he wants to be taken to one of the Belt settlements. Lindsay immediately says he wants to stay with them, and the President claims his diplomatic pouch as payment. Lindsay tries to talk to him before he opens it, but the Speaker uses a power saw to open the bag and pulls out the yarite's severed head. The Speaker suggests they throw him into the airlock, but she is reminded by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court that he is still the Secretary of State and he must be impeached by the Senate first.

Lindsay remembers his training and begins to fabricate a suitable story immediately. He uses enough true information to convince the eleven member Fortuna nation that he was just a soldier following orders. He challenges the President to put him to the test. They believe his story, and the President personally begins his training. He begins by punching Lindsay in the stomach and finishes by breaking his arm. It is a lesson that all his soldiers learn. In sick bay, the Second Justice numbs his arm, sets it and tattoos it, although the idea is appalling to Lindsay. He asks her to incorporate moths into whatever she does.

The Chief Justice reminisces about his life on Mare Serenitatis. He talks about the Republic in his day, and how it was a system of political families with an underclass of refugees. He fondly remembers apples, birds, clouds, trees and even grass. He even claims to have written the play called The Conflagration which Lindsay is familiar with. Lindsay recognizes finally that he is actually Evan James Tyler Kelland - his own great-granduncle and those that had exiled him were still in power. The steroids keep Lindsay from sleeping, so the Second Judge offers him a hypo with a REM promoter and muscle relaxant as well as other goodies guaranteed to "pry loose troublesome memories."

Lindsay trains with the Reps and even the President has to admit that he is making progress. One session involves being able to fire the particle beam gun, and Lindsay can't escape the feeling that if he does, he ruins his own life. He takes drugs to control his response and appear to be without the ability to fire. They administer a convulsant that has him near dead for two days, and when he came to the decision had been made never to speak of it again. When they approach the target, the President asks everyone to gear up but Lindsay.

Part One: Sundog Zones: Chapter Three Analysis

When Lindsay is finally on his way with the FMD, he begins to feel safe until the President insists on inspecting the scope of the "loot" Lindsay took from the Geisha Bank before they left. Lindsay wants to check everyone's face to make sure it is theirs,



but the President doesn't believe the technology to do so exists. His wife, the Speaker, exposes the head inside the bag and the tide immediately turns against Lindsay. They call him an assassin and are one short step from lynching him. Calling on a calm demeanor, he shrugs and calls the job political. He manages to weave a believable yarn using just enough facts to work. The momentum swings again, and though the thought of a severed head still bothers the President, he can't argue with a man who claims to have been following orders. Lindsay manages to go from assassin to perfect soldier by appealing to the emotional nature of the President.

He is put through training, which includes a beating and a broken arm, and is supposed to include firing the particle beam gun, but Lindsay feels so strongly against it that he goes to extensive measures to avoid it. As a result, once the FMD tries to reanimate the arm he had intentionally numbed, the counter agent has him unconscious for two days. Lindsay's dedication to the program and his seemingly willing demeanor give him the appearance of a perfect soldier and he manages not to participate in the upcoming attack.

Part One: Sundog Zones: Chapter Four

Part One: Sundog Zones: Chapter Four Summary

Lindsay boards asteroid ESAIRS 89-XLL and approaches what appears to be a lone occupant. He reads a prepared statement from the President, designed to incorporate "immigrants" into their nation. Nora Mavrides responds that her Family wants simply to be left alone. Neither side is willing to give in. Lindsay continues to act as intermediary. Nora recognizes him as a Shaper, although he won't admit it at first.

There are six in Nora's family. Kleo, at forty years of age, is their leader. The other four are all seventeen years of age, with the exception of Nora, who is twenty-eight. Lindsay tries to convince Nora that her life is more important than winning the confrontation, but it still takes twelve days to orchestrate a meeting between the two factions. Nora reveals how they arrived on a drogue and with nothing but ingenuity, managed to orchestrate a survival. They had grown into the rock and used seeds to grow plants. It seems there is no limit to their ingenuity and desire to survive.

The pirates are of course only biding their time until they can take the Shapers by surprise and eliminate them, although it is agreed that should any member desire to join. The first preemptive strike comes from the Shapers. Rep 3's space suit is intentionally torn so that he begins losing air immediately. Decompression is his end, and marks the beginning of the war between the Shapers and the FMD. Lindsay and Nora find common ground and Lindsay begs her to surrender and become one of them so that they might all live. Eventually she realizes that she'd rather be with Lindsay than even with what was left of her family.

When the fight comes to a head, Lindsay turns on his own crew to stop them from killing Nora. Nora tries to stop her remaining family members, having seen a broadcast that reveals aliens have come. Their own squabbles are irrelevant, but no one will believe her. She is forced to kill the last member of her family to stop him from killing them all rather than surrendering. All that remains is Nora and Lindsay, but they are slowly dying as well. The sour spores have contaminated the garden and are spreading. Even Nora suffers blisters and sores as she adapts. Finally Nora suggests using their gun to destroy the Consensus and hopefully attract someone's attention.

The aliens see the explosion and arrive not long afterward. They shake out a wad of tissue that becomes a television which shows them the outside of their asteroid. The alien calling himself Ensign wants what he believes is an expression of art - ESAIRS XII with a coil of plastic that the ships' robot continues to generate without purpose and attached to the front, a fully formed two-ton head in Paulo's likeness which he created to assure that his life would be immortalized. Lindsay smiles as he recognizes yet another bargaining position and they begin negotiations for purchase.



Part One: Sundog Zones: Chapter Four Analysis

Asteroid ESAIRS 89-XLL is half a kilometer long and is the home to the Mavrides - a group of Shapers who elect not to simply eliminate the FMD when they approach, and as such, lose their sterile environment. The Consensus brings with it all of the spores and contamination from Zaibatsu, but no antibiotics or antibacterials. The Mavrides soon suffer lesions, rashes and boils. Pirates at heart, the FMD have no intentions of allowing the Mavrides off the hook. Each side seeks to gain the upper hand. The Mavrides conspire to eliminate the FMD, one member at a time if necessary, and the FMD seek only to avoid being killed while they loot what they can. It is a battle neither side will win.

Lindsay and Nora are the only two who seem to find common ground. And in an effort to save each other, each one will have to eliminate the last of their kind. It is a sacrifice born of the love they have for each other. Right up until the final moments, Nora tries to diffuse the situation, especially after witnessing a broadcast that reveals aliens have arrived. They are larger, and more technologically advanced than either the Shapers or the Mechs, and both sides surrender with little incident. The war is over, but by then, no one on either side is willing to listen or stop fighting.

When Nora and Lindsay are all that remain, they balance each other out slowly. Nora reminds Lindsay of his Shaper training and Nora learns to survive without the Shaper spinal crab used on Shapers as a diplomatic training tool. The Mavrides' robot continues to produce and launch plastic into space, trailing behind a large head created in the image of one Mavride as a symbol of immortality. The effect is almost artistic, and when Nora cuts loose the Consensus and destroys it, the resulting explosion draws the alien's attention. The alien Ensign who arrives wants to negotiate for the property and Nora and Lindsay are more than willing to discuss a deal.



Part Two: Community and Anarchy:

Chapter Five

Part Two: Community and Anarchy: Chapter Five Summary

The aliens, who called themselves the Investors, appear to have unlimited power. They trade among nineteen intelligent races and are so old they have no memory dating before their own space flight. Humans flourish as the Investors buy into human enterprises and dispense novelty technologies in return. Lindsay and Nora, living on Goldreich-Tremaine, have a good life, settled with children cloned from the Mavrides lineage. The children are named after the Mavrides who died so that Nora and Lindsay could live on. Now, the children are grown and gone from their creche.

Constantine unexpectedly arrives at one of Lindsay's productions. It has been twenty years since Lindsay and Nora accompanied the aliens there, and while Lindsay is prepared to run, Nora is unwilling to give up what they have. With life spans that can be medically extended, they stand to live a long, youthful life together, but Lindsay balks against taking the treatments. He continues to age normally, and now, in his sixties, even his political circle comment, but Lindsay doesn't want his genes to become public record as they identify him correctly. He has hidden under the Mavrides name since arriving and is afraid to risk it. His age is part of his disguise.

Dietrich Ross, a senior genetic, tells Lindsay he is in decay and understands he is "eunique", suggesting he make use of a confidential place where simple procedures are performed. Nora enthusiastically supports the plan so Lindsay goes, expecting to be gone a day or two, and is gone for more than a week. He is somehow drugged and worked on, then put back in a standing position at the counter as though no time had passed at all. The only reason he is aware at all is the seven day growth of beard he now has. He knows Nora will be out of her mind with worry, and heads home immediately. Nora had thought that Constantine kidnapped Lindsay or was somehow involved in his disappearance, and when he returned, she lost a great deal of credibility with her public accusation. Constantine had meanwhile been able to cripple Goldreich-Tremaine's system simply because they underestimated him. Now, the Shapers fled in droves.

Lindsay tries to convince Nora to leave as well, but she still believes that she has enough political clout to overturn the current issues. Lindsay refuses to stay with her. With war returning, he is ready to go back to being a sundog even though he and Nora spent forty years together. He believes that if they stay, they will die for nothing. Nora's true feelings surface when she adds "just like the others". She won't leave and they promise that if her obligations no longer need her, she will look for him, and if she dies before that happens, she makes him promise not to forget her.



Part Two: Community and Anarchy: Chapter Five Analysis

Lindsay and Nora make a deal with the Investors. In return for ownership of their "art", Nora and Lindsay managed to secure a ride and lessons in the Investor's language. When he and Nora arrived, Lindsay had managed to position himself as an important and trusted go between for others who wanted to trade. It is the beginning of their wealth and position on Goldreich-Tremaine. The human population is grateful that the aliens are benign and tolerant. Open warfare is a thing of the past. The years pass.

Lindsay is fifty-one when he sees Constantine and holds a rank in Security, a necessity for those in the academic/military complex. Lindsay and Nora discuss Constantine's visit, and Lindsay insists that even exposed, his relationship with the Investors would insulate them. Lindsay finally decides to have a treatment for aging, having managed to locate a place that is both discrete and confidential. He must avoid normal clinics as he is still hiding his identity from everyone. Nora is thrilled when he tells her and encourages him to do so immediately. She has already done so twice herself, once at thirty-eight and again at fifty, and has often hoped that Lindsay would come to the same decision. He is told he will only be gone two days.

Lindsay and Nora have done their best over the years to do penance of a sort for the deaths that occurred on the asteroid and have used DNA from the Family to recreate the Mavrides one by one. Now, although they are grown and have lives of their own, the guilt both Lindsay and Nora feel remains, sometimes simmering just under the surface. The peace that came with the Investors is slowly crumbling. The younger generation sees the Investors as nothing more than the opportunists that they are, and tensions are simmering between the factions once again. Those who faced war already are in no hurry to bring it back again.

Lindsay is sixty-eight when he finally checks into the demortalization clinic for treatment. He tells the receptionist that he has no gene line records and she suggests that he try hormonals and deoxidation to flush free radicals, but Lindsay is growing more and more uneasy. He tries to overcome it, but finally decides he can't trust the woman he is talking to.

She asks him about his ideology and calls him on his claim that he has none. She asks him if he really believed that the Investors would heal the Schism and Lindsay can tell that she is young enough not to have seen the war herself. She argues with him, citing the fate of groups whose innovations fail, and the fact that they are often shuffled off to a remote outpost where their chances of survival are directly linked to their ability to hide or fight back.

The truth of it hits home with Lindsay, and he tries to defend it, knowing he can't. The young receptionist knows not only who he is, but knows about their Midnight Clique, revealing that she is a Superbright created by one of its members, Margaret Juliano. She is no more than thirty years of age and suggests that before she become so



fanatical about her ideals that she live a little first and experience some of life before being willing to die, repeating the errors those who came before her made. She is certain that because they don't think the way they are supposed to, they will soon be disposed of. She assures him that life is a joke and death is the punchline, and vanishes.

He begins to realize that everything feels and sounds different. The machines he can see are nothing more than plastic and cellulose, and he has a two-week growth of beard. The room is empty and his stomach is taut. He realizes that they must have immediately drugged him and thinks of the anxiety Nora must be feeling comes to him next as he hurries home to her, grateful that at least he is still on Goldreich-Tremaine.

Nora had become frantic when days passed with no word from Lindsay. She was sure that foul play was involved and publicly accuses Constantine of involvement in Lindsay's disappearance. Of course Lindsay returns and explains what happened, but Nora loses a great deal of credibility. In the time Lindsay has been gone, war has begun again. Constantine takes great pleasure in having orchestrated it, having launched the first attack on the Midnight Clique himself, hired by the militants. The Shapers had underestimated him and he enjoys watching as they abandon GT in droves. He boards the Friendship Serene and finally leaves himself.

Lindsay tries to convince Nora to leave as well. She refuses. She tells him that the Mavrides clan needs her, and he counters that now they are better off without her. Lindsay is certain that they will die for nothing, and at least part of Nora agrees. She can't seem to let go of the guilt over the deaths of the original Mavrides clan and feels as though Lindsay is asking her to betray her people a second time. Finally, he leaves alone, and she stays to fight.



Part Two: Community and Anarchy: Chapter Six

Part Two: Community and Anarchy: Chapter Six Summary

Lindsay leaves on an Investor ship. An Ensign tells him the Commander wants him on tape and leaves a large box with Lindsay, telling him to move and behave normally. The tape is in a large canister, and when Lindsay opens it, it spools out on its own, rising, and supporting itself. Lindsay watches it, moving only his eyes so it does not see him. Any movement, however small, attracts its attention. It copies Lindsay's crouched form, but is quickly bored and begins to create a new form. Lindsay finds himself looking at a smaller version of the Commander. He watches with interest as it mimics her being ill. Lindsay carefully takes out his monocle and begins recording it himself. He watches as the tape shows the Captain giving birth to a single egg, and then savagely consuming it. He puts away his monocle and shuffles back and forth to create movement for the tape to collect.

Greta Beatty gives Lindsay his new papers when he arrives on the Dembowska asteroid, identifying him as Andrew Bela Milosz, who recently died in Bettina Cartel. She helps him to get settled in, and after getting clothing and a haircut, she takes him for a meal. She points out some of the more important citizens, including a table from Kabuki Intrasolar, which prompts Lindsay to ask about Ryumin, but she tells him that Ryumin transmits in different circles. Later, after a sauna, he sleeps.

Two weeks later, he talks to Ryumin and is surprised to find that his old friend is a "wirehead" who discourages him from looking to rekindle their old friendship. Lindsay tells Ryumin that he is looking for help, similar to that given to him on Zaibatsu, and Ryumin recommends Wells. Wells puts Lindsay in a position that keeps him busy for the next five years as he plots in secret against the Investors. When he mentions his intentions at first to Wells, he is arrested and taken to the Chief of Police. He is surprised to find that the entity behind that title is Kitsune, who now operates in tandem with Carnassus. They discuss his departure from Zaibatsu and she negates the arrest, allowing him to work under her to overthrow the Investors. After five years, Lindsay learns that GT is now run by a former Midnight Clique member and Nora has remarried. The news is a shock and leaves him feeling desolate.

Part Two: Community and Anarchy: Chapter Six Analysis

Lindsay's room on the Investor's ship is oddly empty and he wonders, looking at the scratches on the walls, if it was used as a zoo at one time. He feels sluggish in the



simulated gravity and the oxygen rich air. He is glad to arrive at the Dembowska asteroid, where he is greeted by Policewife Greta Beatty, his new liaison. She takes him to a clothier when he mentions he is cold, and he emerges with clothing more suitable. From there he is taken to a stylist, who trims his beard and looks after the unruly mess that his hair has become. From there, she takes him out for dinner, and then back to her apartment, located seven levels down. At her suggestion, he takes a sauna to warm up, and then she offers sexual favors which he declines, although she suggests that he get used to the bacteria sooner rather than later. He prefers to stay monogamous to Nora even though he realizes he may never see her again. He climbs into bed, and the canopy above him begins to display brain rhythms. One wave function, outlined in pink, grows as he relaxes, and in no time, he understands its purpose. By concentrating on what makes the pink wave grow, he quickly puts himself to sleep.

After two weeks, he finally talks to Ryumin, who is now hard wired and is not even sure where his real brain is, other than his feeling that it is likely still on Dembowska. The friendship and help that Lindsay is looking for is no longer there and Ryumin is now more interested in data flow than life itself. Ryumin tells him that Wells might be able to help, and arranges an introduction. Wells has his offices deep in the crevasse and Greta accompanies Lindsay to his office, but is sent out once the Police Chief is on line. When Lindsay mentions that his intentions are to overthrow the Investors, he finds himself under arrest, and Greta quickly escorts him to the Police Chief with a kill clamp attached to his back brain.

He is shown through an airlock into a room full of flesh. The brown skin comprises the walls with flashes of membrane and a pipe sized artery pumps blood. When a voice asks him to remove his velcro boots as they make her itch, he recognizes the voice of Kitsune. They discuss the manner in which each of them left Zaibatsu and the details of life since then. When she sees the recording he made via the monocle he had on board the Investor ship, she sees his plan has potential. She rescinds the arrest order and deactivates the head gear.

For the next five years, Lindsay works for Wells under Kitsune's umbrella of authority. He promises her that when the Investors are beaten, he will ensure there is a place for her and Carnassus whose mind she now has control over. Lindsay is taken aback when he meets with an envoy from GT, who tells him that Nora has remarried for political reasons.



Part Two: Community and Anarchy: Chapter Seven

Part Two: Community and Anarchy: Chapter Seven Summary

Constantine sits with his nine-year-old daughter, Vera, and his wife Natalie, watching one of Zeuner's plays. Skimmers Union's modern theater bores him. On this night, Constantine risks it all. He wonders how he will hear it, and suddenly Charles Vetterling floats to the edge of the podium. He announces that the Nysa Cartel has declared for the Ring Council. The audience roars its approval as Vetterling points to Constantine. Meanwhile, Lindsay gets used to his new arm.

A woman arrives, who introduces herself as Alexandrina Tyler. Lindsay recognizes her right away as his first wife. She asks him if he can help her to emigrate to Goldreich-Tremaine, but Lindsay tells her it simply is not possible. She is distraught, but Lindsay, after determining that they were both unattached, asks her if she would manage his household. She agrees to a trial period.

Constantine has had Paulo Mavrides in a sensory isolation tank for two weeks. He opens it and tells him he has been there a whole year. Still Paulo doesn't break. Instead, he reveals Constantine's greatest fear still lives. Constantine is sure Lindsay is dead and says so, but Paulo insists that Lindsay is alive. Constantine rewards him by dropping a vial of toxin into the water and closing the lid.

Nearly six months later, Lindsay watches the creation of the Czarina's Palace. A replica of an Investor ship, it will become the Queen's exile. A veritable city named Czarina-Kluster is born on the strength of an Investor presence. Lindsay learns that Nora is dead, having taken her own life after she was indicted for treason. She dies shortly before she is to join Lindsay. An Investor trade ship brings Constantine, his wife and ten of his genetics to Lindsay. A duel is arranged, and as the details are discussed, Constantine can't help but ensure Lindsay meets Vera Kelland. Though the original Vera is long dead, Constantine carried her DNA for years before having her genetics reestablished. The duel is fought in a fist sized arena, each contestant becoming an alien construct equaling the other. Lindsay manages to defer to instinct and seizes the opportunity he has dreamed of for many years.

Part Two: Community and Anarchy: Chapter Seven Analysis

When the news comes that the Nysa Cartel had declared for the Ring Council, Constantine's wife and daughter are so filled with pride for him that this is the happiest



moment he has ever known. At ninety years of age, Lindsay is looking his age more and more. It has been eighteen years since his wife remarried and he didn't know her new husband well enough to hate him. When Alexandrina Tyler, his first wife, comes to ask him for help emigrating to GT, he proposes that she stay and become his household manager. She agrees to a six month trial period and Lindsay tells her that the sexuality clause is up to her.

Lindsay manages to isolate a Queen from the Investors. His monacle video is enough to initiate action by the Investors against her, and she flees before it happens. Lindsay makes arrangements for Nora to defect and join him, but before she can do so, Constantine ensures she is charged with treason. To avoid having the rest of the clique tainted by the brush she is painted with, she takes her own life, never seeing Lindsay again. Lindsay challenges Constantine to a duel and Constantine accepts, arriving on an Investor trade ship. Even Constantine and Lindsay have difficulty with the actual mechanics of their contest and the Investors are asked for their input although they have a difficult time understanding the concept of a duel at first.

They begin by suggesting economic warfare, with each party granted a stake, but finally an arena is rediscovered in the vastness of the Investor ship, which suits their purposes. Both men would duel in alien bodies of equality so that the winner would be the premier strategist. The arena is tiny, with triangular sides and two goggle equipped helmets are connected to opposing sides. Constantine asks if his spatial analyzer is permitted and Lindsay allows it, just as Constantine allows Lindsay the use of PDKL Ninety-five (better known as Shatter) from the original stock of Michael Carnassus as is in doses of two hundred micrograms. Constantine objects at first, but as Lindsay reminds him the duel is to the death, so even his Shattered personality is inconsequential whether Constantine wins or loses. They lie on their backs as the spinal contact is made and Lindsay uses the first dose. Instinct takes over as Lindsay tries to get used to the insect that he has become. Constantine checks on him through the microphone and Lindsay activates his second dose and moves in with confidence.



Part Three: Moving in Clades: Chapters Eight and Nine

Part Three: Moving in Clades: Chapters Eight and Nine Summary

When Lindsay's mind begins to return, five years have passed. He tries to call out for help and two Shapers take him into the clinic. He is in the Tyler clan's mansion in the Republic. The doctor arrives and Lindsay recognizes Margaret Juliano, who had been put on ice by the Cataclysts many years earlier. She gives him a Look which he doesn't recognize and tells him that his recovery and return to himself has been long and difficult.

Now, the Constantine line is in trouble. Constantine himself suffered a protracted fugue state and by all standards, is dead. Skimmers Union lost its capital status, which Jastrow Station now enjoyed. Alexandrina had come to him every day, bringing him apples from the Tyler orchard. The Tyler mansion is now a Museum with the left wing and grounds devoted to the clinic, which Margaret oversees. Pongpianskul now rules the Republic with Alexandrina as his wife. On the grounds, a young man named Abelard flies a kite and Lindsay marvels at the greenery that has been recovered. He tells Pongpianskul he intends to return to the Czarina-Kluster.

One hundred and six years of age, Lindsay sits in a Czarina-Kluster bar. A Kosmosity academic approaches him, recognizing him from when he carried the name Bela Milosz. A brief conversation reveals that most Cicada inner circles believe that Wellspring is Abelard Malcolm Tyler Lindsay. Lindsay asks Wellspring for tenure and then listens to the conversations around him, realizing that words could no longer hold him. In fact, even rules can't hold him as he strips naked and Navarre leaves right away, flustered.

Left alone with Abelard Gomez, who had come with him from Tyler's mansion, Lindsay listens as Gomez acknowledges who Lindsay is. He tells Lindsay that talking to him is like hearing your own shadow speak, and though Lindsay says nothing, continuing to nakedly meditate, Gomez carries on alone, drawing his own conclusions about what Lindsay is thinking. When he finally finishes and thanks Lindsay for his wisdom, Lindsay can hardly contain himself until Gomez leaves and he is alone in the bar before laughing so hard he feared he would not be able to stop.



Part Three: Moving in Clades: Chapters Eight and Nine Analysis

Lindsay's use of PDKL Ninety-five robs his mind of the ability to think or function. When Lindsay begins to regain himself, he is overwhelmed with the chaos that is reality. Lindsay's first conscious realization centers around a tree. The sheer beauty of it is enough to have him sobbing and hugging it with ecstasy. Margaret is patient as Lindsay slowly regains the ability to speak and articulate the thoughts in his mind. In the five years that he was under their care, they worked diligently to restore his brain, and the alterations in his spatial perception as a result of the Arena. Slowly his mind returns. He listens to her describe the things they did to him and asks her if she is God. When it appears his mind is functioning, she tells him of the changes that have occurred in the time he was incapacitated. Alexandrina comes to him with clothing straight out of his own history, and proudly shows him around.

Robots are not allowed in the Republic and Lindsay is astounded at how much of the Republic has been reclaimed. He meets a young man who introduces himself as Abelard Gomez. He tells Lindsay that every fifth person is named Abelard now, after the great Abelard Lindsay. He talks about the Warden, Pongpianskul, and as Lindsay listens to Abelard, he has an epiphany. Terraforming is what Gomez is passionate about and is the interest that Lindsay plans to pursue even if he doesn't share the dream himself. Lindsay asks Pongpianskul only that he be allowed to take Gomez with him to Czarina-Kluster when he leaves.

Lindsay sits in a bar at C-K. He is waiting for Wellspring. An academic who recognizes him sits down, and the more that he talks to Lindsay, the more ludicrous it all seems. Navarre compares him to Wellspring, whom he and his colleagues believe is the great Abelard Malcolm Tyler Lindsay in disguise. At that moment, Wellspring arrives. Lindsay listens to their exchange, no longer interested in attempting to sway the conversation to his advantage. Words no longer bind him as he stands and begins to strip. The bar empties quickly but for Gomez, who carries on a one-sided conversation with him as he meditates and convinces himself that Lindsay is a philosophical genius with more wisdom than all the rest. He thanks Lindsay for the insight he delivers to himself and leaves. He is hardly out the door when Lindsay begins laughing, believing for a moment he might never stop.



Part Three: Moving in Clades: Chapters Ten and Eleven

Part Three: Moving in Clades: Chapters Ten and Eleven Summary

Lindsay's new group is the Lifesiders Clique. Lindsay, as acting representative, greets the newest group calling themselves Wallchildren and requesting asylum. The Wallmother, originally Kitsune, is now four hundred thousand, eight hundred and twelve tons of mass in total. They are taken to an executive suite where Lindsay greets Captain Murasaki who takes him to the Health Center so Kitsune can speak through her. Kitsune warns him that Vera Constantine, a defector who has come to see him, cannot be trusted.

Lindsay goes to Vera's quarters and can see Kitsune's distrust as she is kept in a room under house arrest, made of stone and iron. They try to heal Philip but without success and the clan lives in fear of Lindsay without Constantine. Vera brings an heirloom - an immortal albino rat - in return for their safe conduct. Lindsay can feel a presence in the walls with her, which she first became aware of it in the Embassy of Fomalhaut Four. Lindsay wonders if it is an alien beyond the nineteen known of and suggests they lure it out into the open, but Vera has tried without success. He tells Vera that she will be coming with him.

Abelard Gomez, Chancellor of Lifesider, calls a meeting to discuss the Investor Queen's disappearance. Wellspring is wanted for high treason. It is thought that he took her to Mars, intending to rule what will become the new Terraforming-Kluster. It is apparent that C-K will disintegrate and the Lifesiders discuss options. For several years Lifesiders had planned to create a series of disasters designed to create life. Though Biodesign is still in its infancy, the Lifesiders decide to pursue this dream rather than opt for safety and security.

Lindsay promises them that before he dies, Europa will be populated by angels - them. He leaves the rat behind while he, Vera and their Pilot fly to Earth in a ship with engines he appropriated from a gasbag's ship. They slip into the ocean without making contact with the primitive locals. The abyssal depths are still undisturbed and are an oasis of life with geology, similar to Europa. They find a valley that teems with life and begin collecting samples of the life forms, and Lindsay notices something detach itself from the hull.

The Presence is dancing joyfully in the ocean's depths and Vera marvels that even it knows that this is Paradise. She wants to be out there like it. They are unable to sample everything as the selection is too vast and when they leave, Lindsay has no doubt that the Presence is with them.



Lindsay's next stop is the Tyler mansion. Margaret has been dead for years but Pongpianskul still rules. He sits with Philip Constantine and shows him his plans for Europa, even offering to take him with them, but Constantine is done. He is ready for death, and while Lindsay sits with him, he drinks a glass of poison, forgives Lindsay for the past, and says goodbye.

Next stop for Lindsay is Europa with his cargo. Gomez, Vera and the rest have all donned aqua lungs and Angel bodies, and are now living in the water. Lindsay finds himself alone with the Presence, who reveals himself at last. The Presence explains that he enjoys eternal life and is eternally fulfilled. He tells Lindsay that he has enjoyed his time around this sun, but it is time to move on and see other things. He invites Lindsay to join him, telling him he can do so simply by holding onto him. Lindsay reaches out and becomes one with the Presence. An Investor arrives and picks through the clothing and metal parts that were once Lindsay. The Presence laughs and they join the Investor's ship, to go wherever it goes.

Part Three: Moving in Clades: Chapters Ten and Eleven Analysis

Lindsay and his Lifesiders Clique greet the newest group to request asylum. The Wallmother in whom the Wallchildren came is the current entity that once was Kitsune. The Wallchildren are all loved and nurtured, one of them even inheriting Kitsune's voice. They go deep inside Wallmother and Lindsay is taken to a room where communication directly with Kitsune is made possible by through Captain Murasaki. Kitsune tells Lindsay that Vera Constantine has come to see him, and marvels at his quick response to the congenetic of an old enemy. She even offers herself to him using Murasaki's body, but Lindsay declines. Kitsune plans to make Dembowska her genetic nest, and insists that Lindsay take Vera out. She warns Lindsay that Constantine's children have no reason to love him or want to love him. Lindsay says he is curious, but wonders how much of that is the influence of Green Rapture.

He goes to see Vera and finds her quarters to be a utilitarian cell like room made of stone and iron. He senses something else in the room and he is unable to stop himself from scanning the room in an effort to see it again. Vera realizes that he sees the Presence as well. Lindsay explains to Vera that most of his friends don't trust her, and as a result, finding a place for her is difficult. She assures Lindsay that they come peacefully, and have put the past behind them. Vera gives Lindsay a very old lab specimen as a gift. The rat is the first to be made immortal. Lindsay frees it almost immediately and it attacks him, biting his metal arm. He grasps the rat carefully, patiently understanding that prison has affected its mind and time will be required to free it.

Lindsay asks her what or who the Presence is, and Vera explains that she has no idea. It had joined her at Fomalhuat and the Investors denied all knowledge or association. Lindsay decides it must be an as yet unknown category of alien. He resolves then to coax it out into the open once they have left Kitsune to ensure the action causes her no

stress. He tells Vera that they will be leaving soon, and puts the rat in his pocket on the way out.

The Schismatrix now has a population of nine billion, and has seen many ideological changes. These continue as the Shapers and the Mechanists fight for Investor approval. Only five of nineteen alien races show any interest in the human race. Some wanted to join at a cost of course, some wanted to invade, and some were willing to join anyone who would have them, but the gasbags of Fomalhaut seem to offer the most. Though it took several decades to learn their language, once mastered, they learned that the gasbags were interested in Jupiter and planned to seed the air around it. The Investors offer to handle transportation. Another group also mastered faster than light travel, and it seems inevitable that humans follow to explore the galactic arm.



Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Swarm

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Swarm Summary

An Ensign Investor takes Captain-Doctor Simon Afiel to the nest of the Swarm, where he will be left for two years of study. When they arrive, a symbiote comes aboard the Investor ship as an advance envoy. The symbiote is not happy with Afiel's arrival, telling the Investor Commander that they have had trouble with humans in the past. The Commander wishes Afiel luck and promises to return in 612 days. The airlock opens into a round, stone tunnel and Afiel dons infrared glasses. He is greeted by Dr. Galina Mirny, who instructs him to follow her after confirming that he has no luggage. There are approximately a quarter of a million in the Swarm, although there are still many stretches of the nest that Dr. Mirny has not explored as yet.

Dr. Mirny grabs the back of a Tunneler and instructs Afiel to do the same as they go deeper into the nest. She explains their mating swarm and shows him one of the fungal gardens. Mirny soon realizes that he is not a simple researcher and demands he be truthful with her. He decides to share his directive with her, telling her about the synthesized pheromones he smuggled in, created from the samples she herself sent back. He tells her of his intention to test the pheromones to ensure they function correctly, controlling the behavior of the Swarm, and then his plan to take back genetic material from one of the Queen's eggs so that a work force can be recreated on Earth. He shares his idea that the Swarm is made up of genetic robots, and whether they work for humans or the nest is irrelevant.

Mirny reluctantly agrees and begins to work with him. Together they manage to isolate a place for themselves, commandeer a worker to digest their preferred fungus, create their own fungal garden to control the air and hijack an airlock guardian to keep it all safe. When the end of his term is near, Mirny leaves on her own to study a new growth in the alates' chamber. She does not return.

Mirny's two tamed Springtails return and tell him that their "food giver" is no good, asking if they can eat her now. Afiel asks to be taken to her, and discovers that she has been absorbed. The new form created from her explains that they had been aware of the threat to them for some time, and they offer him a choice. He can choose to become a symbiote, saving them the trouble of cloning him, and live forever, or he can become a mindless puppet like his partner. After brief consideration, and after learning that fifteen races have come before him, he decides to willingly comply. The entity now calling itself Swarm is pleased. It would have missed his conversation otherwise.

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Swarm Analysis

Simon Afiel is unconcerned about the 612 day interval between his being dropped off by the Investors at the nest of the Swarm and their return to pick him up. Confident that



he can defend himself and that he will be able to complete the tasks he is sent to accomplish, he enters the nest after a Symbiote takes a quick taste of his leg for the purposes of sharing his scent and composition to nest mates. The gravity of the asteroid nest is almost imperceptible and Afriel smiles, comfortable for the first time since he left on this journey.

The Investor ship leaves and there is no turning back. He hears Dr. Mirny call his name, and heads towards her, passing the creature that acts as a stopper for access to the nest. Dr. Mirny takes him on a brief tour, explaining the Swarms lack of understanding where possessions are concerned. Dr. Mirny has no trouble communicating with the two springtails she tamed, and she begins to educate Afriel as to who and what each variation of the species does. Afriel admits that they synthesized the compounds she sent them, and at first Mirny is angry. She tells Afriel that he frightens her, and contemplates whether or not she should show him any more of the nest, but he convinces her that they are on the same side. He tells her that if he manages to get the DNA from a single egg, which in his mind is no more destructive than an abortion. They will be able to breed their own brand of worker and will not have to impose upon this nest ever again. She sees the logic in that, and grudgingly continues.

Mirny sees the Swarm as perfect order. The nest can go on independently for thousands or even hundreds of thousands of years, barring unforeseen interferences. She rightly points out that their own species will likely not even be remembered that long, let alone survive. Mirny shows Afriel how to beg for food from a passing worker, and explains the need to bribe warriors in order to get near the Queen's chamber. Afriel wants to try out the pheromones he brought with him to make sure that their synthesized version works as well as the original and it is this behavior that the Queen recognizes as inconsistent. She investigates, through her Warriors, and when Mirny is out on her own, the Workers collect her and assimilate her into the nest.

When Afriel finds her the next day, there is little of her left that is recognizable. The remains make him vomit as her voice, coming from a mutated worker who has merged with Mirny, explains to Afriel that he has only two options. He can choose to join them and stay an intelligent and living being, or become a puppet with no mind of his own, much like Mirny had. He decides that it is better to become one of a breeding pair that the Swarm has arranged, and though he is worried that they will eliminate him, the Swarm he is talking to insists that they have kept all fifteen of the races that have come before him. Accepting their challenge, he insists that one day he will be the one to defeat them, and the human race will out live them all.



Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Spider Rose

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Spider Rose Summary

Spider Rose watches through telescopes until she finally picks up a signal from an Investor ship a quarter of a million miles away. She targets it and sends it a business offer. Intrigued, they offer her a quarter of a million gigawatts of energy for her jewel which she turns down. Several other offers are unsuccessful. For eight hours, she examines their wares but finds nothing. The Ensign notices a roach fly to her shoulder, and after twelve hours of consultation with his crew, offers her their mascot. The only one they have, named "Little Nose For Profits", is a small reptilian creature with a long, spiny crest, scaly hands with thick digits, and is uncommonly friendly. They offer to leave it with her for approximately seven hundred days, and if it appeals to her, they have a deal.

She agrees, and promptly renames him Fuzzy. It looks somewhat like an Investor baby. On the fifth day, she wakes to find it has killed and eaten four of her largest roaches. She finds it has cocooned and is in hibernation. When it emerges, it looks like a small ape with tiny human teeth and lips, soft baby's feet and without wings. It babbles and embraces her leg, then consumes the cocoon. Once it even mimics her, but sees she is frightened, and never repeats it. After six hundred days, she is quite attached to Fuzzy, who sleeps in her bed with her. She stops taking the drugs that suppress her emotions and begins to let them out, one at a time. Fuzzy holds onto her as she sobs. Her web station comes to a dangerous section of orbit, and three Shaper pirate ships find her. The battle that ensues leaves both sides powerless and dead in the sky. SR knows the end is coming. She has no power, no way of recycling air, no food and no hope of rescue. She picks Fuzzy up and to spare him a slow and painful death, she wrings his neck. For a time, she traps roaches and eats them and when they are gone, she fasts for a long time before finally eating her pet.

When the Investor ship comes, it sends a crewman over to look for their mascot. They take her aboard their ship and clean her and she begins to feel wrong inside. Her stomach is tight and her lungs feel crushed. She wants to die, and at the same time wants their understanding. Suddenly, her throat is full and she is unable to talk. She tilts her head back and her jaw unhinges as her breathing stops. A substance oozes out of her and wave after wave of it covers her. Eight days later she flutters out of the cocoon, eager to be leashed.

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Spider Rose Analysis

Spider Rose feels almost nothing. She chemically ensures that is the case, staunching any feelings before they can take root. She lives in a spinning web like habitat in an orbit around Uranus by herself, having lost her husband in a Shaper attack thirty years before. SR is approximately two hundred years old. She keeps a close watch out for an



Investor ship, knowing she has something that will interest them. The jewel she carries is one of a kind and the Investor Ensign has difficulty finding anything to trade with her of equal value. Finally, the Ensign notices a roach and realizes he has the perfect trade, but they are somewhat reluctant to part with it. At first, SR isn't even certain it is worth the value of her trade, so the Investors offer a trial period of approximately seven hundred days. She agrees and it takes very little time before SR gains a new appreciation for why the Investors are reluctant to trade. She renames the creature Fuzzy - her private joke as it has no hair whatsoever, and grows surprisingly attached to it. It seems to sense her moods, cuddling with her when she needs it, and staying away from her when she isn't in the mood for its company. When it kills four of her largest roaches, she becomes uncharacteristically angry, and rather than dampen the feeling chemically as she normally would, she actively searches for Fuzzy. She finally finds him, wrapped in a cocoon in some form of hibernation. No longer angry, she watches the cocoon, even setting up sensors to alert her if there are any changes while she slept at night. When the cocoon opens, Fuzzy has changed. He no longer appears to look like a small dragon, and instead looks more like a small ape - even having lost its wings. It burbles happily at her and hugs her leg. Amazed, she grows even more attached to it. Fuzzy shows signs of greater intelligence when its mimicry frightens SR and in noticing her response, Fuzzy doesn't do it again. Spider Rose now understands why the Investors were reluctant to part with Fuzzy and she is beginning to think this is a deal worth making.

She turns her attention to her location as she nears a dangerous point in her orbit, coming close to the planet Uranus and more populated regions. Three Shaper ships find and target her, and after a battle that takes out two of their ships, she and the final Shaper ship are left dead in the air. She has no chance of survival beyond perhaps a rescue by the returning Investors. Without food, or ability to create oxygen, she does the humane thing and wrings Fuzzy's neck. She survives by trapping and eating roaches to begin with, and later her pet. When the Investors find her, she fears their response to their missing pet, but without a translator she is unable to understand what they are saying to her. She fears they will leave her behind at first, but they take her aboard and clean and disinfect her. She desperately wants their understanding. In a short time, she begins to feel strange. Her stomach is hard and it is difficult to breathe. Fluid fills her throat and she finally stops breathing. Wave after wave of white liquid oozes out of her, and eight days later she breaks free of her cocoon, eager to be leashed.



Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Cicada Queen

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Cicada Queen Summary

Hans lives on Czarina-Kluster in the Frosh, in a studio that is domestic-industrial. Since his defection two years ago, he has been under the watchful eyes of two dogs, who report his every move to the Queen. After two years, he is finally scheduled to be freed. Arvin Kulagin throws a party for him and the main prize for the evening is a romp with Valery Korstad - a long time desire of his. Once Hans returns home, he has his small place swept for bugs, finding four. He has them removed and intends to send them to Wellspring to be converted to cash which can be donated to the Terraforming project on Mars but before they can be sent, he is accosted by a vigilante dog. The Coordinator, a tiger, comes to the rescue, killing the dog and taking Hans back to the Palace with him. The Coordinator tells him of C-K's imminent collapse and loses his temper when Hans brings Wellsprings name into the conversation. He is given forty-eight hours to vanish or be charged with treason.

Hans leaves and immediately goes in search of Wellspring, finally finding him in Dogstown. They sit together in a tubeway bar where he is introduced to a Lobster named Modem. Hans explains his predicament, and Modem suggests that he escape with them on their ship, which is headed to Mars with the first terraforming ice asteroid. Of course, in order to escape safely, he must become a partially mechanized lobster himself. A simple procedure is used to graft on a shell, a tracheotomy is performed, some nerve grafts done and some anal surgery, and Hans is able to hide in plain sight.

He clings to the outer shell of the Crowned Pawn with the other Lobsters and heads for Mars with the first ice asteroid. On his way there, a call comes in from Valery Korstad, and they argue. He realizes that the ice asteroid will pass by C-K and asks if the Lobster can put him on the asteroid. Modem sells him a parasitic engine to get him there and he has little trouble making the transition.

Soon after, a craft lands and mining robots begin to drill the asteroid. Unafraid of drones, Hans climbs aboard their ship and discovers the Queen, asleep on top of a pile of jewels. Closer inspection reveals she is dead, and soon afterward, he learns that Wellspring and Valery were killed on C-K shortly after he left. He assumes Wellsprings' wealth after forging a will that specifies himself as sole beneficiary and heads for the surface of Mars to begin the project that he spent his life working on.

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Cicada Queen Analysis

Hans has two loves. One is Valery Korstad - the love of his life, and the other is Lichen which he is developing as part of a terraforming project for the planet Mars. Hans is a



Shaper who defected to C-K to aid in the plans to terraform Mars. The Investor Queen has him guarded for two years, releasing him after he has proven to her that he is no threat. On the eve of his release from dog watch, he gives Wellspring a lichen encased in crystal as a gift for the Queen called the Queen's Percentage. It is uncommonly beautiful. Wellspring leaves with it after assuring the group that Hans is likely to be a wealthy man. For Hans, this would involve little in the way of actual wealth as he has already pledged his profits to the Terraforming project on Mars. His freedom is celebrated by the Clique and then between himself and Valery more privately. When he returns to his apartment, he decides to remove any last vestiges of surveillance, and hires a company to find the listening devices. The four that are found are of high enough quality to fetch a decent price, so he sends Kulagin a note asking him to sell them for him. Before he can send them out, a dog is at the door, demanding entry. Hans knows that there is no way the dog is there legally, and his suspicions are confirmed when the Tiger / Coordinator arrives and after an exchange, is forced to kill the Dog. He takes Hans back to the Palace where he tries to talk him into signing over the royalties from his lichen jewels, but when Hans explains that they are already spoken for, the Controller explodes and gives Hans forty-eight hours to get off of C-K.

Hans goes in search of Wellspring for help and finds him in Dogstown. Wellspring listens to Hans and then loudly announces the beginning of the end of C-K. Without the Investor Queen, C-K is doomed. The bar clears out in a matter of moments as everyone tries to get ahead of the coming crash. A Lobster at the table tells Hans that he is heading for the Ring Council and can take him there, but Hans knows that returning there would be suicide after his defection. The Lobster offers to give him the grafts and procedures necessary to become a Lobster himself, enabling him to hide in plain sight. He agrees and within forty-eight hours, he is a Lobster on the Crowned Pawn.

A call from Valery almost has him returning to C-K, but when he positions himself on the asteroid to do so, he comes in contact with a Pirate Shaper ship operated by drones. Inside the ship, he discovers the Queen, already dead, lying on a pile of jewels. When shortly afterward, he hears that both Wellspring and Valery were killed in a Discreet, he sees a unique opportunity. He creates a will imitating Wellspring, and assigns himself as the sole beneficiary. He knows that with the wealth he now has, Terraforming on Mars is a certainty.



Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Sunken Gardens

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Sunken Gardens Summary

Mirasol is one of the Patternists who have been assigned to the redemption camp in northern Syrtis Major on Mars. Advancing dunes bury it repeatedly and surface winds of two hundred miles an hour are commonplace. She is guided by the Regals, who occupy one of the orbiting city-states called Terraform-Kluster, which is a nexus of monitor satellites. She is under close surveillance at all times. A Ladder connects the Terraform-Kluster to the surface. The surface of Mars has been bombarded with large chunks of asteroid ice for a hundred years now, tearing large craters into the surface of the planet. It was a massive undertaking that gave the Regals enormous power.

The Martian surface is a collection of factions, and a contest is held to win the right to ascend the Ladder and live with the Regals. Six factions are invited to send their best to Ibis Crater for an ecological competition, each armed with its most successful biotechnology. It would be a contest of the sunken gardens. It is winter, and this is the season during which all pruning is done in the sunken gardens. Green and yellow mangroves rim the water and overrun the smaller islands at the center. Scarlet ibis dot the trees and Mirasol is filled with sadness at the thought that this was what she had come to destroy. She docks and takes her place at the table where two of her rivals already sat waiting and two more arrive shortly afterward. The Regal Advisor, Arkadya Sorienti, Incorporated, arrives and announces that the sixth contestant will not be joining them.

The rules are reviewed and Mirasol's share of land is almost twenty kilometers square. Birds shriek as the contest begins and the five contestants get to work. The Mantis Crawler on one side of her begins with fire to sterilize the zone as each contestant attempts to create a potential world. The fire spread with speed and Mirasol watches as a variety of creatures scramble to the surface. A flash of red gets her attention and she recognizes a big, red ape, gasping for air. She picks it up with the arm of the crawler and it tried to free itself. Mirasol kills it, pitying it, and recognizes a tightly woven suit. She pulls off the mask and discovers a human face tattooed with stars. Lady Sorienti discourages Mirasol from even discussing her encounter with the alien, even though she herself had witnessed it as the event took place. The Regal knows that no one else saw it, and as a result would be skeptical. Mirasol and the Patternists win by default.

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Sunken Gardens Analysis

Mirasol has never been this close to the city before, or to the Ladder that connects it to the surface. In fact, like most of those her age, she has never been into space. It has



taken her years to get to this point. She flattered her teachers, collaborating with them in the demise of her own culture, and when the opportunity presented itself, she was chosen to take the chance at the Ladder. The Patternists, Mirasol's faction, were a breakaway group from the Shapers who specialized in cerebral asymmetry. They had hugely expanded right brain hemispheres which allowed them to be highly intuitive, but also suffered from autism, paranoia and fugue states. As a result of these weaknesses, their colony faltered. Mechanists evolved by replacing portions of themselves with advanced prosthetics. The Regals began as defectors and dissidents and had the support of the Investors. The competitions were established to maintain motivation so that the factions would strive to improve the ecological sciences they studied. Each faction camped on the edge of its own crater but the competitions were the equivalent of a shortcut - a way up the Ladder.

The Mantis Crawler began with fire, which spread rapidly. In the end, only Marisol is left, and the fire has taken its toll. Marisol put what she believed was a large red ape with serious burns out of its misery, only to discover that it was a human in an ape suit. Regal Advisor Arkadya Sorienti sees it on the monitor as it happens, and appreciates the fact that Marisol came to her first. Marisol can't understand why the Regal Advisor isn't more disturbed by the events involving the alien, and in fact advises her to keep the incident to herself. The Regal believes in the Lobster King and his theory that terraforming is more important than space travel.

Marisol is horrified at first, shocked that the Regal felt nothing for the alien life lost. In fact, the Regal assures her that it is simply part of the cycle of life. Marisol tries to explain why she feels that using these beings as a game, and the planet as an art form is a mistake and morally bankrupt, but the Regal tells her that their game is reality. They see beauty in destruction and when Marisol is in their place, she will judge the rest just as they have. The Regal reminds Marisol that she and her faction have won the Ladder, and the rest fades into background noise as she contemplates the future from a new perspective.



Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Twenty Evocations

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Twenty Evocations Summary

As a child, Nikolai loves his interactive cybernetic teacher. She explains how the first settlers in space were born on Earth, and how Nikolai is a Shaper. Nikolai sees his first Mechanist when he is still a child, and when his friend imitates the difficulties the Mechanist is having with a malfunctioning leg, the Mechanist turns on them, citing his ability to buy, grow, sell or cut them into bits if he desired.

Nicholai grows up, joins the service and is on leave in the Ring Council, drinking in a free-fall bar with two men from his unit. One, a Mechanist, has suspect loyalties, and Nicholai remembers the man who once told him he could buy or sell him. When Nicholai later defects from the Ring Council, it is a Mechanist woman who helps him by offering him a deal. She will hide him providing that he marry her in return. He does so. His feelings for her grow and she is able to understand his feelings like no one else can. She confesses that she simple scans the blood flow patterns in his face.

Nicholai decides to replace his regular eyes with Mechanist upgrades capable of providing him with a clock, a biofeedback monitor and even a television screen that now share his visual functions. They are difficult to get used to and he asks his wife to spend the night with him. She agrees, and when she touches the door, the toxins on the handle kill her almost instantly. Nicholai finds out who is responsible, and sends his own agent of death to deal with Captain-Doctor Martin Leng from Ring Council Security who is from his own gene line.

A servo climbs into the water to attach the Mechanist assassin's arms and legs. Learning from his former wife's gift for finance, Nicholai eventually owns the Kyotid Kluster. He uses her DNA to create a clone of her, and as Chairman, populates the world as he sees fit. He eventually meets his wife's clone as an adult and proposes marriage. She accepts, but is younger and infinitely more in touch with life than he is. Slowly, he begins to resent his age. He decides to leave gracefully, taking poison. His last words are "Futility is Freedom", and he barely remembers to utter them before he dies filled with triumph.

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Twenty Evocations Analysis

Nicolai is a Shaper. He grew up with an interactive cybernetic teacher whom he was extremely fond of. As a young child, he sees the prejudice between Shaper and



Mechanist factions. He joins the service, and this prejudice is even more pronounced. He defects a year later, and takes a Mechanist for his wife. It begins as a relationship of convenience, but grows into much more. Sadly, one of his own gene line sends an assassin to kill him, and the contact venom kills her instantly. He retaliates, now at war with his own people.

He founds and becomes Chairman of the Kyotid Kluster, where he is able to live by his own ideals. He provides safe haven for both Shapers and Mechanists, but his trust is not absolute. Years after his Mechanist wife dies, he meets her DNA clone, recognizing her by the eyes she inherited from her mother. He marries her, but she is so much younger that the gap is obvious. She tells him that the route to youth is to avoid getting set in his ways. She makes him realize that he has lost his edge, even though his health is still good, and he decides to retire. He can see the vultures circling when he makes his announcement. The war between the Shapers and the Mechs is a thing of the past, and Nicholai feels outnumbered. He decides his time has passed and with two young Kosmosity archaeologists, to keep him company, he consumes the poison that will end his life.



Characters

Abelard Malcolm Tyler Lindsay (The Schismatrix)

Lindsay is from the Mare Serenitatis Circumlunar Corporate Republic and travels to the Mare Tranquillitatis People's Circumlunar Zaibatsu seeking political asylum. Lindsay is indicted after the fall of the Shapers to the Mechanists. He is disgraced and seen as an embarrassment, but this action only strengthens his resolve. In combination with Constantine, they form a team that is formidable, but Vera Kelland comes between them with a suicide pact.

After Vera's death, Lindsay is targeted by Constantine, but the attempt on his life is unsuccessful. He lives in exile on Zaibatsu until Constantine sends an assassin to finish what he so long ago started. By then Lindsay has managed to eke out a good existence, becoming a producer and convincing all factions on the planet to support his endeavors in one fashion or another.

Lindsay turns the tables on the assassin, who arrives looking exactly like him, by setting him up to take the fall for murder in his place. Lindsay leaves with a group of pirates called the Fortuna Miners Democracy, becoming one of them in order to survive. When the pirates come across Asteroid ESAIRS 89-XII, they meet the Mavrides - a family of Shapers left adrift to survive on their own. Contact with the pirates is deadly for the entire clan with the exception of Nora, and for all of the pirates excepting Lindsay. Both are forced to kill at least one of their own to save each other.

Together, Nora and Lindsay share the time they have left as their asteroid habitat deteriorates. Nora uses the gun on board the asteroid to blow up the FMD's ship, hoping to attract the attention of some form of rescue, and is successful. Not long after, aliens calling themselves the Investors arrive and offer to purchase what they believe is a work of art. Lindsay wastes no time making a deal that will take he and Nora to the capital city of Goldreich-Tremaine, where they will spend the next forty years together.

Constantine shows up at one of Lindsay's productions and Lindsay is ready to leave, but Nora refuses. When the bank begins to collapse, Lindsay decides to leave with the Investors rather than risk his life staying. Nora elects to stay. Lindsay leaves Goldreich-Tremaine. Upon arriving on the Dembowska asteroid, he becomes Andrew Bela Milosz. It is here that he finally orchestrates a duel with Philip Constantine that almost costs them both their lives. Lindsay is nursed back to health and takes Abelard Gomez with him to Czarina-Kluster when he leaves. He forms the Lifesiders Clique with focus on Terraforming. Most of the Clique goes to Europa while he and Vera go to the oceans of Earth to gather life forms that can be genetically altered to survive on Europa with them. During this process, he sees the Presence fully for the first time, and later, when he goes to Europa, the Presence offers to take him with him. Lindsay accepts, becoming immortal.



Philip Khouri Constantine (The Schismatrix)

Constantine is Lindsay's best friend and has been for fifteen years. Though Lindsay's family had not approved of his friendship with a plebe, Lindsay didn't care. Constantine had been sent in for training in biotechnology two years after Lindsay. They are eventually indicted, but Constantine has long term plans and an iron determination that sets him apart from the rest. This is evident to Lindsay when an assassin is sent by Constantine to offer Lindsay an impossible deal. He tells Lindsay that there has been a coup and now power has shifted from the Advisory Council (dissolved) to the Executive Board for National Survival - run by Constantine himself. Lindsay manages to orchestrate things so that his duplicate, sent by Constantine to kill him, is blamed for a murder and summarily executed while Lindsay himself disappears on the Fortuna Miners Democracy ship. Left behind on Zaibatsu, Kitsune tells Constantine that Lindsay is dead, and despite some unease that his assassin has not returned, Constantine is relieved.

Constantine is one of the many who are seduced by the idea of perpetual youth and employ a virus that renews the skin constantly. As a result, his skin sheds regularly. When Goldreich-Tremaine suffers financial collapse, Constantine is pleased. He enjoys lingering behind to watch his handiwork up close, despite how nervous the remainder of his crew is. He managed to defeat the Shapers and the pleasure of watching it firsthand is intense. They had underestimated him, and with that single error, had lost it all. The militants had used him to attack the Midnight Clique which Nora and Lindsay belonged to, and he had been wildly successful.

Finally, he and his guards board the Friendship Serene and they depart. He is surprised to learn much later that Lindsay is still alive, and a duel between them is arranged to settle the score once and for all. Held in a fist sized arena, the duel takes its toll on both, leaving them unable to function for years. His health is finally restored to a point where he can communicate, and he tells Lindsay that he is ready to die. Lindsay goes to see him, and while they visit, Constantine drinks a poison that ends his life.

Nora Mavrides (The Schismatrix)

Nora is one of the Shapers who occupies the asteroid ESAIRS 89-XII. She is beautiful and intelligent. Traveling with her family, she tells Lindsay that the President should turn his attention elsewhere. The gun that she tells Lindsay she has turned off is so large that they are inside it. She is one of six Family members in the Mavrides gene line. Nora has wide, hazel colored eyes and high cheekbones. Her nose is straight and her eyebrows are dark, like her abundance of black hair. Her skin is the color of copper with just a bit of rouge, and her structure is more Amerindian than Oriental.

Nora is twenty-eight years old when she and her Family meet the Fortuna Miners Democracy and she gets to know Lindsay. Her relationship with him begins when he is selected as the representative sent to the asteroid to arrange for their integration into



FMD society and citizenship. The Mavrides balk at first, but then seem to comply, but under the surface both sides are only interested in survival of their own species.

Lindsay is horrified to discover that Nora is still using a diplomatic training device called a spinal crab, which had been used on him in the first class. He became a Concatenate in the foreign section. Nora was part of the fifth class and still used the crab every night until Lindsay destroys it. When the first FMD member dies, the gloves come off.

Nora tells Lindsay that her Family are all on sexual suppressants, so attending the FMD's Carnival would be out of the question. Lindsay convinces Nora to try the stimulant drugs involved and she agrees, providing that Lindsay take the suppressants in return. An agreement is reached and Nora discovers a desire for sex that Lindsay now sees no use for. The experiment is the beginning of the relationship that will bind them together for the next forty years.

When Constantine causes the collapse of the world they have settled on, Nora insists on staying while Lindsay flees. She is charged with treason before she can leave to join Lindsay and takes her own life rather than have the rest of her group tainted as well.

Kitsune (The Schismatrix)

Kitsune is an artificial creature. Her life is pure and abstract - she is a Shaper. She spent eight of her twenty years with the Bank, dealing with customers and rivals. Human feeling is too mild for her to even notice - like a second subconscious that blends cold and pragmatic logic with convulsive pleasure. Her chemistry requires her to take antibiotic pills and suppositories, or antiseptic showers that are painful. She doesn't share these things with Lindsay. She would never want him to know that he contaminated her.

When she was originally given to the surgeons, her womb was removed and replaced with grafts from the pleasure center of brain tissue. She is wired to her behind, her spine and her throat, claiming it is better than being God. When she gets hot, she sweats perfume and nothing that leaves her body cannot be eaten like candy or drank like wine. She is cleaner than sterile, and still recognizes what submission is.

Kitsune uses a front to present herself to others, acting as a subservient to it. Lindsay frees her from the front by killing it before he leaves. She eventually becomes the Chief of Police on the Dembowska asteroid, and when Lindsay is arrested for articulating his plot against the Investors, he is taken to Kitsune, who grants him freedom.

Later still, Kitsune becomes the Wallmother, joining herself with a space craft and using living tissue to form its bulk. She amasses a great deal of complexity and girth, becoming four hundred thousand, eight hundred and twelve tons of mass in total. She and her Wallchildren arrive at Dembowska where Kitsune plans to make her genetic nest.



Investors (The Schismatrix and Swarm)

In the Investors' race, Commanders are always female and they are the only female on each ship. They are double the size of their crewmen, so large that their size comes with a calm and almost sluggish demeanor. The next in command are Ensigns, who operate as a combination of ministers and diplomats. The remainder of the crew are little more than an adoring harem. They are bright eyed and weigh up to three times as the average man but look small next to their Commanders. The Investors are basically reptilian. They have long, ribbed frills located behind their heads that have evolved to provide temperature control - spread out to absorb sunlight or simply opened when it is too hot. Similar to an eyebrow which evolved to deflect sweat, the frills are more for social use now. When the frill flicker rapidly, it is often a sign of amusement, and the Ensign's frill seems to always flicker, almost like a nervous tick.

The Investors are one of two races capable of faster than light transportation. They are a trading race, dealing in energy and precious metals, but give little advantage to those they trade with. They are aware of nineteen intelligent alien races, and while having been aware of the human race for some time, they delayed contact until the technology was sufficient to interest them. While Shapers and Mechanists both vie for the Investors favor, the true nature of these aliens comes to light and Lindsay manages to make a compromising recording of a Queen, which forces her into exile. As a result, she is coerced into joining the Dembowska asteroid on a satellite built to resemble the Investors trade ships. Called Czarina-Kluster, it lends credibility and desirability to the area.

Investors prefer ultra-violet light.

Ensign (The Schismatrix and Swarm)

The first alien being that Nora and Lindsay meet, an Investor called the Ensign, comes to negotiate the sale of Asteroid ESAIRS 89-XII. Ensigns are the Investor's second in command aboard their ships. They act as a combination of minister and diplomat. The first Ensign that Nora and Lindsay meet is polished and well spoken in English, unlike the Ensign who deals with Lindsay once they leave G-T.

Vera Kelland (The Schismatrix)

Vera is an actress, an artist, and an aristocrat who becomes the first Preservationist martyr. Knowing that an act of suicide would bring about change when nothing else could, Vera, who was married to a man sixty years her senior, believes in their cause and is their muse. Constantine and Lindsay help her to orchestrate her own suicide so that they might free themselves and become all they can be but both are consumed with guilt afterward. Constantine manages to secrete a sampling of her DNA and creates a genetic version of her as his daughter years later who carries the Constantine name.



Greta Beatty (The Schismatrix)

Greta is a Policewife whose assignment is to act as Lindsay's liaison on the Dembowska asteroid. She gives Lindsay new papers, identifying him now as Auditor Andrew Bela Milosz. Greta has a calm and quiet demeanor that rubs off on those around her. She started out as a Carnassus wife, in a strictly erotic relationship. Her promotion came later and now she does liaison work. She has blond hair, which is parted in the middle and cut bluntly along her cheekbones and ears. Her hair looks clean. Greta arrests Lindsay later when he articulates a plot against the Investors.

Alexandrina Tyler (The Schismatrix)

Alexandrina is Lindsay's first wife. She is originally from The Republic of Mare Serenitatis. Alexandrina is Lindsay's mother's cousin and she was fifty years Lindsay's senior when they were married. She lost her citizenship during the Shaper purges fifty years previously, but never forgot her home. She applies to emigrate to Goldreich-Tremaine, but her age makes that impossible. Instead, with the subterfuge necessary, she is reacquainted with Lindsay and he offers her employment managing his household. It is a job she accepts on the spot. She continues to do so until her contract expires, at which time Lindsay is still trying to recuperate from his duel with Constantine. She becomes the curator of a museum created on the old Tyler mansion dedicated to preserving what is left of their old ways of life. Reclaiming the land becomes her focus while Margaret Juliano operates the clinic that the family home has been turned into.

Alexandrina enters into a marriage contract with Pongpianskul who runs the Republic and lives out the rest of her life on the family estate.

Margaret Juliano (The Schismatrix)

Put on ice by Cataclyst assassins when the Midnight Clique was attacked by Constantine, she is reanimated to run the clinic, which is created at the Tyler mansion. She helps Lindsay to regain himself, working on his catatonic body for five years before bringing him back to consciousness. She later helps Constantine in the same manner.

Vera Constantine (The Schismatrix)

Created partially from the DNA of Vera Kelland, Vera Constantine comes to the Dembowska asteroid in the Wallmother's ship seeking asylum after Constantine and Lindsay's duel takes her patriarch's mind. She is chosen to approach Lindsay in the hopes that she will remind him enough of Kelland to drop his guard. It is her intention to assassinate him if given the chance. A formerly unknown alien Presence follows her, and later travels with her and Lindsay to Earth as they gather specimens from the depths of the ocean to use in the creation of "Angels" on Europa.



Angels (The Schismatrix)

Created by Constantine's offspring, Europa is the new home for a species created to live in the warm waters. Genetically engineered, they are a construct designed to be transferred into and lived in by them in an effort to recreate the Paradise that once was.

The Presence (The Schismatrix)

A formerly unknown alien species, the Presence is of unknown origins and is seen by only very few beings. The Presence follows Vera Constantine from the Embassy in Fomalhaut. The aliens there claim no knowledge of it, and the Investors do not believe it exists. Lindsay can see it and sense its presence. It follows Vera and Lindsay to Earth, clinging to the hull of their spacecraft, and expresses unbridled joy as it explores the ocean depths of Earth. When Lindsay and Vera return to Europa, Vera sheds her body to become an Angel while the Presence reveals itself to Lindsay, communicating for the first time. It offers Lindsay what all Shapers desire - immortality. Lindsay joins the Presence and they hitch a ride with an unknowing Investor.

Captain-Doctor Simon Afiel (Swarm)

At thirty-eight years of age, Afiel is a member of the Reshaped faction whose passage, costing millions of kilowatts, is bought on an Investor ship. He holds a doctorate in alien linguistics and in biochemistry and has a master's degree in magnetic weapons engineering. His hormonal balance is slightly altered to accommodate long periods of time spent in free-fall. He lacks an appendix and his heart has been restructured to a greater efficiency. His large intestine has been altered to produce the vitamins that are normally created by intestinal bacteria and he boasts an intelligence quotient of one hundred and eighty. Though not the brightest among the agents of the Ring Council, he is their most trusted and mentally stable.

Afiel is taken to the nest of the Swarm where he will be dropped for a period of almost two years.

Swarm (Swarm)

The Swarm are the only space faring race that has no measurable intelligence. They have six posterior legs and four clawed forelimbs. They have rudimentary, bulbous atrophied eyes that dangle on stalks and are not fond of light. Their heads are segmented and they are neckless. Before anyone can be introduced to the Nest, a symbiote must bring a piece of them that conveys scent and composition to its mates in the Nest, thereby avoiding the visitor becoming classified as an invader and being eaten. The Swarm consists of Symbiotes, Warriors, Tunnelers and Springtails among the fifteen different castes. Gravity in the nest is imperceptible. The entrance to the nest



is guarded by an elephantine sized animal with fur which expands itself until the tunnel is completely blocked.

The Swarm have no concept of privacy or ownership. To attempt to control or isolate any given area from the others is seen as an intrusion, and is dealt with swiftly.

Dr. Mirny (Swarm)

Genetically Reshaped, Dr. Mirny is young and attractive in an anonymously trim way. She wears clothing made from the fibers of a pupa's cocoon while greeting Afiel to avoid any chance of embarrassment, but after her own clothing was consumed by a scavenger symbiote, she opted to remain nude with the exception of infrared goggles.

Lydia Martinez (aka Spider Rose) (Spider Rose)

Spider Rose is a two hundred year old Mechanist. She could be considered insane, but is still very clever. She monitors the chemical basis of normal and maintains it artificially if necessary. Most of her feelings she has managed to quash. She lives alone in a web that spins in an orbit around Uranus. She has long white hair and Spider Rose was lonely.

Little Nose For Profits (aka Fuzzy) (Spider Rose)

A small reptilian creature with a long, spiny crest who is the Investor Captain's mascot. It has scaly hands with thick digits and is uncommonly friendly. It has a dragon-like face and half-transparent flaps over pinhole ears. It is able to assume any form it comes into contact with, appearing to look like the Investors in the beginning, but cocooning and emerging to look more like SR after a short time.

Arvin Kulagin (Cicada Queen)

Kulagin is a wealthy Mechanist who lives in an elegant and spacious place, classically decorated by gigantic marigolds. The suburb where he lives is called the Froth and is a favorite neighborhood of the Clique. With a simulated one tenth gravity, he had enough room for luxuries like couches and chairs and the ceiling is studded with hooks which held his favorite marigolds suspended. Czarina-Kluster

Hans Landau (Cicada Queen)

Hans is a Cicada who spent two long years under the watchful eyes of ever present dogs whose job it was to record his every movement and behavior to be sure that it conforms with the acceptable.



Lobsters (Cicada Queen)

Lobsters live entirely in a skin-tight life support system. One Lobster looks much like any other.

Marisol (Sunken Gardens)

Marisol is a Patternist from the redemption camp in northern Syrtis Major. She has a pale face and dark eyes, and she has the beauty of those that have been genetically Reshaped. She has a nervous habit of biting her fingernails and she has never been into space. Marisol has the cerebral asymmetry of the Reshapers - with one hemisphere of her brain larger than the other, distorting her skull.

Regal Advisor Arkadya Sorienti, Inc. (Sunken Gardens)

The Regal is a member of T-K's ruling group and her clothing reflects that of a high-ranking diplomat. She has knee-high boots that are scaled to mimic an Investor's hide, complete with false bird-like toes. Her skirt is heavy and made out of gold cord, paired with a formal jacket with embroidered cuffs. She has blond hair that is set in a complex style and her bare legs are glossy looking and her eyelids are decorated in soft pastels.



Objects/Places

Mare Tranquillitatis People's Circumlunar Ziabatsu

An ideologically decriminalized region with few civil rights beyond the right to request death at any time. The clouds are malformed and appear bloated in the sky and the air smells vile. Each Concatenate world has its own biological problems, but on Ziabatsu, the souring has become an epidemic. A mutant fungi has spread and formed a crust beneath the surface that repels water and chokes out grass and trees. The soil has dried out and the dampness in the air creates a perfect environment for mildew. Ziabatsu's full time daylight only contributes to this issue and once things progress to this stage, only drastic measures can restore balance to the world. Only a stubborn minority of the population still remains on the planet.

Concatenation

There are ten circumlunar worlds that make up the Concatenation, and each is identifiable by its own particular smell. As each of the habitats age, they also face a series of biological problems.

Shaper Ring Council

Orbiting Saturn, it is one of the societies formed by refugees from planets that have soured.

Mechanists

A cartel of the Asteroid Belt, populated by refugees from planets that have soured.

Nephrine Black Medicals

The Nephrine Black Medicals are criminal biochemists with black laboratories scattered throughout the System. They are reclusive, vicious and tough, supplying any who can afford to pay with memory drugs such as vasopressins, carbolines, endorphins, or even stimulants and tranquilizers. The black chemists can make anything, and if they are unable to synthesize a product, they are able to filter it directly from tissue.

Kabuki Intrasolar

The theatrical venture that Lindsay claims to be part of, arranging a production for which he is recruiting a cast.



Shinju

Double suicide offered by the Geisha for those who prefer not to die alone.

Kabuki Bubble

A geodesic dome built to air the play created by Ryumin.

Bettina

One of the Belt settlements.

Themis

One of the Belt settlements.

Red Consensus

The Consensus was originally owned by a now extinct group called the Soviet Union or CCCP. The living quarters had been launched from Earth as part of a series of orbiting defense stations. Cylindrical, the ship has living quarters that consist of four decks, round in shape and measuring four meters tall and ten meters wide. The stern deck is used for free fall combat exercises; the next deck holds their surgery and sick bay, a sweatbox where the crew can hide from solar flares and a broom closet where spacesuits hang along with tools that would be used outside. The fourth deck is used for military drills.

Fortuna

Fortuna was an asteroid that measured two hundred kilometers across, and the original miners that landed had declared their independence on it. While the ore existed, they were able to buy their way out of trouble, but when it was gone, Fortuna went downhill fast. While many left, the remaining population dwindled, got into debt, and sold everything from their infrastructure to their air. Fortuna was then redefined, and the boundaries became the interior of the Red Consensus. As they were in full control of their national government, they were legally able to grant citizenship, sign treaties, negotiate arms or issue letters of marque. Their pirate nation used lawsuits as a chief source of income.



Roaches

Used as a means of keeping cast off skin, food crumbs, grease, and layers of sweated effluvia under control in an environment such as the Red Consensus.

Goldreich-Tremaine

An orbiting city with a central core that has hubbed spheres that wheel about it. Radar works on external tracks while two tubed suburbs turn on ceramic white stems. The inner complex is a network of lacy habitats in free fall. Outside the two bubbled suburbs, or "subbles" as they are known, are the immaterial walls of the Bottle. A bright fusion core acts as its own sun.

Bottle

The Bottle is a magnetic tokamak field which is eight kilometers long, and using a fusion powered web, shields the Shaper city-state. Once a ship goes through the flaw in the bottle, the city-state behind it vanishes from sight.

Council States

Reshaped with their own fusion suns, there are at least nine council states in existence. They include Goldreich-Tremaine (the capital city), Dermott-Gold-Murray, Synchronis, Kirkwood Gap, Tauri Phase, Cassini-Kluster, Encke-Kluster, Skimmers Union, and Arsenal.

Friendship Serene

Constantine's ship.

Dembowska Cartel

Located on the Demboska asteroid, the Dembowska Cartel is the next stop for the Investor ship. There is only a very light gravity.

Extraterrarium

The Extraterrarium on Dembowska asteroid is a rough cavity that is filled with a rust tinged liquid and is a source of national pride. It is looked after by Carnassus, who is the embassy's exobiologist.



Eurypteroid

A sea scorpion that lives in the Extraterrarium on Dembowska asteroid.

Dembowska Asteroid

At two hundred kilometers across, Dembowska is a third ranked asteroid. It had at one time been hit by something large and the impact had opened a crevasse twenty kilometers deep that revealed a nickel iron core. Generations of mining clear out the nickel iron, leaving a hole too large for air. The Dembowska Cartel lives within this crevasse, using long plazas that drop from one level to the next until reaching the enormous cavernous dugout at the center which is large enough to treat as space itself. This is where heavy industry and cryonics factories are located.

Green Rapture

A drug taken by Lindsay to help him to keep up long term interest in the project of terraforming.

Tyler Mansion

Formerly the home of Alexandrina Tyler, it is turned into a Museum where Alexandrina is the curator. The left wing and grounds are used as a clinic which is run by Margaret Juliano, and the rest is a gathering of mementos of their old ways of life.

Lifesiders Clique

The name given to Lindsay's group, which operates as a shadow government in C-K. They operate as a moral parallel to the rule that the former Queen's Advisors enjoyed.

Wallmother

Name given to the construct that Kitsune becomes. The Wallmother consists of four hundred thousand, eight hundred and twelve tons.

Swarm (Swarm)

Name given to a collective group of aliens who are known as the only space faring race without intelligence. They are large, have four clawed forelimbs and six posterior legs; eyes that dangle on long stalks; and have a suspicious nature. They occupy an asteroid that has been tunneled out to create what they refer to as the nest.



Jewel (Spider Rose)

The find of a lifetime for Spider Rose, the jewel is what remains of a massive ice chunk that orbited Uranus and was hit by lightning. Most of the outer ice flashed off immediately and what remains is a large piece with strings and veins of beryl, interspersed with raw emeralds as large as the Investors' heads and overlaid with nets of red corundum and purple garnet. Strangely colored fused diamond lumps also exist that are the product of quantum states of metallic carbon.

Czarina-Kluster (C-K) (Cicada Queen)

Created to resemble an Investor ship, it was made to that the Investor Queen would feel comfortable in her exile. Her arrival lent so much status to the region that an entire sub-city sprang up from the initial construction. The Queen's exile was planned and orchestrated by Abelard Lindsay and watched over by Wellspring.

Froth (Cicada Queen)

The Froth is a suburb of C-K built in rebellion to be unlike the regimented architecture of other habitats. It was created from an empty cylinder which had been packed with a form of pressurized plastic and then blasted into foam that set leaving angular bubbles through which hallways snaked through. The Froth is well known for its welcome spontaneity and its discreets.

Crowned Pawn (Cicada Queen)

Name of the Lobster's ship that Hans Landau escapes on, after being changed into a Lobster himself so that he could hide in plain sight.

Discreets (Cicada Queen)

Citadels in which there is no surveillance.

Ibis Crater

The crater used as a contest site for factions seeking to earn the right to use the Ladder and take on the Regal's power and wealth.



Themes

Longevity and Immortality vs Survival (Schismatrix)

The Schismatrix describes a universe in which Earth has outgrown itself. A lunar alliance is formed between ten Concatenate worlds, which become the nexus of civilization. Then progress is made into deeper space, leaving the Earth behind to fall into seclusion and technical decline. The entire lunar neighborhood is left behind.

Longevity is pursued by all, some with Mechanics and some with genetics. In an effort to extend life, limbs are exchanged for constructed parts, and even minds are wired until their very hosts brain is inconsequential. Two very different factions evolve and are at constant odds with each other in their pursuit of longer life. Wars are fought and nations are won or lost in an ongoing battle for supremacy that continues until the first Investor ship arrives.

The Investors are a race that has lived so long that their beginnings are unknown to them. They remember nothing beyond their life on the starships and their single goal is to travel space seeking any commodity they deem of value to them. The arrival of the Investors brings a halt to the ongoing wars and both sides come to realize that the importance of life itself eclipses the manner in which life is lived. What is most important is survival. This is brought into sharp focus when the Investors arrive, as it is obvious to all that the Investors are powerful enough to end life on Earth if they were anything but the benevolent ambassadors they present themselves to be. As such, war becomes crass and intolerable. Peace and trade are the new subjects of concentration by Shapers and Mechanists alike as they collectively vie for Investor favor.

The Cost of Arrogance (The Swarm)

The Swarm is a closed community living entirely within an asteroid. Captain-Doctor Simon Afriel is taken to the asteroid by the Investors for a two year period of study of their species. Posing as a researcher, Afriel joins the only alien life form in order to win acceptance by the Swarm. Dr. Galina Mirny greets him and shows him around the Nest, advising him on how to avoid becoming an enemy to be eliminated. Afriel admits to having synthesized the various hormones that Mirny sent back with previous Investors, and when Mirny questions his motives, he is finally honest with her. He admits that he is interested in much more. He confesses his rank as Captain in Security from the Ring Council, and explains the scope of their project. While at first angered by their subterfuge and the sheer audacity of their plan, as he explains the details to her, she realizes that Afriel might just be the lesser of the evils as far as intrusion into the Swarm is considered.

Afriel explains that he merely intends to test the effectiveness of the synthetic hormones and then leave with a small amount of DNA from a single Queen's egg. To Afriel, it seems no more intrusive than an abortion on Earth would be. It is much less invasive



that the alternative forms of study that might have occurred instead, and possibly brought an end to the Swarm itself. By co-opting Mirny's help, Afriel is able to confirm the viability of the synthetic hormones, using them to control different factions of the swarm. They manage to instruct some, enlist others, and believe that they have succeeded in maintaining their subterfuge. Afriel believes that one day, they will breed an entire army of Swarm members under their control.

What neither realizes is that the Queen immediately noticed the changes to her Nest. Before the Investors can return, Mirny's body is taken and absorbed by the Swarm and Afriel is given a choice to join the Swarm on a permanent basis so that they can study him. The only alternative is for him to join Mirny and be absorbed as well. They confess to having absorbed fifteen separate races before his, and their continued life is a testament to their intentions.

The Cost of Morality (Sunken Gardens)

Mars is being terraformed. For a hundred years, great strides have been made and life is now a reality on the planet's surface. The Regals live in orbit above it just as the Lobster King has since he delivered the very first ice asteroid and sent it to the surface. From this lofty perspective, the effects of their actions are seen only as either a plan that worked or a plan that failed. A group of beings who were researching the secrets of star flight stumbled onto the secret of the Investors and faster than light (FTL) travel. As soon as they were successful, a decision had to be made. They were destroyed from orbit, like an exterminator would rid a home of roaches. It is done from a distance, clinical and without feeling, but not all members of this faction were killed. The Lobster King decides that if humanity spent its time working towards star flight, terraforming would become a lost cause. As soon as star flight was achieved, interest in terraforming Mars would end as curiosity replaced it. The Investors didn't want humans to have the technology for star flight either. If humans had FTL, they would no longer be compelled to pay them for trips to the stars. Economically, it would have cut into the Investors profit margin.

When Marisol becomes a pawn in this game, she sees things from a different perspective. She had also played the game, being the best student she could be in an effort to be chosen as their representative at the next contest. Her plan works. All she can think of is winning the Ladder for her faction. When she sees the death involved and is responsible for the death of an alien herself, she takes the matter up with a Regal. Her Regal Advisor, Arkadya Sorienti, Incorporated, has no difficulty playing the role of God. Everything lives, everything dies. Who cares? Marisol would have argued further, but the Regal points out that having won the Ladder, she will now be in the position to play God herself. With that thought, Marisol forgets the arguments she had and her thoughts turn to living above. Her moral stand lasts only as long as it takes for her to find herself on the other side of the Ladder.



Style

Point of View

Schismatrix is written primarily in the first person perspective, primarily as experienced by the main character, Abelard Lindsay. There are small segments devoted to the first person perspective of Constantine as well. The author paints a good story that enables the readers to put themselves into the heart and mind of Lindsay as he experiences heartache and triumph. The story begins with Lindsay and his exile to another Concatenate for subversive behavior.

His exile is where the story begins, and Lindsay's fear and unease is well defined as he finds his way around the new life he now has. One thing is almost immediately clear to him: In order to survive, he must find a way to make himself indispensable to all factions rather than taking sides and becoming one faction or another. He immediately sets out to win over the first pawn in his scheme to rule from the sidelines. Lindsay doesn't take the lack of sterility seriously at first, but since he was engineered to be without microbes, he soon develops dysentery.

Lindsay manages to use the skills taught to him by the Shapers to his advantage, earning him positions of power. He is quickly able to discern what others want or need, and provide that skill or service to ingratiate himself to them. For most of his lifetime, Lindsay ranges from one circumstance to another, providing services that earn him positions of respect and power.

Setting

Schismatrix begins as Lindsay arrives at the Circumlunar Zaibatsu as a exile. In his six months as a political exile, he becomes a facilitator, giving all factions a common interest - amassing wealth. When his true identity is discovered by an assassin sent by his former friend and now bitter rival, Constantine, he must once again find a creative way to distance himself. He commits a crime and leaves his look-alike to take the punishment for it, at the same time giving the gift of absolute freedom to Kitsune, who until this time operated through a front out of fear for her safety. He escapes on a Mechanist's pirate ship, becoming one of them in order to survive. He manages to convince all on board that he is committed to their cause, but is constantly looking for way to move up.

The next opportunity presents itself when the pirate ship called the Red Consensus comes across an asteroid called Esairs 89 - XII. Only half a kilometer long, it is the home of the Mavrides clan. He is so taken with Nora Mavrides that when the dust settles, they are the only two survivors. He is prepared to die there in her arms, but the Investors arrive, and negotiations to see the asteroid to them begin. In return for their quarters, he asks for passage to Goldreich - Tremaine and education. Lindsay is one of



the few who see the value of learning the Investor's language and rapidly becomes their favorite trading agent, cementing his position in their community.

He takes the Mavrides name, hiding once again in plain sight, and creating plays until his rival Constantine shows up at one of them. When the situation becomes too volatile, Lindsay takes passage on an Investor trade ship, leaving Nora behind. He is dropped on the Dembowska asteroid. As Constantine rises to power, he becomes a larger threat. Lindsay challenges him to a duel, and Constantine accepts. Neither man wants to live with the fear of assassins or worse from the other. The duel takes its toll on both. Constantine never fully recovers and Lindsay requires five years of care before his mind begins to return from the drug he takes. The experience changes him, and when he leaves the Tyler mansion, he takes Abelard Gomez, a youngster with Terraforming dreams, with him.

Together, along with the gene line Constantine started, they manage to begin the process of terraforming Mars. Using DNA from all manner of creatures from the depths of Earth's ocean, they create a race of water angels and shed their bodies to become a new intelligent species. Lindsay feels he is too old to begin again, but accepts the offer to join a Presence that has made itself known to only a precious few. He leaves, immortal, and free.

Language and Meaning

While *Schismatrix* is written primarily in ordinary English, the author intersperses this normalcy with passages that are at first difficult to grasp, but through persistent use, become commonplace to the reader. These exceptions that exist include descriptive passages referring to the many different factions that live in this time period, and the variety of interstellar outposts that have been created as man reaches further and further into space.

This story takes place in our Earth's future where in an effort to extend life, two distinct factions have evolved in competition with each other. Shapers are beings created via laboratory efforts and educated electronically, while Mechanists are the product of conception and birth, but in an effort to extend life they have resorted to using mechanized parts to replace those that fail with age. Both of these factions have their positive and negative aspects. Their battle for overall supremacy is halted when a visit from an alien race calling themselves the Investors arrives. With the combination of a blend of human nature and imagination, the author has woven a story the reader can easily imagine. The use of Klusters to describe the settlements that are set up by renegades and exiles and the trading practices between the factions both lend authenticity to the tale. Another aspect that rings true to human nature is the authors creation of a museum dedicated to the preservation of the "old ways" of life. It is a reminder that progress has its pros and cons.

Structure

Schismatrix is a story set out in three parts. Part one is approximately one hundred pages in length, and consists of four chapters. These chapters are further subdivided into the locations where each segment takes place, and the period of time which is covered. Part one takes the reader from 27-12-'15 to 17-7-'17. Part two is approximately sixty pages in length and contains chapters five through seven. The time period covered spans 3-4-'37 to 14-2-'86. The third part of this story is also almost sixty pages in length and is divided into three chapters from chapter eight to eleven. The time period represented takes the reader from 17-6-'91 to 25-12-'86.

The Plus in the title (Schismatrix Plus) refers to the selection of Shaper/Mechanist Stories that make up the final portion of this book. Divided into five separate stories, this portion of the book spans approximately seventy pages. The first story, Swarm, is just under twenty pages in length, and like the other stories at the end of this book, there are no sub sections, chapters or subheadings dividing the story. The second short story is Spider Rose, which is only about fifteen pages in length. The third story, Cicada Queen, is almost thirty pages in length and is the longest of the five. The fourth story, Sunken Gardens, and the fifth story, Twenty Evocations, are shorter in length than the others. Twenty Invocations is divided into twenty short, numbered paragraphs, each depicting a segment of a single character's life.



Quotes

"Is it true that when you're fully operational, you yourself don't know if you're speaking the truth?"

Part 1: Chap. 1, p. 20

"You will underwrite all my extravagances, and establish a free-wheeling, free-spending atmosphere of carefree hedonism."

Part 1: Chap. 2, p. 34

"It must be some kind of Shaper thing."

Part 1: Chap. 3, p. 65

Lindsay's practiced excuse for being unable to fire the main gun on the Mechanists ship.

"Now that your network has been, as you say, 'contaminated', we can at least meet face to face without spacesuits."

Part 1: Chap. 4, p. 72

"No one alive will hurt you without coming through me first."

Part 2, Chap. 5, p.126

"You know, I can't remember offhand where I left my brain."

Part 2, Chap. 6, p. 146

"To those our age, old memories can come with unexpected force."

Part 2, Chap. 7, p. 164

"It's been a long treatment: restoring a brain altered by heavy dosage of PDKL Ninety-five."

Part 3, Chap. 8, p. 182

"Life is lived day to day, not in centuries."

Part 3, Chap. 9, p. 198

Professor Yevgeny Navarre to Lindsay and Wellspring as they discuss pragmatism.

"We could babble reassurances until the sun expands, and never convince each other."

Part 3, Chap. 10, p. 212

"It knows this is paradise!"

Part 3, Chap. 11, p. 229



"We humans are as children to other races, however; so a certain immaturity seems natural to us."

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Swarm: p. 239

"Take good care of our Little Nose for Profits."

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Spider Rose, p. 263

"You've entered my domicile under false pretense and threatened me."

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Cicada Queen, p. 287

"Why should we trade the power of creation itself to become like the Investors?"

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Sunken Gardens: p. 312

"What is it you have that we want?"

Shaper / Mechanist Stories: Twenty Evocations, p. 317



Topics for Discussion

How does a planet sour? What is the direct cause of souring? What are the signs that a world has soured? How can a soured world be reconstituted? Is recovery a feasible option? What options are available to colonies that suffer from this issue?

What are the differences between Shapers and a Mechs? Which is more likely to have genetic altering? What advantages might a Mech have over a Shaper, if any? What advantages do Shapers enjoy over Mechs, if any? Which of the two is most likely to survive?

Who are the Investors? Where do they come from? How old are they? What is their purpose in life? What do they want with humans? What personality traits best describe them? What makes them different from humans?

How does Abelard Lindsay avoid Constantine? What does Constantine believe happened to Lindsay? Why is he under that impression? What worried Constantine about the circumstances surrounding Lindsay's death?

What is a Kluster? How many Klusters are there? What faction do Klusters belong to? Who runs them? Why was the first Kluster created? How many units does it take to qualify as a Kluster?

How many times does Abelard Lindsay change his identity? Which identities does he assume, and where is he when he assumes them? Which identity does he most enjoy and miss most? Why?

What are the names of Abelard Lindsay's wives? Where do they originate? What factions do they belong to? Who is his first wife? Who holds the title the longest? Is Lindsay married at the end of the story, and if so, to whom?

What is Lindsay's most ambitious project? When does he get the idea, and who gives it to him? What methods are used to initiate the process? Does it work? What promise does Lindsay make to the Constantine clan? Does he manage to live up to it? If so, how?

What is the Presence? When is it first introduced? How does it travel? Who does it reveal itself to first and how? What does the Presence show obvious joy over? What other omnipotent presence is it compared to and why?

How do Lindsay and Constantine finally settle their lifelong conflict? What aids do both take in order to proceed? What kind of arena is used and where is it? Who is the victor, and how long does it take before he is aware of his victory? Why?

What is PDKL Ninety-Five? What is its purpose? Who takes it? What are the results? Who else is revealed to have taken this and where? What was the outcome?



What different identities does Kitsune assume? What is her first? What is the last? How do they differ? What gift does Lindsay give Kitsune when he leaves her? What does he hope it does for her? What does Kitsune bring him when she comes to the Dembowska asteroid?

What is the Swarm? Where do they live? How do they survive? How many types of beings live in the Nest? Where does the variety come from? What do the researchers learn from them, and why have they sent another scientist to the Nest? What do they hope to accomplish with the tests they are running? How soon does the Queen realize what they are doing?

What special item does Spider Rose have? Who does she believe will be interested in it? Where does Spider Rose live? By what other name is she known? What is she offered for her treasure? What does she finally settle on? What happens to her and why?

How long does Hans Landau live under the Dogs? What is the purpose of the Dogs? Where does Hans get taken once he is freed from them? What happens that makes it necessary for Hans to leave? How does he manage to do it undetected? What does Hans become? What does he discover in that form, and how does it affect his life?