



HURSTON

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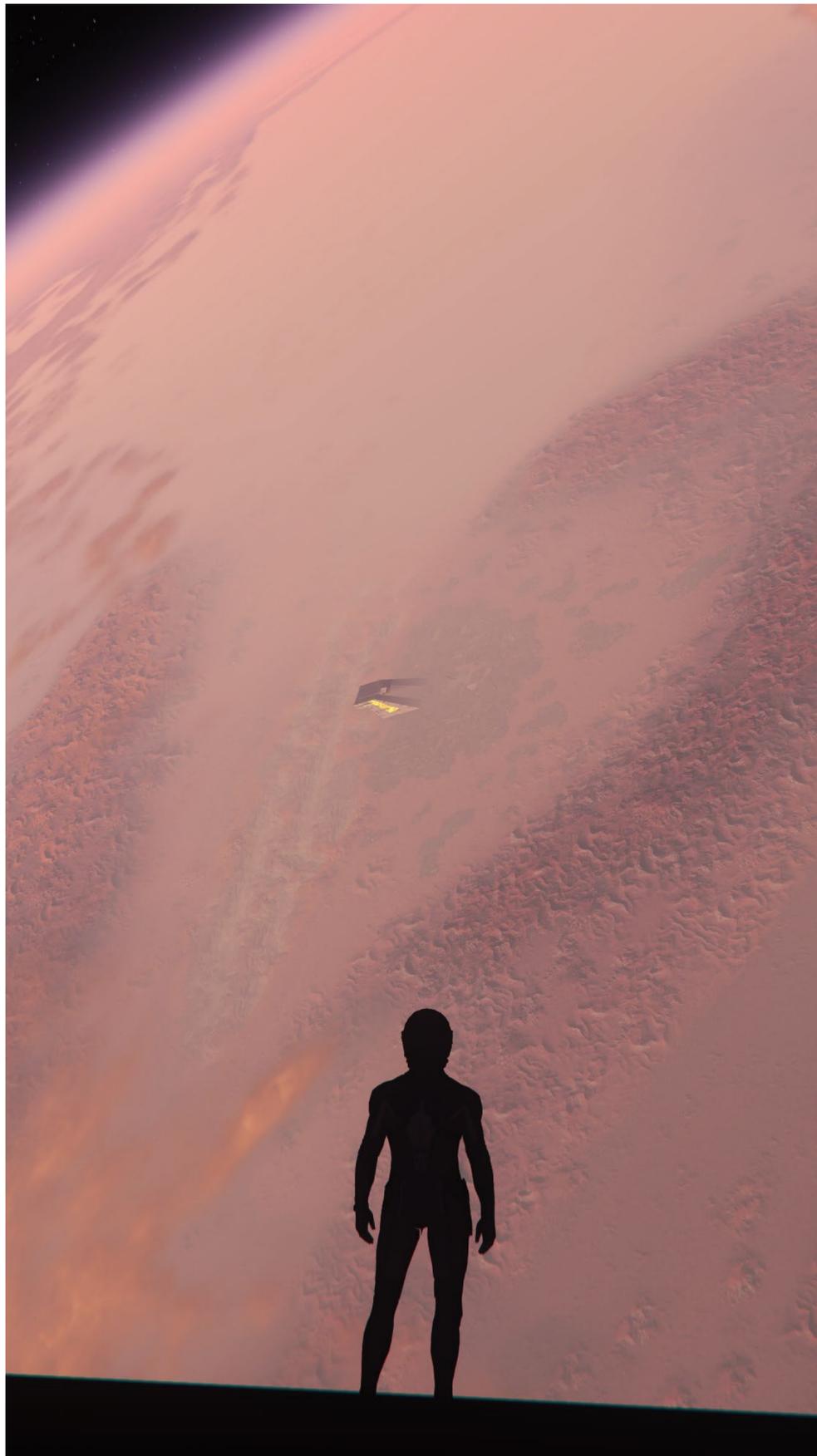


A note from our CEO



“Life is trying things to see if they work.” These few words from 20th century author and screenwriter Ray Bradbury seem to depict perfectly our world, today. Well, our entire universe, to be honest. The ‘Verse, as we know and imagine it, is a very complex thing to grasp and guess in its entirety. And if we stare at it for long enough, we might try to figure out what exactly is that keeps us flying in it. Relentlessly. Day and night. Life after life. Endlessly. On a continuous journey. To see if things work, together, we need to put things in motion first. Together. It’s the meaning and the purpose of what we try to achieve that is important. It’s the sum of the parts that matters, not the individual ones. Ultimately, what we seek is a legacy. Something which we can call ours. Something to call home. And what better example of a legacy and a place to call home than Hurston? This must have been the thoughts Solomon Hurston had when, back in the middle of the 25th century, he established what would have ended being one of the wealthiest company in the ‘Verse. This might be the very same thought people have when setting their feet on the surface on this planet the first time, today. The intricate pattern of life which lies in front of everyone who tries to get accustomed to this planet is still to be tamed and granted. Comprehended.

Our writers and photographers took a very endeavoring task in creating this magazine. They put their best efforts to discover the perfect angle to tell their story from. To shine a light from. To enrich that story. To explore the meanings. The beauty. And the perils which lie in there. Did they succeed in this hard task? Well, I think they did. What you have in your hands is their love letter to this planet which might be difficult to understand at first. But, after all, we all know what it really takes to figure it out. After staring at its skies and stars for a while and after experiencing one of its brightest sunrises it all becomes clear, at one point. Like a picture in our minds. Like a frame, which tells a whole new story. Every time. Welcome to Hurston, then. Where things are never fully black and white. But rather in all shades of orange and red.



Welcome to Hurston

A black veil dotted by distant stars and gas clouds looming over a dark and round silhouette on which a thin sunrise casts a mix of purple and orange shades onto the horizon. Such is the sight any traveler on their journey to Hurston, in the Stanton system, would experience when arriving by night at Everus Harbor, the planet's main space station. Probably unknown to them by that time is that despite this nearly oneiric glimpse, most of the planet resembles more of an oversized junkyard than a paradise resort.

A giant H-shaped building would then slowly come into their view, on the ground, casting its wide shadow onto an entire capital as the sun rises in the distance; the headquarters of the weapons company that owns the whole planet, standing tall as a beacon of the sheer power and hegemony Hurston Dynamics holds and displaying it to the public's view in plain sight. A battle-earned title and privilege, in more ways than the masses would think true. One made of focus, resolve, control, and conviction.

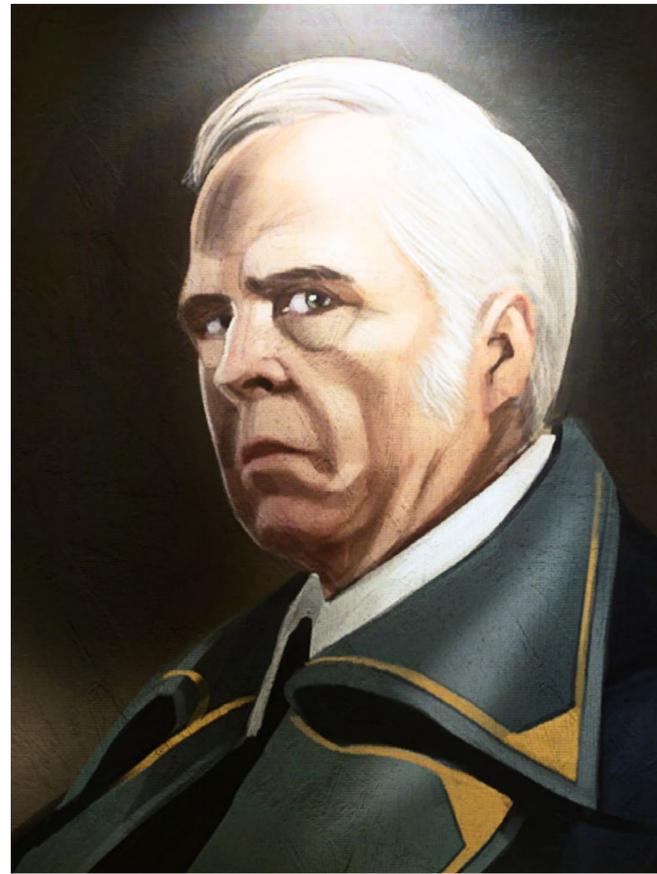
No other words could be used to describe the Hurston family's five hundred years longevity on a market where competitors may quite literally be on the lookout to kill their counterparts. And more than to their company, those leitmotifs apply all the same to the inhabitants living on the planet Magda

Hurston acquired from the Empire back in 2865.

Just under a century later, the enterprise has already permanently scarred the planet, and one could say Hurston feels like the encapsulation of all excesses: draining a planet to its core in the wake of expansion and shaping it according to man's will.

And yet, despite the company's contrasted public image, such pragmatic principles have built a corporation that left its footprint on Human history forever. Everything, from Hurston's gigantic capital and its business district down to the dying panorama, screams for the company's motto. Profits always come first.

Welcome to Hurston, where things are never fully black and white, but rather in all shades of orange and red.



A Family's Legacy Shining Upon The Stars

The year is 2865. Economically crippled by its intensive colonization efforts, strained by the centuries-long fighting against the Vanduul threat, and drowning in the financial abyss the Synthworld project is, the Empire's fragile economy can't keep up with its mounting expenses. Budget cuts and increased taxes are quickly discussed, but the renewed demands from megacorporations of acquiring entire continents to run their operations eventually give bureaucrats a clever way out, and pave the road to a new era: that of privately owned planets.

Magda Hurston would be the first woman in hu-

man history to ever purchase governing interests and settlement rights from the United Empire of Earth, for the planet that would from there on be known as Hurston. The rest of Stanton's planets soon followed suit and were bought by other megacorporations, each of them intending to lower their expenses while centralizing their entire production processes.

No official statement has ever been released as to how much Hurston Dynamics nor any of the other companies spent to acquire their own super-earths and gas giant, but rumors have it to be in the trillions.





Only the wealthiest of corporations could pursue the commitment and investment of such an endeavor, ones that were built brick by brick centuries through centuries. To Hurston Dynamics, matching this requirement merely seemed like a formality.

Established in 2438 by Solomon Hurston, the company would sell weapons for more than half a millennia as History punctuated mankind's journey into the stars with wars against alien species and intestine conflicts alike.





Built day after day and developed by fourteen consecutive generations, Hurston Dynamics' legacy shines not only through its name, but through the countless conflicts it brought to an end.

One name that hides all by itself personalities like Archibald, Ita, Arial, Aberdeen, Maria, and Madga Hurstons. Pioneers, visionaries and engineers whose legacy, while it remains debated to this day, will last in the history books for eternity.

Once a Paradise Resort

Nitrogen, oxygen, argon, and carbon dioxide. Hurston surely looks strangely similar to Earth as one studies its atmosphere's composition through survey charts, but any scientist glancing up from his Mobi Glass would quite quickly notice the difference.

An orange and hazy smog would immediately catch their eyes, one that seems to be forever falling onto the horizon, like a sandstorm approaching in the distance. Dust particles are filling Hurston's air and mingling with polluted gasses. The planet's crust was extensively mined for profit as soon as it was purchased, leaving nearly all wildlife to starve and die as the atmosphere stands massively polluted due to heavy industry work. Only a few varieties of the once flourishing flora still cover the landscapes, struggling to recycle an air that is slowly suffocating its inhabitants. Seasons are no more.

Piles of rusted debris scattered over hundreds of kilometers slowly decompose in wide-open graveyards, onto a reddish soil that some would compare to rivers made from the dried blood of the countless lives Hurston Dynamics' weapons and ammunitions have claimed. A prospect way more dire than the exotic look the planet's distinctive hue gives it from space.

Stanton I is managed as any other asset or investment by Hurston Dynamics, and the richest of families has always sought to make them profitable in the shortest amount of time. It is no accident if the mounting piles of garbage the company's industries produce were never processed - another of its cost-saving and highly debatable methods.

And yet, the rapid destruction of the planet's habitat has paved the way for something new. Acidic piles of clay-like material can sometimes be found on some remote parts of Hurston, venting gasses from *inside* the planet, a residue of the mining process Hurston Dynamics utilized to strip the ground.





Local Occupancy

Residency

Lorville. A city so wide it is divided into multiple and nearly autonomous districts all articulated around a central security tower that oversees its whole block. But all those districts reside only in the gigantic shadow that looms over the city at any time, its faceless steel frame ever pointed toward the capital's inhabitants wherever they are standing, working, or sleeping. Reminding them of whose territory they live on.

The "Central", as it is commonly referred to, serves as Hurston Dynamics' headquarters and center of operations. Standing four kilometers tall, it houses all the executive offices of the company in a history-filled setting. Gigantic statues and plaques remind the rare visitors of the family's hegemony over the centuries. The construction of the nearly H-shaped building took thirteen years from 2877 to 2890, and started straight as the city was founded, merely five years after the first company workers' arrived on the planet.





The capital's location wasn't picked by accident. Massive mineral deposits reside under and near it, which was first and foremost thought as a workers-hub and spaceport, part of its very name being the contraction of "Local Occupational Residency", one of the company's many contested policies - that of having its workforce live on the same place it works. Hurston's infamous Life/Labor-style of contract system towards its employees has made for an entire life centered around work, down to the city's name. Although Lorville stretches on more than twenty kilometers of buildings, most inhabitants only go through limited portions of it on a daily basis.

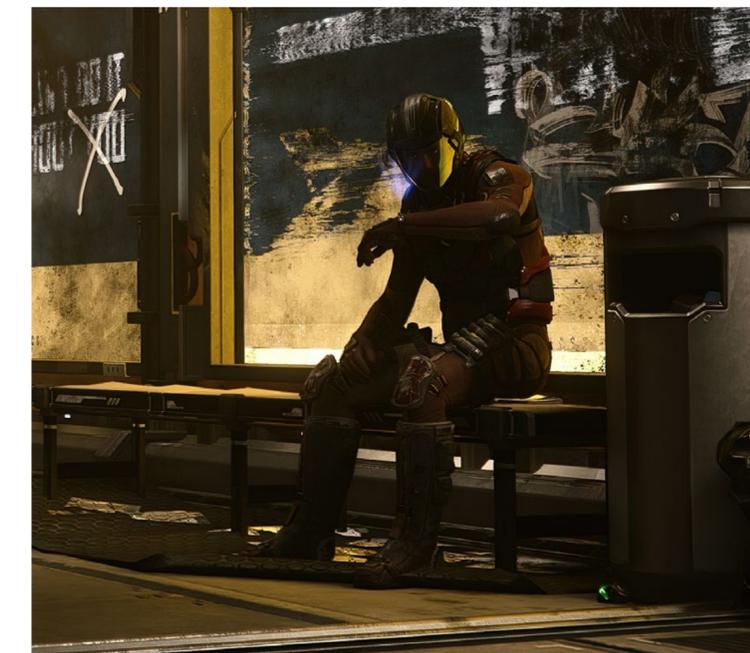
Each of the Workers' districts, as they are called, houses residential buildings as well as bars, restaurants, shops, clinics, and metro lines. The people living there all share the same job, or at least nearly the same, as a dedicated metro line takes them to their workplace in the shortest time possible. Nearly every second of their lives is dictated by the contract they signed, in as well as out of their long shifts. They rent the very bed they sleep in from the company they work for, and the question is not so much as how could the company make such a system work, but rather to what extent.





Even the limited amenities Lorville has to offer to its inhabitants are owned by Hurston Dynamics, further reducing its operating costs as any money spent by its employees goes back into the company's pocket and pays for the same wages these workers spend so willingly. The same basic principle applies to nearly all goods and services on the entire planet, from housing down to the food supply chain, effectively bringing the question as if such a system is to be designated as modern slavery or not. The weapons manufacturer, in turn, claims that it offers jobs and a future to people who would otherwise have none: former drug addicts, ex-inmates, in debt individuals, and such.

One of the places these people live in is the L19 Residence. All areas within the city are designated by a number, depending on which grid or sector they are part of, and are all thought as nearly independent settlements. This six-stories modular residential building is meant to expand as the population does, adding new floors as the company's growth demands it. A metro station stands less than a hundred meters away from it and links the block directly to the city's Spaceport, while another line, on the square named Leavsdan, takes workers to their shift all around the clock.



Should L19 have a soul, Leavsdens square would symbolize it, while the central security tower overlooking the whole district would be its heart, and the various heavily armed guards patrolling the area both its veins and ventricles. The setting would have you think people from all walks of life coexist in this unique place, as one metro line goes to the workers' facilities while another, across the street, leads to the Central Business District. Another of Hurston Dynamics' deceptive methods.

In much the same way, Leavsdens square poorly maintained MacIntyre & Victor's bar and its warm atmosphere would have you think of it as a safe ha-

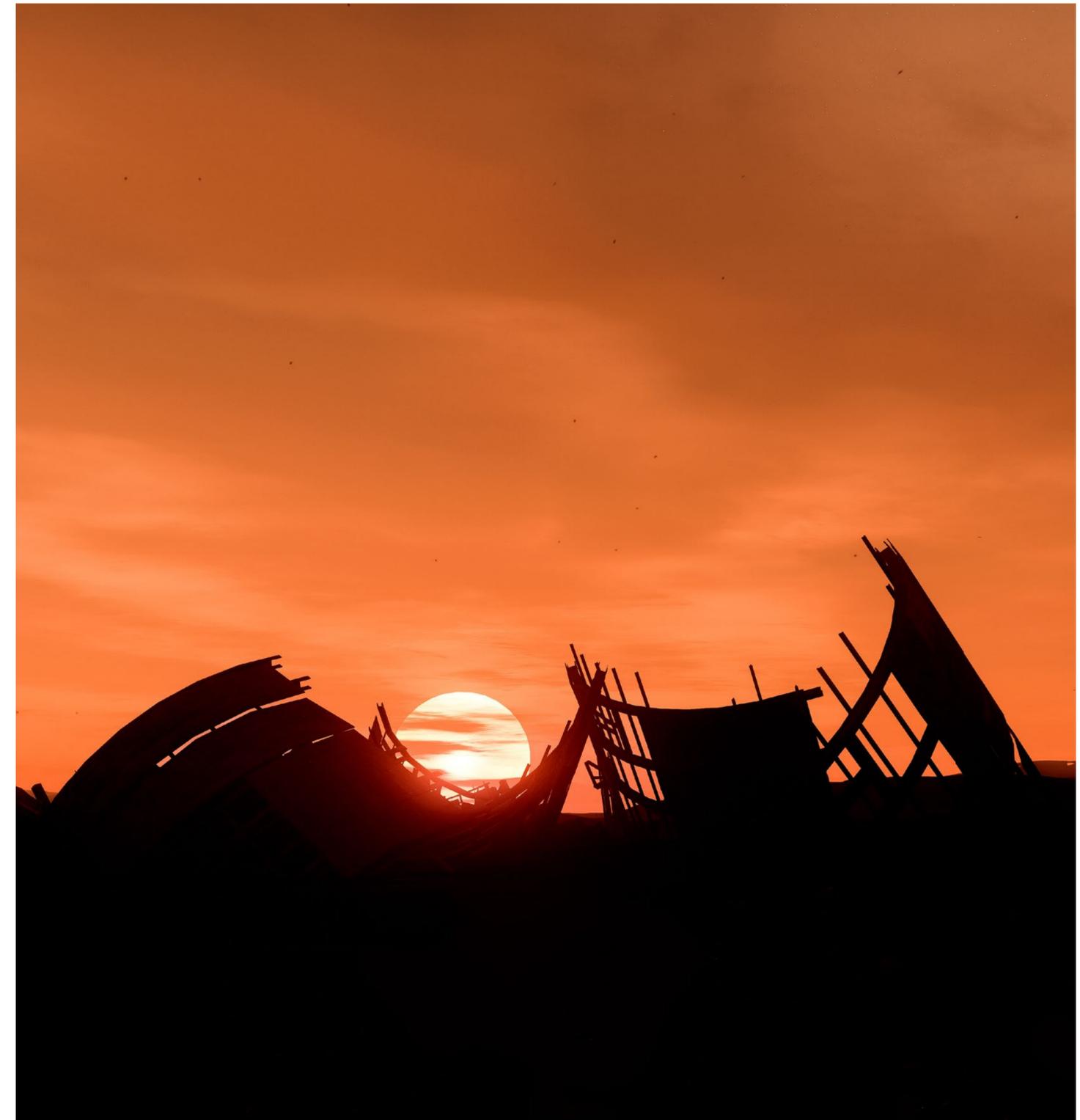
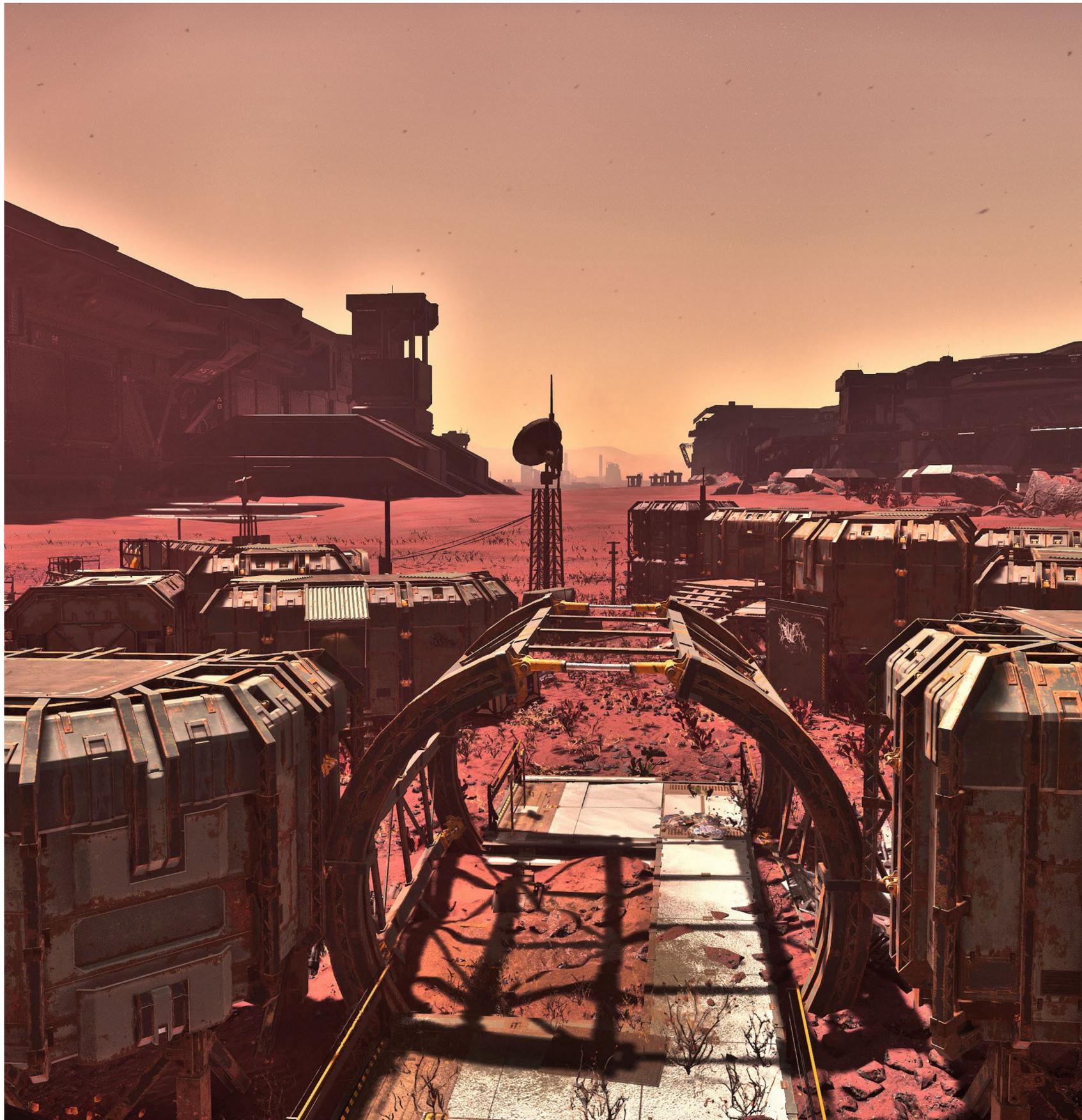
ven and shield against the outside's dust and smog, but every credit that goes into the bartender's pocket is one in that of the Hurston family. Most workers attend the place to vent after a long shift, not giving much second thought as to how it is operated. They ignore the reality of this entire suburb, or feign not knowing rather than realize the grand illusion they embrace and live in. This never-ending nightmare is theirs, and they shall cherish it - willingly or not. A UEE Army veteran and independent security contractor has established himself inside these walls, but even he relies on Hurston-issued contracts.



Some other businesses are located in the vicinity. A nearby scrap processing plant is operated by an owner people often call a scholar, while an equipment shop going by the name of Tammy and Sons overlooks the metro line that takes employees to their work. Even a state-of-the-art hospital faces the square, Maria Pure of Heart, its elegant black and gold interior giving a relative sense of luxury and health security in an otherwise quite poor and polluted district, her curator's figure looking down on every patient.

The most popular shop of all, however, is located at the city's spaceport, Teasa. Just like the rest of the whole city, it is operated by a company that belongs to Hurston, and so does the vehicle dealership right next to it - New Deal. One that offers both ground and space vehicles, fueling the grand illusion for local workers that they might one day secure enough money to escape from what seems like an open prison. One whose custody they willingly entered.





And like every prison, it stands guarded by imposing walls that encircle Lorville. Although they are quite simply advertised as a security measure against any natural hazard or fauna, no wildlife larger than a

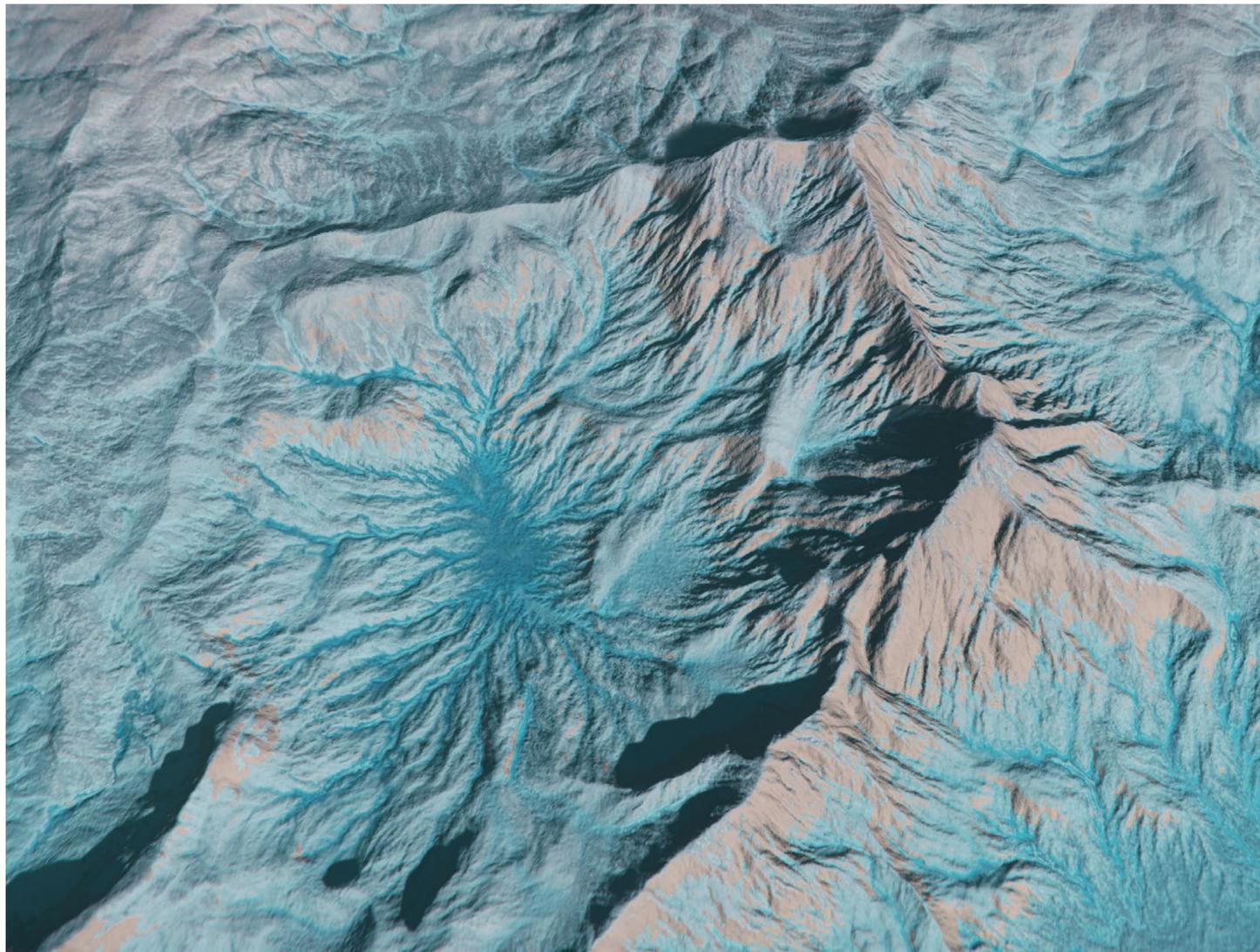
mouse has survived Hurston Dynamics' passing. No one dares say, let alone think, about the truth, but the only thing those metal barriers are guarding, is the city itself.

An Everlasting Mark In The Heavens

Arial, Aberdeen, Madga, and Ita. These Hurston names are not just those of famed CEOs, engineers, or special forces operatives. They fuel the very company they share their name with through principles, ideas, and a particular commitment. Naming the planet's moons as a tribute to them therefore seemed appropriate to the narrative the weapons manufacturer has been building throughout centuries. One of hard work and devotion to achieve immortality through the history books.

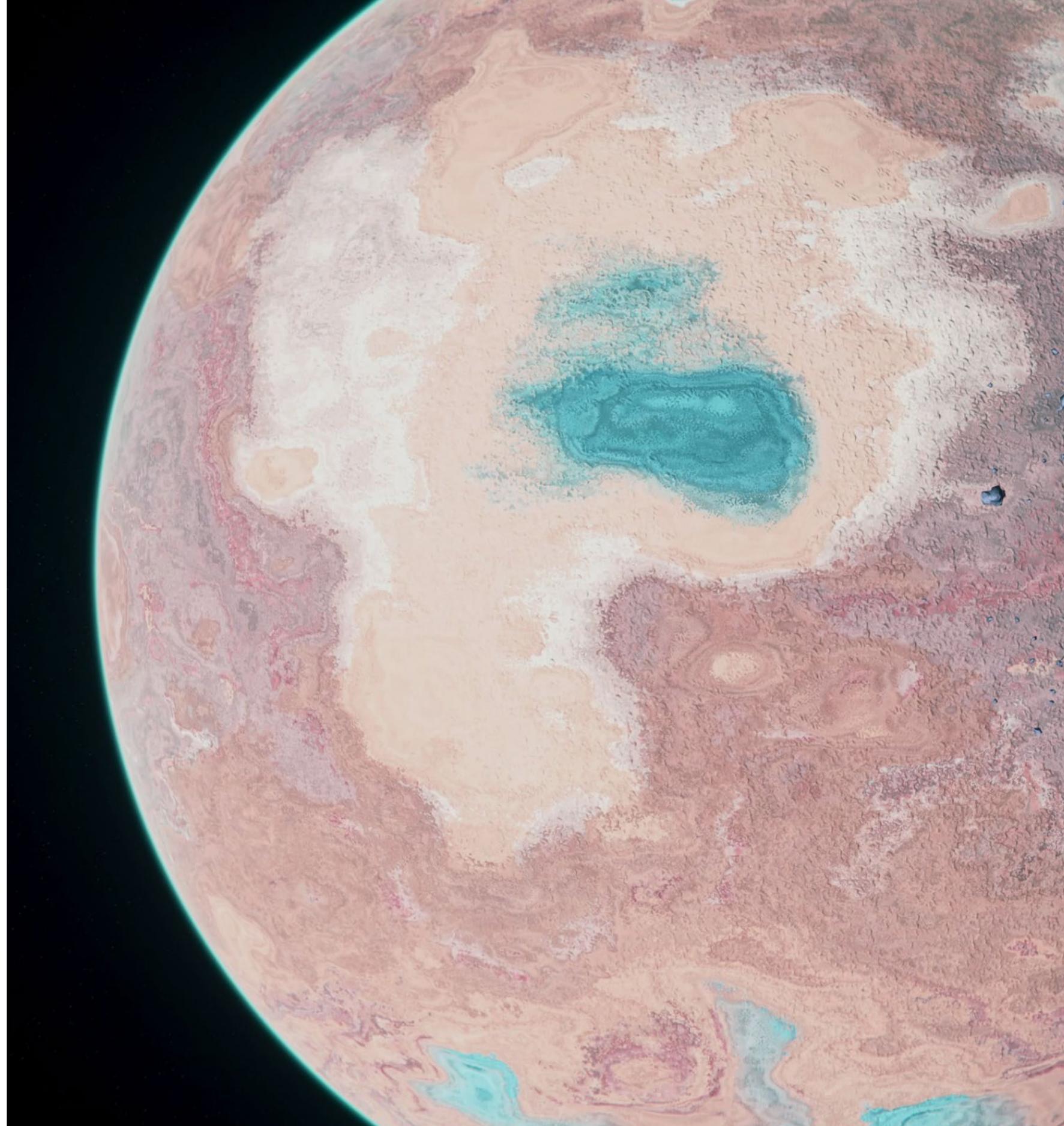
Arial Hurston, the company's third CEO and creator of the Life/Labor style contract still utilized to this day has given his name to the planet's first moon, Stanton 1a. Situated 52.000 kilometers away from Hurston, its nitrogen-based atmosphere contains no oxygen and remains unbreathable even with protective gear meant to shield a person from the blazing 280 to 370 degrees of its surface. Visibility is nearly in-existent as the hot temperature causes refraction effects, doubled by a haze of dust particles. Harsh conditions have made for the moon to be the home of only two outposts, namely HDMS-Bezdek and Lathan, that only get rarely visited by miners and cargo haulers.

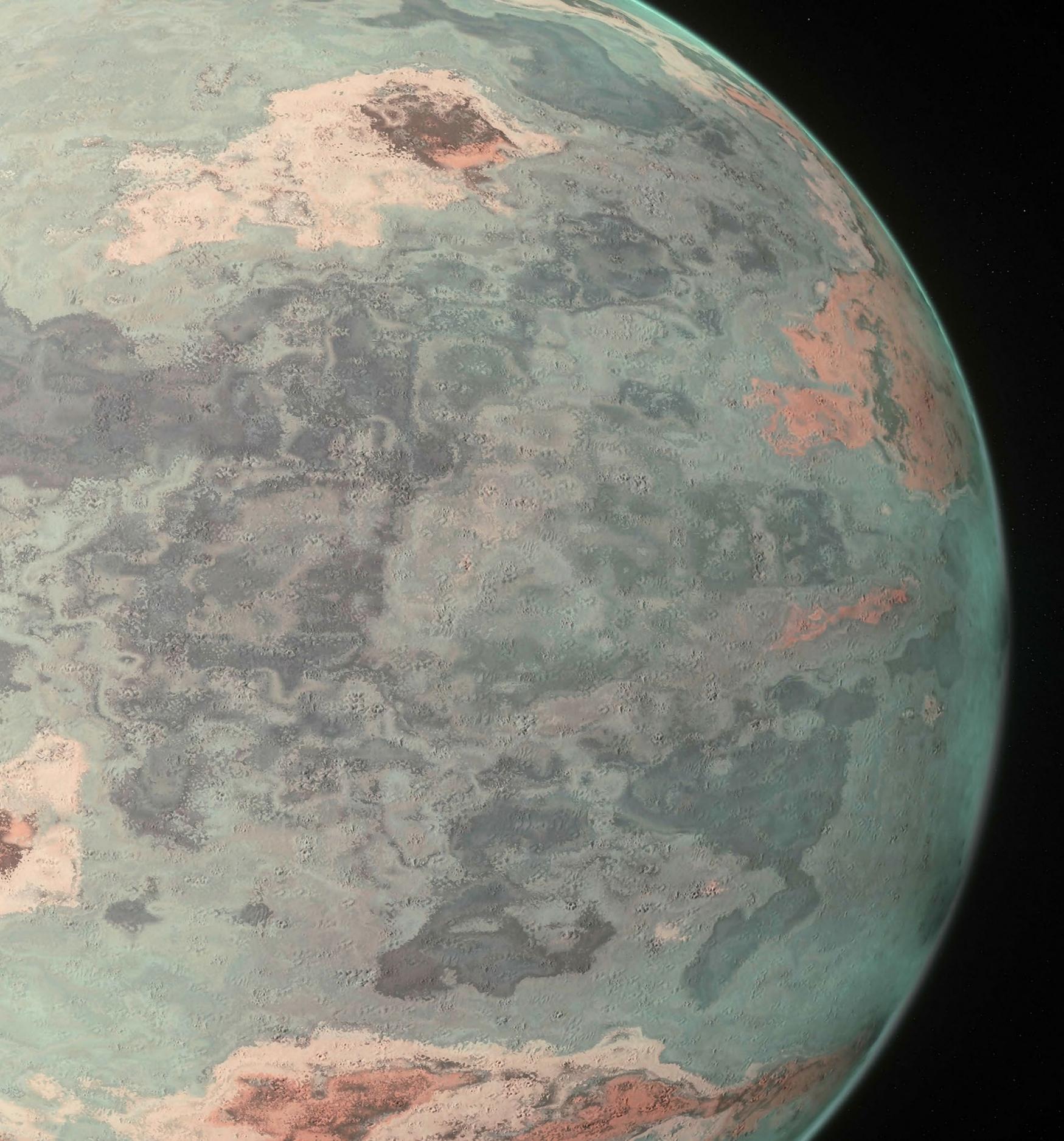




Few tales still exist of the once green and lush moon Stanton 1b supposedly was. While Hurston Dynamics has relentlessly dismissed that claim, it is said to have been transformed into a toxic and boiling wasteland through the extensive testing of antimatter weapons. A cynical prospect, considering its name comes from the Hurston's family engineer whose designs influenced the first antimatter warheads ever produced, but one the company has put to good use. The moon's uninhabitable conditions paved the way for the most infamous installation of the whole system, one of Klescher's Rehabilitation Centers. A prison that makes the mere idea of escaping to be hopeless, for only death awaits outside its thick walls and underground facilities.

Little has to be said about Magda, except for the marvelous sights its landscape has to offer. Rocks tinted blue by the moon's thin atmosphere are mixed with plateaus whose pale brown hue immediately strikes from space, on a soil littered with asteroid craters. Methane and nitrogen make for a toxic air that requires a breathing apparatus, but the lower temperatures of around 30 degrees Celsius turned the moon into an unexpected tourism destination. Although no sources can confirm nor deny such an allegation, it is possibly the one and only moon within the entire Empire's territory to have been named after someone who could have personally requested it.

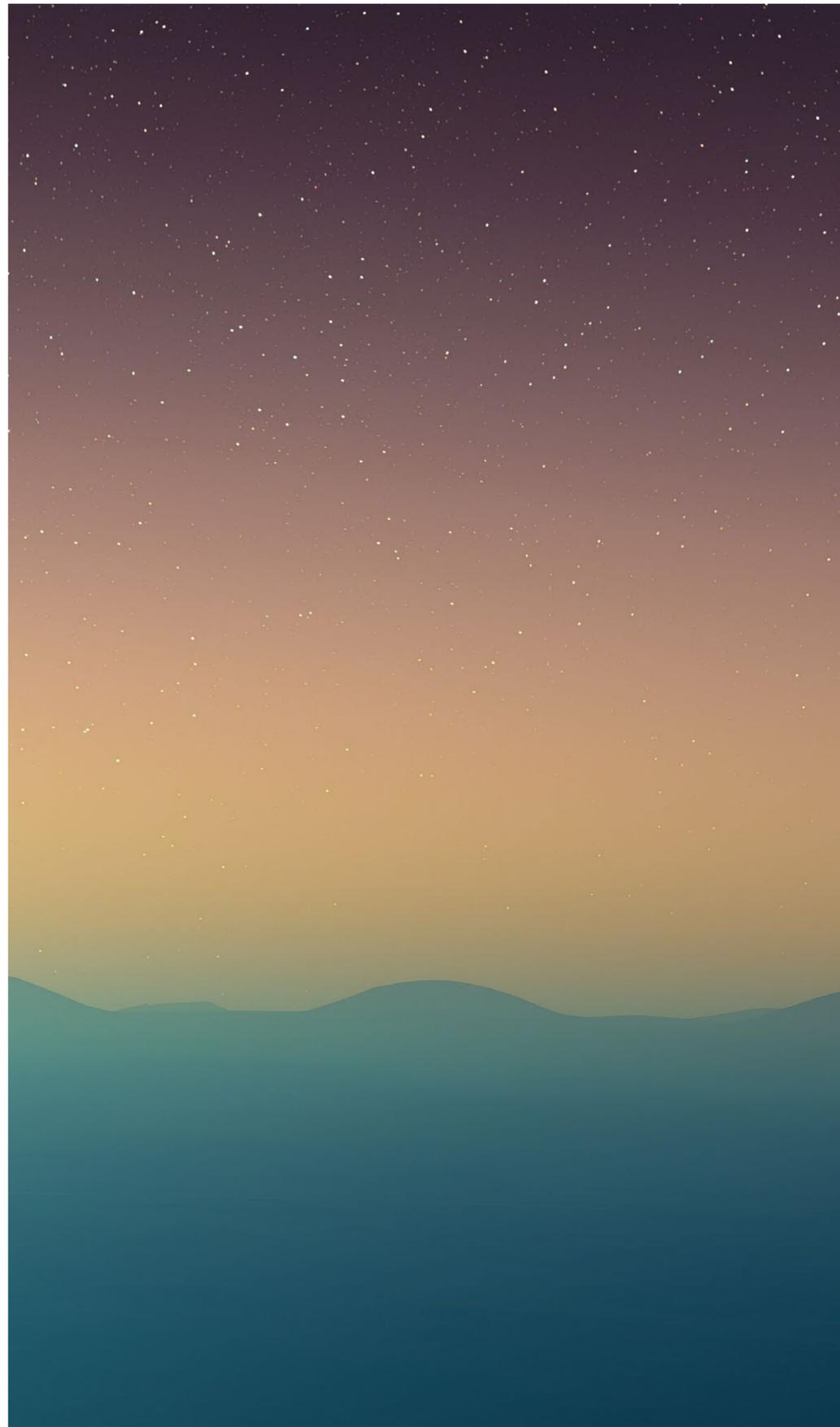
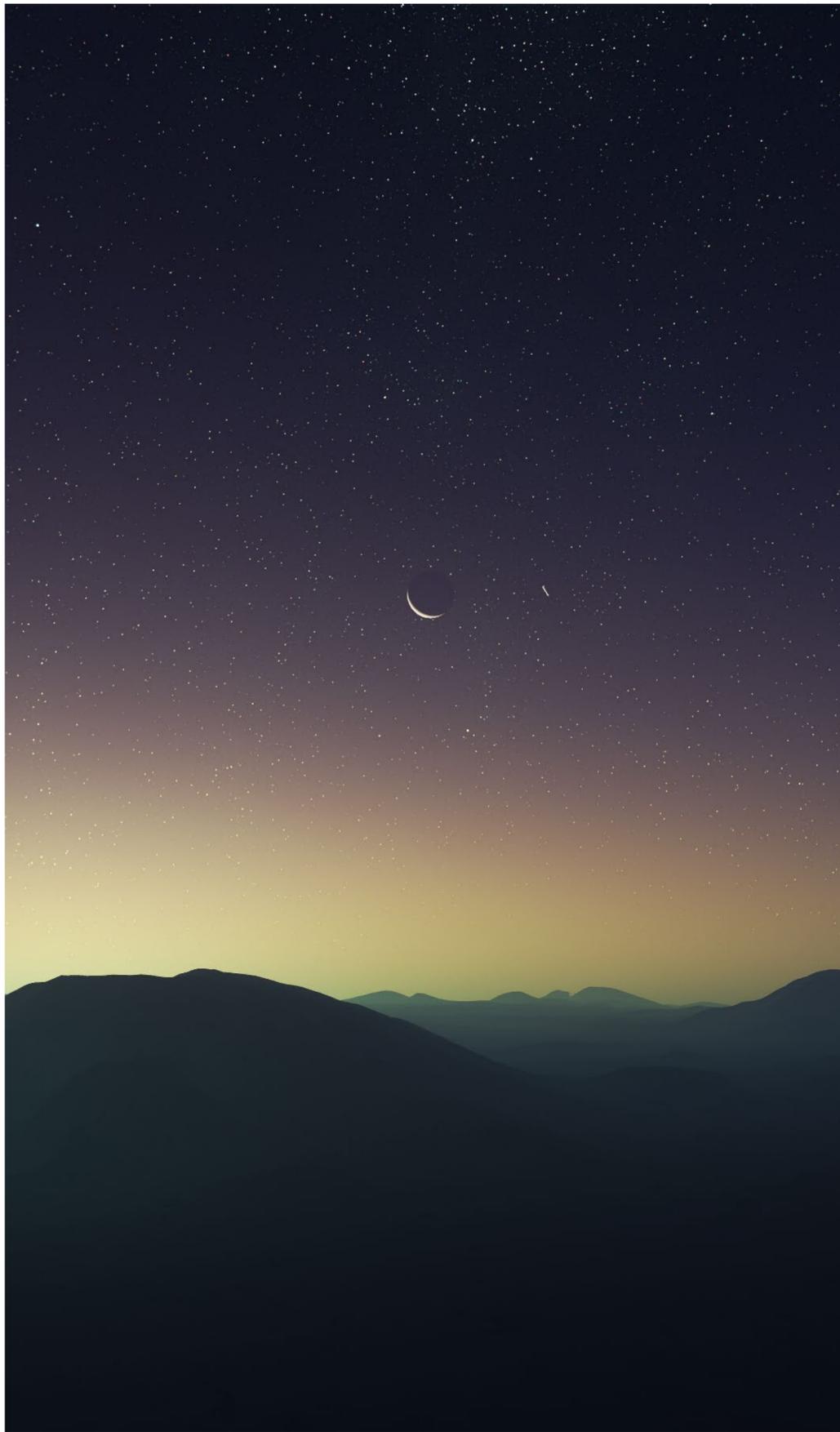
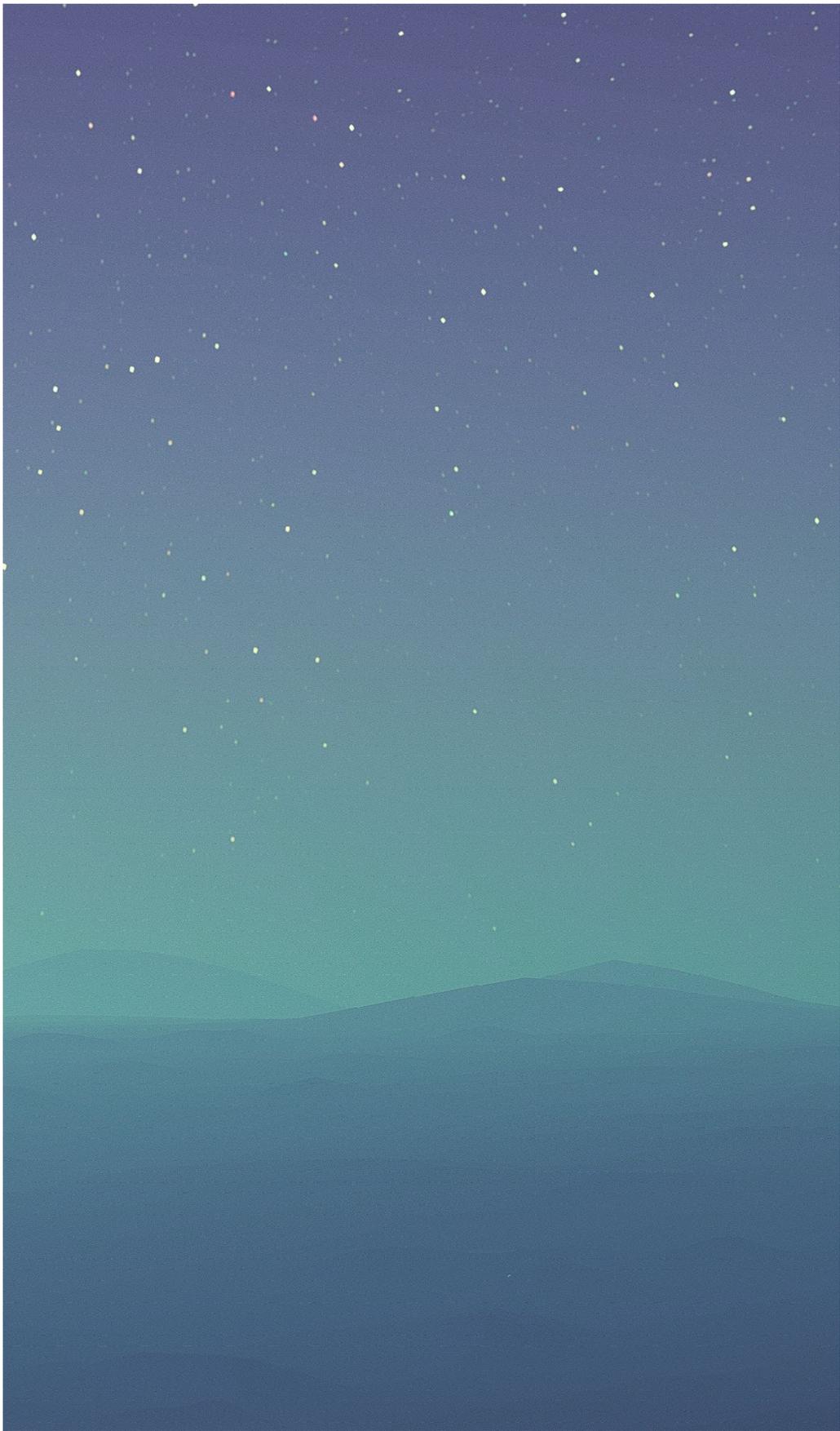




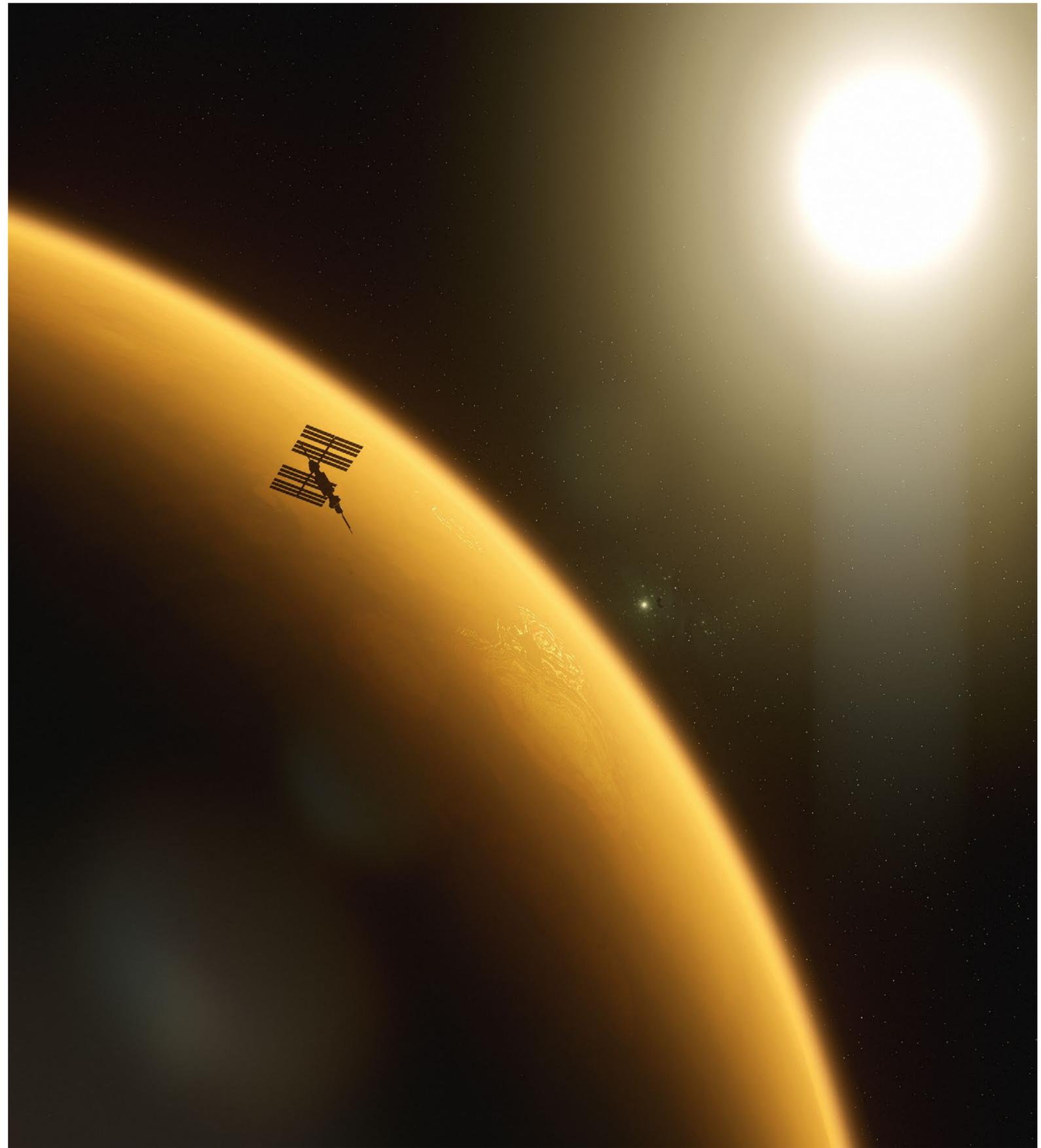
Stanton 1d, the last of Hurston's moons, stands nearly 120,000 kilometers away from its planet, alone, in colder reaches. Its gray surface's coating temperature rarely gets hotter than 10 degrees, even in its dark brown valleys and canyons. One could speculate its appearance pushed the company to have the moon honor the name of Ita Hurston, a member of the - at the time - United Planets of Earth's special forces who died during the First Tevarin War, on a soil not her home. Although Ita is Hurston's farthest moon, it stands forever in the corner of the eye to anyone on the ground, a constant reminder of why the company manufactures weapons.

Closer to the planet itself, and yet so far from it, hovers a gigantic man-made structure overlooking Hurston and its trillions-worth economy from a relatively safe distance, up in the sky. Everus Harbor

watches like a guardian at the gate, locked in geostationary orbit above Lorville. Despite its cramped hallways, the endlessly recycled air that flows inside its corridors and through filters seems like a real luxury compared to that of the dusty surface down below. The circular station's seven arms are always extended into the void, holding thousands of containers ready to ship at any time, as well as fuel and other materials required to maintain haulers and private vessels that dock to it. And still, despite its paramount importance regarding the weapons company's economy, it may very well be the only strategic asset Hurston Dynamics doesn't own, as ironic as it can seem. Overlooking an Empire within the Empire is not some Hurston family member in their private ship, but only a classic Rest & Relax space station.









A Land of Stories Yet Untold

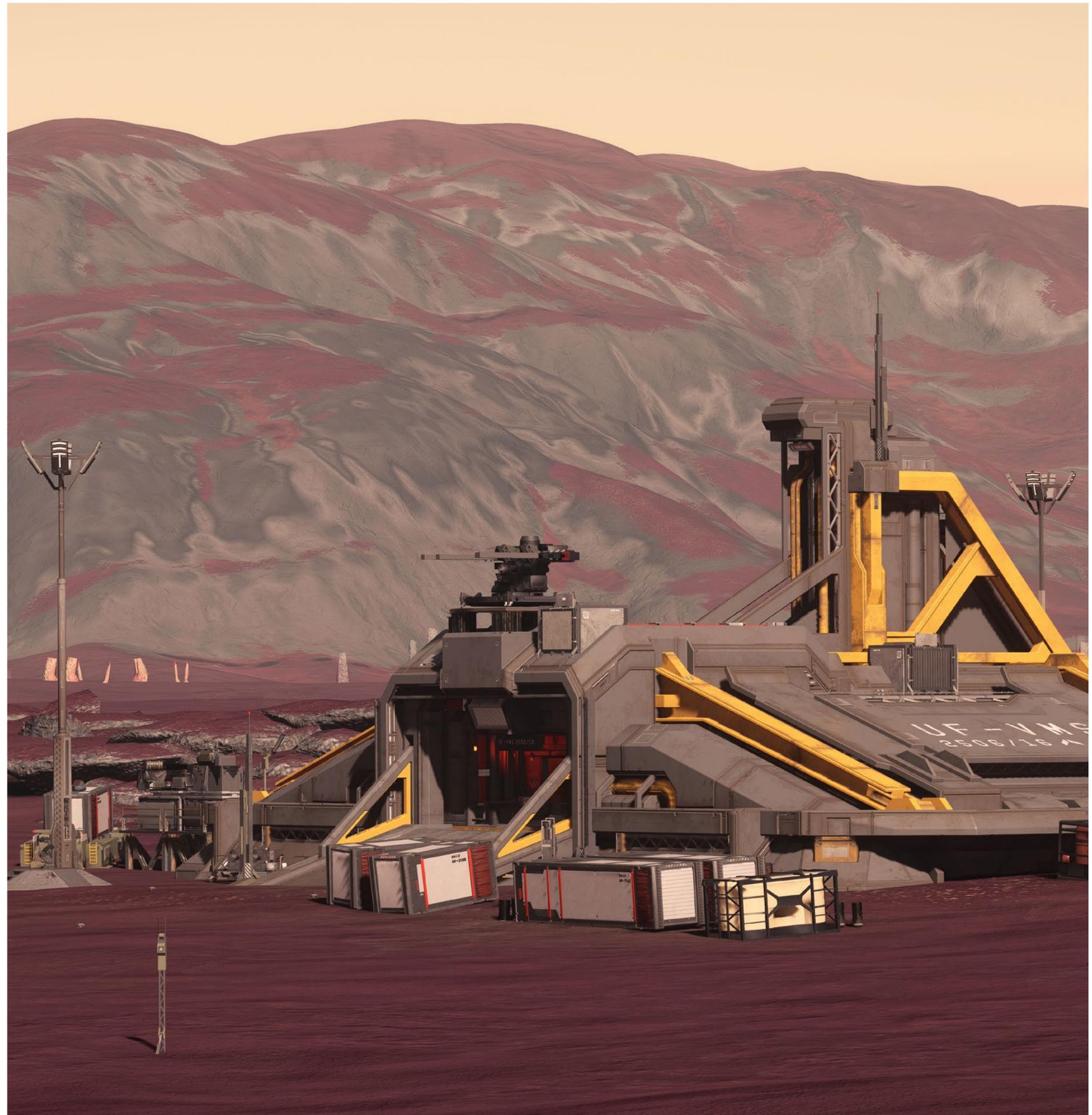
Crashed satellites, strange rocky formations, illegal salvage outposts, isolated data centers, or underground and sometimes unexplored caves stretching on dozens of kilometers. Such are the varieties one could witness on its journey through Hurston Dynamics' domain, in the Stanton system. A territory that is far less homogeneous than the company would have people think, locked in their all too similar lifestyles and issues. But for all its flaws, Hurston undoubtedly remains the most economically active of all Stanton's planets, and a place where anyone looking for a job might just find one that suits them.



The aristocrat family would have its narrative tell people there is nothing left to do that they haven't already tried, but in the end, who knows what secrets Stanton 1 still has to tell, and what opportunities it still has to offer to visionaries and doers? Maybe there laid their real message, among the cold-hearted and sometimes ethically debatable principles. That those who don't try won't ever know, and will

instead have to fall back in line and follow the crowd like mere cattle. But not them.

This simple consideration makes visitors leave the planet in a different way than they arrived. For when they look down on the Hurston below from the orbit, it stares right back at them asking a simple question. *Who will you be?*





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