

Startide Rising Study Guide

Startide Rising by David Brin

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Plot Summary

Startide Rising by David Brin is the story of an exploration vessel from Earth, commanded and crewed by neo-dolphins, having to make repairs on an obscure water planet while Galactic fleets fight overhead to obtain its secrets.

The exploration vessel Streaker, commanded and crewed by neo-dolphins, lands on the water world Kithrup to make emergency repairs. A massive battle breaks out overhead, pinning them. Streaker carries a contingent of natural scientists whose explorations yield a wealth of data about two unknown species. The crash of an alien warship nearby creates a tsunami that rattles the neo-dolphins' nerves, but Tom Orley proposes using the hulk as a "Trojan Seahorse." While he is away preparing a diversion and his lover, Dr. Gillian Baskin, is overseeing science, mutiny brews and Captain Creideiki is electrocuted. As he recovers, Creideiki receives an epiphany from the whale gods, which prepares him to speak with the voice of the island.

As Creideiki's successors cancel Tom's plan, Gillian invokes secret orders to seize command. The rebels go into exile on the island, to be left behind as the Trojan Seahorse is played out. They control a longboat capable of limited space travel. When Tom detonates a psi-bomb, the wave is felt around the planet and in space, where the Thennanin are convinced that their crashed ship has survived. Aliens converge to find the source of the bomb. Meanwhile, Stenos' neo-dolphins reveal bloodthirsty tendencies.

Changing alliances in space facilitate the Trojan Seahorse plan. Creideiki fails in his appeal to the Karrank% to help divert the common enemies, but the tormented creature eventually lets out a massive psi-wave that disrupts the warfare and rids the planet of combatants. Dr. Metz, the crazed dolphins' creator becomes their first human victim. Rebel Takkata-Jim flees in the longboat and is quickly killed. Streaker also launches, stranding the island party and Tom. Sharp maneuvering and an ambush of pursuing aliens gets it to safety at a transfer point, whence it begins the trip home. The other survivors board a small skiff and head home, less assured of their survival.

Prologue and Part 1, Buoyancy (Chapters 1-13)

Prologue and Part 1, Buoyancy (Chapters 1-13) Summary

While her lover Tom Orley sleeps, Gillian Baskin records in her journal how Streaker, pursued by Galactics, reaches Kithrup, a water world suited to the dolphin crew and rich in heavy metals needed for repairs. Captain Creideiki wants them both on the bridge for morale. Chapter 1 focuses on Toshio's pessimism as a team prospects for vanadium. It turns into a search-and-rescue operation for two crew mates. Toshio narrowly escapes death at the tendrils of a voracious sea weed, thanks to wise-cracking Keepiru, just as word comes of a gathering war overhead. In Chapter 2, a Tandu fleet pours in, using paths opened by the Episiarch. The Acceptor then takes command, using psychic powers to analyze enemy armadas and would-be Earth victims.

In Chapter 3, Takkata-Jim commands the bridge during Creideiki's rest period. He orders the prospectors back and hears Ignacio Metz talk about negotiating with the ETs. In Chapter 4, the dream goddess Nukapai helps Creideiki briefly overcome insomnia before he is summoned to the bridge. In Chapter 5, Tom consults the secret Niss machine about the situation and talks briefly with Gillian, who is preparing to treat casualties. En route to the bridge, Tom considers options for Streaker's escape. In Chapter 6, the space battle is chaotic, but the Soro Queen Krat is unconcerned by setbacks until a Tandu cruiser penetrates her defenses. Only her maternal instinct for the egg she lays prevents her chief tactician's execution.

In Chapter 7, a tsunami caused by a star cruiser's crash causes the panicky neo-dolphins to beach themselves. Toshio risks landing on a metal island to save them. In Chapter 8, the Jophur high priest and chief of staff differ over killing allies and the former is killed. In Chapter 9, Gillian writes about crew hypochondria, worries about Hikahi's crew not responding, and figures that Metz is behind Takkata-Jim rather than Hikahi being second in command. She examines Herbie, the billion-year-old ET corpse. Chapter 10, Metz cannot understand how rational inhabitants of the Galaxy can so enjoy warfare rather than sharing whatever they think that Tom and Gillian have salvaged from the Derelict Fleet. Metz alone knows that Bosun K'tha-Jon has killer whale gene splices. In Chapter 11, Tom and Creideiki confer about restored armaments and tiny hopes. In Chapter 12, wanting only to go home to mate, Krat plots to enslave the dolphins and pervert them to her purposes. In Chapter 13, Toshio and Hikahi clean up and discover a pre-sentient species.

Prologue and Part 1, Buoyancy (Chapters 1-13) Analysis

After the Prologue explains in broadest terms how the exploration vessel Streaker has reached Kithrup, a water world to make repairs, Part 1 begins introducing characters and filling in details on Streaker's plight. Quotations from Gillian Baskin's Journal become an irregular feature in the novel, used whenever concise summaries of events are needed. Generally, the story is character-driven, with chapter headings indicating which characters are in focus. Rich detail, however, is brought in constantly about all of the characters already introduced, such that the formal chapters could have been dispensed with. The ten parts have each to be considered as a whole.

It gradually becomes clear that Streaker is on a historic but ill-starred mission. Never before has a major vessel been commanded and crewed by neo-dolphins with humans serving only as evaluators and technical advisors. Neo-dolphins have been for generations genetically adapted to communicate with humans and use their natural abilities working in space. Humans have not demanded that they and neo-chimpanzees, similarly adapted, serve an extended period of servitude in exchange as other patron races demand. Humans claim to have evolved without help of a patron race. They are at the bottom of the ladder among space-faring races and generally loathed. The ethics of the whole system and means of Uplift is debated and much detail into how it is accomplished is provided.

Streaker finds itself submerged on Kithrup in need of repairs after discovering, prior to the novel's opening, an undocumented Derelict Fleet and informing Earth of its finding. Ordered into silent hiding, Streaker finds out-of-the-way Kithrup, whose peculiarities as a world are described at length. In the short run, the Earthlings are fortunate that a variety of Galactic species arrive swiftly and set to battling over them, giving them time to make repairs. The wreck of one crashed star cruiser eventually offers a way out, but first it creates a tsunami. This puts the dolphins into a frenzy during which most beach themselves. Bioengineering has made them a skittish species, a fact that comes out vividly in later chapters. Note how Dr. Metz early on is painted as a Dr. Frankenstein character, carrying out secret gene splices. Late in the novel he himself makes the literary connection as he lies dying at his creature's hand.

Characters are generally introduced in short chapters with their names as the titles. Webs of interrelations are built up as the cast broadens. Young Toshio is first introduced, as a pessimistic human leading a team prospecting for vanadium to make repairs. He is nearly eaten by a sea weed that has killed a crew mate. The neo-dolphin Keepiru, Toshio's wise-cracking nemesis saves his life and then resumes embittering him. During the tsunami, Toshio repays this debt.

Chapter 2 is the first of many entitled "Galactics," the diversity of warring extraterrestrials being lumped together rather prejudicially. They are a motley assembly. Each chapter generally concentrates on introducing a specific species, sometimes along with its clients. The mighty and daring Tandu makes use of two powerful



supernatural beings to arrive first. Understanding their society, particularly the roles of Episiarch and Acceptor, is more difficult than picturing how humans could Uplift and work alongside dolphins. Some of the later alien races are more easily anthropomorphized, such as Chapter 6's Soro Queen Krat, a recurring character, whose maternal side conflicts with her fierce temper towards enemies and inept underlings, and Chapter 8's church/state dispute among stalk-like Jophurs, with the high priest being summarily killed. The strongly intolerant, quasi-religious nature of Galactic society begins to be depicted.

Chapter 3 resumes introducing Streaker's officers. Over the next few chapters it is clear that there are profound differences of opinion and hidden agendas that could lead to open conflict. The chief neo-dolphins ally with humans to increase their prestige among enlisted neo-dolphins. Chapter 4 introduces a dream goddess, Nukapai, who helps Creideiki deal with chronic insomnia. She and the Whale Dream, which underlies dolphin spirituality before and after Uplift, are referred to frequently in the novel. Creideiki is the greatest mystic and poet aboard. Gradually, by trial-and-error, the reader achieves a sense of how the three dolphin languages fit together, when each is used, and the psychological connotations of each. It is a challenging exercise, but becomes increasingly rewarding, as some of the haiku-like verse is charming.

In Chapter 5, it is revealed that the two lead humans, Tom Orley and Gillian Baskin are in love and each conducts a special, secret project. Tom has hidden aboard a Tymbrimian Niss computer to evaluate whether, as suspected, the human-owned copies of the Galactic Library are edited to limit usefulness. It seems odd, for instance, that no references are found for the Derelict Fleet or the millennium-old corpse that they make off with. Nicknamed Herbie, it is Gillian's pet project. Only in Chapter 12 does Krat reveal that her target is the dolphins and her goal is to enslave and pervert them. That there are laxly-enforced standards of Galactic behavior is suggested.

The pitched and ever-shifting space battle comes to Kithrup as a battered star cruiser crashes at supersonic speed some fifty kilometers away from Striker. Through the end of Part 1, this sets up a series of tsunamis that the prospecting team must survive. Pessimistic Toshio emerges as an unlikely hero, risking body surfing onto a jagged metal island and promptly throwing up as he realizes that he has survived. Gillian writes in her Journal about crew hypochondria, but the prospectors are thrown into "rescue fever," which manifests itself in wholesale beaching. Most readers will find this a familiar cetacean behavior. Its rarity among natural bottlenose dolphins but frequency among the genetically-engineered points to the kinds of problems that the crew faces going forward. They are a skittish lot, no matter how hard they work to accomplish their tasks. Metz watches this closely, particularly K'tha-Jon, into whom he has secretly spliced killer whale genes. This, of course, leads to tragedy later in the novel. Part 1 ends with Toshio and Hikahi finding remnants of a pre-sentient species' way of life and catching fugitive glances of individuals. Going forward, letting them share in humanity's laissez faire attitude towards Uplifted clients rather than letting them fall prey to less benign masters becomes a significant theme. Clearly, no one would consider simply letting them be, a possibility also brought up later when a truly bizarre species speaks from the depths of the planet.

Part 2, Currents (Chapters 14-27)

Part 2, Currents (Chapters 14-27) Summary

Self-conscious Charles Dart, the lone neo-chimp, and human Dennie Sudman talk about Creideiki's caution. She approves of how the neo-dolphins do their jobs more than does Charles, but shuns Sah'ot's attentions. She is updated by Gillian and Emerson D'Anite about the incoming ambulance cases. Toshio tells Creideiki about Tom and Tsh't's plans to salvage the ET wreck, and the captain reluctantly allows Dennie Sudman and Sah'ot to explore the island under Keepiru's command. Dennie rues having to fight off the neo-dolphin's advances. In Chapter 15, K'tha-Jon orders three racist Stenos including Moki to shut up, lest they alienate the humans or tip Creideiki too early.

In Chapter 16, the Brothers of the Night, religious zealots, are preparing to turn the ultimate Weapon on Kithrup from a moon in the Kthesmennee system when the Soro arrive with the same Weapon and destroy their moon. In Chapter 17, Tom, Hannes and T'shi lead 20 select crewfen in inspecting the Thennanin wreck, which structurally has survived the crash remarkably well. Tom realizes from studying it just how primitive humankind is vis-a-vis the Galactics and how wise the Terragens Council has been in refusing to be enslaved to the Library as most species are for convenience sake. Golden Age mentality is crippling. Still, Tom is anxious to recover the wreck's Library. In Chapter 18, tired and irritable after hours of performing surgery, Gillian is in no mood for Charles' demands to talk about somehow-lost data on Kithrup's being recently inhabited by sophonts. Gillian agrees to bring it up with the captain and others. She is angry at the sarcastic Niss machine for giving no help on the mystery of Herbie. Wondering if Tom misses her as badly as she does him, she receives Charles' fax about his theory and swims to visit Hikahi in sickbay and show the data to Makanee.

In Chapter 19, an exhausted Creideiki gives a morale-building lecture about Keeneenk to some 30 fen, challenging them to consider how dolphins and humans think differently about the surface of the ocean and what reflections mean. Noticing Takkata-Jim and K'tha-Jon, he worries again about whether the Exec should be replaced. When the session ends, Takkata-Jim warns K'tha-Jon against mutiny until and unless Creideiki fails to rescue the ship and crew. In Chapter 20, two Xappish officers discuss whether the war is about the Progenitors returning or the Earthling threat being ended. Client races have united six times to rebel, twice successfully, only to become patrons as terrible as those overthrown. The Xappish ship is destroyed by a space mine. In Chapter 21, Toshio and Dennie explode a drill-tree growing out of a metal mound. It seems an unlikely evolutionary niche and is not mentioned in the Library. A probe, remotely controlled by Keepiru, is sent into the resulting cavern but is partially disabled. Sah'ot and Dennie rush in impulsively to see if the grotto is clear for exploration. Sah'ot accepts Keepiru's rebuke.



In Chapter 22, an exhausted Creideiki holds a consultation with his chief scientific personnel. He runs out of patience with Charles' jargon-filled demands to run experiments and grows sexually aroused by Hikahi. They tell him that, amazingly, Kithrup has not been surveyed in 400 million years and is listed in the Library as the final home of the supposedly extinct Karrank%. Charles sees evidence of advanced civilization as recently as 30,000 years ago and wants to investigate. Metz liberates the captain by requesting a private audience. He wants to redefine priorities, now that that Streaker clearly cannot avoid capture. They must negotiate with the victor in the religious war overhead, offering them the data and artifacts that they have collected. Creideiki puts off refuting this naïveté and Metz's charge that the minority Stenos dolphins are victims of racial prejudice. Metz worries that the captain has discovered that he is secretly studying mutants under stress.

In Chapter 23, Gillian reviews holographs of the Derelict Fleet and recalls how explorers grow disoriented before their gig is annihilated by a probability field. She wonders about Herbie, whom Tom secretly recovers and whose mystery she alone must unravel. The Library relates the myth of the Abdicators, which parallels Progenitor tales and dubious Earthly millennial dogmas and Hindu belief in avatars. Frustrated, Gillian activates Niss, which is anxious that the Library that it is monitoring not know of its own existence. They talk about humanity's artistic, philosophical, and political success despite a pre-Contact history of mistakes. Frustrated, Gillian asks to work with the islanders, the mission's second most important goal.

In Chapter 24, a veteran Synthian spy, Beie Chohooan, hides in a comet's tail, observing the fighting above the planet Kithrup. She condemns the artless slaughter and constant betrayals among the combatants and her own people's timid caution in fighting alongside Earthlings. She is touched when one tiny wazoon client sacrifices itself to save her ship, and tells the survivors to feel, care, and mourn. In Chapter 25, Tom recovers the alien ship's Library intact and sends it and three undamaged probability coils to Streaker. Tom wishes he could see the Niss access it. The next step for the battleship, when Creideiki orders it, is for it to be reamed empty by explosives, for although escape could come by rescue, negotiation, or trickery, Tom sees only trickery as feasible and decides to undertake a probably suicidal mission to bait a hook to attract the warring aliens. Creideiki will have one last chance to order him not to go. Tsh't mournfully assists Tom's preparations.

In Chapter 26, Creideiki takes Hikahi's report as they swim together. She advocates leaving the scientists behind as non-combatants—as they themselves wish. If Streaker happens to escape, Creideiki warns, they will be marooned. He has reluctantly accepted Tom's plan, subject to advice by the ship's council. Once her engine is repaired with salvaged parts, Tom will create a diversion so Streaker can be moved undetected to the site of the wreck. Creideiki realizes that he has broken this news too harshly. Hikahi mourns for Gillian's coming loss, but then turns passionate towards Creideiki, for life goes on. In Chapter 27, the island is eerily silent as Toshio and Dennie blush at the sounds of nearby lovemaking. He struggles to say things that will get her to treat him less like a child and wishes that he had telepathy to know her thoughts. As

Toshio watches her sleep in preparation for a busy day, he hears Gillian and Tom enjoying, probably, their last bittersweet night together.

Part 2, Currents (Chapters 14-27) Analysis

Part 2 continues adding secondary characters including Emerson D'Anite and adds a wealth of detail to the portrayal of characters already introduced. It begins introducing and gradually intensifying relationships. The scientists emerge as a bloc with research goals at odds with the captain's concern to remain hidden from the warring aliens overhead and to find a way to return to Earth with their invaluable findings. He has to deal with racial divisions among the neo-dolphin crew members and is only marginally aware of a growing spirit of mutiny. The leaders, Takkata-Jim and K'tha-Jon, are at odds over how long to tolerate the captain's indecision before acting. Metz worries that his secret experiments on how neo-dolphins who have received special gene splices react under the intense psychological pressure that has come upon the mission. The atavism that characterizes the beachings in Part 1 is becoming more widespread, requiring that victims be reassigned to less critical jobs.

On the romantic front, the neo-dolphin Sah'ot takes an amorous interest in the human Dennie Sudman, who rejects him but subconsciously returns his flirtations. The Ness computer ignores more important concerns to ask about this behavior. Creideiki longs for Hikahi and gets frustrated when responsibilities repeatedly get in the way. Eventually they get together in a discretely underplayed scene, the captain's longings having been rather explicitly described.

Tom's plan to salvage the alien wreck is gradually unfolded. Creideiki assigns teams of key personnel to the salvage operation and exploration of the island, unknowingly isolating himself as the threat of mutiny grows. Tom and Gillian each muse about the Library and the nature of the knowledge shared therein. Humankind's pre-Contact legacy of good and evil is several times analyzed philosophically. The sarcastic Niss machine is not forthcoming in helping analyze the meaning of the Derelict Fleet, whose fateful discovery by Streaker is told in far greater detail than in Part 1. That finding it is a major mission objective is made explicit, but why the rest of the Five Galaxies are so determined to learn what Streaker learns is still kept secret. Preliminary work on the island suggests that the planet is clothed in mysteries that will have to be worked out. The scientists in a stultifying meeting with the captain advance hypotheses that turn out not to be far from the truth. Tom rejoices at recovering the wreck's Library, marking the first time that humans have access to an alien version.

Beginning in Chapter 25, Tom's plan is clarified. He sees that Streaker's only chances, once the war ends, are rescue, negotiation, and trickery. Why only trickery as feasible is detailed, as Tom decides to undertake a probably suicidal mission to detract the combatants while Streaker is moved to the wreck site. He and Gillian have discussed which of them should go and decide he is the better choice. Why is left for later explanation. His leaving will clearly be bad for crew morale, which already is low. On the eve of the mission, Gillian and Tom make love on the island, enjoying, probably, their

last bittersweet night together. Tom contemplates how their bio-engineered telepathy might keep them in contact over distances but he is solemn about leaving.

Chapter 19 gives insights into the dolphin teaching of Keeneenk, as the captain, an adept, lectures crewfen, challenging them to consider how dolphins and humans think differently about the surface of the ocean and what reflections mean. It is a thought-provoking exercise, if the reader goes along with meditating. Certain crewfen disdain the philosophy, which deepens the spirit of mutiny. Looking forward, Creideiki will need to call on these powers to recover from a debilitating accident and prevent the derailing of his mission. Many passages in Part 2 describe the neo-dolphins' various languages and provide examples of their haiku-like poetry.

As in Part 1, several depictions of religious zealots fighting overhead are sprinkled through Part 2. These include in Chapter 16, the Brothers of the Night, who discover too late that a librarian who helps them find the secret of an ancient, ultimate Weapon has shared with the Soro as well. In Chapter 20, Xappish officers discuss the motivation of the present war, revealing new details about the myth of the apocalyptic Progenitors and the prospect of rebelling. Streaker's version of the Library provides copious amounts of mythology that Gillian finds sadly reminiscent of holy wars on Earth. Chapter 24 introduces a rare sympathetic alien character, Beie Chohooan, a veteran Synthian spy, who is disgusted watching the artless slaughter and constant betrayals. Her people are allied with beleaguered Earthlings but unwilling to commit themselves to battle. Earth and its colonial worlds are revealed currently to be under siege.

Part 2 ends with a certitude that disasters and discoveries lie ahead.

Part 3, Dissonance (Chapters 28-34)

Part 3, Dissonance (Chapters 28-34) Summary

Sah'ot studies the aborigines, Kiqui, doubts if the genetic engineering that makes neo-dolphin more human-like has advantages, and sees madness in Tom's escape plan. In Chapter 29, the ship's council meeting about this "Trojan Seahorse" plan is, in Takkata-Jim's opinion, a disaster, for the aliens are too advanced to be tricked. K'tha-jon nudges him to take command. In Chapter 30, Akki resents being stuck aboard ship when all but the dregs of the crew are at the wreck on the island and tries to break up a bloody fight that K'tha-Jon ignores. At the wreck in Chapter 31, weary engineers strip it clean inside and are sad that a plan better than Tom's fails to develop. Streaker will be moved soon. In Chapter 32, balances of power and alliances in space have shifted. The Acceptor detects a Synthian trying to communicate with Earthlings, and fails to report it to the Tandu instantly.

In Chapter 33, Tom is flying his solar plane ahead of a storm front. He misses Gillian already. As the storm intensifies, Tom dives for a smoking island. In Chapter 34, Creideiki examines his once-beautiful ship outside, triple-checking repairs. One area of the hull shows where it and another craft in another parallel universe had swapped metal. The Whale Dream is built around this concept and most Galactics use it to cheat the absolute speed of light. Sometimes Creideiki wishes he could go back to his species' old innocence. He does not expect the war in space to last more than a few days and is unwilling to surrender quietly to the victor. While checking a critical detector buoy that K'tha-Jon has finished working on, Creideiki is stunned by a penetrator bolt and blacks out.

Part 3, Dissonance (Chapters 28-34) Analysis

Part 3 is rich in detail about the island aborigines, the Kiqui, first named in Chapter 28. In the course of Part 3 both Sah'ot and Creideiki lament elements of cetacean culture and even anatomy that have been sacrificed to be Uplifted towards human standards. They leave unanswered the question of whether it is worth it. Most of Part 3 revolves around Tom's risky plan. Creideiki reluctantly accepts it because it is the only pro-active approach. The would-be mutineers offer nothing more than surrender to the victor, which Creideiki can never do. He longs to frolic in the ocean as of old, but duty keeps him focused. Chapter 29 first calls Tom's plan the "Trojan Seahorse," and Takkata-Jim, who foresees disaster, is aghast that K'tha-jon does not catch the allusion to the hollow wooden horse presented in antiquity as a gift to the city of Troy. Inside, Greek soldiers wait to be dragged inside the gates in order to emerge and slaughter the unsuspecting. The Exec sees this as a sign of deficient schooling. Earlier there are references to Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*, in which the Bard talks of the dolphin's lustiness, and to a series of literary and historical human sidekicks. These and the double-entendre reference to the 1960s television/movie star Flipper are surely aimed

at the readers of the novel rather than to be taken in the context of neo-dolphins in at least the 24th century.

The final chapters picture Tom flying northeast to an island armed with three psi-bombs and a water distiller. He is forced down by weather on an active volcanic island. Meanwhile, Creideiki is critically injured—if not killed—inspecting a critical component that the suspicious K'tha-Jon has been working on. One is left to wonder whether this is the opening shot in a mutiny or, from the rebels' point of view, a felicitous accident. Chapter 30 has made clear that tensions are rising among the dregs of the crew left aboard as everyone else scatters to critical missions. Takkata-Jim is acting impudent.

Depiction of the Galactics is minimal in Part 3, with Chapter 32 reprising the Acceptor as a rather jovial witness to Beie Chohooan's bold attempt to contact the besieged Earthlings. It and brief references to the continuing battle serve only to keep that aspect of the novel in mind. There is a sense that some species will emerge victorious in a relatively short time and the Earthlings will have to respond to their inevitable demands.

Part 4, Leviathan (Chapters 35-45)

Part 4, Leviathan (Chapters 35-45) Summary

Gillian on her island learns about the brutal Tandu from the Niss, which is discovering new things in the new mini-Library. She has dreamed that something terrible has befallen Tom, but senses that he is alive. She also has nightmares about alien creatures suffering in battle and Herbie smiling at her. Gillian allows herself an hour a day to read. Otherwise, she assists Dennie in studying the Kiqui, whose language has broken the translator. Toshio has gotten the crushed robot to work and is confident that it will gather Charles' data. Pictures from 90m show a tapering cavity studded with ledges. The drill-root runs up the middle, its bottom invisible in the depths. Planning to return to Streaker in three days, Gillian leaves Toshio to deal with difficult Charles on his own. In Chapter 36, Akki learns that Metz's genetic records are being loaded on the longboat and that the ship has been closed down because of the captain's electrocution. Takkata-Jim is in charge. Heading to the bridge, Akki realizes that the best fen are absent, and the rest are demoralized. He tries to motivate them to duty.

In Chapter 37, finishing clearing the wreck is the hardest work that Hannes has ever done, particularly managing the anxious-to-please neo-dolphins. Hikaihi's arrival helps them concentrate, but the work party has lost contact with Streaker and are tracing the break. In Chapter 38, Charles complains about Toshio working the robot only part-time. Brookida finds it odd that the drill-tree would go down half a kilometer and asks where the material excavated from tens of thousands of such trees goes. Charles will assign Dennie to find an answer and is lobbying to go to the island in person. Charles knows that he irritates others but only his work is important. In Chapter 39, Makanee needs to talk to Gillian but is told that communications are blacked out until a psi leak is traced. Metz and Takkata-Jim fail to calm her fears that the latter is scheming to take command contrary to protocols. Privately, Makanee worries about Tom, who alone can thwart the mutineers and suspects foul play and conspiracy. In Chapter 40, Creideiki, floats in intensive care.

In Chapter 41, Tom coughs sooty air, lying in slippery weeds in the shadow of a volcano. He has salvaged only his three psi-bombs and a water distiller from the crash. His face is slashed and his body cramped, and he cannot remember why he is here—until he sees Gillian's face and hears her haikus, probably a hallucination but perhaps a risky psi message that the Eatees could hear. As she disappears, talking of healing and dreaming, Tom relaxes. In Chapter 42, Charles has been wearing Toshio out with scientific demands, while Dennie is busy with the Kiqui and Gillian is angry at Takkata-Jim for brushing aside her questions about Tom and ordering her not to return to the ship until Dennie's report is complete. Charles has discovered that for generations sophonts have in recent geological times been burying industrial garbage in the planet's subduction zone. This is suspicious, since Kithrup is supposedly fallow. Takkata-Jim has ordered Keepiru and Sah'ot to monitor the robot's descent around the clock. Tired of

Dennie's rejections, Toshio fantasizes about Gillian, who will soon need comforting in the loss of Tom. He is interrupted by Akki's call coded in Trinary, asking to talk to Gillian.

In Chapter 43, Akki waits on the ocean bottom, where he has spliced into a cable. He fears being caught tapping in to tell Gillian about the de facto coup aboard Streaker with Stenos taking power. Akki answers Gillian's questions about Creideiki's condition and the officers' inability to rally the crew—even as he senses that he is being hunted. Painting his pursuer with sonar, Akki recognizes K'tha-Jon and begins evading laser bolts. He wonders if Takkata-Jim has ordered this and if Gillian is in danger. Needing to reach the ship to help Makanee, Akki swims away, in the direction that K'tha-Jon is least likely to watch. Meanwhile, Gillian sees fear for his friend on Toshio's face. Needing to take Keepiru with her to the ship, she leaves Toshio in military charge. The vital work on the island must go on and Takkata-Jim should not suspect that she has gone. They hug goodbye, she not having put on her wetsuit and Toshio enjoying the view.

In Chapter 44, Creideiki itches miserably as he recalls childhood, the joys of swimming, and the many ways of touching. He concludes that he is sick. His mind feels vacant. He manages a cry of confusion and realizes that he is dreaming, unnaturally, with both hemispheres of his brain. He sings to comfort himself but only creates unstoppable nightmare images. As Nukepai takes shape beside him, he forces open his eyes and cries out in dread "**K-K-Kph-kree!!**" (pg. 194), a name that he is unaware he knows. The god speaks to him in a language that he had not known he knows, telling him that his incomplete mind must be completed. He is dead meat unless he passes through the belly of the Whale Dream. It will be hard but it is his duty. Creideiki wants to die, but is not allowed: he must go to the very depths to see the Truth. Then, if he wants to die, he may. The walls of the hospital tank vanish and Creideiki finds himself swept downward in the slipstream of the great sperm whale, surrounded in an aura, in an open sea. Meanwhile, looking at the tank, Makanee and his assistant think that they hear a sigh.

In Chapter 45, Tom shivers in the cold, suffering cramps, exhausted, and disoriented by a dream of aliens destroying the planet Garth, which humans and chimps colonize together. Stars colliding overhead show that the battle over Kithrup continues. He eats and drinks and considers which of the psi-bombs to use. Only if the Thennanin survive will a Thennanin distress call enable the Trojan Seahorse plan to succeed. Otherwise, it will be shot down. With the glider destroyed, Tom knows that he cannot get back to Gillian but is glad that she is safe. He makes a sling, sets the psi-bomb's timer, and sings as he revs up and throws. He has two hours to await his fate. He has gotten used to periodic terror-filled dreams, made possible by the destruction of his speech centers. He finds that he can understand simple words but not follow a conversation. It is so difficult that he switches to the gods' trick of encompassing and absorbing meaning.

Part 4, Leviathan (Chapters 35-45) Analysis

The title of Part 4, Leviathan, derives from the Hebrew Bible, especially Job 43, where it describes a sea dragon. Crippled Creideiki sees a whale-appropriate epiphany: a great sperm whale god with some of the flashing details that Job attaches to Leviathan. Part 4



shows the aftermath of Creikdeiki's accident and suggests that it may have been an assassination attempt. With the cream of the crew on assignment outside the ship, the crisis shown growing in earlier chapters deepens and it becomes clear that the human patrons will have to step in to salvage the situation. None, however, is available at the critical moment. Gillian and Tom are on separate islands, missing and worrying about the other, and recalling old times. Each suffers nightmares. A good deal of scientific information dribbles out about the Kiqui and the drill-roots and mounds, but only adds to the mystery of why Kithrup is officially listed as fallow. More details are regularly added about the nature and means, successes and failures, of the dolphins' Uplifting.

In Chapter 39, the physician Makanee emerges as a key figure. She demands to speak about Creideiki's care with Gillian, but is told that communications are blacked out until a psi leak is traced either to the island or the wreck. Metz and Takkata-Jim are in league trying to control her, but this only heightens her fears that a mutiny is underway and of what will befall the captain if he comes out of coma. A pathetic snippet of Trinary verse makes up Chapter 40. Dramatic for its starkness, it leaves little hope for Creideiki's revival. Note that Makanee arranges to lunch with Akki. This explains his upcoming sudden, brave, decisive actions.

In Chapter 41, Tom begins setting up to carry out his plan, although his wrecked glider seems to doom him never to see Gillian again in person. Much detail is given about his wretched physical condition after the crash and the alien environment in which he operates. The local seaweed is at least not predatory as in the vicinity of Streaker. He is comforted by a vision of Gillian but also disoriented. Meanwhile, Gillian makes ready to sneak back to Streaker, advised clandestinely by Akki about the de facto coup. Examples of destroyed morale are given to give a feel for the chaos. Interim captain Takkata-Jim has ordered communications shut down, but apparently for a valid reason: to prevent psi leaks that the aliens fighting overhead could detect. Whether he also has more sinister reasons is raised when Akki is discovered tapping into a cable and chased away by Takkata-Jim's right-hand-man, the savage K'tha-Jon. This begins a long and dramatic pursuit, which carries into Part 5. It ultimately brings out the danger of splicing orca genes into a neo-dolphin, notable at this point because Metz has throughout Part 4 been making notes about his secret subjects' behavior under abnormal stress. He has also collected his papers in a space-worthy escape craft.

Chapter 44 depicts Creideiki's moment of crisis. It opens with him wishing miserably to scratch and masturbate. He feels disconnected. Somehow, he manages a cry that Makanee and his assistant hear but find baffling. His condition and that of the ship are so bad that it is probably not merciful to pray for his recovery, believes Makanee. Nukepai again takes shape but then yields her place to Kph-kree, the god of the Whale Dream. Creideiki realizes that he knows that name without knowing how and understands and uses a language that he has not known. Kph-kree is no gentle voice of conciliation, but a deity worthy of Leviathan—or even the God who reveals himself in smoke and thunder at Mt. Sinai. Kph-kree tells Creideiki that as a neo-dolphin he has been absent without leave from his species and its destiny and must make amends. He must confront Truth before he is worthy of choosing life or death. Surgically stitched back together and immobile, he is quite literally dead meat unless he obeys.



As Creideiki is swept downward dramatically, in the slipstream of the great sperm whale, surrounded in an aura, in an open sea, focus returns to Tom's sufferings and disorientation. The overwhelming odds against the Trojan Seahorse plan working are gone over as Tom does what he must to lure any Thennanin to the wrecked craft, which will become a wrap for Streaker. The psi-bomb will be heard all over the planet and in space, but have no lethal physical consequences. Tom is not committing suicide, even though he has no hopes of returning home. With Creideiki apparently out of commission, one wonders how the plan can be pulled together.

Part 5, Concussion (Chapters 46-63)

Part 5, Concussion (Chapters 46-63) Summary

Dennie is ignoring Sah'ot, Toshio has taken command, and Sah'ot is stuck monitoring the probe, depressed until he recognizes the complex syncopated song of the planet itself. In Chapter 47, out on guard duty, Haoke tries to provoke Moki to fight, but joins him in carrying out orders to intercept Keepiru and Gillian, whose sled lures them away from Streaker. In Chapter 48, Takkata-Jim occupies the captain's cabin for the symbolism and thinks about the fame that will come if he rescues Streaker. He is frustrated to hear that Gillian is back aboard and Keepiru has collected equipment and gone out again. He summons Metz to a meeting and wishes he had vicious K'tha-Jon around. Takkata-Jim had hoped to put this off 40 hours.

In Chapter 49, Tom in a crude cave puts himself into a trance, preparing for the loudest (albeit soundless) noise and brightest light of his life. Meanwhile, Toshio thinks that Sah'ot and Dennie are both crazy: Sah'ot hears singing, which he transcribes, and Dennie ignores the Kiqui to work on the drill-tree—and wants to talk to Charles. All three begin having trouble focusing and are seized by dread. The Kiqui suddenly attack and then rush, squealing, into the pool. Recognizing the sound of a psi-attack, Toshio urges Dennie to use Tom's method of overcoming the noise: count their heartbeats and breaths. Sah'ot suffers less and deals with it by separating noise into individual strands. The Kiqui identify it as a call for help from the depths. A new song demands understanding: who dares bother the planet's peace?

In space, Buolt of the Thennanin is summoned to the Tandu flagship, afraid but determined to look composed, wishing that he could ally with the kinder Soro, but figuring that once an outright Soro victory is prevented, he can switch sides yet again. Buolt pities the dolphins if the Tandu or Soro get hold of them, but does not intend to let them hoard data. Just then, the psi-attack hits, bearing the psychic image of the lost battleship Krondorsfire. Buolt resolves to make one more demand. Beie Chohooan too hears a cacophony from Kithrup that suggests the humans have help and moves closer. The Soro are insulated against psi-attack, but Krat orders an investigation of every warship landing on Kitheru, to determine the source of the blast. At the wreck, Hikahi calms workers as the psi-waves hit by advising them to concentrate on their work. Deep underwater, they are shielded. She assumes that Galactics have seized Streaker and prepares to investigate.

Aboard Streaker, Takkata-Jim and Metz confront Gillian and Makanee as a psi-wave emanates from Gillian's head and she laughs, realizing that Tom has succeeded. Creideiki listens over an open mike, helpless, because the old gods will not free him to rescue his ship. A voice from nowhere summons him, now sensitized with psi, to ignore Kph-kree and follow the hard way. Creideiki's whistle is heard in Chapter 50 and Makanee and Gillian see the change. Takkata-Jim calls for a ship's council, even after

Gillian whispers her "Secret orders" (pg. 228), hoping to find a compromise to avoid civil war. When Creideiki asks in baby talk to get out, Gillian senses intact intelligence.

In Chapter 51, Tom emerges trembling from his cave. The remaining psi-bombs contain brief codes to inform Streaker what aliens come to investigate. The first to arrive is obviously Tandu in design. If no one else comes, Tom will have to warn Streaker to fight to the death. As he prays that others will arrive, the Tandu is blasted from above. He dives to avoid the intense heat of battle, rigs a snorkel, and waits. Knocked out in the wake of something huge landing, Tom sees that the Galactics have responded to a false mayday and killed one another off. He has lost all but one psi-bomb, the verifier that tells the Trojan Seahorse to fly. Spotting a floating egg-like wreck five kilometers away, Tom begins swimming. He needs food and shelter. A small scout limps overhead and crashes on the island. He diverts to it.

In Chapter 52, Akki is exhausted, fleeing K'tha-Jon, who keeps him cut off from wreck and island. In Chapter 53, Moki informs the ship that Haoke has been killed by an intruder, when in fact he had done it in a rage. He has no regrets. Moki is ordered to cancel K'tha-Jon's mission and himself to return to the ship. Instead, imagining himself a great sperm whale, he joins chasing Akki. In Chapter 54, Keepiru figures that he is being pursued by someone in a foolish, noisy hurry. He makes out Akki being hunted by K'tha-Jon, and wants to help, but is obliged to deliver his message to Hikahi. He chooses to distract K'tha-Jon. In Chapter 55, Charles talks about evidence of a civilization only 100 years ago, but Metz is busy packing to go into exile on the island. Charles wants to go along. Takkata-Jim has meekly resigned and Gillian has taken command, pending Hikahi's return. Streaker will move within hours. The comfortable longboat will be safer. Metz promises nothing.

In Chapter 56, Sah'ot is put in charge of communicating with Creideiki. Gillian turns down his request to study resonances coming from the planet's crust and to concentrate on security, the Kiqui, and Creideiki. She leaves it to him to decide whether he wants to rejoin Streaker if it tries to escape, or remain on the island with the longboat. In Chapter 57, Dennie and Toshio talk over Takkata-Jim and Metz's exile, which includes no radio or capacity to reach space for a month. Toshio is sticking with Streaker, even if this escape scheme is doomed. Dennie has completed her report on the Kiqui, who may be bootstrapping their own Uplift and the living metal-mound, which she would love to study for years.

In Chapter 58, Krat has killed a Librarian for bringing bad news about the fleet on Kithrup. Krat wants to send another party to confuse the enemy. In Chapter 59, Creideiki sees the mixed nature of the gods but is determined to help save his ship and crew. In Chapter 60, Gillian hopes that Hikahi relieves her soon. Tom has not signaled which ETs are investigating the hoax, and the Niss wants to talk, on a non-emergency basis. Hearing that the cable is fixed, she informs Hikahi that she will move Streaker at 2100 hours, unless ordered otherwise. She sees off the longboat, on which she has taken secret precautions. In Chapter 61, Hikahi sets off by a roundabout route. Just as she goes out of range, Gillian's message arrives.



In Chapter 62, Takkata-Jim smashes the tethered buoys before heading for the island. Charles, a stowaway, declares that this removes incriminating evidence. Metz is pleased to have Charles along. In Chapter 63, Tom reaches the shattered, smoking ET scout and finds no food but comforts a dying survivor. After the Thennanin declines euthanasia, they question one another. The ET is surprised that the humans flee here, observes that the Tandu and Soro are winning, and asks to hear a story about the Return as he dies. Awakening at dawn and intending to swim to the eggshell, Tom sees a column of Tandu already moving in that direction.

Part 5, Concussion (Chapters 46-63) Analysis

Part 5 shows the chaotic aftermath of Creideiki's disability, which increasingly looks less like an accident, and Takkata-Jim's inability to take command effectively. Moki murders Haoke and K'tha-Jon begins a long pursuit of Akki. Takkata-Jim regrets not having his henchman at his side during the deepening crisis. Gillian reveals that she has secret orders to seize command if the neo-dolphin command experiment fails. She intends to turn the ship over to Toshio, a trained naval officer, when he returns. In the meantime, she takes decisive command. Metz and Takkata-Jim go into exile on the island. They are joined by a surprising stowaway, Charles. They will be left behind as the Trojan Seahorse ploy is attempted. The longboat is a vessel capable of limited space travel.

Part 5 jumps from locale to locale to show the varying effect of Tom's psi-bomb detonation. It turns the Kiqui briefly murderous and then panicky. Humans hear the sound of hundreds of fingernails scraping down chalkboards and use Tom's meditation techniques to outlast the noise. Being deep underwater seems to mute the effects. The planet itself speaks, demanding to know who dares bother its peace. This is left as a hanging mystery to be solved. The core of the psi-bomb's message is aimed at the Thennanin in space. It identifies the lost battleship as the Krondorsfire. Shifting alliances are briefly examined as the war builds to a great confrontation in the vicinity of a great gas planet, and all of the combatants send scouts to Kitheru to see what has happened there.

Aboard Streaker, the psi-wave helps Gillian realize that Tom has survived and Creideiki to break free of the ancient god's hold. Tom holds off using his final psi-bomb until he knows which aliens respond. A great battle occurs on the island, leaving a 360° horizon of smoking debris. Tom continues to suffer cruel injuries and disappointments and considers the nobility of losing his life to save his crew mates. It is far more palatable if Streaker actually escapes, which means that the Thennanin must still survive.

Tom has the opportunity for the second time in his life to meet a Thennanin face-to-face, when a small scout crashes on the island. The pilot is pinned in the wreckage and fatally wounded. They talk politely around the stereotypes that each species holds of the other. The Thennanin is oblivious to some of the insensitive things it inadvertently says. It falls asleep hearing Tom's story about the Derelict Fleet. It is a death scene filled with pathos and sympathy. Part 5 ends with Tom watching a column of Tandu moving towards the egg-shape wreck that he hopes will offer him food and shelter.

Part 6, Scatter (Chapters 64-72)

Part 6, Scatter (Chapters 64-72) Summary

Creideiki speaks better than he listens. Sah'ot runs him through linguistic tests and another surgery helps. When Sah'ot tells him about the planet singing, Creideiki asks to listen. In Chapter 65, Gillian cannot wait for Hikahi to move Streaker. Toshio and Dennie will stay at the island as long as possible and then rendezvous at the wreck. If Tom survives, he will fly to the island. The others will be abandoned, as they wish. In Chapter 66, Akki, at dawn, wonders what genes are spliced into K'tha-Jon to make him a malevolent cannibal, first encounters the hunting Kiqui, and hears K'tha-Jon reacquire him on sonar. In Chapter 67, Keepiru narrowly avoids a torpedo fired by Moki and then maneuvers into position to counterattack with his cutting torch. In Chapter 68, Tom hides as three groups converge on the eggshell wreck. One advances swiftly thanks to a shaggy Episiarch that creates solid ground before it. Tom fires on it.

In Chapter 69, Toshio camouflages the longboat and wonders why Takkata-Jim is not in the brig. He decides to search the longboat that night for anything that might cause trouble. Later, Metz and Dennie sit across from the Kiqui Nest-Mother and elders, as the computer translates the conclave. The Kiqui are ready to sign a treaty sending a dozen to Earth, where they will be treated better than by any other patron. Dennie is sorry not to get to study the metal-mound more and demands to leave only when Toshio does. They come upon Charlie and Takkata-Jim struggling over a canister. Three like objects, already confiscated, have been moved away to safety. Takkata-Jim denies setting the trap for Creideiki and claims that he cannot control Metz's Stenos who should not have been allowed on the crew. Earth must learn that dolphins can be turned into monsters. Charles claims that the a-bombs he has smuggled are small: just 1 kt.

In Chapter 70, Hikahi tries not to worry about what she will find. If Streaker is destroyed, she cannot surrender to the aliens, for she in particular knows too much about the Derelict Fleet. It would be best if she could report this incident to Earth to prevent more bullying, but knows that no one can currently control these aliens. Hearing dolphin distress cries, she heads toward them. In Chapter 71, Charles is happy to find one bomb has not been confiscated. In Chapter 72, Streaker lifts off from the ocean floor, leaving a message for Hikahi and trailing cable from the island. Without training, Gillian is uncomfortable in command. Creideiki has rallied and is helping raise morale. She continues ignoring the Niss and wonders where Tom is. Intense fighting over his last known location makes her doubt his survival. Without word from Tom, Hikahi will decide whether to hide or flee in the hulk. Outside, Creideiki admires his ship but is told by Kph-kree's specter that he will never sail on her again. Creideiki realizes that his duty lies in studying the planet's suppressed anger. Wishing them good luck, he slips away. The god comes along to watch.

Part 6, Scatter (Chapters 64-72) Analysis

Part 6 sees a shifting of personnel. Creideiki makes a come-back to the point that he is able to improve morale by his mere presence. He is allowed to watch the moving of the ship from outside. Why he wants to do this is made clear only at the end, when he slips away to fulfill another mission to which he feels called. During his therapy with Sah'ot he shows an interest in the planet's mysterious singing. He positions himself to swim off, with the mysterious Kph-kree specter deciding to come along to watch the fun. Such a light-hearted response from the frightening god is unexpected but endearing.

The Akki/K'tha-Jon and Keepiru/Moki dramas are kept alive and provide bits of analysis of how normal dolphin behaviors have somehow been perverted. Tom's fate is relegated to a minor role, as he hides as three alien groups converge on the eggshell wreck that is his only hope of survival. He fires on an Episiarch that is speeding the Tandu to victory. Recall its role in getting whole armadas impossibly through space. Note that Tom is happy to get the opportunity of witnessing such a rare occurrence—before opening fire.

The exiles reach the island. Toshio believes that Takkata-Jim has not set the trap for Creideiki and is surprised not to be able to control his crew, blaming Metz for getting unstable Stenos assigned. This emphasizes what Akki and Keepiru are learning: dolphins can be turned into monsters by genetic engineering. Since evaluating such matters is part of the ship's mission, it is imperative that a report reach Earth. A sign that trouble lies ahead on the island appears when Charles succeeds in hiding one 1 kt. atom bomb to use in his tectonic experiments. Security aboard Streaker has become incredibly lax, as Charles' manner of stowing away—described in detail—makes clear.

Chapter 72 concludes Part 6 with another excerpt from Gillian's journal. This is an effective device for summarizing non-character driven material. Streaker gets underway, justifying Tom's plans to salvage the wreck for usable parts and the crew's technical abilities. Once again, Gillian emphasizes how uncomfortable she is being in command without proper training. Earlier Takkata-Jim makes clear that he is a trained officer and still fails because of the quality of his followers. Also mentioned several times by Gillian is her ignoring the Niss machine because it is not signaling an emergency. This builds suspense over what the message can be. Knowing that the Niss is a tease, Gillian ought not to have put off answering so long. There is another paean to Tom's endurance, but Gillian is losing hope that he has survived, since he has not ignited another psi-bomb.

Part 7, The Food Chain (Chapters 73-75)

Part 7, The Food Chain (Chapters 73-75) Summary

Akki, in terror of K'tha-Jon's savage cries, knows that he cannot last long and wants to die with honor. In Chapter 74, Keepiru races towards the sounds of vicious battle ending in a scream of triumph. He arrives to see K'tha-Jon devouring his prey. K'tha-Jon declares in Anglic that he is Metz's one real success: a member of the top of the food chain, a judge of the sea—an Orca by brain and blood. Keepiru taunts him: he is a mutant, a failed experiment; his gene-plasm will be flushed down the sewer when Keepiru's report reaches Earth. In a rage K'tha-Jon begins pursuing Keepiru. It lasts into the evening, causing indigenous fish to flee. Keepiru wonders why he has not shaken K'tha-Jon as he is able. Drawing K'tha-Jon into a channel, Keepiru uses academy tactics to confront him belly-to-belly and uses his artificial arms to seize and hold him out of harm's way. Entangled, he anticipates a move to slam him into a wall of jagged metal and twists, bloodying his enemy instead. He cannot follow up with a torch attack. K'tha-Jon announces that he will drown Keepiru, but Keepiru stays calm, rips the neural link from K'tha-Jon's head. Keepiru springs free and the chase resumes. When K'tha-Jon declares that he has the food chain on his side, Keepiru is surprised at this reference to pre-Uplift mystical religion: cetaceans never resent being eaten by someone higher up the chain and those above never go on senseless hunting sprees. It is a code of honor that humans learn of and exploit. Keepiru taunts K'tha-Jon with verses. Seeing lost Hist's skeleton, Keepiru realizes that they are in the region of the killer seaweed. He leaps to safety but K'tha-Jon is entangled. Keepiru almost regrets this ending. In Chapter 75, Hikahi has been amazed by sounds of ritual combat all night. She finds Keepiru bruised, burned, and dazed.

Part 7, The Food Chain (Chapters 73-75) Analysis

Brief Part 7 combines psychological analysis and a breathtaking chase sequence. K'tha-Jon revels in his Orca nature, killing and devouring Akki, and then turning on Keepiru. Twice the primitive cetacean belief in a hierarchical food chain is mentioned. It is a mystical theology that humans learn about and pervert to their own ends. It is also a code of honor; species that are devoured do not begrudge those who devour them, knowing that it is a matter of survival, not sport. K'tha-Jon perverts this.

Keepiru works him psychologically, pushing him into a rage that allows Keepiru to use his advantages of speed and size in a race across the surface of the alien ocean. Keepiru dares not dive, because that gives the semi-Orca advantage. Keepiru also taunts the vain attacker sexually and suggests that his gene pool will be destroyed, once a report reaches Earth. In the end, Keepiru's vow early in the novel never to repeat his shameful behavior during the tsunami helps him keep his head and remember training moves to incapacitate K'tha-Jon. Note that while he relishes outthinking K'tha-Jon, he also enjoys inflicting maximum pain. Atavism is never far from the neo-dolphins.

A second chase ends when Keepiru lures K'tha-Jon into the killer seaweed from which he rescues Toshio early on. It is a bit of a deus ex machina ending, but it also serves to resolve the fate of another of the lost neo-dolphins.



Part 8, The Trojan Seahorse (Chapters 76-91)

Part 8, The Trojan Seahorse (Chapters 76-91) Summary

Beie Chohooan curses having a vehicle that is too easily detected and dies, mentally urging the humans to fight on. In Chapter 77, Toshio tells Dennie about sneaking in and out of the longboat to learn that Takkata-Jim is converting the stolen bombs into fuel. Dennie has found that the metal-mound is the larval stage of an organism that matures in the crust below, feeding on magma. Dennie is also falling in love with Toshio. In Chapter 78, Tom watches skirmishes and larger air battles, rising at times to cause mischief. He does not yet know whether to set off the remaining psi-bomb. In Chapter 79, Krat is angry over losses. The Thennanin appear to be breaking their Tandu alliance. When the humans are hers, Krat will make them pay dearly.

In Chapter 80, Gillian summarizes the happy reunion, Streaker's successful docking, her fear of having to leave Toshio, Tom, and the Kiqui behind, and her sorrow at losing Creideiki. She cannot tell Toshio about her secret plans for the a-bombs. In Chapter 81, Charles laments his career as a token but is sure that fame is coming. Toshio controls the only radio on the island, which Takkata-Jim needs in space. Creideiki taps into the cable to get in touch with the voices. In Chapter 82, Tom ambushes and kills two braggart aliens.

In Chapter 83, the Niss machine tells Gillian what it has learned from the Thennanin Library and Creideiki's intuitions about Kithrup forming a legend that will outlive the present wars. In Chapter 84, Hikahi cares for Keepiru's wounds. In Chapter 85, Niss details how Karrank%'s patrons transform them into miners living directly off of radioactive materials. The metal-mounds are larval stages for the singing creatures underground. Gillian worries that if Charles uses even one bomb, it could harm the Karrank%. In Chapter 86, after Dennie and Sah'ot depart, Toshio disables the transmitter, breaks contact with Streaker, and dives to splice into the defunct robot line to enable Creideiki to talk to the voices. In Chapter 87, Gillian curses the broken connection, for Toshio has not counted the bombs. In Chapter 88, Toshio finds Tom's sled beached and its wiring tampered with. Charlie believes that Takkata-Jim and Metz are about to escape. Knowing that he risks missing Streaker's take-off, Toshio resolves to try to delay Takkata-Jim.

In Chapter 89, Niss tries to overcome Gillian's confusion about how legends—archetypal symbols—often precede cultural upheavals. Streaker's encounters are too unique not to become the stuff of song. Niss confirms that Creideiki has heard and believed this and is working to find allies. In Chapter 90, Creideiki requests in the language of the ancient gods an audience with Karrank% to talk about their common tormentors. His "apprenticeship in the Sea of Dreams" (pg. 327), enables him to

understand the combination of psi and static sound, but Karrank% rejects any involvement with enemies that want only Earthlings. Nukapai takes form to commiserate, but Creideiki does not understand why she urges him to use prescience. They need a big diversion to help Tom's plan succeed. In Chapter 91, Tom reaches the downed cruiser. He kills the two Gubru who have just reported finding no humans and only radioactive food, and learns from a third that Thennanin have survived. Tom kills it also. Knowing that Streaker cannot stop for him, he broadcasts using a Gubru radio.

Part 8, The Trojan Seahorse (Chapters 76-91) Analysis

Part 8 opens with Beie Chohooan, the one sympathetic Galactic, being killed. Elsewhere in space, the Thennanin leave the alliance with the Tandu, which is critical to the Trojan Seahorse plan succeeding. Toshio must get Dennie and Sah'ot back to Streaker before it moves and keep watch on Takkata-Jim. Little by little it becomes clear that Gillian has modified the longboat in ways that will be fatal if it departs too early. Dennie's findings about the Karrank% grow increasingly clear, and Charles' plans to detonate a small nuclear device deep in the crust could endanger the Karrank%. As communications between the island and the ship are cut, the situation is more tense than any of the characters knows. On top of it all, Dennie and Toshio fall in love.

Creideiki returns as a significant character, capable of communicating with the Karrank%, whose tragic history is finally detailed. Niss lectures Gillian on how the Karrank% being discovered by the youngest sentient species, alongside an utterly unknown pre-sentient species, is bound to become the stuff of legends. It confuses Gillian with reverential talk about how myth-building often facilitates the transformation of an historical epoch without contemporaries necessarily realizing that it is happening—and has happened. Niss is certain that Streaker's voyage will be such a pivotal event, putting the Uplift System on trial. This final statement is, unfortunately, left undeveloped.

Creideiki appeals to the Karrank% to help divert the common enemies from Streaker's departure (not in so many words), bending the truth a bit to show commonality. The unique species, which continues to moan in unbroken suffering millions of years after its taking over Kithrup, wants nothing to do with the universe and rejects any part in Creideiki's scheme. It states ambiguously that the aliens want only "you," which could mean Earthlings in general, the neo-dolphins in particular, or even Creideiki as an individual of particular talents. Throughout most of the novel, it has appeared that the aliens are after the dolphins more so than the humans, and possibly Herbie the mysterious cadaver. Nukapai reappears and urges Creideiki to use prescience. This is left an enigmatic statement, to be clarified in the final chapters.

In Chapter 91, Tom comes face-to-face with three Gubru fighters. This species is among humanity's worst enemies. They make clear that the search on Kithrup is specifically for humans. One Gubru delivers a long, pious sermon about how youngsters—including the entire human race—must learn from their elders in humility. From all indications, Tom is down to his last resources, exposed to radiation if he stays in his current shelter, and likely to be annihilated if he uses a Gubru radio to contact the ship. He would stand

a better chance of short-term survival if he were to use the psi-bomb, but he knows that Streaker cannot stop for him. He again figures that it is best to die with honor and uses the radio.

Part 9, Ascent (Chapters 92-105)

Part 9, Ascent (Chapters 92-105) Summary

Dennie and Sah'ot return to Streaker's old site to be sure that Hikahi sends the skiff for Toshio rather than Tom. Takkata-Jim is furious over Toshio's latest sabotage of the longboat and tells off Metz for arrogance and ignorance throughout the flight. Sreekah-pol cuts Metz down and the Stenos go on a killing spree. Dying, Metz tells Toshio the plan: to give the Galactics the location of the Derelict Fleet and the Kiqui as the price for freeing Streaker. Toshio rejoins Charles and says that they must stop Takkata-Jim, even if it means being stranded. Their self-sacrifice will make them legends on Earth. Charles confesses to planting a bomb, deep.

In Chapter 94, told that Streaker is ready to fly, Gillian studies a holo of the battlefield and makes contact with Hikahi and Creideiki. Hikahi cannot take command and tells Gillian not to delay because of her. In Chapter 95, Charles rescues the hostage Kiqui from the longboat while Toshio draws off the Stenos. In Chapter 96, Tom phrases his message carefully; in Chapter 97 Creideiki pleads with the stubborn Karrank%; in Chapter 98 Tom is amused, drawing the aliens away from Streaker's mission; and in Chapter 99 the alien fleets respond. Gillian wishes that Tom could have found a more elegant, less desperate approach. In Chapter 100, Toshio is cornered, but escapes when the island begins to shake and the voice booms in his head: leave them alone. Toshio curses as the gunboat leaves the planet. In Chapter 101, the fleets converging on Tom's signal are hit by a wave of psychic noise, a "mental scream of anger and rejection" (pg. 353) that overpowers shields and immobilizes crews.

Stunned worse than the others by the psi-wave, Gillian in Chapter 102 suspects an alien attack, but is told that it comes from the island where an antigravity craft has launched. A chain of crustquakes shows the Karrank%'s anger. The computer shows the fault moving towards Tom's island as a transmission in Anglic arrives. In Chapter 103, Tom speaks in code about seeing one Thennanin and hearing of others around. They should play their hunch. Choking up, he talks of getting the valuable data home, ends with a Trinary poem, and destroys the transmitter. He is ready for the Eatees to attack as the volcano bursts into fireworks. On the bridge, Gillian tears up but does not mourn, feeling that Tom is alive. She focuses on Takkata-Jim, who is headed toward the chaotic flotillas. When the cliff towering above Streaker shakes, Gillian orders emergency lift-off.

In Chapter 104, Krat's fearful crew has no answers for what is happening on the planet. Concluding that it is all diversion, she orders capture of the Earthling emissaries seeking surrender, before the Tandu notice them. Learning that the Thennanin are leaving the alliance again, Krat says good riddance. The Acceptor enjoys the excitement on Kithrup but cannot make sense of it, as the Tandu demand. Struck with a neural whip, the Acceptor ignores the pain. In Chapter 105, Dennie more than Sah'ot and Keepiru

suffers from the new psi-wave, but Creideiki seems to have expected it. They observe two launches, one small and one large.

Part 9, Ascent (Chapters 92-105) Analysis

Part 9 examines the outcome of Metz's finagling his "pet monsters" (pg. 338) onto the crew. He has worked them into a killing frenzy and Metz is the first victim on the island. They fan out to massacre the Kiqui and remaining Earthlings, but Toshio has warned everyone to flee or hide. He nearly becomes a victim but is saved by the planet's violent psi-eruption, around which most of Part 9 is organized. Before dying, Metz reveals Takkata-Jim's plan and confesses his guilt in creating the first homicidal dolphins, "Demenso cetus metzii"—"Metz's mad dolphins"—and sorrowfully invokes the image of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*: "it seems I am murdered by my own hubris" (pg. 340). The worst thing that Metz can say is that Takkata-Jim acts human.

The chapters race by staccato, shifting foci as time runs out on Charles' submerged a-bomb, whose effect has been hinted at but far exceeds anyone's expectations. The situation in space is precarious for an escape attempt without Tom's information. When Tom broadcasts using Gubru radio, all forces converge, but the voice of the planet erupts in massive protest against those who are bothering it. Whether the bomb sets it off or not is unclear. The psi-wave that it launches disrupts aliens and humans, but dolphins are spared. Creideiki looks as though he understands and approves it all. Takkata-Jim takes advantage of the situation to launch in the longboat, but heads into the midst of the chaos. Streaker also launches, stranding Toshio's party and Tom. Tom's final message to Gillian is poignant and her refusal to mourn points to a happy ending. Krat is determined to capture the fleeing Earthling emissaries before the Tandu can. This and scattered hints about the stability of the lifeboat indicate that Takkata-Jim's crew may not enjoy a fruitful voyage. Streaker's fate seems in only slightly less peril as the final part of the novel begins.



Part 10, Rapture (Chapters 106-125) and Epilog

Part 10, Rapture (Chapters 106-125) and Epilog Summary

Toshio swims to safety before the metal-mound and islands all around collapse and the sea bottom quakes. He wonders if one bomb could cause this. In Chapter 107, Takkata-Jim realizes that his radio is dead and the longboat requires the crew that he has left behind. Alien fleets converge on him, with Soro in the lead. In Chapter 108, Streaker hides in volcanic hot spots as Takkata-Jim causes a distraction as, in Chapter 109, the fire controls jam open and launch torpedoes at everyone—and draw return fire. Wailing, he makes wild evasive maneuvers before turning toward a second fleet, which he hopes will consider him an ally. In Chapter 110, having attracted attention of those hunting Tom, Gillian orders an escape and in Chapter 111, Tom mentally thanks Gillian for this.

In Chapter 112, Takkata-Jim somehow shuts down the weapon system—but flight controls also stop. Two alien fleets turn on him. In Chapter 113, Streaker roars out of the atmosphere at full power, chased by about 20 skirmishers. Gillian orders setting an ambush at a giant gas planet for the two leaders. In Chapter 114, Krat hears about an odd vessel leading a chase from Kithrup, smells a trick, but cannot give advantage to the Tandu. She orders a truce call. Buolt congratulates himself on withdrawing his forces and being in position to chase the Earth ship, while the Gubru detect the ruse of flying in a shell. In Chapter 115, Streaker does the non-obvious by pumping out water, launching a decoy probe, and accelerating hard to the side. Dying as they hit a wall of snowflakes, the perusers condemn this uncivilized trick. Massively lightened, Streaker performs a rapid 180° turn as Gillian considers ambushing others to gain Hikahi and Creideiki more time to rendezvous—and to get vengeance.

In Chapter 116, the Tandu and Soro join forces in all aspects of capturing the Earthlings and presenting their findings to the ancestors. In Chapter 117, Takkata-Jim, exhausted and unable to surrender to anyone, sees Streaker make her move, knows that he and his mission are finished, and is sad to die alone. In Chapter 118, Streaker knocks out two enemy and heads for Kithrup. In Chapter 119, a joint Tandu-Soro force moves toward the gas planet to capture the Earthlings and learn where the Progenitor Fleet is. In Chapter 120, as Streaker's port side missiles are knocked out, Gillian senses doom and wishes that she had executed Tom's plan better, but, suddenly, six Thennanin ships come in, blasting at the pursuers, who flee. Gillian orders everything shut down and smoke pumped out to appear disabled. In Chapter 121, Buolt believes that Krondorsfire is withdrawing and plunges on after Tandu/Soro force before it can capture the prize.

In Chapter 122, the Niss computer accepts congratulations on the swift Thennanin translation, observing that the Earthlings have amassed so much data on Uplift that they must be saved. Tsh't tells Gillian what she already knows: it is unsafe to return to



Kithrup or to remain in disguise. Gillian orders a course to the transfer point, where they will dump the Seahorse and flee. In Chapter 123, Krat ignores a lone crippled ship's departure as she chases the rest of the Thennanin squadron. She knows that the Earthlings on Kithrup are trapped. An aide dares tell Krat that Earthlings at the transfer point are taunting them. The Tandus begin pursuit, but Streaker is in a good position to escape.

In Chapter 124, Tom sits, contemplating starvation, watching the unused psi-bomb, and missing Gillian. In a trance, he pictures a wedge shape split apart like an egg and a caterpillar-like cylinder emerge. He hears from Gillian a trance-haiku in answer to one about which he has been thinking. The caterpillar vanishes into a no-place. Tom decides that he should survive. In Chapter 125, Hikahi believes that the skiff has supplies to reach only the second of five transfer points needed to near civilization. Few ships their size have accomplished this, but there is nothing lost in trying. Gillian's taunting has drawn the Galactics away from the planet, allowing Hikahi and the dolphins to find Toshio, a tribe of Kiqui, and Charles. Finally, they spot Tom, haggard, drying the meat of slain Gubru, Tandus, and Episiarch. Hikahi finds this a sign that they will reach home. The Epilog is a poem addressed to Creideiki, telling him to rest, listen, and learn as Startide rises and he faces much to do.

Part 10, Rapture (Chapters 106-125) and Epilog Analysis

Part 10 concludes the novel, to which an enigmatic five-line poem is added as Epilog. Takkata-Jim discovers that he cannot control the longboat or communicate with the aliens, but fights as long as he can until he is destroyed, lamenting that he dies alone. Coming from a cetacean, Takkata-Jim's reference to the "Nantucket sleighride" (pg. 377) is rather distasteful. This is 19th-century whaling jargon for the wild ride a harpooned victim gives to those in the whaleboat before it runs out of strength and is killed. It is also fanciful to imagine it would make an apt simile centuries later. At any rate, it buys time for Streaker, which does some fancy flying under Tsh't's expert command and following some of Gillian's intuitions. There are some wisecracks about women's driving that reach for humor but strike a sour and surely anachronistic note. The sharp maneuvering within the gravitational field of a gas giant like Jupiter seems unlikely, but allows for a neat ambush for the pursuing aliens, dumping all of the water except what is needed for those on the bridge. Ordering it, Gillian appears unusually coldblooded. At the same time, the neo-dolphins' atavism has receded.

On the other side of the war, Krat is the center of the surviving alien forces and forges an alliance with the Tandus. The latter's negotiator, a Stalker, finds negotiating with her so distasteful that it vows to chew off two legs; Krat in a later discussion wonders about this loss and makes up her mind, when the goal is achieved, to bite off not only the Stalker's head, but all of its head buds as well, ending its existence. A Trainer is made to behead itself for failure, showing the prevalence of this seppuku-like ritual. Krat wants to end the humiliating alliance and gain a few Earthlings to play with afterwards.

Buolt's six Thennanin ships arrive like the U.S. Cavalry, blasting away at those pursuing Krondorsfire, which Buolt believes is commanded by his old buddy. No one finds it odd that the derelict battleship limps off to safety. Fearsome Krat only realizes the trick when Gillian taunts her from the safety of the transfer point—and promptly sheds the outer hull and jumps to hyperspace. Krat demanding of her newest Librarian to know what the childish "Nyaahh nyaahh" (pg. 385) means is a delicious (but probably anachronistic) touch. For some reason, this critical maneuver is handled in the context of Tom's trance vision, just before he is picked up by the last Earthling vessel on Kithrup, the skiff. Its chances of reaching Earth appear tiny, but finding Tom (who will cut into their already inadequate provisions) creates optimism. In another delicious touch, Tom has prepared a variety of alien jerky, which is added to the stores. The narrator notes that it is an acquired taste.

From the Epilog, it appears that Creideiki remains on Kithrup. Keepiru and Sah'ot had gone into a kind of mystical ecstasy with him, but it appears that Kitheru is piloting the flight home. Having quoted two authentic haiku by the 18th-century master Yosa Buson, the book ends with Creideiki being told in verse to rest, listen, and learn as Startide rises and he has much for him to do. The orthography suggests that Kph-kree, the god of the Whale Dream, is the speaker.

Characters

Dr. Gillian (Jill) Baskin

A tall, stately, pretty, dark-blond woman in her early thirties, Gillian is both a physician and an agent of the Terragens Council, which in commissioning the mission of the exploration vessel *Streaker* issues to Gillian "secret orders" (pg. 228) to countermand, if necessary, neo-dolphin command. Gillian keeps a Journal, which is frequently quoted to bring the reader up to date on developments. This makes her an official source of information alongside the anonymous narrator.

Gillian's primary assignment is in the busy infirmary, but she spends whatever time she can studying a billion-year-old cadaver that Thomas (Tom) Orley rescues from the *Derelict Fleet* some time before the novel opens. Tom's powerful Niss computer finds nothing about such a creature—or about the *Derelict Fleet* itself or the water world on which they land for repairs after being chased by Galactic flotillas—in the onboard Library. Niss notices and comments upon apparent flirting between Gillian and Tom, her life-long friend and long-time lover. Nicknamed "Life-Cleaner" by neo-dolphin crew, Gillian is genetically-engineered for telepathy and is able to communicate long-distance with Tom, with most of the psychic power coming from her side. Thus, when Tom volunteers for a seemingly suicidal mission, Gillian senses that he is still alive and sticks with the plan that is unpopular with the rest of the officers.

Early on in the novel, Gillian wonders what politics have gained for Lt. Takkata-Jim the position of Vice-Captain, rather than that position going to her best neo-dolphin friend, Lt. Hikahi. When Capt. Creideiki is incapacitated under suspicious circumstances, implicating Takkata-Jim, Hikahi is on a mission away from the ship, forcing Gillian to take command to prevent chaos. She holds off invoking her "secret orders" as long as possible, because she wants to see the neo-dolphins prove themselves capable of commanding and running a ship on their own. In Hikahi's absence, Gillian makes the key decisions to go forward with Tom's "Trojan Seahorse" escape, modifies the longboat in which she knows that Takkata-Jim will seek to surrender to the Galactics, and executes a series of bold and even bloodthirsty maneuvers that bring *Streaker* safely away from the planet Kithrup to a staging point for the return to Earth. Gillian's taunting the Galactics at this point allows Hikahi to rescue fellow crew members left on Kithrup, including Tom, and offer hope that they too will return to Earth.

Thomas (Tom) Orley

A tall, dark-haired human, Tom is the Alien Technologies Consultant assigned to the exploration vessel *Streaker*. He helps Dr. Metz and Dr. Gillian Baskin in evaluating the dolphin crew on the species' first trial commanding and crewing a spacecraft. He is responsible for evaluating alien devices, particularly military ones, and represents the interests of the Terragens Council that commissions the voyage. When *Streaker* is



forced down on the water world Kithrup, Tom helps repair the stasis generator and spends whatever time he can spare with the Niss computer in the abandoned dry-wheel section of the ship. It is lent to him by a Tymbrimi spy prior to take-off to help evaluate the integrity of the onboard Library. Incidentally, many of the female neo-dolphins aboard have platonic crushes on Tom.

Tom's true love is Gillian. They have known from their teen years that they are intended for one another. Tom is "a product of wild genetic engineering" (pg. xii), which enables him to communicate telepathically with Gillian, with most of the power coming from Gillian's side. This psychic link become crucial when Tom accepts an almost-certainly suicidal mission to distract the Galactics from Streaker's escape, which he plans. Sensing that Tom is alive, Gillian sticks to the plan when others would give up.

Tom also works closely with Capt. Creideiki, who summons him to the bridge when Galactic forces assemble overhead and begin a massive battle. Tom is not surprised that five fleets have followed the Streaker to Kithrup. Early in the battle a Thennanin battleship, Krondorsfire, crashes near Streaker, and Tom leads a party to inspect the wreck, and develops a plan to ream it out and hide Streaker inside, forming a "Trojan Seahorse" to escape to space. Tom realizes from studying the wreck just how primitive humankind is vis-a-vis Galactics.

Tom next volunteers to fly away from the crash scene to deliver confusing messages to the warring forces overhead. The first is a psi-bomb that will alert the Thennanin to Krondorsfire's survival and plans to return to space. The plan calls for him then to wait to see which species respond, signal Streaker when it is safe to emerge from cover, and fly back to the island in time to be picked up. A thunderstorm destroys his glider and seemingly dooms him to be left behind. Tom suffers physically and mentally on this mission, which ends when he overhears aliens talking about the situation and uses their radio to tell Gillian to flee without thinking of coming for him.

Tom is resigned to dying on Kithrup, but not without a fight for survival. He dries the flesh of a number of aliens that he kills in battle and sees Gillian and Streaker make the Jump that will send them toward Earth. He is in a trance when a small skiff filled with survivors left behind finds him and his coming aboard gives them hope that they will once again see Earth.

Capt. Creideiki

The commander of the exploration vessel Streaker, Creideiki is a male neo-dolphin with impressive credentials as an engineer and sailor. On his desk he keeps a signed photograph of the officers of the legendary James Cook. Creideiki is also a collector of eclectic artwork and music from a dozen races, and an adept of Keeneenk, a combination of human-style logic with the heritage of the Whale Dream. He regularly makes the rounds of the ship, using Keeneenk to calm the neo-dolphins' hypochondria. An engineer by training, he is at heart a mystic poet.



Creideiki is also an insomniac and it is during a rest period that data arrive pointing to a battle beginning in space above the planet Kithrup, where Streaker is stranded, pending repairs. This leaves cool, sarcastic Vice-Capt. Takkata-Jim in command of the bridge at the crucial time. Creideiki fights insomnia largely by submerging himself in the ancient Whale Dream. As he chants Trinary songs, Creideiki senses the sleek, black dream goddess, Nukapai, approach through the bulkhead and echo his rigid compositions. This lulls him to sleep. Summoned hastily to the bridge. Creideiki asks that Thomas (Tom) Orley, the human with whom he most associates, join them. Creideiki reluctantly authorizes exploration of a downed alien spacecraft and a nearby island on which a pre-sentient species is found.

Creideiki has difficulties with Takkata-Jim and the Bosun K'tha-Jon, but downplays any threat to his authority. He begins considering making a change in the chain of command. Dealing with the boring scientists, Creideiki finds himself sexually aroused by Lt. Hikahi, his third in command. Creideiki cannot disregard the desires of Dr. Ignazio Metz, who will evaluate him at the end of the mission, and Metz has included in the crew a number of mutated neo-dolphins who under stress grow schizophrenic and side with the mutineers. Metz wants to negotiate with whichever species wins the religious war overhead, in order to get data on the neo-dolphin flight back to earth, but Creideiki knows that the mission has far broader objectives than this and considers Metz naïve.

During a rare outside inspection, Creideiki is electrocuted by a faulty buoy, is found shortly before his air runs out, is operated on twice, and long remains unconscious. Recovering, Creideiki recalls childhood, concludes that he is sick, and manages a cry of confusion that his caregivers hear. The goddess Nukepai takes shape beside him but then gives way to Kph-kree, a god who speaks to him in a language that he had not known he knows, telling him that his incomplete mind must be completed by passing through the belly of the Whale Dream. It will be hard but it is his duty, and he may die only after he has gone to the depths and seen the Truth. Creideiki experiences being swept downward in the slipstream of the great sperm whale, surrounded in an aura, in an open sea. The old gods are not ready to let him rescue his ship, but another, more powerful voice from nowhere summons him to follow a hard path, being newly sensitized with psi.

Creideiki finds that in working with Sah'ot he is able to communicate the contents of his brilliant mind in other ways. He hears about songs emanating from the depths of the planet and makes contact with the tormented Karrank%, who want only to be left alone on their planet. Creideiki believes that he has failed to convince Karrank% to help create the diversion that will let the Earthlings escape, but is gratified when Karrank% emits a massive psi-wave that achieves this purpose. Creideiki appears to remain on Kithrup to complete the work that Kph-kree has laid out for him.

Toshio Iwashika

A young, black-haired, male human midshipman serving aboard the exploration vessel Streaker, Toshio hales from the water world Calafia, where humans and neo-dolphins



live in harmony. Toshio is recruited to help with dolphins' artificial-hand/eye coordination. He receives a variety of nicknames throughout the novel, including "Little Hands," "Great Dreamer," "Ladder-Runner," "Sharp-eyes," and "Shark-biter." Toshio's best friend is Akki, a midshipfin. Toshio speaks the neo-dolphin language Trinary badly.

Toshio is sensitive of his age and his position and resents older First Pilot Keepiru's incessant teasing. He would rather endure it, however, than have Lt. Hikahi order Keepiru to leave him alone, and never verbalizes the smart retorts that he formulates. Above all, Toshio hates being stranded on the planet Kithrup and, without expressing it, fears that they will never leave.

When Toshio disobeys orders by collecting a leaf sample from a massive, aggressive seaweed, he is nearly drowned and eaten, but is saved by, of all people, Keepiru. Toshio saves some face by finding the missing Ssassia, for whom the crew is searching. He is grateful not to be reprimanded publicly for leaving formation. Keepiru, however, resumes taunting him. Before it can return to Streaker, the prospecting party is struck by a series of tsunamis. From his training on Calafian, Toshio knows the extreme danger of rescue fever, which strikes both Hikahi and Keepiru. Toshio races to the metal island where his comrades have beached themselves, timing it between aftershocks. First, he subdues Keepiru and assigns him to help with the risky rescue. Toshio is surprised to survive and become the first human to stand—and vomit—on the soil of Kithrup. This rescue finally bonds Toshio and Keepiru as friends.

Toshio, Dennie Sudman, and Sah'ot explore the island under Keepiru's command. Toshio is not sure if he trusts Sah'ot, who seems as dissembling as many humans. While not a prude, he also does not care for Sah'ot's sexual games with Dennie. As the mission advances to striking scientific finds, Toshio and Dennie become lovers. Toshio stays behind to keep an eye on the mutineer Takkata-Jim and his lethal followers and, when caught, is saved from death only when the island begins to shake and tilt. He swims to safety and is eventually picked up by Hikahi's skiff for a long-shot return to Earth.

Akki

A neo-dolphin midshipfin serving aboard the exploration vessel Streaker, Akki hails from the water world Calafia, where humans and neo-dolphins live together in harmony. He finds it hard to believe that neo-dolphins have such difficulty grasping past, present, and future. A small Tursiops variant with yellow-gray coloration, Akki is Midshipman Toshio Iwashika's best friend. He handles the radio when the great space battle breaks out overhead, while Toshio is fighting for his life with a tenacious seaweed.

When Capt. Creideiki is electrocuted and Takkata-Jon enforces a communications blackout, Akki risks AWOL charges to contact Dr. Gillian Baskin about abandoning her scientific mission and returning to assert her rights as an Uplift patron. Akki answers Gillian's questions about Creideiki's condition and the officers' inability to rally the crew—even as he senses that he is being hunted. Painting his pursuer with sonar, Akki



recognizes the savage Bosun K'tha-Jon and moves just in time to evade the first of many laser bolts. He swims evasively until he can go no further. Akki should be able to outrun the larger dolphin, but the water irritates his skin and he finds himself cut off from help. Akki is killed and partially devoured before Keepiru comes upon the gory scene and a new chase ensues.

Beie Chohooan

A veteran Synthian spy, Beie Chohooan hides in an extinct comet's tail and observes the fearful fighting above the planet Kithrup. She condemns the artless slaughter and constant betrayals among the combatants and her own people's timid caution in fighting alongside Earthlings. She is touched whenever her tiny, tarsier-like Wazoon clients sacrifice themselves to save her ship from destruction. She tells the survivors that it is proper to feel loss, to care, and to mourn.

Beie Chohooan remains on duty, trying to make contact with the humans and moving closer when Thomas Orley's psi-bomb detonates, drawing representatives of all of the combatants to the planetary surface. She is angry that her High Command has not provided her with a vehicle better able to avoid detection. She destroys five enemy missiles before being sent spinning and burning into the "dusty galactic dark" (pg. 302), mentally urging the wolfing humans to fight on.

Brookida

An elderly neo-dolphin metallurgist serving aboard the exploration vessel Streaker, Brookida first hears his colleagues succumb to rescue fever and alerts Toshio Iwashika to the danger of mass beaching. Brookida is drawn to the cries of rescue fever, but fights it. Toshio sends him back, wearing an uncomfortable breather, to the ship to summon help. Brookida later discovers references to the Karrank% species, for whom the planet Kithrup has been reserved for 400 million years without re-surveying and re-assignment. Brookida questions why metal-mounds form only in areas of volcanism and suggests that it is related to a life form's feeding. This is a major scientific discovery.

Emerson D'Anite

A stocky, black, male human engineer assigned to the exploration vessel Streaker, Emerson effects a Scottish accent, declaring that "all Scots are engineers and all engineers are Scots" (pg. 76). He mischievously makes it impossible for Dennie Sudman to back out of exploring the newly-found island alongside Sah'ot, a neo-dolphin who is anxious to seduce her.

Dr. Charles Dart

A male neo-chimpanzee planetologist assigned to the exploration vessel *Streaker*, Charles is self-conscious about innate behaviors—rolling gait, shrieking laughter, and laying his long arms atop his head—that his female human lab partner, Dennie Sudman, fails to notice. Charles still bears the psychological scars from his early career. He completes his graduate work on earthquakes in California, Chile, and Italy, does all of the correct things professionally, but attracts no graduate students to mentor. Charles believes that this is discrimination, which fits in with his studies on the history of human racism and tokenism. Charles admits that his personality turns off co-workers and even fellow chimpanzees, but he is not in a popularity contest. Even his attempts at gallantry usually turn into faux pas. People are no kinder to him than he is to them. Being assigned to *Streaker* puts him under Dr. Ignazio Metz's thumb, but Charles cozies up, when he makes monumental discoveries that will establish his reputation.

Charles' early work on Kitheru is hindered by Capt. Creideiki's concerns about security. Charles' request to conduct small-scale seismic explosions is denied, but Charles is single-minded about his work and uncovers evidence that Kithrup is inhabited by "technological sophonts" (pg. 88) within the last 30,000 years, rather than being fallow for 100 million as the Galactic Migration Institute and Library record. Charles considers the onboard Library a "pack of lies" and "friggin' morass of misinformation" (pg. 103), because it contains no reference to what he is observing in this cosmic whodunit. Lt. Hikahi, commander after Creideiki's accident, admires Charles' chutzpah. Charles hopes that Kitheru may be renamed for him.

At the end of the novel, Charles detonates a small atomic bomb at great depth, which apparently moves the Karrank% to give a massive psi-shout that disrupts all sentient minds to varying degrees and begins a series of cataclysmic events along a plate fault. Charles disappears and is assumed dead, but is later found clinging to a tree, which he finds embarrassingly stereotypical.

Haoke

A silent Tursiops neo-dolphin assigned to the exploration vessel *Streaker*, Haoke remains a Sub-Sec in the engine room, although his test scores indicate the intelligence to become a non-com or officer. Haoke goes patrolling with Moki out of a sense of duty, while Moki goes, hoping to have an opportunity to kill, envying Bosun K'tha-Jon for getting the assignment to hunt Midshipfin Akki. Moki sings in Primal to provoke Haoke, who is upset about Capt. Creideiki's condition but glad that wise Takkata-Jim will reject the hopeless Trojan Seahorse scheme. Haoke favors giving the Galactics whatever they want. Nothing is worth dying for. Haoke acknowledges orders to intercept a sled coming from the island and kill the intruder if an enemy or turn it back if a member of the crew. In a "confused but exalted state" (pg. 238), Moki kills Haoke and later reports that he is pursuing the purported intruder, upon whom he pins the blame.

Herbie

A billion-year-old humanoid mummy of unknown species, discovered by the exploration vessel Streaker aboard the Derelict Fleet, Herbie awaits thorough scientific study on Earth. He is temporarily the roommate of Dr. Gillian Baskin, who performs non-destructive tests. The mini-Library aboard Streaker contains no data on the fleet or a being of Herbie's description. He has the skeletal structure of a planet walker.

Heurkea-Pete

A Steno neo-dolphin assigned to the exploration vessel Streaker, Heurkea-Pete serves as communications and detection operator after Capt. Creideiki's accident, handling many a vital message. He is a rare Steno who does not join the mutiny led by Lt. Takkata-Jim.

Lt. Hikahi

A small, light-gray, female neo-dolphin officer, third in command of the exploration vessel Streaker, Hikahi is first seen leading a search expedition for vanadium, a rare metal needed for ship repairs. She switches the focus to search and rescue for Phip-pit and Ssassia, crewmen who go missing. Informed about the outbreak of war overhead and ordered back to the ship, Hikahi surprisingly slips into the Primal dialect, a sign of panic. As an adept, Hikahi might have used Keeneenk to calm the others when they panic in a tsunami, but she beaches herself and is badly injured. Worried when Hikahi does not reply to communications, Dr. Gillian Baskin wonders what politics have made Takkata-Jim Vice-Captain rather than Hikahi, her best neo-dolphin friend. Hikahi is battered but survives and with Toshio encounters a pre-sentient species, the Kiqui. Hikahi is concerned that all trace of Earth visitors be carefully removed, including bodies of dead dolphins and all debris. Hikahi recovers from her wounds and resumes her duties, inflaming the captain's passions by flirtatious swimming during a meeting and scanning him with radar for clear evidence of his desire.

After Creideiki's accident and Vice-Captain Takkata-Jim's aborted mutiny, Hikahi is next in line to command Streaker, but is busy supervising the preparation of a Thennanin battleship, Krondorsfire, crashed near Streaker, to serve as a shell within which the Earthlings can escape: a "Trojan Seahorse." In her stead Dr. Gillian Baskin holds command. Hikahi orders Gillian to leave without her if the opportunity arises. The data that they have collected is too vital to risk losing. Hikahi is left behind, but takes the skiff to collect fellow survivors and risk a flight in the cramped and under-provided vehicle back to Earth.

Keepiru

A neo-dolphin, native of the new and rustic planet Atlant, Keepiru serves as First Pilot of the exploration vessel Streaker. Nicknamed Wormhole-Pilot, Keepiru is gray with a phosphorescent sheen and needle-like teeth. His voice is like a bassoon. Young Midshipman Toshio Iwashika, whom Keepiru picks on constantly, considers him mean. Keepiru slurs his Anglic language, always sounding like he is giving raspberries. When Toshio is nearly drowned by an aggressive weed, Keepiru rescues him at risk to his own life, but afterwards resumes his taunts.

When Keepiru succumbs to the rescue fever that overcomes the neo-dolphins as they are tossed about in the tsunami caused by the crash of a star cruiser, Toshio evens the score, demeaning himself and hoping that Keepiru will respond to the instinct to protect human children. It works. Toshio's taunting him to snap him back to reality turns Keepiru briefly murderous, but he then begs to help rescue the others. This even bonds Keepiru and Toshio as friends.

After being treated for his wounds, Keepiru is assigned as military advisor to the biologists' study of the island. Toshio orders Keepiru to accompany Dennie Sudman and Sah'ot back to the ship as he remains to thwart mutineer Takkata-Jim's attempt to flee into space. Keepiru hears the sounds of savage K'tha-Jon hunting Akki, but comes upon them too late to save the Midshipfin. Keepiru denounces K'tha-Jon's reversion to a wild state and swims for his life in a marathon race. Exhausted, Keepiru recognizes the seaweed that had nearly claimed Toshio's life and watches it entangle and drown K'tha-Jon. At the end of the novel, Keepiru pilots the small skiff in which the few remaining survivors of the island depart for Earth on a journey unlikely to succeed.

K'tha-Jon

An enormous male Steno neo-dolphin assigned as bosun (petty officer) aboard the exploration vessel Streaker, K'tha-Jon leads the revolt against Capt. Creideiki and turns murderous. With a blunt mouth, sharp teeth, counter-shaded body, and bulging eyes, it is easily seen that he has secretly received genes from the *Orcinus orca* (killer whale) from Dr. Ignazio Metz. Hearing about mutinous talk by three Stenos neo-dolphins, K'tha-Jon confronts them and rebukes Moki for his temper and racist talk. This can only harm his and Takkata-Jim's case with the humans should they find it necessary to mutiny. When Akki breaks orders and leaves the ship, Takkata-Jim orders K'tha-Jon to find him and bring him back. Arming him with a laser rifle perhaps indicates a different goal. His first shots at Akki miss and a long chase begins. K'tha-Jon assumes the role of the species at the top of the food chain, demanding his right to kill. Keepiru, who remains loyal to the captain and his legal successors, comes upon the grisly scene as K'tha-Jon devours his prey. K'tha-Jon brags of being mind and blood an Orca and chases Keepiru nearly to exhaustion, but is captured by deadly seaweed and drowned.

Krat

The Galactic most featured in the novel, Krat is Grand Elder and commander of the Soro forces in the great battle over the planet Kithrup. She is a brown leathery autocrat who reclines on a broad, soft cushion of vletoor skin. She has hooded eyes, three scaly abdomens, the third distended by an enormous egg that battle hormones accelerate towards laying, and a vicious mating claw, which pulses when she grows angry and which she several times uses to dispatch those who displease her. When Krat lays her egg, she shifts her attention to it and thoughts of returning home and mating again.

When not feeling maternal, Krata hates all Earthlings as nuisances, the Kanten as sanctimonious, and the Tymbrimi as "devil-tricksters" (pg. 53). She has long wanted to blot humans out and to indenture the neo-dolphins as slaves, (illegally) alter them genetically, and pervert them. They are her prize. As a military leader, Krat diverts critical resources from preparing a battle against the Tandu/Thennani alliance near the gas-giant world and orders an investigation of every place that a warship has landed on Kitheru. This plays into the Earthlings' hands, as they ready a Trojan Seahorse escape. Krat shifts alliances frequently, but feels particularly humiliated to have to ally with the Tandu at the end of the novel. She does not see the Trojan Seahorse ploy unfold until it is too late. Admitting that it is a clever ruse, she is furious when the Earthlings mock her before disappearing safely down a transfer point.

Dr. Makanee

A small, female neo-dolphin, Makanee serves as ship's surgeon aboard the exploration vessel Streaker. She believes that a physician must be "part intellectual and part alchemist, part sleuth and part shaman," and that medical school does not prepare one also to be a soldier and politician (pg. 170). A fifth of the crew regularly shows up with psychosomatic complaints at every sick call. Dr. Gillian Baskin and autodocs help Makanee treat the survivors of the tsunami that strikes while they are prospecting outside the ship. Makanee operates twice on Capt. Creideiki after he is electrocuted, and she grows quite belligerent when she cannot talk to Gillian about Creideiki's continuing care because of a communications blackout. She agrees with Metz argument that Takkata-Jim must maintain a chain of command until the ship's council votes on a permanent appointment, but privately suspects foul play and conspiracy. She inspires Midshipfin Akki to contact Gillian, which leads to his murder.

Dr. Ignazio Metz

A condescending, white-haired, pot-bellied human specializing in dolphin Uplift, Metz is an observer assigned to the exploration vessel Streaker. On Earth before the flight, Metz leads efforts to incorporate *Stenos bredanensis* DNA in *Tursiops amicus* stock. He has a reputation for favoring *Stenos* dolphins and shows special interest in Vice-Capt. Takkata-Jim, a *Stenos* into whom he has secretly grafted genes from *Orcinus orca* (killer whale).



Metz warns Capt. Creideiki of the danger of fleeing the Galactics before Streaker makes its desperate dash and, pinned down on the planet Kithrup, advocates negotiating with the extraterrestrials—he forbids use of the offensive slang "Eatee" (pg. 19). He cannot understand how the rational inhabitants of the Galaxy can so enjoy fighting among themselves rather than sharing whatever they think that Thomas Orley and Gillian Baskin have picked up in the Shallow Cluster. Since Metz will evaluate him at the end of the mission, Creideiki must go along with him in many things and puts off confronting Metz about crew members' behavior. Creideiki considers Metz politically naïve.

Metz comes to believe that the captain suspects his special studies of neo-dolphins under stress. Soon after their meeting, Creideiki is electrocuted in what appears to be an accident and Metz supports Takkata-Jim's right to assume command. Gillian invokes "secret orders" (pg. 228) to countermand, if necessary, neo-dolphin command, and Metz joins Takkata-Jim in self-imposed exile on the island. Eventually, Metz comes to understand that Takkata-Jim has turned the Stenos unnaturally homicidal and becomes the first victim of a move to eliminate witnesses that might get back to Earth. Sreekah-pol cuts him down with a laser beam, but Metz clings briefly to life. Before dying, Metz confesses his guilt in creating "Demenso cetus metzii"—"Metz's mad dolphins"—and sorrowfully invokes the image of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein: "it seems I am murdered by my own hubris" (pg. 340). The worst thing that Metz can say is that Takkata-Jim acts human.

Moki, Steekah-pol, and Hakukka-jo

Three Stenos neo-dolphins, Moki, Steekah-pol, and Hakukka-jo are tired of Capt. Creideiki's inspections and pious quoting of Keeneenk teachings to inspire his fellow Tursiops. Hakukka-jo is concerned about crewfen overhearing them and fears that Dr. Metz and Takkata-Jim have spoken about them. The other two are unconcerned. With Tom Orley and Tsh't on a mission and Kitahi in sickbay, the time seems right to mutiny. Moki becomes a pod leader under the new regime and begins eying both male and female crew members as sexual conquests. Frustrated that Takkata-Jim sends K'tha-Jon rather than him after Akki, Moki accepts guard duty with Hakoe, hoping to have an opportunity to kill something. Moki is glad that Creideiki has gotten his just desserts by being electrocuted. Moki sings a number of savage verses in Primal Delphic to provoke Hakoe, but only succeeds in getting himself tongue-tied. Haoke acknowledges orders to intercept a sled coming from the island and kill the intruder if an enemy or turn it back if a member of the crew. In a "confused but exalted state" (pg., 238), Moki kills Haoke and later reports that he is pursuing the purported intruder, upon whom he pins the blame. Sreekah-pol later executes Metz at Takkata-Jim's unspoken order.

Nukapai and Kph-kree

The dream goddess of the cetaceans, Nukapai appears several times to Capt. Creideiki when he is under stress. She helps him overcome chronic insomnia at the start of the novel, echoing his Trinary poems about the Whale Dream and summons him to duty in



Primal; she alone may speak to him in this ancient form of language. Nukapai also introduces him to the more powerful goddess Kph-kree, who undertakes to educate him properly and orders him to perform an undisclosed mission on Kithrup after all non-native species have left.

Sah'ot

A Stenos neo-dolphin, Sah'ot is a civilian linguist/anthropologist assigned to the exploration vessel Streaker. He is "obviously a genetic experiment, in which the gene-crafters were pushing a set of traits toward a calculated optimum" (pg. 101). He hates the nubby "fin-gers" that have been implanted on his pectoral fins and are supposed eventually to evolve into hands. He also dislikes the shunting of some of his brain capacity from sound to human-like sight and analytical thought. Sah'ot is uncomfortable with devices other than computers that help him communicate with alien species.

Sah'ot regularly seeks opportunities to be alone in the water with the human Dr. Dennie Sudman, in order to seduce her. She avoids him whenever possible. Sah'ot has a musical voice. He wears a civilian harness much smaller and less complex than military versions. Capt. Creideiki is skeptical of Sah'ot's sudden request to visit the newly-found island. This, perhaps, is residual bad blood from when Sah'ot refuses to board a ship of the Derelict Fleet and thus avoids being killed like ten explorers. When Dennie objects to Sah'ot trying to take over what should be her project, the Captain makes them work together, under Keepiru's military command. Sah'ot foolishly gooses Dennie, is strongly rebuked, and apologizes, but his attitude remains, "Whatever was good enough for horny old Flipper was good enough for his brainy descendant" (pg. 139). He dislikes self-justifying like humans. He composes suggestive limericks to interpose in his report to Dennie.

Sah'ot recklessly enters the dangerous shaft that has just crushed a robotic probe, followed by Dennie. Toshio is not sure if he trusts Sah'ot, who seems dissembling like many humans. Sah'ot looks defiant when reprimanded by Keepiru, but performs the appropriate submissive behaviors. Sah'ot discretely observes the Kiqui at sea and picks up their language, which resembles Primal Dolphin in structure. The elders seem to accept him. Sah'ot's undergraduate work studying wild spinner porpoises hunting tuna prepares him to talk with Creideiki after his speech centers are disrupted by electric shock. Having never liked the captain, Sah'ot is reluctant, but challenged. He also wants to study the resonances coming from the planet's crust, but Gillian tells him to concentrate on security, the Kiqui, and Creideiki. She leaves it to him to decide whether he wants to rejoin Streaker if it tries to escape, or remain on the island with the longboat. Sah'ot leaves with the last skiff, whose chances of reaching Earth are poor.

Dennie Sudman

A female human exobiologist assigned to the exploration vessel Streaker, Dennie has almond eyes, high cheekbones, and a broad smile, but also has body-image issues.



Capt. Creideiki intimidates her. She no longer notices the behaviors that make her male neo-chimpanzee lab partner, Dr. Charles Dart, self-conscious. She joins the expedition to advance her career and escape a wrecked personal life. Trapped on Kithrup, she regrets it.

She agrees with Creideiki's caution about exploring the water planet Kitheru, which frustrates Charles, whom she enjoys teasing. She approves of the way Creideiki and the rest of the neo-dolphins are performing their jobs, but goes out of her way to avoid Sah'ot, who seeks opportunity to seduce her. Habitually indecisive, she refrains from asking advice on this subject from the overworked Thomas Orley, partly because she is embarrassed about the situation. Creideiki forces Dennie and Sah'ot to work together, with Keepiru as the military authority. She suggests that Charles Dart go instead of her, but Emerson D'Anite believes that her training is more important to staking a claim to the potential new clients of humanity. Toshio considers that Dennie might not be as mature as she has always seemed and disapproves of her subtle encouragement of Sah'ot's sexual games. Eventually Toshio and Dennie fall briefly in love but are parted in the final dramatic events surrounding the departure of Streaker and its longboat.

Hannes Suessi

A gaunt, balding human engineer assigned to the exploration vessel Streaker, Hannes is nicknamed Maker of Wonderful Toys. He warns young Toshio Iwashika not to try to look down on the largely-dolphin crew. He will be laughed to scorn and probably nipped at. The Protocols governing how Earth species are to behave apply only when Galactics are around. Hannes dislikes the ETs (whom he calls Eatees) and cannot imagine humans alone running Streaker.

Under Thomas Orley's command, Hannes takes part in the rescue party for survivors of the tsunami caused by the crash of an alien star cruiser and next joins Orley and Tsh't in evaluating potential uses of the wrecked and sunken Thennanin battle cruiser. A veteran of major engineering projects throughout the Galaxy, he finds refitting the alien ship his biggest challenge, including keeping the anxious-to-please neo-dolphins happy. They speak too rapidly for him and he is tired of living in the water. A bad poet, Hannes dislikes having to use the Trinary language, which is the only choice when forced to use breathers on the job. He finds it hard to transmit technical materials. Hannes accompanies the Library and other valuable items salvaged from the ship back to Streaker. He earns high marks for the skill with which he restores Streaker to flight status and conceals her inside the wrecked hull, making possible the Trojan Seahorse escape.

Lt. Takkata-Jim

An unusually large, thick-bodied, muscular Stenos neo-dolphin, with irregular gray coloring, a shrewd, sullen eye, and jagged teeth, Takkata-Jim serves as Vice-Captain and Executive Officer aboard the exploration vessel Streaker until he leads a mutiny



against Capt. Creideiki, whom he considers brilliant. Takkata-Jim is "coldly logical" and "primly correct" (pg. 50), able to speak the Anglic language almost exclusively, without falling back on Trinary, and seems "impervious to the Whale Dream." Since the debacle at the encounter with the Derelict Fleet, Takkata-Jim has been in charge of placing in new jobs those crewmen who revert to atavistic ways. Assisted by Bosun K'tha-Jon, he does a fine job, but his own attitude puts him at odds with the captain, and Creideiki begins thinking about replacing him as Executive Officer.

Takkata-Jim realizes that K'tha-Jon is subtly pushing his agenda and warns him to watch himself unless and until Creideiki proves incapable of saving the ship and crew. Takkata-Jim wonders whether the Bosun is serving him or vice versa. Takkata-Jim sides with Ignacio Metz, who calls for negotiating with the extraterrestrials. Takkata-Jim needs Metz as a patron to impress the neo-dolphin crew, but Metz cannot be manipulated. Takkata-Jim uses sarcasm widely and effectively and cannot abide wisecracks. On the bridge, Takkata-Jim is unfailingly polite.

Taking interim command after Creideiki's supposedly accidental electrocution, Takkata-Jim orders a communications blackout until a supposed psi leak can be pinpointed in the cabling to the wreck and the island. His arguments to calm Dr. Makanee are not sound but are confidently delivered, hoping to gain time for him and Metz, but she delivers sarcastic verses that almost make him attack her. When Akki breaks orders and leaves the ship, Takkata-Jim orders K'tha-Jon to catch him and bring him back. Moki had wanted to go out and kill him. This results in Akki's murder and eventually K'tha-Jon's drowning. Left without his right-hand man, Takkata-Jim retires to the island with Metz and three homicidal Stenos. One mortally shoots Metz without Takkata-Jim speaking the command, and Takkata-Jim lacks the courage to put Metz out of his misery. Metz curses him as being human-like

Determined to bargain with the Galactics for Kiqui hostages and the coordinates of the Derelict Fleet, Takkata-Jim launches aboard the longboat, which Gillian Orley has secretly modified. His communications, armaments, and navigation do not respond and Takkata-Jim finds himself pursued by two hostile flotillas. He laments having to die alone.

Lt. Tsh't

A female neo-dolphin, Tsh't is the exploration vessel Streaker's fourth officer. With Thomas Orley and Hannes Suessi she leads the mission to evaluate the uses of the crashed Thennanin star cruiser. When Tom develops a probably suicidal plan to attract the warring aliens' attention, Tsh't reluctantly accepts a key role assisting. She doubts that Capt. Creideiki will prevent the mission, as she believes in secret orders that put humans above the command structure. Tsh't supervises clearing out the great central cavity of the downed battleship. During the escape of the Trojan Seahorse, Tsh't's battle experience is recognized and she is put in practical charge of the bridge by acting captain Dr. Gillian Baskin. She flies brilliantly.

Wattaceti

A neo-dolphin engine room technician aboard the exploration vessel Streaker, Wattaceti attends Capt. Creideiki's sessions on Keeneenk in an effort to improve himself. After Creideiki's accident and Takkata-Jim's lock-down of the ship, Wattaceti often holds a key communications position.

Objects/Places

Kithrup

The setting for most of the novel, Kithrup is a volcanic, water-covered world orbiting the population-II dwarf star, Kthsemeneem. Its region of space is gravitationally shallow, resulting in it being rarely visited—so little, in fact, that the planet is last surveyed some 400 million years before, at which time it is designated by the Galactic Migration Institute as a peaceful place for the Karrank% species to die. It is then, apparently, forgotten. The ship's physician for the exploration vessel Streaker considers it barely habitable as the damaged ship seeks a place of refuge to repair damage.

The seas of Kithrup are rich in metals that are, without treatment, toxic to the neo-dolphins and humans aboard Streaker, but a possible source of the vanadium nickel needed for repairs. The water is crystal clear and marked by coral-like metal mounds rising above the surface. These are great spongy islands formed by coral-like creatures whose exoskeletons are metallo-organic. Drill-trees grow atop, sending down long metal-tipped roots to gather nutrients. Streaker's onboard Library offers no explanation. Dangle weed endangers the crew as it searches for vanadium.

The Galactics arrive swiftly but remain preoccupied fighting one another long enough for repairs to be made and an innovative escape plan formulated for Streaker: she is encased in the wreckage of a Thennanin battleship shot down early in the fray.

Scientists aboard Streaker discover and study a pre-sapient species, the Kiqui, representatives of which they want to return to Earth to claim as clients for Uplift, rather than let them fall into the hands of less scrupulous and merciful patrons. They also uncover evidence that the drill-trees are the larval stage of an amazing psionic species, the Karrank%, which at the end of the novel voices its annoyance at being disturbed by outsiders and demands to be left alone. In the end, the war that disturbs Kithrup moves away, and only Capt. Creideiki is left to talk to the voice in the language of the Whale Dream.

Streaker

A cylindrical exploration vessel commissioned by the Terragens Council, Streaker has a crew of 150 neo-dolphins, seven humans, and one neo-chimpanzee as it sets off from Neptune. Based on a Snarkhunter-class design, Streaker is simple and unique, catering to the needs of the neo-dolphin crew (see diagram facing pg. 1). It combines "ancient Galactic designs and indigenous Terran technologies" (pg. 66). Most of the vessel can be flooded with oxywater, but a "dry-wheel" of workrooms and cabins is maintained in pseudo-gravity for the few primates. While trapped on the water planet Kithrup, these sections are abandoned.



Just prior to the opening of the novel, Streaker happens upon a Derelict Fleet in the Shallow Cluster. It consists of some 50,000 spaceships, each the size of a small moon. There, a team sent out to investigate is destroyed, killing ten crew members. Streaker recovers an alien body and various artifacts and, when it reports this to Earth, is ordered into hiding. Streaker is ambushed at the Morgran transfer point and chased by various alien races seeking to learn where the Derelict Fleet is located. They pursue Streaker to the water planet Kithrup, where Streaker settles to the bottom to make repairs, and observes the alien armadas battling in space.

Dr. Gillian Baskin's Journal reveals that the crew is near-hysterical much of the time but is kept in line by Capt. Creideiki's lessons in Keeneenk logic. Search crews find no vanadium, needed for repairs, but when an enormous Thannanin warship crashes nearby, salvage work provides the needed parts, and the idea hatches to use the alien ship's thick hull as a "Trojan Seahorse" to cover Streaker's burst to freedom. Before this can be accomplished, Creideiki is electrocuted and a brief mutiny ensues, led by the racially-motivated Stenos hybrids. Gillian assumes temporary command and effects the escape. A few stragglers escape soon afterwards on a small skiff.

Abdicators

According to the ancient Galactic Library, Abdicators date from a violent time 600 million years ago and are one of three species connected with a war during the fabled Tarseuh episode in the 15th aeon. A group called the Lions then controls the Five Galaxies until the Tarseuh ally with six supposedly-extinct species to end the tyranny and reestablish the Institutes. The Abdicators believe that "certain ethereal races" (pg. 116) from time to time deign to take on the form of Uplifting species as "Great Ghosts" to be available in the event that special interventions are required. This conflicts with the more common belief in a departed Progenitor who promises some day to return.

Acceptor

A spider-like creature that is psychically adept, the Acceptor is used by its patron, the Tandu, as a living sensor to control the battle around the planet Kithrup, giving its patron the advantage of knowing the minds of all of their enemies and of their intended Earthling victims aboard the exploration vessel Streaker. After the Episiarch gets the Tandu impossibly through space to the planet Kithrup, they turn over battle command to the Acceptor, who rejoices that Earthlings are so inept at shielding psychic leaks. Conquering and eating them will be simple, once the other heretical species' fleets, also in pursuit, are destroyed. The excitement of studying the battle puts the Acceptor into an unbreakable orgasmic state.

Brothers of the Night

The Brothers of the Night are religious zealots first seen in the novel seizing a moon in the Kthesmenee system and beginning to build the ultimate Weapon that will enable



them to sweep aside all heretics and blasphemers and alone capture the Earthlings on Kithrup. The Weapon is based on an obscure reference in the Galactic Library. They are disappointed to learn that Soro has already perfected it and destroys their moon. The Fourth Brother of the Ebony Shadows, discoverer of the Weapon's secret, survives and leads other survivors into hiding.

Later in the novel, after Thomas Orley detonates a psi-bomb on Kithrup, the Brothers, like all other alien powers, send out an exploratory vessel. Only the Brother of the Twelve Shadows and Brother of the Dim Gloom survive the fray. Having slaughtered the Paha, they discuss forcing the "half-sentient Earthers" (pg. 314) to tell them where to find the ancient warlords. Although slaves to their military doctrine, the Brothers are mutable, having gill slits to live underwater and four tool hands. Tom ambushes and kills them, nonetheless. Other Brothers join the chase for Streaker as it escapes in its Trojan Seahorse disguise.

Calafia

A water-world that is inhabited by humans and neo-dolphins, Calafia provides, from its tiny academy, most of the crew members for the newly-built and commissioned exploratory vessel Streaker. At the time of this novel, peaceful Calafia is occupied by the savage Soro.

Derelict Fleet

Derelict Fleet designates a collection of ancient warships, some as large as small moons, that the exploration vessel Streaker happens upon in the Shallow Cluster, a "small gravitational tide pool" (pg. 12), some 50,000 parsecs off the Galactic plane. Informed of the discovery over an open line, the Terragens Council warns Streaker to hide and keep silence. This broadcast attracts the attention of all of the powers of the Five Galaxies, who begin warring with one another and pursuing Streaker, each wanting to learn the location and gain the few artifacts that have been recovered.

Episiarch

A shaggy, amorphous, four-legged creature, the Episiarch concedes nothing to Reality and is able to propel a Tandu fleet impossibly across the universe at unprecedented speed in search of the exploration vessel Streaker. Thus the Tandu armada pours out of a crack in space over Kithrup ahead of its enemies. The Episiarch is then locked away until its powers of denial are needed again. Later in the novel, when various aliens are searching for Thomas Orley, an Episiarch creates a temporary dry pathway over marshlands for the Tandu infantry to cross. Tom is awestruck to see the creature, but shoots at it nonetheless.



Gubru

An avian (bird-like) race, the Gubru are fiercely militaristic because they believe that this will speed up the return of the fabled Progenitors and the great apocalyptic moment for the entire Galaxy. The Gubru are particularly hostile to humans. During the final fight on the planet Kithrup, Thomas Orley overhears three Gubru discussing the situation, shoots two dead, and fights savagely hand-to-claw with the third. Thinking himself abandoned and destined to starve, Tom prepares Gubru jerky from the corpses.

Institute of Migration

The powerful Galactic bureaucracy that licenses planets to specific species for specific periods of time, the Institute of Migration rivals the Galactic Library for power and influence. All patron-lines obey its "codes of ecosphere management," because the alternative would be "galaxy-wide disaster" (pg. 104). Inexplicably, the Institute has not re-surveyed the planet Kithrup in over 400 million years.

Jophur

Jophur are a species that consists of a stack of waxy, living rings, each serving a particular purpose. The rings are bound by a sap-like substance flowing through the center and an oration-peak sits at the top of the pyramid. Ring discoloration indicates high emotion. The number of rings indicates rank. The Jophur have a powerful, fanatical priesthood opposed to alliances with heretics like the Thennanin and caring little about rituals of betrayal on which the military piously insist. When the high priest and chief of staff disagree over strategy, the latter blows off the former's oration ring, causing a bright, sticky mess on the bridge. A new priest is then ordered constructed to perform the rites. As Kithrup writhes with psi-waves at the end of the novel, a surviving Jophur expedition is buried in volcanic debris.

Karrank%

A sentient species for whom the planet Kithrup is reserved 400 million years prior in order that it might die in peace, the Karrank% are sophonts so savagely abused by their patrons that the Institute of Migration grants them the planet in partial recompense for their suffering. The species' name, ending in an extended glottal stop, causes humans to choke when attempting to pronounce it. In pre-sentient form, the Karrank% are like moles, living in a metal-rich world. Excellent diggers, they are forcibly transformed into miners and bred to live directly off of radioactive elements. Instead of dying out on Kithrup as expected, they adapt to a unique life-style: the metal-mounds are larval stages for the singing mature creatures underground.

Dr. Gillian Baskin worries when she hears that Dr. Charles Dart has kept a single low-yield atom bomb to test his theories about the planet's crust. The explosion could harm



the Karrank%. Capt. Creideiki, after suffering brain damage, is able to communicate with the Karrank% using language forms from the Whale Dream, but the Karrank% refuse to see Earthlings as fellow sufferers at the hands of tormenting aliens and demand to be alone. The explosion (and/or, perhaps, Creideiki's pleadings) brings forth a great psi-burst of indignation that incapacitates the various creatures on and above the planet. This provides a diversion that ultimately allows Streaker to escape.

Kiqui

Pre-sapient amphibious creatures native to the planet Kithrup, the Kiqui subsist as hunter-gatherers on a metal mound near where the exploration vessel Streaker puts down for repairs. They fish by night and forage for nuts and small animals by day, when deadly sea vines are active in the ocean. Kiqui have webbed hands, flippered feet, and a crest on their heads that collects oxygen from the water to supplement their air-sac. First Pilot Keepiru commands the exploration team that evaluates the Kiqui and other aspects of the island's ecology. Linguist Sah'ot discretely observes them at sea and picks up their language, which resembles Primal Delphin in structure. The scientists find that the Kiqui are candidates for Uplift and provisions are made to remove representatives to Earth to register the humans' right to Uplift them and prevent their falling into the hands of less merciful patrons. Dr. Ignacio Metz suggests that the Synthians might also be adequate patrons.

Keeneenk

A school of discipline practiced by neo-dolphins, Keeneenk combines human-style logic with the species' own heritage of the Whale Dream. Both Capt. Creideiki and Lt. Hikahi are Keeneenk adepts. Creideiki regularly makes the rounds of the ship, using Keeneenk to calm the neo-dolphins' hypochondria. Hikahi might have used Keeneenk to calm the neo-dolphins whom she leads in a prospecting expedition when they panic in a tsunami, but she also succumbs, beaches herself, and is badly injured. Creideiki regularly teaches the philosophy, collecting about thirty students. In one session, he challenges them to consider from the pre-sentient-dolphin and human perspectives, whether reflections on the surface of the ocean are reflections of light from above or of sounds from below. He makes it a homework assignment. A group of Stenos, leaning towards mutiny, look down on the participants.

Library of the Five Galaxies

An information storehouse that "holds Galactic society together" (pg. xii), the Library has been accumulating and cross-referencing data since the mythical time of the Progenitors. Its symbol is the rayed spiral glyph. The exploration vessel Streaker is sent out to verify whether there has been, as is suspected by humans and Tymbrimi, tampering and redacting of the data provided to them in local editions of the Library.

Little evidence is found until Streaker happens upon the Derelict Fleet. The fleet is too massive and too ancient to be overlooked without reason.

Delivery units of the Library are scaled to the community using it. Streaker's crew has but a micro edition. Dr. Charles Dart rails against the onboard Library as a "pack of lies" and "friggin' morass of misinformation" (pg. 103). Dr. Gillian Baskin takes it upon herself to study the "Sargasso file" (pg. 114) dealing with the Derelict Fleet. A Reference Librarian's voice apologizes for having little data in the equivalent of all the books published on Earth through the late 21st century. It cannot speculate on why a photograph of an ancient corpse, Herbie, recovered from the Fleet would have rallied all of the religious fanatics in the Galaxy to pursue Streaker. Translation of the Library from archaic Galactic 7 into colloquial Anglic over two centuries has been unsatisfactory. Dr. Gillian Baskin suspects that the data, not the language, are deficient.

Thomas Orley is anxious to gain access to the far larger mini edition aboard the alien battle cruiser Krondorsfire, which crashes near Streaker. It marks the first time in 200 years that an alien edition becomes available for human study intact; two others have been captured, but damaged. Libraries are always programmed to self-destruct. Tom comes to realize the limitations of blindly relying for aeons on the Library for all information rather than searching for answers as had happened in the days of the Progenitors, inventors of the Library. Niss, a computer given to Tom by a Tymbrimi spy, is constantly monitoring the onboard Library trying to prove that Galactics have "stacked the deck" (pg. 118) against younger sophont species and begins finding evidence in the alien edition.

Neo-Chimpanzees

Humanity's first clients in offering Uplift to sapience through genetic engineering, neo-chimps are followed a hundred years later by neo-dolphins, who appear to be far more numerous. Dr. Charles Dart, the only neo-chimp aboard the exploration vessel Streaker, demonstrates typical neo-chimp resentment of stereotyping for such pre-sapient behaviors as tree-climbing, scratching, and sudden fits of anger. He indicates that fellow neo-chimps are not fond of his difficult personality.

Neo-Dolphins

Humanity's second clients (after chimpanzees) in offering Uplift to sapience through genetic engineering, neo-dolphins have become within three centuries of Uplifting some of the best pilots in the Five Galaxies. In this novel they are being given their first chance to command and crew a starship, albeit under human observation and evaluation.

Long before they undergo Uplifting and learn to express their feelings, dolphin are smart-alecks, laughing at human antics. Nicknamed "fen" ("fin" is the singular), neo-dolphins are also frequently referred to by their Latin genus, Tursiops. Most are Tursiops truncatus (bottlenose dolphins) that have not received Steno bredanensis (rough-tooth



dolphin) gene grafts. Steno genes seem to improve "initiative and individual brilliance" (pg. 50), but also harshen temperaments. The new hybrids are Tursiops amicus (Friendly bottlenoses). Uplift remains ongoing, with Dr. Ignazio Metz a major researcher, implanting genes to obtain specific traits. One fin has received genes from the killer whale (*Orcinus orca*), with tragic consequences: the first recorded homicides by a cetacean.

Neo-dolphins are given to hypochondria. Fully a fifth of the Streaker crew shows up with psychosomatic complaints at every sick call. Older, less evolved neo-dolphins experience difficulty speaking human-like languages and tend when under stress to revert to the atavistic behaviors, including entering the primeval "Whale Dream" and suffering "rescue fever," which causes fatal beaching. Neo-dolphins appreciate that humans have not exercised their rights under Galactic law to keep them in servitude for 100,000 years. Neo-dolphins when working normally wear harnesses that provide robotic, human-like functions such as arms; breathing apparatus to minimize the need to surface; and supplementary gill-lungs to let them breath oxywater. There are experiments to help them evolve hands on their flippers.

Fen's blow holes are modified for human-like speech using three languages: Primal, Trinary and Anglic. Primal Dolphin is a "semi-language" (pg. xii) used on Earth by unmodified dolphins. Its use by neo-dolphins signifies trouble during "rescue fever," when dolphins rush to help beached comrades. This happens during the tsunami that follows the crash-landing of an alien warship. Anglic is a formal tongue, hard to understand for humans. Its use is an art for neo-dolphins. It links the neo-dolphin to humankind's cause-and-effect world, allowing them to analyze, to think in terms of past/present/future, to scheme, to use tools, and to fight wars. Trinary is used for relaxation, imagery, and personal matters. It is an expansion of Primal.

Niss Machine

A "pseudo-intelligent computer" (pg. xii), the Niss is lent to Thomas (Tom) Orley by a Tymbrimi spy before the exploration vessel Streaker begins its mission. Niss is kept a careful secret in a deserted section of the dry-wheel. It displays three-dimensional patterns, "like multicolored motes caught in a dust devil" (pg. 26) while conversing with Tom. Early in the novel, Tom is too busy to consult the Niss often. The machine is useful in part because it is so flexible and independent; this also gives it an irritating, manipulative nature. Tom assumes that the captain knows of the Niss but does not mention it. The machine claims that it is put aboard to bypass access programming in the onboard mini-Library and prove that its makers are not neutral. Niss notes humans' propensity for getting into trouble and learning from it but is surprised by the magnitude of the Streaker's calamities. Niss concludes that the Galactics believe that Streaker has found something of enormous archaeological and religious significance, worth fighting a massive battle over.



Pila

A mammalian species enjoying high positions in Galactic organizations, the Pila have Uplifted clients of their own. Some 200 years ago, the Pila are humiliated by humans in an affair that is difficult and expensive to cover up. The Pila are no longer indentured to the savage Soro race, but many serve in the Soro armada, including the tactician Cubber-cabub.

Progenitors

The mythical "first species" that achieves Uplift by itself, some two billion years in the past, the Progenitors master interstellar travel, establish Galactic culture, including the Library of the Five Galaxies, begin the chain of Uplift of various other species, and are looked to, mystically, to return at the end of the apocalyptic age. Many extraterrestrials, particularly the Tandu, zealously worship the Progenitors. The Progenitor myth conflicts with that of the Abdicators.

Soro

Among Earth's most powerful enemies, the Soro are reptile like egg-layers whose reproductive hormones often are intensified by warfare. Queen Krat is in this condition as she directs the wild battle over the planet Kithrup. The Soro are patrons to four species (the Gello, Forski, Paha, and Kisa) that figure in the novel. This means that the Soro are responsible for having Uplifted them to sapience via genetic modification and enjoy their service for 100,000 years. The Soro generally ally with the powerful Tandu, to the extent that any stable alliances are possible, but as the battle unfolds, they become enemies and then allies again.

Synthian Enclave

Allies of the beleaguered Earthlings and Tymbrimi, the Synthians cling naively to the hope that all combatants will obey the codes of the Institute for Civilized Warfare. Their veteran scout, Beie Chohooan, sees that the religious fanatics will never do this and condemns her overly-cautious people for waiting and waiting. One of the Synthians' client species, the pink-eyed, tarsier-like Wazoon, perform suicide missions to protect the spy ship and are ashamed to show their sorrow when one of their number perishes.

Tandu

Insect-like creatures, the Tandu are honor-bound to cut off legs or even heads in expiation for mistakes. Fortunately, they are able to regenerate the sacrificed parts. Tandu look down on all other species in the Five Galaxies, using some as slaves and considering all to be destined for elimination at the end of time. The Tandu worship the



ancient Progenitors and anticipate their return as an apocalyptic event, at which point the true believers (Inheritors) will reign over a purified Galaxy after the Tandu, as a corps of holy warriors, having eliminated all unworthy species. Carnivorous and sometimes cannibalistic, the Tandu are difficult clients of the Ngth6, but adept at Uplifting other species, including the Episiarch and Acceptor. Their excessive genetic manipulation of these species is under long-term investigation by the Galactic Institutes. The powerful Tandu generally ally with the Soro, to the extent that any stable alliances are possible, but as the battle unfolds, they become enemies and then allies again. The Tandu are tremendous risk-takers in battle, using their probability drive to jump through space, and occasionally being swept into other universes.

Terragens Council

The body that handles relations between the races of Earth (Terra) and the Galactics, the Terragens Council commissions the flight of the research vessel Streaker. Looking to the precedent of 19th-century Japan, the Council refuses to treat the Library as the exclusive source of knowledge. They fear settling into another paralyzing "Golden Age" mentality (pg. 86) such as Earthlings have often settled into and from which most species in the Galaxy currently suffer. Streaker's design is, thus, a combination of "ancient Galactic designs and indigenous Terran technologies" (pg. 66). When Streaker stumbles upon the Derelict Fleet and informs the Council, she is ordered silent and into hiding. This sets the Galactics scrambling to find her and learn where the Fleet lies.

Thennanin

A militant species terrified of "reality alteration" technology, the Thennanin lose Krondorsfire, a "behemoth" (pg. 81) star cruiser a half-kilometer long, early in the free-for-all battle over the water planet Kithrup, some 50 km. from where the damaged exploratory vessel Streaker sits, awaiting repairs. Despite hitting the water at Mach 5, denting two sub-surface metal islands, and plowing into the bottom precariously near a chasm, it remains in one piece, a testament to the strength that also makes them slow and unmaneuverable. Thomas Orley, Tsh't, and chief engineer Hannes Suessi survey the wreck, salvage usable parts and materials, and determine that the hull can be gutted and used as a "Trojan Seahorse" to effect the escape of the starship Streaker. Tests show that the ship is fabricated at least 30 million years ago. It is a masterpiece of refined Golden Age construction, striking Tom all at once as refined, simple, indulgent, ornate, functional, ostentatious, arrogant, and bizarre. Streaker is fitted inside the hulk.

Buolt of the Thennanin is afraid, being summoned to the Tandu flagship, but determined to look composed. He wishes that he could ally with the kinder Soro, strongest of the survivors, while the Thennanin are weakest of the major powers. Once the Tandu prevent a Soro victory, the Thennanin will switch sides yet again. Buolt pities the dolphins if the Tandu or Soro get hold of them. He intends not to let them hoard data. The Thennanin do change sides just before a psi-attack hits, bearing the psychic image of the lost ship Krondorsfire. Streaker convinces Buolt that she needs to retreat from the

battle, and her sister ships continue on. Other combatants believe the ruse and Streaker escapes, free of her alien outer casing, bound for Earth.

Tymbrimi

Humanity's greatest allies, the Tymbrimi are practical jokers. A Tymbrimi spy provides a Niss machine to Thomas (Tom) Orley to secret aboard the exploration vessel Streaker, to tap her micro-Library looking for proof of editorial tampering. The Tymbrimi look human but have feathery tendrils, sensory organs growing from their temples, that make them telepathic. When direct speech is impossible, they revert to using empathy glyphs.

Uplift

"The process by which older spacefaring races bring new species into Galactic culture, through breeding and genetic engineering. The resulting client species serves its patron for a period of indenture to pay for this favor" (pg. xiii).

Themes

Religion

Religion fills *Startide Rising* by David Brin explicitly and implicitly. Explicitly, war over the planet Kithrup is all the more savage because it is a holy war. All of the major powers in the Five Galaxies are determined to own whatever the exploratory vehicle *Streaker* has found and removed from the mysterious *Derelict Fleet*. To think, like Lt. Takkata-Jim and Dr. Metz, that the eventual victor will negotiate with and free them after getting whatever data and artifacts it wants is, in Capt. Creideiki's opinion fatally naïve, given the nature of the war. Various scenes among the Galactics makes clear that no mercy will be shown to the vanquished or to the Earthlings when they are captured.

The most widespread belief in the Galaxy is in the Progenitors, a mythical "first species" that achieves Uplift by itself, some two billion years in the past, master interstellar travel, establish Galactic culture, begin the chain of Uplift of various other species, and are looked to, mystically, to return at the end of the apocalyptic age. Many extraterrestrials, particularly the savage Tandu, zealously worship the Progenitors. This myth conflicts in details with that of the Abdicators. Studying this in the Library reminds Dr. Gillian Baskin of Earthly millennial dogmas that result in bloody wars and atrocities, as well as Hindu belief in avatars. She indicates an interest in following up but never does. Nothing else about human religion is mentioned. More piously, a dying Thennanin asks a human to recite the story about the Return and is kindly obliged and given water.

Cetaceans have a religious world view dating from long before contact with humans. The *Whale Dream* is built around the same concepts of parallel universes that enable Galactics to cheat the absolute speed of light. Creideiki, the most mystical of the neo-dolphins, sometimes wishes that he could go back to his species' old innocence. He communes with the dream goddess Nukapai to overcome insomnia and takes time out of his busy schedule to deliver morale-building lectures about Keeneenk to some 30 fen. One assignment is to consider how dolphins and humans think differently about the surface of the ocean and what reflections mean. His belief system tends toward the religious/philosophical as found in Asia, rather than to the dogmatic/theistic systems of the West.

That is not to say that there are not personal gods. When Creideiki has lost his speech centers and is recovering from surgery, Nukapai again takes shape beside him before giving way to Kph-kree. Seeing this god, he cries out in dread, knowing the previously unknown name and understanding the god's unknown language. Kph-kree calls Creideiki to a mission to complete his incomplete mind by entering the depths to see the Truth. The walls of the hospital tank vanish and Creideiki finds himself swept downward in the slipstream of the great sperm whale, surrounded in an aura, in an open sea. Simultaneously, he listens to his physicians talking about the ship's peril, helplessly, because the gods will not free him until a voice from nowhere summons him to ignore Kph-kree and follow the hard way. Creideiki sees that the gods are of a mixed nature.



Kph-kree's specter tells him that he will never sail on Streaker again and keeps watch on his efforts to help the ship escape the planet.

There is a fairly long discussion of the nature of how legends—archetypal symbols—often precede cultural upheavals and how Streaker's encounters are too unique not to become the stuff of song. Creideiki takes it upon himself to use the language of the ancient whale gods to plead with Karrank% for help against their common tormentors. His "apprenticeship in the Sea of Dreams" (pg. 327), enables him to understand the combination of psi and static sound. Karrank% seeks isolate as powerfully as many separatist sects and achieves it by giving off a psychic scream that drives everyone except Creideiki away. As the last Earthlings worry about being stranded, Toshio declares that, if this happens, their self-sacrifice will surely make them the stuff of legends on Earth.

Genetic Engineering

Uplift is defined in the "Glossary and Cast of Characters" as "the process by which older spacefaring races bring new species into Galactic culture, through breeding and genetic engineering. The resulting client species serves its patron for a period of indenture to pay for this favor" (pg. xiii). Genetic engineering is by far the faster means of achieving change. Dr. Ignazio Metz is in the forefront of research in the field and has without Capt. Creideiki's knowledge arranged for some of his experimental subjects to be included on the voyage of the experimental vessel Streaker, in order to study them under pressure. When the mission goes awry and psychological pressures build, hypochondria and atavism are widespread. Most neo-dolphins are genetically engineered *Tursiops truncatus* (bottlenose dolphins) that have not received *Steno bredanensis* (rough-tooth dolphin) gene grafts. Steno genes seem to improve "initiative and individual brilliance" (pg. 50), but also harshens their temperaments. Only Stenos join the mutiny, but not all Stenos join. The mutinous Bosun K'tha-Jon, recipient of Orca genes, boasts of these splices. He declares himself Metz's one real success: a member of the top of the food chain, a judge of the sea—an Orca by brain and blood. Keepiru, however, taunts him as a mutant, a failed experiment; his gene-plasm will be flushed down the sewer when Keepiru's report reaches Earth. On the brink of becoming the first victim of neo-dolphins, Metz likens himself to Victor Frankenstein, slain by his own monster. Homicide goes entirely against the species' nature.

This is the negative practical lesson of the novel about genetic engineering. It is nearly universal in the Streaker crew. On the positive side, the two lead humans, Thomas Orley and Gillian Baskin, are also both, in her words "a product of wild genetic engineering" (pg. xii), which enables them to communicate telepathically, to breathe oxywater when needed, and do various other things that help them interface with the neo-dolphins. There is one member of the neo-chimpanzee species, humanity's first Uplift clients; Dr. Charles Dart is an unsocial workaholic who deeply resents stereotyping and questions the wisdom of Uplifting dolphins.



Humans are the only species that claims to have evolved sentience without aid of a patron race. Some Galactics claim that this is impossible and all record of the patrons have been lost. Humans are looked down upon as barely sentient and scorned for not requiring of their clients long periods—on the order of 100,000 years—of indenture to repay the gift. Humans treat their clients almost as equals, as closely at least as they treat humans of other races equally. This is underscored when one of the Galactics declares that when she captures Streaker, she will enslave the dolphins and pervert them to her purposes. In Galactic history client races have united six times to rebel, twice successfully, only to become patrons as terrible as those overthrown. The worst case scenario involving genetic engineering involves the newly-rediscovered Karrank% of Kithrup, whose patrons transform them from burrowing creatures into miners living directly off of radioactive materials. This causes a major scandal and they are assigned the fallow planet on which to live out their agonizing lives.

Streakers' scientists also discover on Kithrup a pre-sentient aboriginal species, the Kiqui. There are indications that they, like humans, are bootstrapping their own Uplift. The humans are anxious to sign a treaty with them and send a delegation to Earth to establish Uplift rights. Humans assume that they will treat them better than by any other patron.

Warfare

Startide Rising by David Brin takes place under the cloud of Warfare. When the exploration vessel Streaker happens upon a Derelict Fleet that everyone in the Five Galaxies has apparently forgotten and reports the find to Earth, all of the militant races of the Five Galaxies converge to wrest the information from her. She is badly damaged as she flees and makes it to the isolated planet Kithrup. She puts down on the ocean bottom to make repairs. The risk-taking Tandu are first to arrive overhead, but are soon put upon by other ancient enemies, including the almost equally-brutal Soro. The skies over Kithrup light up with explosions and pseudo-nebulae are slow to dissipate. Streaker is fortunate that the massive Thennanin battleship Krondorsfire is shot down early in the fray and settles to the bottom, nearly intact but with no survivors, some 50 km. away. Parts are salvaged to make repairs and the hull is cleared in order to hide Streaker inside, as a space age Trojan Seahorse.

The warring Galactics are generally portrayed as a bloodthirsty lot, unconcerned by losses, constantly shifting in alliances as the tides of battle develop, scheming for the upper hand and philosophical when it fails. A veteran Synthian spy, Beie Chohooan, stands apart among the Galactics. Observing the fighting from a hiding place, she condemns the artless slaughter and constant betrayals among the combatants and her own people's timid caution in fighting alongside Earthlings. She is touched when one tiny wazoon client sacrifices itself to save her ship and tells the survivors to feel, care, and mourn. Warfare is, theoretically, governed by the codes of the Institute for Civilized Warfare, but the present conflict has all of the attributes of holy war, which is always the bloodiest and most desperate form. One human who regularly displays naïveté, Dr.

Ignazio Metz, cannot understand how rational inhabitants of the Galaxy can so enjoy warfare rather than sharing whatever they think that Streaker has salvaged.

Key to the success of the Trojan Seahorse escape is creating diversions. Thomas Orley accepts the suicidal mission of setting off a psi-bomb that will disorient all combatants and convince surviving Thennanin that their crashed ship has survived. Without their defense, the disguised Streaker would be shot down. The psi-bomb attracts platoons from each warring faction to the point of detonation, and Tom watches them destroy one another. He is surrounded by a circle of destruction. The final remnants fight hand-to-hand. Tom uses a Thennanin radio to confirm that it is safe for Streaker to lift off. That broadcast draws more attention.

Streaker lifts off after the mutineer Lt. Takkata-Jim steals a longboat and launches into space to negotiate with the combatants. He does not know that his communications, weapons, and steering systems have been tampered with. He careens about trying to look innocent and helpless, but is destroyed by two converging armies. Around the time that the longboat departs, the Karrank%, the voice of the planet, lets out a terrible psi-roar that disorients everyone and begins a series of tectonic changes. The surviving combatants find it expedient to chase Takkata-Jim. These diversions allow Streaker to make her break. She heads towards a giant gas planet where, unbeknownst to the crew, a titanic battle had been planned. Streaker destroys her pursuers by cool trickery and ambush in maneuvers that are described in minute detail before disappearing into a transfer point to head home to Earth. Amazingly, none of the combatants finds it odd that a battered warship leaves the fray and meanders to a point of safety.

Style

Point of View

Startide Rising by David Brin is, for the most part, told in the third person past tense by an omniscient and anonymous narrator. A few short chapters and parts of chapters are presented as Dr. Gillian Baskin's Journal. These tend to be summaries of recent events and are, of course, told in the first person. The narrator switches rapidly between scenes, particularly in the final chapters, creating a staccato effect, keeping the many strands moving forward in parallel. The narrator appears to be human, from a subtle prejudice for human ways and defensiveness when negative aspects of human history are brought up. He does not go all the way to adopting a defensive posture, however, because the neo-dolphins who make up the majority of the characters for the most part appreciate humankind's benign treatment. A few Stenos neo-dolphins, however, have been purposefully driven to unnatural homicide.

The narrator is definitely prejudiced against most of the sophont races of the Five Galaxies who are engaged in fighting over the Earthlings as a prize. Most of them overtly hate humankind and speak more condescendingly and hatefully about humans than is returned against them. The narrator happily portrays acts of brutality by aliens against other aliens and disparages almost all of alien culture. One Earthling character, however, insists that aliens (ETs: extraterrestrials) not be demeaned by calling them "Eatees," which suggests carnivorous frenzy.

Much of the book consists of dialog among the characters. This allows a variety of points of view to be expressed about the novel's primary conflict: whether to attempt an escape from the planet where they are temporarily stranded or to negotiate with whichever alien species emerges victorious in the war overhead. This conflict heats up to the point of attempted murder and mutiny. There are also squabbles between the cautious ship's captain and the scientific personnel who want to discover the unique planet's mysteries. In part this becomes a turf war tinged with racism. Finally, because Dr. Metz wants to study his neo-dolphin hybrids under pressure, many of the crewmen are unstable characters, which translates into griping.

Dialog is complicated by the fact that humans and neo-dolphins communicate in several different forms of language, one of which resembles the Japanese haiku form. This results in sometimes enigmatic word pictures that must be contemplated a while to find non-poetic meaning. The frustrations of using different forms of language are regularly emphasized.

Setting

Startide Rising by David Brin is set primarily on Kithrup, a volcanic, water-covered world orbiting the dwarf star, Kthsemeneem, in a rarely-visited portion of the Galaxy. It has not

been surveyed by the Galactic Migration Institute in some 400 million years. No details about the Karrank% species to which it is given as a place to die with dignity are preserved in the Library of the Five Galaxies. The exploration vessel Streaker puts down there after being damaged in space battles in order to make repairs. Streaker is forced to make an extended stay when the Galactic war follows her to Kithrup.

The seas of Kithrup are rich in metals that are toxic to neo-dolphins and humans, crystal clear, and marked by coral-like metal mounds rising above the surface. These are great spongy islands formed by coral-like creatures whose exoskeletons are metallo-organic. Drill-trees grow atop, sending down long metal-tipped roots to gather nutrients. Dangle weed growing around one island endangers the crew as it searches for vanadium and claims a few lives. Scientists aboard Streaker are anxious to study the unique world. They discover and study a pre-sapient species, the Kiqui, representatives of which they want to return to Earth to claim as clients for Uplift, rather than let them fall into the hands of less scrupulous and merciful patrons. They also uncover evidence that the drill-trees are the larval stage of an amazing psionic species, the Karrank%, which at the end of the novel voices its annoyance at being disturbed by outsiders and demands to be left alone.

On Kithrup, scenes are set aboard Streaker, on an island fairly nearby, which the scientists study intensively, at the sunken wreck of the massive Thennanin battleship, Krondorsfire, crashed some 50 km. from Streaker, and in the waters between these three points, as atavistic neo-dolphins prey on their shipmates. Thomas Orley flies a glider northward to a volcanic island and is stranded there by a freak storm. Representatives of the warring aliens land in his vicinity and fight it out to the death. He kills a few himself.

The novel in flashback refers to the accidental finding of a "Derelict Fleet," a collection of ancient warships, some as large as small moons, inside the Shallow Cluster, a "small gravitational tide pool" (pg. 12), some 50,000 parsecs off the Galactic plane. When Streaker informs the Terragens Council, the powers in the Five Galaxies are alerted and begin fighting over which will capture the secret of the coordinates. It also paints brief pictures of life on Earth, Calafia, and other Earth colonies.

Several chapters, inevitably titled "Galactics," depict a variety of ET life forms in their spaceships. These are varied and limited in scope. Only one species receives positive coverage, because it sides, however ineffectively, with humankind. The others are shown at their most savage, capricious, and fanatical.

Language and Meaning

As fellow science fiction author Edward Bryant points out in his Foreword, "But he does it so well..." David Brin is one of the few science fiction writers capable of handling both real science and style. Brin is, in *Startide Rising*, building an "Uplift" universe that over multiple novels shows how the Galaxy functions, inhabited by countless species dragging others up to sentience and warring among themselves. Humans—and their

clients, neo-chimpanzees and neo-dolphins—are at the bottom of the hierarchy and have many powerful enemies willing to wipe them out. This novel follows an exploratory vessel, *Streaker*, that happens upon a lost fleet of starships millennia old, and is forced to ditch on a water world in order to make repairs while a wild battle rages overhead in space.

These factors combine to give the novel a rich texture of language. The ship is primarily crewed by neo-dolphins that have been genetically engineered and equipped to speak with humans. They use three languages, depending on a number of factors, which are set off typographically to indicate which is in use. Two of the tongues are formulated like Japanese haiku.

Trinary verse is indicated by an asterisk (*) before each stanza and at the poem's end. The two parts of the couplet are divided by an em dash. In Capt. Creideiki's practice, they are rigid compositions tied to the Whale Dream. Primal verse is largely extinct; only the dream goddess Nukapai dares use it with Creideiki. When the neo-dolphins are tossed about in a deadly tsunami, they revert to Delphin Primal, a sign that they are about to beach themselves. It is indicated typographically by a pound sign (#) before each stanza and at the piece's end. Sah'ot observes the Kiqui, natives of Kithrup and picks up their language, which resembles Primal Delphin in structure. Kiqui is indicated typographically by a colon-question mark-colon (:?:) sequence.

Since the primary setting is a naval vessel, much of the language has the flavor of the sea, generally purged of obscenities. A few of the colorful euphemistic substitutions and general malapropisms are inoffensive. There is a good deal of naval jargon built in, some tactics, a lot of discussion of cetacean (whale, dolphin, and porpoise) behavior (with Flipper invoked for those who need a mental image to follow) in the wild and after genetic modification of the brain to make it more human-like. This, of course, involves the book in ethical debates.

The various alien races battling overhead each has its own voice and figures of speech. Each has its major physical and psychological characteristics sketched and its place in the over-all hierarchy of Galactic society sketched. At least ten versions of Galactic, the lingua franca of the future, are mentioned and one is quoted at some length without translation, allowing the reader to sleuth a bit. Space travel at sub-light speed is rather too brisk, but the alternative would be risking a Jump too close to planetary bodies or slowing the pace of the novel to a crawl. The mechanism of jumping is rather well explained and the risks involved not downplayed.

Structure

Startide Rising by David Brin consists of ten parts, further divided into 125 chapters, numbered consecutively throughout the novel. The major parts are numbered and titled and have one or more relevant epigrams. The numbered chapters identify in their titles the primary character(s) in focus. Many chapters are divided into multiple screens

suggesting simultaneous occurrences. Breaks are generally indicated by a large-font ellipsis. Both parts and chapters vary greatly in length.

Part 1, "Buoyancy," covers chapters 1-13. It establishes that the exploration vessel Streaker, commanded and crewed by neo-dolphins on the first test of their space-faring abilities, has been forced to land on the water world Kithrup to make emergency repairs. Almost immediately a massive battle breaks out overhead, pinning them perhaps forever. The ship carries a contingent of natural scientists who chafe at restrictions on exploring. The crash of an alien warship creates a tsunami that rattles the neo-dolphins' nerves but perhaps provides a means of escape for the ship.

Part 2, "Currents," covers chapters 14-27. It describes various relationships among characters, including love interests and a sinister experiment that could lead to mutiny. Tom Orley comes up with a plan to use the wrecked warship to escape, but his role in distracting the warring aliens may cost him his life. How they come to be pursued by religious fanatics is discussed as are the mysteries of why the Library has missing data and how certain features on Kithrup might be interpreted.

Brief Part 3, "Dissonance," covers chapters 28-34. It is rich in detail about the island aborigines and the pluses and minuses of Uplift. The action revolves around Tom's risky plan and Creideiki's electrocution, possibly an accident or the start of the brewing mutiny.

Part 4, "Leviathan," covers chapters 35-45. Crippled Creideiki sees a whale-appropriate epiphany, which prepares him to speak with the voice of the island at the novel's climax. The cream of the crew is on assignment outside the ship and those at the island gather a good deal of scientific information.

Part 5, "Concussion," covers chapters 46-63. Gillian reveals that she has secret orders to seize command if the neo-dolphin command experiment fails. As she takes decisive command, the rebels (and stowaway Charles) go into exile on the island. They will be left behind as the Trojan Seahorse ploy is attempted, but control the longboat, which is capable of limited space travel. The climax of Part 5 is Tom's detonation of the psi-bomb, whose dramatic effect among all the groups of characters is depicted.

Brief Part 6, "Scatter," covers chapters 64-72. It shows a shifting of personnel, with Creideiki coming back to the point of improving morale. Akki continues being chased by K'tha-Jon and Keepiru by Moki. Extremely brief Part 7, "The Food Chain," covers chapters 73-75. It combines a psychological analysis and breathtaking chase sequences. K'tha-Jon revels in his Orca nature, killing and devouring Akki, and then turning on Keepiru. Twice the primitive cetacean belief in a hierarchical food chain is mentioned.

Part 8, "The 'Trojan Seahorse,'" covers chapters 76-91. Changing alliances in space are set up, which in the end facilitate Streaker's escape through the Trojan Seahorse plan. Creideiki appeals to the Karrank% to help divert the common enemies, but the tormented species wants nothing to do with the universe.

Part 9, "Ascent," covers chapters 92-105. It shows Metz realizing the price of creating pet monsters when he becomes the dolphins' first human victim. The voice of the planet emits a massive psi-wave that disrupts aliens and humans, but spares dolphins. Takkata-Jim takes advantage of the distraction to launch the longboat and Streaker also launches, stranding Toshio's party and Tom.

Part 10, "Rapture," covers chapters 106-125. Takkata-Jim discovers that he cannot control the longboat or communicate with the aliens and dies alone. Encased in the Thennanin hull, Streaker, by some sharp maneuvering, ambushes pursuing aliens and heads for the safety of a transfer point for the trip home. The island survivors aboard the smaller skiff find Tom and also head home, with much less assurance that they will make it. An enigmatic five-line poem about Creideiki's new mission vis-a-vis Startide Rising forms the Epilog.

The book also includes a Foreword, "But he does it so well..." by Brin's fellow science fiction author, Edward Bryant; a very useful "Glossary and Cast of Characters," and a schematic drawing of the starship Streaker. A Prologue, "The Journal of Gillian Baskin," sets up briefly how Streaker comes to be marooned on the water planet Kithrup with an intergalactic war raging overhead. Finally, Brin offers a one-page Postscript, primarily about the neo-dolphins' language.

Quotes

"Brookida switched to Anglic. Though somewhat shrill and stuttered, it was better than Toshio's Trinary. Dolphins, after all, had been modified by generations of genetic engineering to take up human styles, not the other way around." Part 1, Buoyancy, Chapter 1, pgs. 7-8.

"Once upon a time the Tursiops, or bottlenose dolphin, had been about the least likely cetacean to beach himself. But genetic engineering had upset the balance somewhere. As the genes of other species were spliced onto the basic Tursiops model, a few things had been thrown out of kilter. For three generations human geneticists had been working on the problem. But for now the fins swam along a knife edge, where irrationality was a perpetual danger." Part 1, Buoyancy, Chapter 7, pgs. 39-40.

"That the ship was still in one piece was amazing. In its Mach five meeting with the ocean, it had caromed off at least two small sub-surface islands—leaving substantial dents in them—and plowed a deep gouge in the ocean floor before finally catching up against a furrow of pelagic mud, just before it would have smashed into a sheer scarp." Part 2, Currents, Chapter 17, pgs. 81-82.

"'Keeneenk is a study of relationships,' he told his audience. 'That part comes from our dolphin heritage. Keeneenk is also a study of strict comparisons. This second part we learn from our human patrons. Keeneenk is a synthesis of two world-views, much as we ourselves are.'" Part 2, Currents, Chapter 19, pg. 91.

"'Never have I seen such mindless slaughter! Have they no pride? No appreciation of the art of war?'

"Even as she watched, Beie saw the strongest of the alliances fall apart in a fiery betrayal, as one flank fell upon the other." Part 2, Currents, Chapter 24, pg. 119.

"In spite of the distance, Gillian caught a mixed flavor in the fleeting psychic glyph. It felt too human to have been only a fin, too cetacean to have been merely a man.

"Then it ceased. The psychic onslaught was over.

"She didn't know what to make of any of it. What use was psi, if its messages were too opaque to be deciphered? Her genetically enhanced intuition now seemed a cruel deception. Worse than useless." Part 4, Leviathan, Chapter 35, pgs. 160-161.

"It amounted to an informal coup. Officially, Takkata-Jim was acting on behalf of the unconscious Creideiki until a ship's council could be convened. But Streaker's water had the taste of a herd with a new dominant male. Those close to the old bull were on the out, and the cronies of the new swam in the vanguard." Part 4, Leviathan, Chapter 43, pg. 184.

"Sah'ot concentrated. It was like trying to follow all parts of a six-part fugue at the same time. The patterns interleaved with an incredible complexity.

"No wonder they had all thought it noise! Even he had barely caught on!



"His harness timer chimed again, but Sah'ot didn't notice. He was too busy listening to the planet sing to him." Part 5, Concussion, Chapter 46, pg. 205.

"The hairy creature was creating land—or at least a solidity—in a narrow causeway in front of the party! Just before and on both sides of the train, there was a faint shimmering where reality seemed to struggle against a noxious intrusion.

"An Episiarch! Momentarily Tom forgot his predicament, grateful for the rare sight." Part 6, Scatter, Chapters 68, pg. 270.

"Keepiru was hardly listening, uncomfortably aware of the vanishing distance between himself and the monster.

"'You arrogate t-too much. You have only a few gene splices from...'

"'I am ORCA!' K'tha-Jon screamed. The cry echoed like a high paen of bugles. 'The superficial body is nothing! It is the brain and blood that matter. Listen tom me, and dare deny what I am!'" Part 7, The Food Chain, Chapter 74, pgs. 288-289.

"'Dr. Baskin.' The machine tried again. 'Every epoch has its turning point. Sometimes it occurs on the battlefield. Sometimes it takes the form of a technological advance. On occasion, the pivotal event is philosophical and so obscure that the species in existence at the time are hardly aware that anything has changed before their world-view is turned topsy-turvy around them.'" Part 8, The Trojan Seahorse, Chapter 89, pg. 324.

"We can't outrun them, especially not while we're faking Thennanin engines or wearing this heavy Thennanin shell. But only a fool would try to take them on in a straight battle.

"A fighting fool like Tom, she thought ironically. Or Creideiki. If either of them were in command, I'd be preparing condolence wreaths for the Brothers of the Night now.

"'Gillian?' Tsh't asked nervously.

"Gillian shook herself. Now. Decide now!

"She looked at the approaching death machines.

"'Down their throats,' she said. 'Head towards Kithrup.'" Part 10, Rapture, Chapter 118, pg. 379.

Topics for Discussion

Why are human beings called (and call themselves) "wolfings" throughout the novel? How does this relate to the uniqueness of the human Uplifting experience?

How is racism depicted among the neo-dolphins and Charles Dart? What are the similarities and differences? How is the history of human racism brought in to provide perspective?

Dr. Ignazio Metz dies comparing himself to Victor Frankenstein. What are the bases for this dramatic declaration? What had he been trying to achieve and what actually does occur? How could he have defended his actions?

What is the Library of the Five Galaxies? What are its good and bad points?

What historical parallels are cited to it in the history of humankind and what others from contemporary culture might be added?

What are the key factors in having the Trojan Seahorse succeed? What might have made it fail? Briefly research the Greek legend and comment on how apt its use is in this situation.

How does the food chain operate among cetaceans? How do humans historically exploit this? How does K'tha-Jon apply its principles to himself?

How are the Karrank% victimized? Does Creideiki's pleading for help constitute additional victimization? What do you think causes the great outcry that changes the entire course of the war over Kithrup?