

for EABA™

Time Lords

begin the adventure into forever.

 **BTRC**

greg porter

WHERE DO I FIND IT?

INTRODUCTION

PROLOGUE.....	1.1
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE	1.2
EPILOGUE	1.12

ADVENTURERS

RECOLLECTIONS	2.1
BASICS	2.2
PRIMARY GAME.....	2.2
SECONDARY GAME	2.7
TERTIARY GAME	2.8
TRAITS	2.8
NEW TRAITS & SKILLS	2.10

TEMPORAL MECH.

RECOLLECTIONS	3.1
BASICS	3.2
LIFE, THE UNIVERSE, AND EVERYTHING	3.2
Phantom timelines.....	3.4
Chronon side effects	3.6
USING CHRONONS.....	3.7
PARADOXES	3.9
Altering history	3.11
I want a T.Rex!	3.11
The Blindsided Designers	3.12

THE MATRIX

VIGNETTE	4.1
BASICS	4.2
WHAT DOES A MATRIX DO?	4.2
ALTERING HISTORY	4.8
CATAclysms	4.11
MATRIX TRICKS.....	4.13
OTHER DESIGNER TECH	4.16

THE TIMELORDS

VIGNETTE	5.1
BASICS	5.2
THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS.....	5.3
Bit players.....	5.15
WHERE IN HELL ARE THEY?.....	5.16

ORGANIZATIONS

VIGNETTE	6.1
BASICS	6.2
THE GUARDIANS	6.2
The Good Guardians	6.4
The Bad Guardians	6.10
THE SHAPERS	6.11
THE WATCHERS	6.13
DOMINO SOCIETY	6.14
SAMPLE AGENTS	6.20

VIGNETTE	7.1
BASICS	7.2
STARTING THE PRIMARY GAME.....	7.3
STARTING THE SECONDARY GAME.....	7.5
In a nutshell.....	7.6
Playing the original TimeLords ...	7.7
CAMPAIGN TOOLS AND TIPS.....	7.7
Matrix experience	7.7
RANDOM WORLDS	7.8
OTHER WORLDS	7.13
HISTORY AS WE KNOW IT	7.14
The GM and the Historian	7.21
The Burdens of a Time Patrol....	7.21
HISTORY AS IT MIGHT BE.....	7.23
SHORT ADVENTURES	7.29
Survival of the Fittest	7.29
Battle of Tours	7.33
Shore Leave.....	7.42
Shakedown.....	7.45
Downtiming Base	7.49

VIGNETTE	8.1
BIBLIOGRAPHY	8.2
WEAPON & GEAR NOTES	8.3
How much does it weigh?	8.4
What is a quarter worth?.....	8.4
How do I spend it?	8.5
RANGED WEAPONS	8.6
MELEE WEAPONS	8.9
PERSONAL ARMOR	8.9
OTHER STUFF	8.10
INCIDENTAL COVER.....	8.11
ADVENTURER SHEET	8.12
INDEX	8.14
OPEN SUPPLEMENT LICENSE.....	8.15

▼ **WHAT IS THIS? - TimeLords** is a reissuing of **BTRC**'s role-playing game of the same title, with new background material and converted over to **EABA**, **BTRC**'s online role-playing system.

TimeLords is a game of time and dimension travel, eon-spanning adventures powered by an alien artifact whose potential is limited only by your ability to comprehend its workings. With it, you can go not only forwards and backwards in time, but sideways as well, because an alternate universe is often just a timeline where things happened differently than they did in the "real" world...

Game history - TimeLords has been plugging along for over fifteen years now, **BTRC**'s first role-playing title and one of the first time travel role-playing games. It went through a couple editions and half a dozen supplements, and then sort of fell by the wayside as we worked on newer systems. But, it has not been dormant, just working behind the scenes. Long-time player Eric Baker has become a successful SF author, and has published work based on the **TimeLords** universe. I have also stepped into the fiction field and at this time I'm (still) trying to get **Eternity's Shadow** accepted for publication. This is a novel based around the background of the game, the original acquisition of time travel by humanity and how it shaped history as we know it. Changes to the original **TimeLords** background are largely due to this work, and excerpts are sprinkled throughout.

TimeLords includes all the background material you need to run a time or dimension hopping campaign of *any* type, with plenty of technobabble and campaigning tips to get you through the exceedingly strange and complex nature of the universe in general.

For those just getting started, you'll want a copy of the **EABA** rules to generate your adventurers. We suppose you could use any other rpg system with the **TimeLords** background, but why? Aside from that, everything you need for a universe of adventure is currently in your hands.

Good luck...you're going to need it!


Greg Porter

Prologue

Time: 2389CE

Location: Earth_{null}

Lucifer watched the sky fall and the world end. He had seen it more times than he cared to count, though the gleaming skull held loosely at his side would tell him the exact number if he cared to ask. He stood naked on the mountaintop, waiting and watching. The city, a smudge at the end of the valley, represented just another failure. It stood on a small mountain of its own ruins, two, three and even four story buildings of stone and brick inside its nested walls. Outside, its rocky flanks eventually gave way to treeless pasture and farmland, extending the length of the valley and on terraces halfway up the mountains. Roads paved with stone extended a little ways outside the city before reverting to crushed stone and then to dirt, snaking off in myriad directions. No machines of any kind could be seen, save for the occasional windmill or waterwheel. In a hand he held the only thing of consequence these people made, a knife of iron. *So little, but it is something.*

He shielded his eyes and looked towards the heavens. Above, unseen by day, were the sparks Far-walker called "sun-fire", not stars, but points of light made by unknown but thinking hands. Those hands were more primitive than the Destroyer, but far more advanced than mankind's. Lucifer had seen what was going to happen, if not on this exact world, on others like much it, but forced himself to watch. *Maybe it will be different this time.*

"It begins, old friend." The skull's voice came from no particular direction, and spoke in a language so old it had no name. "The sun-fire intensifies shortly before the hammers fall." A pause. "As always." Far-walker's voice conveyed a sense of regret, though Lucifer knew his teacher was largely incapable of emotion. Lucifer watched the skies intently, though Far-walker could and later would bring forth images far more accurate and detailed. The death of humanity was a morbid fascination to them both...and something more. *There.* A point of white against the daylight blue, then four heartbeats. *Point. Spot. Disk. Fireball.*

Impact.

The city vanished as the comet hit. The flash of heat hit Lucifer first, vaporizing snow and spalling the rocks around him. Razor-edged flakes bounced off his skin and whined disappointed into the distance. The radiant heat burned off his hair but only reddened his skin, and he bowed his head to even the destruction of his coarse black locks. When he looked back up, the pillar of fire and smoke had dimmed to bearable levels and was already pushing at the roof of the sky. Then the shockwaves hit, driving him back a step. First from the comet's passage through the atmosphere, then from the impact itself.

The cloud of debris and choking gas was more leisurely in its passage than the shockwaves, boiling from the impact site like Hell itself had opened. It would soon roar its way up the mountain to where they stood, and into the valleys beyond before it finally slowed in its destruction. Lucifer knew this future all too well. The same was happening elsewhere across the world. Cities died, their smoking pyres blotting out the sun. The next rains that fell would be cold, black and acidic enough to burn the skin. There would be no harvest, not this year or the next. The few survivors he found in the future were little more than animals, afraid to build, afraid of the open sky, inbred and sometimes lacking even language. The angry hands in the sky would continue to hurl rocks and ice, though not with such deadly aim or deliberate malice as this first time. In a few centuries, even the pitiable remnants of humanity would be gone. Lucifer wiped the dust from his eyes, leaving a moist smudge on one cheek. He looked into the empty eyesockets of the skull he held.

"We fail...again. Why do I keep trying?"

"Revenge," the skull quietly said.

"Revenge."

Lucifer stepped over the ridgeline, picked up a bundle of clothing, and jumped.

"Lucifer once told me that the thousand years after Thira were the hardest. While Far-walker held a treasure-trove of Designer knowledge, it was next to useless to him. There was no intermediate data between basic mathematics and advanced quantum mechanics. No blast furnaces, no steam engines, no understanding of magnetism or electricity. The Designers were so advanced that they didn't even bother with simple things like mundane metallurgy."

- from interview with Rachel Weaver, known as Uma, 2278CE, subjective year 443

TimeLords

Inventions, discoveries, wars. Kingdoms raised and kingdoms toppled. Assassinations and deaths in the still of the night. Individuals saved from death and billions condemned to it. All to drag humanity kicking and screaming into an era of advanced technology, to build for him what he needed to be built.

But who was he? How did he acquire the power to travel through time, and what gave him the will and ability to survive over ten thousand years in pursuit of a single goal? It's a long story, and it starts ten billion years from now...

▼ **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE** - *In the Beginning there was the End.* And at the End were the Designers. The race that created the Matrices and most of the other associated technology had another name for themselves, but those who sorted through the mess they left behind found it impossible to pronounce, so they were assigned a more convenient title. The Designers were apparently the very last species in our galaxy to develop intelligence, and they had the misfortune to come by it very late: By the time their ancestors first gazed up at their pale, red sun with curious eyes, the universe had become a dull place. The Milky Way galaxy, long ago stripped of rejuvenating gas clouds, had become a stellar boneyard, populated almost entirely by old red dwarfs and neutron stars, the dying embers of former glory. From their home planet, the night sky was an unbroken black.

When their scientists arrived at the laws of thermodynamics, the implications carried a special poignancy.

Their civilization survived for hundreds of thousands of years. As befitted their environment, they were a slow and careful lot, not given to sudden advancements in any field. Still, over the millennia, they gradually built up to a staggering level of scientific and technological achievement. They developed a workable hyperdrive, rearranged their solar system, and built planet-sized sensor arrays to listen for other civilizations, but found none. They explored the eons-empty ruins of the civilizations they called the Old Ones, races who would not even climb from the primordial ooze until long after Earth's sun was just a memory. Designer physics discovered the ultimate prize: The Grand Descriptive, a set of equations that seemed capable of describing the relative relationships of all that was.

▼ **BASICS** - *History is a fabrication.* Not a lie, but *fabricatus*, a made thing. Everything that is about the past and probably anything that will be in the future has happened or will happen because a time traveller interfered somehow. This is not to say that every single event in human history was directly shaped by time travel. *Just the important ones.* And when you make the big changes, the little changes follow.

History as you know it was shaped to reach a certain goal. Shaped by one man with the ability to travel through time, and the motivation to do something with that ability. He needed something, and needed a civilization to build it for him. But no such civilization existed. And when he traveled to the future, he found that the civilization he needed never would exist.

You must understand that without outside pressure, humans have no impetus to improve their lot. Ancient man used his intelligence the way a ram uses his horns, a way to compete for mating privileges. The strong, clever man became a leader of men, and then discouraged strength and cleverness in others, lest they challenge his position. Scientific progress was glacial, scientific method unknown. Our time traveller determined to change that, but he had no such knowledge of his own to give. So, he took the meager advances his distant descendants achieved in *their* future, and transplanted them to the past, using history as a machine to multiply the time he had available.

And it all seemed for naught, grand but pointless achievements that would ultimately be remembered by no one. Interstellar explorations had found only dead stars and frozen, lifeless planets. The great technological ears they had unfurled to the cosmos heard only the uniform drone of interstellar hydrogen, cold, thin and sterile. The universe was winding down, and they were to be the last spectators. The fabric of interstellar space had already unraveled in places, leaving a nothingness that was even less than vacuum. Their sun provided a last oasis, but it too was well past its prime. Their great machine intelligences could predict how long it would take them to exhaust all the readily available fusion fuels, and how long the following era of privation would last until their civilization sank into final oblivion. Their poets composed wistful prose about the shiny young universe they had missed, and horror stories about the inevitable victory of the encroaching night, and the icy grave of hope. But not all were hopeless. Many could not bring themselves to meekly accept the eventual triumph of entropy, and labored to somehow create a better future for their kind.

▼ **ABOUT THE DESIGNERS** - There is no one alive who has actually seen a Designer, so all that anyone has are Lucifer's recollections and data provided by Far-Walker. What we know is that they were carapaced creatures about a meter to a meter and a half long, and perhaps half a meter high, with a large number of pseudopods, some specialized for movement, others for manipulating objects. They lived in a cryogenic environment, comfortable with liquid methane and frozen ammonia seas. They had numerous eyes, sensitive to the far infrared, but other details of their biology are lost to us. The only thing that is known is that they were extremely efficient, and could use virtually every energy source in their resource-poor environment. Biomass, certain minerals, even thermal differentials between an upper surface warmed by their dim red sun and an underbelly cooled by the frozen ground, all powered the Designer metabolism. The destruction that brought about their extinction and the millenia of exposure since that time have taken care of any physical remains. Not even pictures or data records have been found, despite significant efforts on the part of several TimeLords.

The Door - The equations of the Grand Descriptive postulate the existence of numerous discontinuities, of several distinct types. Through the application of certain mathematical transformations, the Designers discovered that some of these could be made to do 'tricks', changing position within the Descriptive. At first, it was believed that these singularities and their 'travels' were useless abstractions, and some held that their very existence invalidated the Grand Descriptive completely. At length, however, the same math transforms proved critical in perfecting their hyperdrive theory, demonstrating conclusively that they *did* correspond to physical phenomena, and prompting new interest in their implications.

Eventually, using modified hyperdrives, the Designers were able to 'capture' a Descriptive discontinuity, and hold it, where it could be studied at leisure. The first attempt to manipulate the discontinuity was nearly the last. Feedback between the discontinuity and the containment field resulted in a local breach of the spacetime continuum. However, analysis of the resulting wreckage confirmed the hypothesis being tested: *the discontinuities could be used to manipulate time itself.*

And so they discovered the universe's last and greatest secret. The rest would be mere engineering. Their offspring would have a future...in the past. The Door was open. At the very end of Time, time travel had begun.

Much like the way human physicists vie for time on a particle accelerator, Designer researchers competed for opportunities to tweak the captive singularity in various ways, by gingerly modifying the parameters of the binding fields. And, just as it is with their human counterparts, there were soon many more researchers than time slots. So they conjured up another one. And another. And another.

Eventually, thousands of the discontinuities predicted by the Grand Descriptive (the exact number is lost to us) were under Designer control, on or around their homeworld.

It was found early during the course of experimentation that the discontinuities were the reason for time itself. Time was not a function of matter, but a property imposed upon matter from outside by the sparsely distributed discontinuities. Having a like "charge", they repelled each other, and were distributed more or less uniformly through space, more densely within gravity wells, less so between stars. Isolating one from the rest of the universe within a modified hyperdrive altered the fabric of spacetime for millions, sometimes billions of kilometers. The Designers wrecked countless solar systems collecting these discontinuities, but there was no one left to complain about it, and the Designers didn't care. *They weren't planning on staying.*

The Designers determined to use time travel to escape the frigid doom overhanging their race. Self-contained temporal manipulation devices were constructed. The term we have for them is Matrix, its exact derivation is unknown. Temporal scoutcraft were constructed, built around these first Matrices. The Designers were concerned about the potential consequences of certain paradoxes (more on this later). So, in keeping with their cautious nature, their 'flight tests' were all brief visits to distant places and remote times. Everything worked perfectly, and the scoutcraft were then dispatched to search for an era suitable for colonization. Not all of them came back. Even for the Designers, time travel had its risks.

Inter-temporal colonization required a compromise. They reasoned that, since they were going to all the trouble of moving their entire population in order to buy time for their civilization, they might as well go back as far as possible. On the other hand, if they went too far back, there would be less of the heavier elements (silicon, iron, etc.) around, and so fewer interesting planets. In the end, they chose a period roughly 15 billion years after the Big Bang. *Sound familiar?* If not, that's roughly the universal "summer" that we live in right now.

The Designers did not plan to make their escape in great fleets of time traveling space arks, or anything like that. What fleet could hold the populace of a crowded planet? Also, they would need a steady power source until they discovered suitable planets. They had a simple solution to both problems: Through the operation of thousands of stabilized discontinuities, and devices whose parameters we can only guess at, they would bring their entire solar system with them. This was not arrogance. It was merely a measure of their quiet confidence in their utter mastery of nature.

TimeLords

This confidence was apparently well deserved. As far as we know, the operation was accomplished without a hitch. The Designer's sun and homeworld phased into the Milky Way galaxy around 10,000BCE by human reckoning.

It was a time of great celebration, and great awe. Not from their own incredible feat of astro-engineering, doubtless the greatest ever achieved, but of the view. There were *stars!* Before they had known only the wide, red, familiar face of their sun by day, and stygian darkness by night. But now the night sky was a velvet curtain, alive with thousands upon thousands of brilliant, dancing points of light, an eruption of nocturnal brilliance unimaginable to any of their kind who had not seen it.

They looked upon their work, and saw that it was good. So they packed away the inter-temporal star moving gear, and settled down to methodically explore the young, vibrant, energy-rich universe which their awesome technology had placed at their disposal.

After a few short journeys into the now-recent past, the ruling entities of the Designers determined that any further time travel would be unnecessary, wasteful, possibly dangerous. So they ruled that henceforth the Matrices would only be used for space travel or other similar functions. They did not provide for any enforcement of this edict. They knew that enforcement was unnecessary. In fact, they made the ruling, as they made all their rulings, without fear of contradiction or argument. Millennia of living with the conformist mindset required for survival on their crowded, resource-poor world had long ago weeded out any trace of societal deviance from the race.

So, it was the sort of thing they were not at all prepared for...

A not so happy ending - Designer civilization flourished in its new environment. Some things changed, some things didn't. They remained frugal, industrious, responsible, and obedient. But the limitless horizons now before them had some effect. Slowly, little by little, they began to become less cautious. A new generation was born and matured, in a world of limitless energy and boundless possibilities, something their elders could never have imagined in their own desolate youth.

Long before their trip through time, the Designers had particularly excelled at cybiotics, the design of technology built by a biological host. This science fit in well with their frugal mentality, as the central philosophy was economy of effort: Why design a machine from scratch, when you can let nature do half the job for you? Living things, after all, are self-motivating, self-replicating, and self-repairing. By the time of their great temporal exodus, they had come to rely on cybiots a great deal. But the future of the science, like the future of the race, seemed in doubt, as, over the millennia, they had exhausted the potentialities of their planet's biosphere. Generations of researchers produced no improvements. The cybiots they had worked fine enough, but there seemed to be nothing left to do in the field.

After the Exodus, that view changed quickly. Their new galaxy was *crawling* with life. Exploration and colonization missions cataloged billions of new species, including a handful of tool users ranging from starfaring societies ("almost" intelligent) to extremely primitive (Stone Age humans). The possibilities were limitless! Cybiotics was reborn. Soon a flood of useful new critters, from the microscopic to the gargantuan, came pouring out of the labs.

Some centuries after the Exodus, the Designer subgrouping known as the Family of Reconstructive Evolutionists came up with a peculiar idea. It was not the sort of idea that members of their species usually entertained, for it was grandiose, and involved the expenditure of a great deal of effort to create something for which there was no demonstrated need. In earlier times, the concept would have been dismissed without a second thought. *But times had changed.*

Put simply, their plan was to use every trick of Designer science to create the ultimate being possible, a sort of demonstration model of their technology. It would not be just another god-like computer: They already had plenty of those. Instead, their creation would be a creature that would, at first glance, appear to be mere flesh and blood. It would be a being one could touch, embrace, shake appendages with, but it would be as brilliant, wise, potent, and indestructible as they could make, a supreme and enduring monument to their technology. It would be used as an emissary to the "lesser races", so that Designers did not have to trouble themselves dealing with what they considered sub-intelligent beings.

Their recipe went something like this: Start with a large tool user of modest brainpower. Discard and replace those simpler parts of the brain whose functions could be easily replaced by technology. Augment the higher centers with a fully interfaced computer, the biggest that would fit in the space available. Then rip out various organs, one by one, replacing each with much smaller micromachinery or custom-designed organs performing the same functions. Use the space saved to install nifty hardware. Armored skin, that could seal airtight against hostile environments, backed by thermal insulation and energy-absorbing pocket universes. Electromagnetic sensor arrays. A closed metabolic cycle, allowing near total self-sufficiency, at least when operating at low power. Organically replaced metal bones, to withstand high gravity. And while they were at it, an internal gravity drive. Perhaps a hyperdrive, laid along the spine...No! A Matrix! Right at the base of the skull, next to the FTL communicator...etc. The resulting construct would be able to toss aside pesky asteroids with induced gravity warps, beat mountains flat with internally mounted probability cannon, instantly access every computer on the homeworld, maintain simultaneous mental contact with thousands of Designers, and travel through interstellar space without recourse to any external device.

After considerable meditation on the subject, the ruling entities approved the project. Their predecessors would have been turning in their graves, but the ever-conserving Designers would have considered burial to be a waste.

We do know something about what the finished product looked like. The basic outline was nothing startling, being similar to the human pattern: It was a four limbed, upright biped. Its head, however, did not look remotely human. A narrow, toothy snout projected from the front of the enlarged brain case. From the end of the snout, where nostrils would be on a mammal, hung a short, flexible trunk, like a tapir's. Above the snout were two eyes, very wide, and pitch black. Loose flaps of skin, like the ears of some dog, hung on either side of the head. It was a large creature, standing over two meters tall. The closest human pronunciation of its species was the "Qual'n", and its primitive homeworld lay several thousand parsecs closer to the galactic core than Earth.



Somewhere in the creation process, an error was made. Some safety check was overlooked, or perhaps some shortcut was taken. Perhaps before the brain was reconnected to the sensory apparatus, it became aware, and spent too long in sensory deprivation. Or perhaps the brain they chose was defective to start with, in some way they overlooked. Xenopsychology was a relatively new field for them. Whatever the case, the finished product still lived up to all their stated expectations. It was brilliant. It was wise. It was patient. It was powerful.

TimeLords

It was also a murderous, xenophobic paranoid.

Psychologically speaking, the Designers were one big happy family. Peaceful and reasonable, they imagined that true intelligence and pacifism went hand in hand, and that only sub-intelligent primitives embraced violence. Their culture did not prepare them for a genius capable of genocide.

At first, though, all seemed well. Their creation concealed its madness, patiently making its plans, gathering or subverting Designer power sources and preparing itself, all the while appearing to be the gentle, enlightened demigod they wanted it to be. Only after all its systems were fully operational did it strike. Like most high-tech civilizations, the Designers relied heavily on their version of computers. Imagine the effect when, in one moment, every significant computer on their homeworld shut down. All backup systems failed simultaneously. The paralysis was total. Amid the chaos, the malignant angel they had brought forth struck again.

Within seconds, every Designer within a thousand kilometers died in agony.

Not Enough.

Rising swiftly into the atmosphere, he sensed, calculated, and chose.

Beneath him the planet twitched. The greatest architecture multernity ever knew crumbled to dust before a planet-wide seismic convulsion of a magnitude that any human geologist would declare impossible.

Still, Not Enough.

The bringer of the Apocalypse sped higher. Again he sensed, calculated, and chose.

Folding space around himself as protection from his own handiwork, he gathered his power for a supreme effort, and concentrated. It is not easy to destabilize a small red star. Indeed, it is very, very hard.

But it is *not* impossible.

Leaving a dead planet circling a dying star, The Great Destroyer set out to obliterate the colony worlds.

Vengeance is mine! - Shortly before their destruction, the Designers discovered humanity. Our species got relatively little attention. We were one of many tool-using species, and specimens were collected and stored in stasis as a matter of course. Sheer chance chose a handful of humans to be taken out of storage for behavior studies. A few were taken to a nearby asteroid for a series of experiments. This family of neolithic humans was placed in a simulated steppe environment and observed for some years. Not quite lab rats, not quite pets, the humans were aware of their limited environment, but powerless to do anything about it. Through the guidance of a limited AI based on a deconstructed tribal elder (an "ancestor spirit"), they learned and were taught, as well as could be expected for superstitious illiterates. To them, the Designers were not gods, but still held in awe and fear. Designer emotions and motivations were alien to the captives, and while the AI shaman had the best understanding of the Designer psyche, human language did not have the concepts necessary to express them to his companions.

As word spread of the creation of the Emissary, the Family of Designers studying the humans decided to modify the adult male, whose self-designation was Bright-spear, to test if this manipulation of lower life forms was an ultimately profitable exercise. The human was very lightly augmented, stronger, faster, tougher, but nothing so drastic as had been done to the Qual'n. To allow him to interface to their interstellar computer network, they used a surplus Matrix. It was available, and an efficient use of existing resources. An inhibiting system would prevent any other uses. Final tests were about to get underway when the renegade Qual'n, calling himself the Destroyer, arrived at the asteroid colony. No coherent warning had gone out during the homeworld's destruction, so the outpost was unprepared. There was nothing here that could stand in his way, and he knew it, so this time his method was more brazen, more leisurely, and more cruel. He planned to spend a few days killing off the hundred thousand or so inhabitants, a few at a time, by slowly burning out their brains, so that he might fully savor the slaughter. Using the Designers' distinctive mental signature to find his prey, he did not notice the humans.

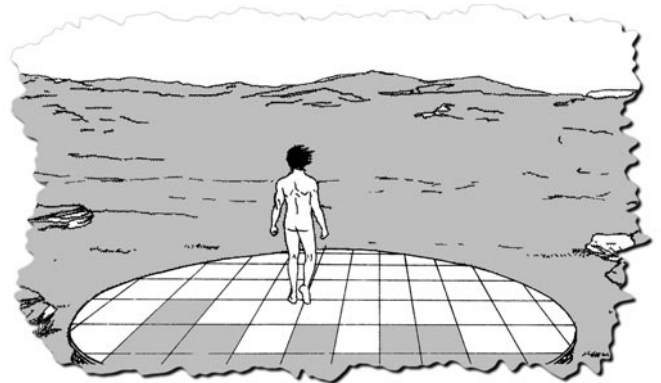
In an incredible display of hubris, The Destroyer announced his presence and intentions to every soul on the planet. He did this via broadcast over their network, the content of which was, more or less, "I'm going to kill you all, and there's nothing you can do about it". Then, an invisible rain of madness and destruction began to fall upon the colony, intensifying by the minute. Amid the shambles, trapped and forgotten inside the habitat dome, an altered human blindly ran towards his lifemate and infant son, only to see a rift in the habitat suck them into the vacuum of space. Seeing the hungry ground open up and swallow all he loved, his mind filled with thoughts of escape. As he too was sucked towards oblivion, a Designer tech's dying convulsions deactivated the inhibiting system on the Matrix in his brain.

The human's wishes were granted. He was gone.

The Destroyer sensed the Jump and recognized the phenomenon immediately, but had no means of determining its destination. Furious at the escape, he cut short the torment of his victims by vaporizing the colony site, and he then departed to search for other prey.

The human, meanwhile, suddenly found himself elsewhere. He did not know it yet, but he was also *elsewhen*. The experiment had been successful: The Matrix had sensed his distress, and taken him to more congenial surroundings.

This human was *not* a helpless castaway. He was stronger and tougher than any natural human could hope to be. And he carried the crystal skull that was the embodiment of the tribal shaman Far-walker. It was limited in scope and ability, and no longer had access to the vast Designer databases, but it still held secrets that would take millennia for humans to finally grasp.



Even so, what sort of life did Bright-spear have left? He was alone, bereft of family, filled with rage and grief, stranded in a place so far removed from his true home that his language had no words to express it.

There seemed no point in carrying on. At the brink of despair, he remembered something from his childhood. His tribe had been hunters. He knew from the elders' tales that, if a hunter was wise, clever, and brave, he might bring down the mightiest creatures in the world with nothing more than a stone-tipped spear.

At the brink of self-destruction, this idea saved him. It suggested a purpose, a reason to survive, a Cause. He should not die uselessly on this barren world. Somewhere out there lurked the thing that had destroyed everything he cared about. Whatever it was, it had to be destroyed. As far as he knew, there was no one left to do it. He would have to be the hero, the Champion of Goodness and Light, opposing what must surely be the embodiment of Darkness and Evil. He would repay his debts to his friends and family the only way now possible.

"I'm going to get that bastard!"

His ancestor spirit was only able with some difficulty to convince Bright-spear that the Destroyer was far too powerful to challenge, even with the strength of ten men and skin tough enough to turn the sharpest flint. Bright-spear had to find a way to make the tools to make the tools to make weapons capable of defeating the Destroyer. Far-walker did not tell Bright-spear how many thousands of years this would ultimately take. Bright-spear had the time. The Designers had taken away the death-of-winters from he and his family as a simple, routine procedure. He would never grow old so long as the Designer implants in him continued to function.

His thirst for vengeance gave Bright-spear the will to survive, and surviving, he learned. He learned to use his Matrix. Gradually, he learned to influence the destinations of his Jumps, and found that the path of days to come could branch like an endless river. He found that without goading, humanity would never develop the tools he needed. Worse, some side effect of temporal translation made moving advanced items from one time to another virtually impossible. He could move things from place to place, but not from time to time. Fuels and explosives ignited, electrical arcs corroded and pitted delicate machinery, unknown quantum effects ruined transistors and integrated circuits. It was not a deliberate limit built-in by the Designers. *Their* technology wasn't affected, and they just didn't care about anyone else's. He was unable to jump-start his own past with equipment from a possible future.

TimeLords

So he goaded humanity from the rear. From the development of metalworking to writing and mathematics, he Jumped across continents and centuries, finding advances, spreading ideas, pushing tribes, then nations into conflict to spur a need for research and better tools with which to do violence. Sometime during an extended sojourn among the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean, he took the name Lucifer.

At the same time, he also began creating allies. Some millennia after the fall of the Designers, Bright-spear made a tentative visit to a world that had been occupied by Designers, *and* was not instantly lethal to humans. There he uncovered dormant Matrices from the wreckage, and learned that his own Matrix obeyed him only because it considered him a subset of the Family that augmented him. Using this authority, he reactivated the Matrices he found. For anyone else to use them, the Matrix would have to recognize them as a subset of *his* Family, and by extension, of the Designer Family. He spread his seed across the centuries, and tracked his children down when they reached adulthood.

These became the first TimeLords. Some of them he had rescued from almost certain death, others were lured by the promise of adventure, wealth, power or immortality, while others were simply 'converts'. Now he had extra sets of hands to do what he called The Work. He scouted out useful futures from the many useless ones, ruthlessly culling and pruning dead-end possibilities, while his children steered the bulk of humanity's potential existence down the highest-tech roads they could find or make.