

GEOGRAPHY

Crux is a small planet about a quarter of the size of Earth. The surface of the planet is covered with water from a massive flood, while the interior of the planet is hollow with a burning core in the center. Many years ago, the ice caps melted and the inhabitants of Crux were forced to migrate from the surface to the interior by the flood. In the interior, water is scarce and there is a desert-like terrain. Because the core is at the center of the planet, Cruxians experience a perpetual high noon. There is a main river on the interior, the Stygia River. The Stygia used to flow freely, but when tectonic plates in Crux's crust shifted years ago they blocked off the river supply, making water inaccessible without advanced technology.

The core asserts the force of gravity on everything, and its pull is strong enough to hold objects and organisms down on the outside. The planet rotates at a very fast rate and the centripetal force created by this spin pulls things on the inside of the crust outwards. In the middle of the crust the two forces – gravity and centripetal – create a point of equilibrium where the two forces cancel each other out.

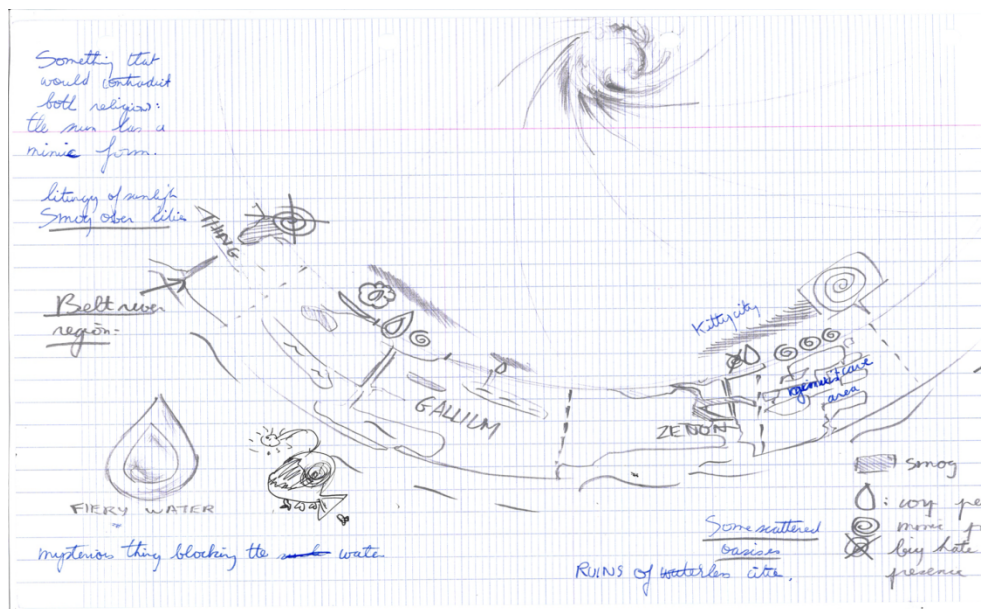


Figure 1 A Map Illustrating the Surface and Interior of Crux



Figure 2 Map of a Cruxian Landscape

FLORA AND FAUNA

Because the interior of Crux is a desert, the flora on the planet are all types of cacti. These cacti have gigantic flowers that provide shade and a large root system that can reach the water on the surface. They store water, but because the cacti are poisonous to Cruxians the water in them is unusable. In contrast to the Cruxians, the fauna on the planet can drink the water in cacti. Every animal has specialized teeth to help it bite through the cactus to reach water. Animals also have exoskeletons to help survive the desert climate.

Natural landscape
inside Crux



Scaled surface →

the roots will continue to grow
while the cacti with. Cacti can
multiply their size by 20



folded wings



Cactus seeds



rolls up with
its eyes tucked under
his belly

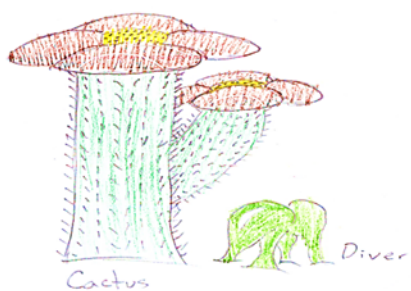
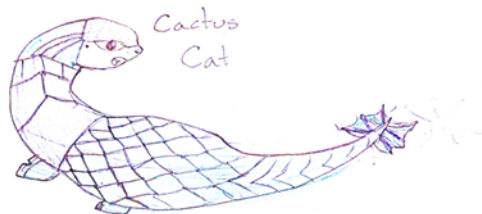


The most common
bug of Crux, it
feeds on the pollen in
the air. Its eyelids
can rotate on the ocular
globes, which are delicious to a lot of other species.



groves of cacti

minutely long
roots





neel. A small creature that lives from the top of the plant, not
spines or squashed.

CRUXIANS

Cruxians are similar to humans except they photosynthesize like almost all other organisms on Crux. Because there is perpetual light from the core of the planet, Cruxians regulate their days according to work shifts. A typical Cruxian's day consists of 12 hours of work, 8 hours of rest (in corelight so they can photosynthesize), and about 4 hours of recreational time. Cruxian families live in their own house. If a Cruxian is single, he or she shares a house with another single Cruxian who works the opposite shift. As a result, such housemates rarely, if at all, see each other.

MIMICS

When Cruxians started drilling for water 20 or so years ago, they hit pockets within the crust that housed a previously unknown species, called mimics, who then spread throughout the world. Mimics, unlike Cruxians, need neither water nor sunlight. They gain all their sustenance from darkness through a process called umbrasynthesis. Mimics have a two-stage life cycle that begins as a juvenile mimic, or mote, which is a speck that runs on instinct. Motes' lifespans are only days long, unless they are able to successfully undergo the following transition to adulthood: When any non-mimic creature (including Cruxians) dies of an event other than old age, all motes in the area instinctively swarm to the body.

Through cellular replication, the mimic takes the form of the deceased creature, inheriting its likeness, instincts, and remaining lifespan.

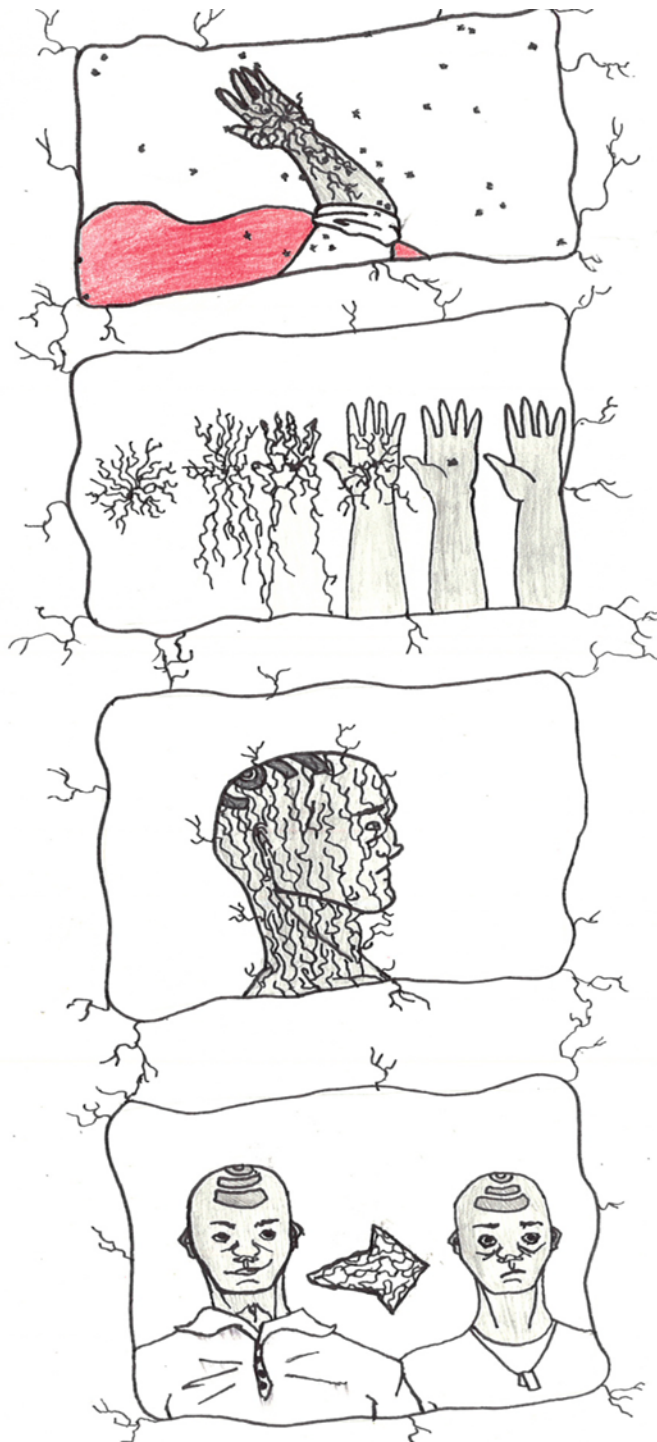


Figure 3 A Mimic Life Cycle: From Mote to adult Mimic

CORPORATIONS

While the world once had small regional but weak governments, the corporations now control every major part of Cruxian society making them the de facto government of Crux. In particular, corporations have a strong grip over the planet's water supply. There are five corporations in the world: Gallium Corporation, Xenon Industries, Niobium Inc., Ferrus Inc., and Censium Coalition. They all use corporate religion to keep workers motivated and compliant, and they pay their workers with a limited amount of global currency and water tickets, which can only buy water within each worker's own corporation. Each corporation has a distinct identity, which can be summarized as follows:

- ❖ Gallium Corporation uses drugs to keep people working. It is the largest company and has a generally anti-mimic attitude.
- ❖ Xenon Industries is the smallest corporation with long shifts and low pay. It emphasizes corporate religion.
- ❖ Niobium Inc. pays poorly but treats its workers well.
- ❖ Ferrus Inc. has high pay but makes people work hard. It is strongly anti-mimic.
- ❖ Censium Coalition pays well, allows religious freedom, and is pro mimic.



Figure 4 Corporate Logos

RELIGIONS

Religion plays a large role in Cruxian society. The oldest religion, Stygianism, dates back to when the Cruxians lived on the surface of the planet. Neo-Stygianism is a branch of that religion that capitalizes on anti-mimic sentiment. Genuism is a cult with the core belief that when a mimic replicates a Cruxian, the Cruxian is cleansed and reborn; however, this belief is really a lie perpetuated by the religion's leaders to allow them to kill humans to provide bodies for mimics. Corporatism is the corporate religion that preaches that a good, diligent worker will earn eternal relaxation in the afterlife and a lazy worker will have to work forever. Corporatism is used by the corporations to encourage their employees to work hard and long without many immediate rewards.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology on Crux relies primarily on corelight power. Cruxians have developed technology ranging from ground transportation vehicles to basic radio communication, utilized by the various corporations primarily for spreading propaganda. Cruxian vehicles include cars, trains, dune buggies, scooters, and airships, all corelight-powered. Water is transported between cities in armored, heavily guarded caravans. Living on the bottom of the planet's crust gives Cruxians easy access to all sorts of metals and minerals. The private security firms have flintlock pistols and rifles and corelight-focusing weaponry that concentrates the core's light into a ray of intense heat capable of inflicting burns.

CRUX TODAY

Today, only twenty years after the mimics' arrival, tensions between mimics, who have no control over their natural life-cycle, and Cruxians, who generally fear the "body-snatching mims," are palpable. A mimic is indistinguishable from a Cruxian by looks alone, therefore paranoia runs rampant. If someone is accused of being a mimic, he or she might be locked in a dark space for three days without water. If the being survives, it's a mimic. If it dies, it was innocent of the accusation of being a mimic!

The social and moral climate of the entire planet has been irrevocably changed by the arrival of the mimics. Most mimics simply wish to integrate into Cruxian society. Some attempt to resume the life of the Cruxian that owned their image previously. Some are forced to do so simply by circumstance. But what few seem to have realize is that, because they don't need water, mimics are not nearly as reliant on the corporate superpowers as Cruxians are. This gives the mimics an economic advantage that could cause a complete power shift if wielded intelligently.



Figure 5 A Cruxian City