



# SCAR

ABOVE



**Scars Above** is a challenging sci-fi third-person action adventure shooter combining the rewarding feel of overcoming difficulty with a compelling and intricate story, set in a mysterious alien world to explore.

A colossal and enigmatic alien structure appears in Earth's orbit and stuns the entire world; humanity names it 'The Metahedron'. The Sentient Contact Assessment and Response team (**SCAR**) - consisting of scientists and engineers - is sent to investigate.

Things don't go as planned and the Metahedron hauls the team across space onto a mysterious extrasolar planet. Playing the role of **Dr Kate Ward** - a SCAR member - who wakes up dazed, alone in a strange, hostile environment. Determined to survive, you set out to find your crew and unravel the mystery behind what's happened.

In this first story teaser you will find a short story about the player character Kate. It tells you a part of the direct prequel to the game and introduces you to Kate's thoughts and feelings. You'll also see some concept art and graphics for the game.

If you're curious now, then go ahead and take a look here:

**Scars Above on Steam:** [https://store.steampowered.com/app/1196090/Scars\\_Above/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/1196090/Scars_Above/)

**Mad Head Games:** <https://www.madheadgames.com/>

**Prime Matter:** <https://primematter.gg/>

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**BILDNER**





**Name: Kate Ward**

Title: Doctor of Science

Age: 34

Qualifications: Ph.D. in Astrobiology and Astrophysics, Master of Science in Physics and Engineering

Fitness level: Athletic

Parents: Alex and Cara Ward

Height: 1.69m

Weight: 58kg

Blood type: O Negative

Nationality: Canadian

Born in: Halifax, Nova Scotia





What is destiny?

Destiny means something different for everyone. Not everyone finds theirs before they die.

And very few are lucky enough to fulfil their destiny.

What does it mean to me?

The television captures my gaze. Blake Capper stares earnestly at me from his Washington studio. “Breaking News”, claims a banner at the bottom of the screen, “Presumed Alien Flying Object Sighted.”

It’s like a headline you would find in a cheap science fiction film.

Instinctively, I squint at the wall calendar next to the fridge. The fourth of May. The whole world now knows. I myself have known the truth for months.

“A word of warning!” The seriousness in the newscaster’s voice makes the unbelievable real. “The images you are about to see may unsettle you.

They come from the telescope of an amateur astronomer in Houston. What they show call most of what we have known so far into question. About the universe. About science and technology. And about us.”

Nervously, I grab the couch cushion - clutching it like a stuffed animal. The image changes: The blackness of space, stars.

The image wobbles, thus revealing it has been taken on Earth, since the atmosphere’s fluctuations make it seem like the stars never stand still.

“So far, the sighting has not been confirmed. News Line is in touch with government officials and is trying to ...”

Capper’s report degenerates into back-

ground noise. Something starts shining in the centre of the image, bright like a star, but not shaped like one: a luminous triangle. For the observer, it is on top, but in space, there is no below and above. This is just the orientation the unknown amateur astronomer from Texas chose for his shot. Or the producers of the news channel.

A buzzing sound. I startle. The mobile phone on the coffee table lights up, the vibration makes the half-full coffee cup tremble. The display shows a caller ID: “Mike Yoshida.”

With the cushion clenched tightly to my stomach, I stretch, sweeping the open biology book I’ve just been reading off the table. The living room is untidy and the phone is just out of my reach. Twice it slips through my fingers before I manage to answer the call.

“Mike.” I turn on the speaker so I don’t have to press the device to my ear.

“Kate. News Line.” His voice quivers.

“I’m watching it!”

We follow the programme in silence.

Capper’s monologue and the banner on the TV reveal what is about to trend on Twitter and Mastodon, what they will be talking about tomorrow at every office water cooler and in every canteen, in every school yard and at every family dinner table: A gigantic, geometrical object is approaching Earth. It is approaching from the direction of the constellation of Canes Venatici, the hunting dogs, is clearly artificial in nature - and certainly not man-made.

“Robinson has us lined up to speak.” Mike’s usual cheerfulness seems inap-

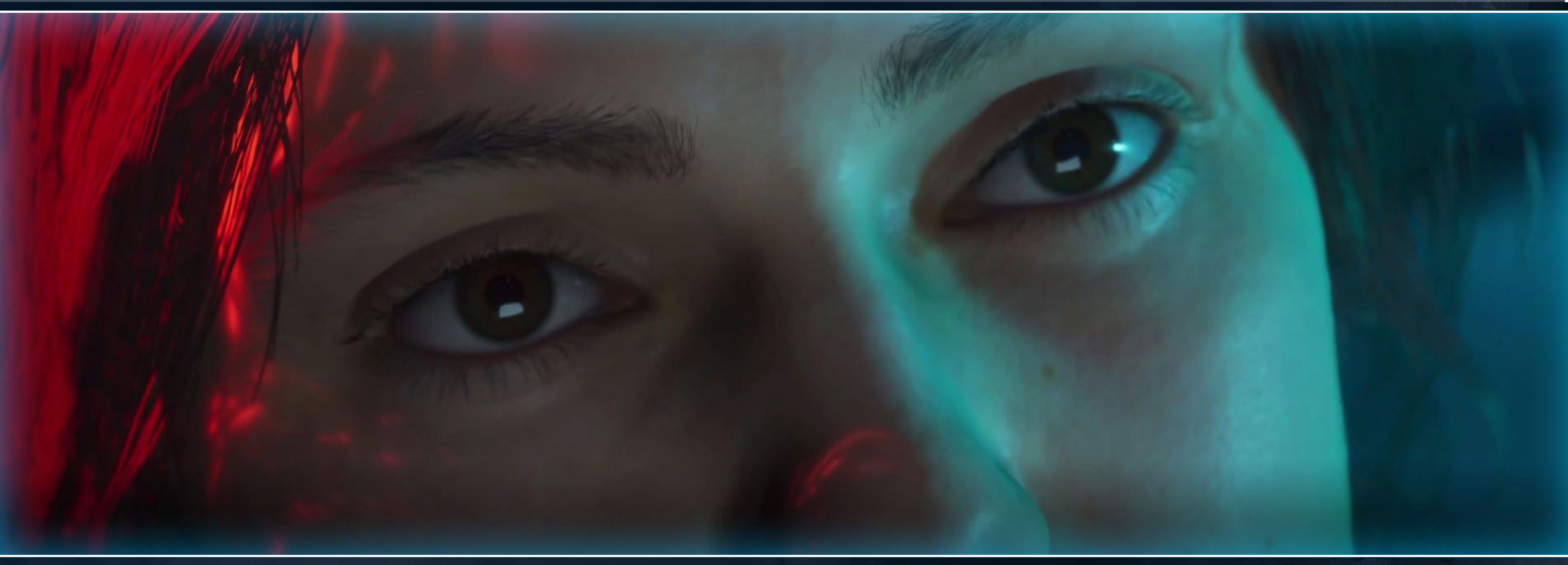
propriate to the situation. It seems contrived, but by now I know - it’s just who he is! His words come quickly, one thought following the next: “What do you think they want from us? Do you think it’s finally going to start? They have to now, don’t they? MBC, NSMBC, Wolf News, even Humfeed. Everybody knows.”

What do I know? I’m a scientist, not a psychic. I put the cushion down.

With the phone in my hand, I hurry into the bedroom, open the closet, and look for a fresh work overall off the rack. It is







half past ten in the morning, this should have been my Sunday off. The first in two months. It's not going to happen now. Part of me is glad. Who can rest when there is so much new to learn?

"We've just received confirmation from NASA." Capper's voice follows me from the living room, rattling off numbers: Speed, size, presumed mass.

Locomotion: Staged, in transitional leaps of four astronomical units. Propulsion unknown.

Intent: unknown.

ETA in Earth's orbit: Seven days, four hours, twenty-six minutes.

I don't need to listen, I've known the

values for a long time - I collected them myself, weeks ago. I had only hoped that we would have more time to prepare for the overall panic.

I take off my pyjamas and get into my overalls, zipping them up to my neck. The symbol of the SCAR initiative nestles against my chest. With a pang of pride, I stroke the hem of the patch. Out of hundreds of scientists and astronauts across the globe, they have chosen me as one of four. Biology and astrophysics, they all scolded me for this odd combination of subjects - Auntie Em, my friend Natalie, even Dad. Now it turns out to be indispensable. My career could have been more unsuccessful, I guess.

Destiny. I've found mine.

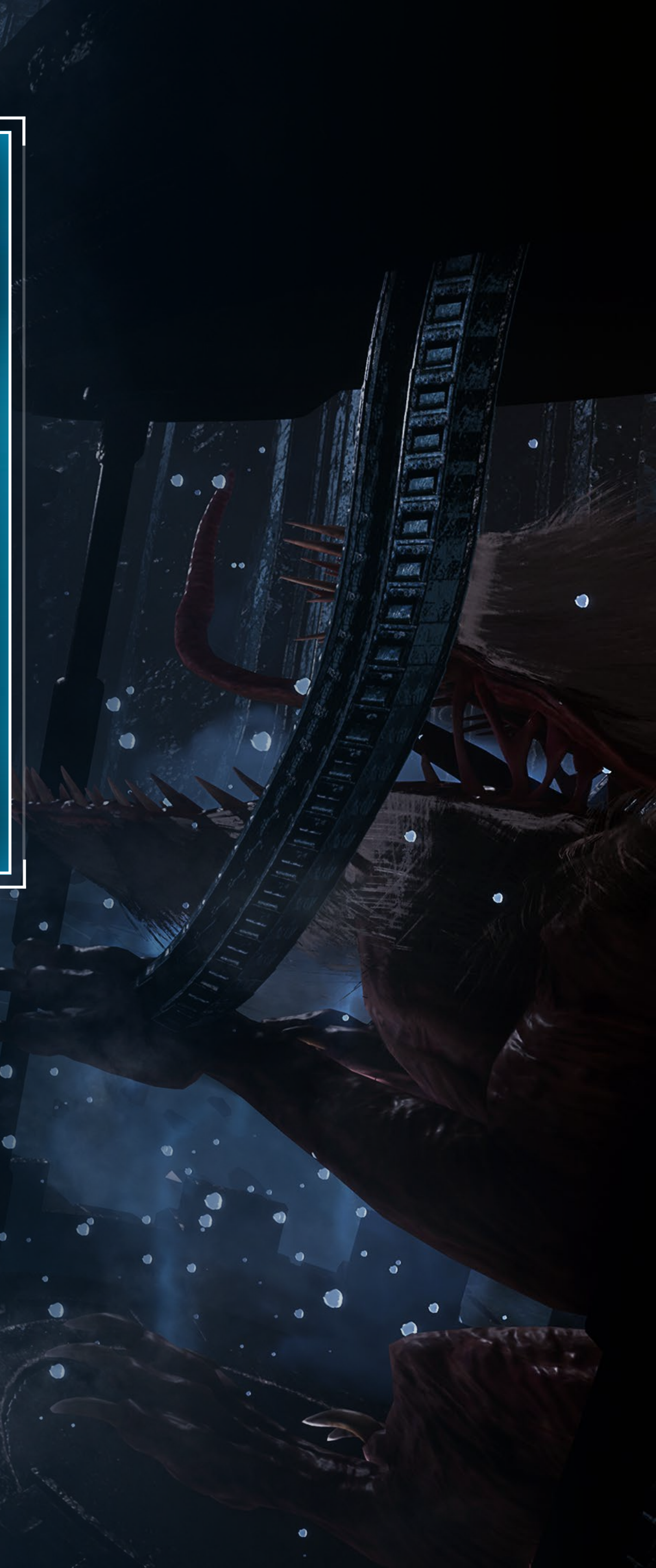
The vibrating alarm buzzes anew. This time it's a text message. "Representative is getting restless," writes Commander Robinson. "All team members are to report to HQ immediately."

I acknowledge with the thumbs-up emoji - quite unmilitary, but I didn't join the space project to follow chains of command. SCAR is as much a civilian organisation as NASA, from where I was poached.

Then I remember that Mike is still on the other end. It's unusual for him to be quiet for so long. The development seems to have captured him.

"See you at HQ," I say goodbye and hang up. I have the suspicion that I

will hear him talk more than I would like in the coming days.





**LIVE**

***BREAKING NEWS***

**Mysterious alien object enters Earth's orbit**



The Metahedron has reached the orbit of Mars.

People in service overalls sit beside and in front of me, typing on laptops and tablets, talking on the phone. Professor Chandra and Director Bloomquist, the heads of the research programme, are talking to representative Brandon - our star guest, you may say. Busy murmurs fill the boardroom. I stare at the large screen at the head of the table.

The sight is familiar, and still I can't get enough of it. Immobile, the alien object stands in space, a perfect, that is, three-sided pyramid. The surface is a dark grey, but it seems incomplete and is interrupted by countless openings. Are they windows? Drive shafts? An unearthly, cyan blue glow emits from these gaps. A mysterious aura surrounds the entire object.

As always, questions race through my mind: Where did it come from? Who created it? Is it a spaceship? A probe?

I don't want to believe in one possibility, but of course, it's stupid to just dismiss it.

What if it's a weapon?

Representative Brandon is obsessed with that idea. On the next jump, the Commander and I have calculated, the object will appear abruptly in Earth's orbit. That's why we're here.

"Metahedron." At the head of the table, the representative rolls the name on his tongue as if tasting every syllable. „Who thinks up such a word monstrosity?"

"The Greeks." Mike sits next to me, he briefly grins.

Nobody laughs. Only Tamara Coleman, our doctor, smiles. Next to me, Commander Robinson shakes his head sternly.

No one at SCAR knows who coined the

name - it must have been one of the technicians at the Nancy-Grace-Roman-Space-Telescope who first detected the object during a routine functional test. NASA, ESA and CNSA detected it before anyone else; most of Earth's governments knew. Together, they formed "Sentient Contact Assessment and Response."

SCAR is a multinational organisation tasked with researching the object and its intent. All of this was kept secret from the world's population for months - no small feat considering the monumentality of our discovery. But it was clear from the beginning that the population would eventually find out. At the latest, when the Metahedron reaches Earth.

The representative responds with a sombre look. "The time for jokes is over, Mister Yoshida." He points to the large screen in front of him. The image is washed out, a banner scrolling at the bottom. It is the stream from D-SPAN.

"The US government provides funds to SCAR from the defense budget," he continues. "Funds that I have approved, on the orders of the President and without consulting Congress. Very soon, Congressmen will start asking questions. The opposition will call it embezzlement, the people will go into hysterics and apply pressure. They will want my head. What can I tell them to justify this expenditure? What results do you have for me?"

I turn away, pretending that the tabletop and my folded hands are the most exciting thing I've ever seen. Typical human being! Everyone is out for themselves and the politics of the day only look at the now. It makes me angry.

Commander Robinson clears his throat. "It's true: all attempts at communication have failed so far." His voice becomes authoritative, he goes into one of his monologues. "But we know now that we

are not alone out there. Even if we don't achieve immediate success, the knowledge gathered here will ..."

"'Knowledge gathered', Commander?" The representative slaps the table so hard that water glasses and laptops bounce. I wince.

"If I want empty words, I can listen to a speech by our President." Brandon gestures to the screen. "SCAR is turning into a billion-dollar grave! What do you have so far? A few blurry pictures and numbers. The media has already grabbed those, I can't go in front of the congressmen with that. There goes your US budget."

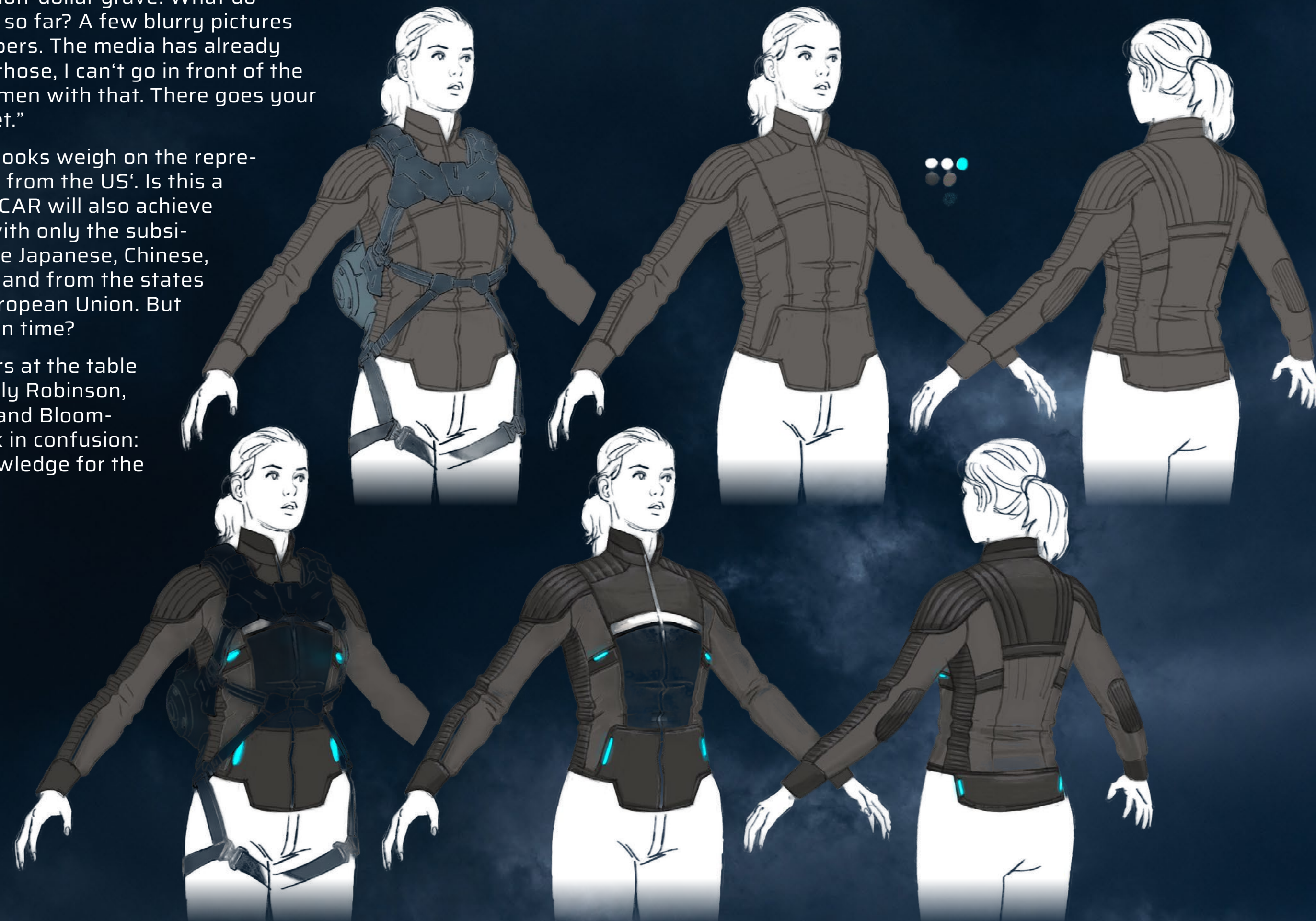
Stunned looks weigh on the representative from the US'. Is this a threat? SCAR will also achieve its goal with only the subsidies of the Japanese, Chinese, Russians and from the states of the European Union. But will it be in time?

The others at the table - especially Robinson, Chandra and Bloomquist, talk in confusion: "The knowledge for the

future ..." - "... science, technology, the course of history ..." - "... the object does not come to us with answers."

"Then we'll just have to go to it with our questions," I hear myself say.

#### CONCEPT ART OF KATE'S SUIT





The people in the room turn to me.

My palms are sweating - suddenly I am the centre of attention and I hate it, but I have to say something. I flip open the laptop that has sat unused in front of me until now, connect it to the input interface and mirror my desktop onto the large screen. Images of the Metahedron appear, this time, in high resolution and full detail. They come from NASA's space telescopes.

"For months we have been bombarding the object with radio messages. Mathematical and chemical formulas, symbol explanations and the like, on a continuous loop." I call up an extract of our first contact signal on the screen; groups of dots representing prime numbers. Hydrogen and helium as abstract drawings and white characters on a black background.

"Same approach as the old Voyager probes," Robinson adds. "So far we haven't had an answer. If the Metahedron is manned, the crew are playing dead." With a nod, he motions for me to continue.

"These radiating ,windows' give us pause." My cursor wanders over a particularly prominent opening, large enough to accommodate an entire skyscraper. Cyan blue fills the monitor. "Through them, we could penetrate the object, with a probe, for example. Or ..."

"... a spaceship," Chandra completes the sentence. He shakes his head. "I admire your initiative, Dr. Ward. But the aliens might take it as an attack"

Brandon won't hear of it, with a gesture he sweeps my suggestion aside.

"You expect me to convince Congress by demanding they spend even more money?" His face hardens. "For what? A possible suicide mission?"

The English language is not "rich" enough for certain thoughts. So much is going through my mind at this moment. Why does it have to turn into something so dramatic? What if the strangers are here on a peaceful mission after all? Not a heroic sacrifice - but a peaceful first contact - which explorer wouldn't be willing to do that? The needed ship exists, there are prototypes, also from civilian manufacturers - the HERMES project comes to my mind. Brandon stares at me, I stare back, searching for words. A silent trial of strength ensues.

"Guys!"

Tamara's outcry makes us cringe. The medic holds up her smartphone so that everyone can see the display. During the argument, she was the only one staring at her phone, now I realise why: she was keeping an eye on the D-SPAN feed. The image shows the same scrolling text and section of the starry sky that were on the big screen a moment ago.

With one difference. It's full of stars - and the blackness of space. Nothing else.

The Metahedron has disappeared.

Suddenly it goes dark outside.

Horrified silence.

In the midst of the silence, noise pushes through the closed window on the tenth floor: shouting, dogs barking, horns honking from the nearby highway. I feel heat rising in my cheeks.

Mike is the first to rush to the window and pull it open. He points to the sky. "We have company!"

The shock only paralyses me for a moment. Not a minute later, I'm standing at the window too, along with all the others, gawking out. The Metahedron hangs in the sky, imposingly large, unwavering and - what did Douglas Adam once

write? - "in much the same way that bricks don't." The brain doesn't want to believe how immense the thing is, always trying to adjust the dimensions downwards, only to be lectured again. I feel dizzy.

"I thought we had seven days." Slowly, the new reality sinks into my mind. The object has transited. It's in orbit, big as a mountain, completely blocking out the sun. Its immense shadow plunges an entire swathe of land into darkness. I try not to think about the flight paths that run through this airspace - it's hard to imagine the air displacement caused by a thing of these dimensions when it appears transitionless in a planet's atmosphere. There must be hurricane force storms in the upper layers of the air.

"Dr. Ward." The representative stands beside me - has he been there all along? - and looks tremulously at the sky. "How long will it take your team to get this spaceship ready for launch?"

Destiny.

Not everyone lives to see their destiny fulfilled. I, realising it once again, have found mine.

It hovers a few miles above the Earth.







