

Dual Universe Fanstories



*Of Quarters  
And Quanta*

by Kurock

Serious Spaceship Drama

### Legal Details

The Dual Universe brand, the Dual Universe logo, Dual Universe and all associated logos and designs are the intellectual property of Novaquark S.A.S. All artworks, screenshots, characters, elements, storylines, worldfacts, lore or other recognizable features of the intellectual property relating to these trademarks are likewise the intellectual property of Novaquark S.A.S. Dual Universe and the Dual Universe logo are the registered trademarks of Novaquark S.A.S. All rights are reserved worldwide. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Novaquark S.A.S. has granted permission to *Serious Spaceship Drama* to use Dual universe lore, logos and designs for fan-fiction writing, promotional and information purposes on its website and related documents but does not endorse and is not in any way affiliated with *Serious Spaceship Drama*. Novaquark is in no way responsible for the content on the fan-fictions or functioning of the dedicated website, nor can it be liable for any damage arising from the use of this website.

Dual Universe Website:

[www.dualthegame.com](http://www.dualthegame.com)

### Publishing Details

Editor: Daniel Nusser | Munich, Germany

E-Mail: [contact@spaceshipdrama.com](mailto:contact@spaceshipdrama.com) | Discord: Agilolfing#8694

Website: [www.spaceshipdrama.com](http://www.spaceshipdrama.com)

Release date: December 19, 2019

# ***Of Quarters And Quanta***

## **by Kurock**

***quanta***

*plural of quantum*

***quantum (noun)***

- 1. The basic digital monetary unit used universally by the human race.*
- 2. (Physics) A discrete quantity of energy proportional in magnitude to the frequency of the radiation it represents.*



“Intruder!”

The old man ran, clutching his satchel, hoping to lose his pursuers in the maze of haphazardly placed crates and boxes. The sharp corner of a canister clipped him on the knee. He swore and limped on. A sudden space between the containers gave him a view of his target: the Arkship covered in its regular web of scaffolding. He lost sight of it again as he pushed himself into an alley of even more cargo containers.

“Intruder!”

The shouts were getting louder, closing in from all sides. Gasping, he stopped to lean against one of the identical containers while he caught his breath. He had hoped he would have more time since he bought his way into the Arkship construction site. More time to get closer. Close enough to place his satchel and press the detonator he had in his pocket. Close enough to have his revenge.

A soldier rounded a corner, weapon pointing at the old man. The soldier hesitated. The old man gritted his teeth against the dull pain in his knee and ran. He was rewarded with the sound of laser fire and scorch marks appearing on the container where his head was a moment ago. Zigzagging his way between the containers, he barely kept ahead of the crunch of boots. A drone buzzed overhead. He knew it would not be long before he was caught.

A shadow fell over the old man. Looking up he expected to see a fleet of drones or worse, an attack craft. Instead, he saw the massive Arkship, standing at least a kilometre tall, its strange metallic hull glistening in the sun. He had made it, against all odds. Almost casually he flung his satchel deeper into the Arkship's shadow.

A moment later, the soldiers surrounded him. He pressed the button on the detonator in his pocket. Nothing happened. A dud. All his efforts amounted to nothing. Disappointment crushed him as he dropped to his knees. With a crack, his injured knee gave out and his consciousness with it. When he awoke, he was being dragged away by a pair of soldiers. He knew he would be secreted away to some facility where he would spend the rest of his life, if he was lucky. He didn't care. He had already lost it all.

He was sitting in the troop transport when he felt the dull thud followed by a low rumbling roar. Soldiers outside were pointing at Arkship. But there was no Arkship, only a cloud of dust where it once stood.

The old man slowly cracked a smile.



Doctor Margaret Winder was the first to arrive at Room 3B, United Earth Federation conference centre, Prosperity. As expected, she thought. It was exactly two hours before the meeting was scheduled to begin. More than enough time remained for her to review her precisely timed presentation. The hologram projector flashed through the near life-like holographic images timed to match her index finger tapping the table.

She adjusted her glasses as she focused on the first hologram. It showed the latest image captured by the powerful deep space array telescopes: the neutron star. The neutron star that was ultimately responsible for this meeting and would bring an end to the planet humanity called home for thousands of years.

Nothing like the imminent destruction of Earth to galvanize people to unite against a common foe, she thought wryly. The call to action led to the formation of the UEF. The United Earth Federation was created as a global institution to coordinate humanities efforts to survive the inevitable apocalypse. That unity then almost immediately fractured into quarters. Four factions, each believing their ideologies were the best suited for the survival of humanity. Of course, the other three were demonstrably wrong. Logic would surely prevail.

Tap. Next image.

A hologram appeared depicting an Arkship under construction in one of the many UEF installations around the globe. The Arkships, as their name implied, were the near light speed capable spaceships tasked with carrying humanity to colonize distant exoplanets. The faction she belonged to, Luminous, the faction revering knowledge and wisdom, was responsible for the creation of the Arkship technology. Luminous was responsible for creating all of the technology that would make saving humanity not only a possibility but a certainty.

Tap. Tap. Tap.

The next sequence of holograms depicted an explosion destroying the scaffolding surrounding the Arkship and the slow collapse of the incomplete hull, tumbling to the ground in a rain of debris and clouds of billowing dust.

While the indestructible Kyrium hull was undamaged, as expected, returning the structure to its upright position was an inconvenient setback. An inconvenience like the small fact that there was not enough space on the Arkships for all of humanity. An inconvenience like the riots after the Generics Diversity Program was announced. Could they not understand that each Arkship had to be populated with a wide spectrum of genetic material to combat inbreeding in humanity's new settlements throughout the galaxy?

The Etherean faction, the faction that prides itself on culture and arts, suggested the "Life Lotto": A lottery meant for providing anyone on Earth a chance to win a ticket for passage on an Arkship. They also suggested the euthanasia stations. Ethereans said the one provided much-needed hope and the other an outlet for inevitable despair. Even with these measures, the Alpha faction, the militaristic faction, had their hands full suppressing the riots in strategic locations. The Alphas were also the only faction that insisted on a strict hierarchical



system where the others subscribed to more logical meritocratic councils.

She paused her finger mid tap as a clean-shaven man, with short shaven raven hair, dressed in smart black military uniform marched into the conference room. The Alphas representative, Admiral Maximillian Powers, reminded her of a bird of prey with his hooked nose and sharp eyes. Thought he could hardly be called handsome by any standards, his commanding presence left no doubt as to who was in charge. And those piercing eyes. She shivered.

Was that the time? She must have been lost in thought again. Before she could rise to offer the customary greeting, he waved her back into her seat.

“No need, Maggie,” the Admiral said as he claimed the seat at the head of the table.

Her brows furrowed reflexively.

“Excuse me. Doctor Winder,” he corrected himself, “I forgot how much you dislike that pet name.”

Winder swiped the holographic presentation away a bit more forcefully than she intended.

“A pleasure. As always. Max, ” she enunciated each word perfectly in

an attempt to not to grind her teeth in frustration. The man made her feel like a field mouse being considered for a hawk's next meal.

Thankfully she was saved from further small talk as his gaze was drawn to the newcomer bouncing into the room. Grand Merchant Rishikesh Murphy, the Emporium factions representative, arrived clad in flowing gold-silk robes that neatly hid his slight paunch. The Emporium believed in money and wealth and Murphy was known to be rolling in quanta, the universal currency. An example of his wealth was the expensive potted bonsai plant he cradled with care.

After scanning the room, Murphy failed at attempting to hide his disappointment as he didn't find what or whom he was looking for. He took a seat near the door as he jovially greeted her and the Admiral.

The Admiral's and Winder's replies went unheard as Murphy turned his full attention to a new arrival. Strutting into the room as if it were a fashion show and they her awestruck audience, Katerina Klein, the Ethereans representative, never failed to dazzle her beholders. With naturally curling golden locks, red pouting lips, and sparkling crimson dress with matching heels, 'Stylish' didn't begin to describe her. Winder looked down at her own slightly wrinkled white lab coat

before catching herself. Good looks won't save humanity, she thought with a shake of her head. Only results mattered.

Winder squared her shoulders against the confrontation that was about to begin.



Admiral Maximilian Powers watched as Rishi bounded out of his seat and rushed to present his little tree to Kat. Powers knew she was not impressed by the gift but ever the gracious one she accepted it and started to ask about Rishi's latest ventures. Rishi produced a cup and thermos from the folds of his robes, poured some dark liquid into a cup and offered it to Kat. She politely refused. What did Rishi think this was? Some sort of picnic? Both ignored the expressionless Maggie.

From the head of the table, Powers coughed into his fist with a pointed "Ahem". Kat and Rishi's backs straightened most satisfactorily. Quickly, but without seeming to rush, they seated themselves. Powers nodded for the unfazed Maggie to begin.

Powers half listened to the introduction. He already knew why they were called to this meeting, but he felt smugly accommodating today. He would allow the little circus to continue a while longer before he cut it short. Powers wondered how the Luminous' presentations always managed to come across as a monotone lecture. He mused they must have some secret training facility that specializes in making talks as boring and technical as possible.

The hologram switched from the collapsing Arkship to an elderly person's face. Powers started to listen as Maggie droned on.

"...suspect that was arrested on site. Grantham Sky has no prior record of any anarchistic behaviour nor any ties to any terrorist 'no future' agency. Upon questioning he gave the following statement," Maggie said and tapped her finger.

"Yeah, I done it," a tired aged baritone voice confessed.



The interrogation chamber was always dark and gloomy. Today it reflected Powers' mood. He was called out of his annual dinner with

the other Admirals for a little chat with what was, by all accounts, a resourceful and cunning terrorist. Infiltrating an Arkship construction site is no small feat, never mind successfully blowing it up. He was surprised, no, disappointed to find a decrepit old man in the interrogation chair. It almost seemed a joke at his expense.

He perked himself up a little as he realised solving this would be a big feather in his cap that might even get him considered for the next Fleet Admiral after the old man retires. Which could be sooner rather than later.

Powers stood behind the one way glass, listening to the Sergeant interrogate the balding man in his late sixties.

“Name?” The Sergeant stated more than asked.

“Grantham Sky,” the prisoner answered tiredly.

“Accomplices?” the Sergeant asked.

“None,” the prisoner answered slowly.

“Look, you clearly had help. Who put you up to this? Help us help you,” the Sergeant attempted to assure the prisoner. Poorly.

“Ha! Like you helped when I asked you to find my niece? Where is Nicole? Where are you hiding her?” Grantham demanded.

“Is that a confession?” The sergeant asked lamely.

Grantham sighed, “Yeah, I done it. To get my own back, you see. For my family. None of my family were chosen for the diversity program. My son got his Life Lotto ticket stolen. And you, you UEF bastards, kidnapped my niece. I got my own back and that is that.”

“Mad. Utterly senile,” the Sergeant said to himself as he shook his head. The idea of the UEF targeting a single family was ludicrous. And yet more people were getting this strange idea.

The insistence of the public and even the other factions to willfully go against what is best for humanity grated Powers. They would be forced to see if he had to plug in the compliance chip into their brains himself. He was sure Ethereans would see it as infringing on freedoms but security wins out in the end. It always does. Also, they never need to know.

Powers pressed the intercom button on the side of the wall and

announced, "Sergeant, you are authorized to install the compliance chip. Find out who he works for."



"I got my own back and that is that," Grantham's voice echoed through the conference room.

"No further statement is recorded," Maggie concluded. Tap.

The hologram changed to a younger version of Grantham, "Grantham's son was indeed awarded a ticket in the city-state of Providence. However, according to the local officials, he did not claim the ticket in the allotted time, so it was passed to the next in line. His body was found in an alley a week later. The official report states he died from unknown causes."

The thoughtful silence was broken by a soft tap. A young woman's likeness replaced the man in the hologram. "Nicole Sky, the only niece of Grantham Sky, born to his brother Fredrik Sky."

"Fredrik Sky," Rishi chimed in, "wasn't he on the team that perfected

the stasis capsules. What happened to him?”

Pursing her lips at the interruption, Maggie continued in the same monotone voice, “Fredrik Sky was caught in a flash riot and died from head trauma. His wife visited a station shortly thereafter. After that, Nicole Sky disappeared from our records.”

Powers interrupted, “It's not uncommon for people to disappear these days. We simply don't have the manpower to investigate every orphan that goes missing, even if the prisoner was telling the truth and even if he wasn't a terrorist by his own words and actions.”

“But do you have the manpower, as you put it, to protect the Arkships from this kind of sabotage?” Kat fired at Powers.

Powers glared coldly at Kat. That emotional airhead nature that was so typical of Ethereans really got on his nerves. They will all be put in their place in due time. Instead, he turned to Maggie and asked, “What do you think?”

“The Arkships and Project Rebirth must be protected, of course,” Maggie answered without hesitating, “The highest priority right now



would be defending the Arkship AI core. The general public is still hesitant over even semi-sentient AI since the ban on sentient AI over four hundred and fifty years ago. But we have no other means of maximizing our chances of success. An Arkship without its AI would be about as likely at delivering humanity to another suitable planet as alcohol-based life forms evolving on Titan.” At the blank looks she received, Maggie explained, “Which is to say, not very likely at all.”

“Irrelevant.” Rishi interjects, “This incident clearly shows the incompetence of the Alphas. I put forward the motion to have an Emporium managerial structure put in place to oversee the clearly lacking security forces.”

The indulgent slob bares his fangs, Powers almost laughed. If the Emporium were interested in something, it would mean there was quanta, Earths universal currency, to be made. However, Rishi’s plan mattered little. Powers heard the synchronised march of combat boots echoed through the outer hallway. The Captain's punctuality always met his high expectations.

Powers grinned. He would get to the bottom of the conspiracy soon enough.



Etherean Representative Katerina Klein bit her lower lip as soldiers filed into the conference room. They lined the walls and blocked the doors, weapons resting on their shoulders. No escape. They smartly saluted the openly smirking Admiral. What an infuriating man. Katerina always wanted to have a bust made showcasing his athletic build and strong jawline but after this stunt, she would have to reconsider.

“This is most inappropriate, Admiral Powers. See that your men leave immediately,” Doctor Winder ordered.

She was completely ignored.

“Admiral. Is this really necessary?” Katerina asked in what she hoped came across as a soothing voice.

“Not until one of you confesses to blowing up the Arkship,” the Admiral said casually.

“This is coercion!” Master Murphy said as he slapped the table in

frustration, splashing some of the dark liquid out of his cup, staining his sleeve. Making sudden moves while surrounded by trigger-fingered thugs, Katerina thought. Very clever.

“No. This is me asking nicely,” the Admiral stated coldly.

No one spoke or moved. The Doctor remained sitting there like an overly intellectual porcelain doll. Master Murphy held his tongue which was an unexpected change from his usual bubbly self. Katerina toyed with the tiny leaves of the bonsai in front of her. Not a twig or bud out of place. Exquisite.



Kat stood, enjoying the painting hanging in her foyer. The splashes and swirls of colour invoked feelings of hope in her as her eyes followed the line of a green sprout pushing its way out of ashen soil. The bowed tip threatening to burst into a colourful bloom, contrasted the burnt grey background of skeletal trees.

“It's named ‘The Hope of Rebirth,’” Kat said to Grantham as she played with the little square of plastic embossed with her name and address in her hand. The old man had appeared at her door

clutching a frayed satchel saying he was sent by someone she knew. And now they stood admiring her painting in her foyer.

“She liked growing flowers,” Grantham murmured, “I just want to know she is safe, Miss Klein. Not knowing is far worse than knowing the truth. The UEF must listen. I will make them listen.”

Poor man, Kat thought. He didn't know that she was part of UEF too. Little good that would do as the Etherean council barely listened to her. The other faction representatives ignored her on any important matters too. She was always told she was being too emotional. Typical Etherean they would say. Ethereans were removed from reality, living with their collective heads in the clouds. Dreamers. But Ethereans saw their reality differently. More clearly. And they shared their visions with others. Where Luminous spoke to the brains, and Alphas to the muscles, Ethereans spoke to the soul.

At that moment, Grantham's soul spoke to hers. Maybe the other factions would listen too if they are shaken enough?

Grantham opened the satchel revealing grey bricks stamped in bold red letters “Explosive”.

“I want to send the UEF a message for killing my family and stealing

my niece away. My message is to blow up an Arkship. Kramer said you could help get me into the Arkship complex," Grantham stated.

She didn't know who Kramer was, but she could not ignore the hope in Grantham's voice. Was the UEF not supposed to bring hope to the people of Earth? A hope of a life in the stars. All the posters screamed that promise at those that cared to look at them. Posters of empty promises. UEF Propaganda. Propaganda she helped create. She could still make those promises a reality. If they would only listen. She would make them listen. Only if they listen can there be change.

"I will get you into the complex," Katerina assured Grantham, "But once in, you are on your own."

"That is enough. Thank you."



"It was me," Katerina breathed. The only reaction in the room was a sharp intake of breath from Master Murphy. "I organized the little fireworks display around the Arkship," Kat elaborated.

“Why?” the Doctor asked simply.

Katerina leaned forward, inspecting the bonsai closely, as she spoke, “Humanity is more than their physical forms. Each person is full of their own hopes, dreams, and aspirations. This might be difficult for some here to understand, but people feel. We put those feelings into our creations, our art, our music.”

Katerina sighed, “With the neutron star destroying our planet, our entire solar system, we must preserve something of what humanity has created before. And now we are told none of it has a place on the Arkships.”

“But our digital libraries..” the Doctor began.

“Digital,” Katerina snapped back, “is no substitute for the physical. The data banks are pale ghosts in comparison to artistic creations that can never be replicated. A small concession is all I asked. Place the Bartholdi Electric Light on the nose of an Arkship. What is a six-meter statue compared to the kilometre high Arkship?”

“The additional mass of the statue would mean less biomatter can be accommodated in the Arkship,” the doctor informed

dispassionately.

“Don't you think I know that? More weight means fewer people can be saved. But. But aren't our arts and culture what makes us human?” Katerina pleaded. Were those tears welling in Master Murphy's eyes? He dare not cry or she might start too.

The Admiral nodded. Maybe he saw it her way now that she had explained. But her hopes were dashed as he stated:

“Arrest her.”



Grand Merchant Rishikesh Murphy wiped the unexpected dampness from his eyes as Kat was led out of the conference room by a pair of soldiers. This may cost her her seat on the Etherean council, Rishikesh thought to himself. And it was his fault.

“The Bartholdi Electric Light,” Rishikesh began to distract himself, “is a statue made of copper, gold and stained glass. The statue depicts a hand clutching a burning golden torch. It's worth a pretty quanta in its own right but it is deemed almost priceless due to its cultural

significance. It is the only part remaining of the Statue of Liberty today, the rest having been lost to various wars. The original Statue of Liberty was a gift from the nation-state of France to the nation-state then called the United States of America. Of course, there were many more billions of humans than there are today. Our city-states would not be able to accommodate such large numbers. But that is beside the point. The point is the statue came to be a symbol of freedom. And freedom is what the people of Earth crave the most.”



Freedom from the sword of Damocles hanging over all their heads in the form of the solar system destroying neutron star.

Grand Merchant Rishikesh Murphy didn't look nearly as grand having foregone his finery and silk robes for common workman clothes and a goodly splash of grit and dust. He raised his tin mug to the group gathered around the splintering table in the corner of a dingy hole that passed for a bar. The other four raised their mugs and emptied them down their own throats. Grantham coughed at the low-quality liquor.



“What will you use it for?” the first terrorist asked Grantham, nodding at Grantham's newly acquired slightly frayed satchel.

“I am going to blow up an Arkship,” Grantham said quietly to those gathered. Rishi would have spat out his drink if he hadn't heard it before. It still sounded crazy.

“Sure, buddy. Whatever you say. You don't have to tell us what you are going to use it for if you don't want to,” the first terrorist said with a laugh.

“There is enough explosive in there to level a city block,” the second terrorist added, “Very simple. Press button and boom!” He waved his mug into the air in the vague circular motions while taking care not to spill a drop.

“As long as it's far away from here. With the copious quanta good old Kramer here brought us”, the third chimed in while slapping Rishi on the back, “we can all easily retire to a tropical island somewhere.”

“Copious?”, The first guffawed, “Where did you learn such long words? A book?”

“I can read!”

“Since when?”

The three terrorists laughed and wandered to the bar to spend a small part of their new fortune, leaving Grantham and Rishi alone at the table.

Rishi slid a small business card over the table to Grantham. “Miss Klein can get you where you need to go.”

“You didn't have to help me, Kramer,” Grantham said quietly to Rishi, pocketing the square of plastic, “Why do you do it?”

“I grew up on the alleys of Prosperity, you know,” Rishi started nursing his mug, “Just me and my uncle, it was. I realised early, life was easier with quanta in your pockets. So I made sure my pockets were full using whatever means possible. I got by stealin' and scammin' in the beginning. That is until the UEF soldiers came. They blamed my crimes on my uncle. They wouldn't believe a kid could do them. Tempers flared and my uncle died. Of course, the soldiers were never charged with anything.”

“I'm sorry.”

“Not your fault,” Standing, Rishi pocketed his empty mug, “I eventually made enough to go planetside. I guess I’m saying I know what it’s like to lose my entire family to the corrupted UEF. It’s time those soldiers paid for their crimes.”



“Even your points are long-winded, Rishi. Get to the point,” Maximilian intones with a small sigh.

“Thank you for pointing out the point of my point is the following point. People are desperate and they will do anything to get onto an Arkship. The prices for Life Lotto tickets on the black market are astronomical, easily reaching billions of quanta. This leads to people paying in favours just to see a distant relative having a small chance of being saved.”

“Rishi,” Maximilian warned.

“My point,” Rishikesh answered, “is actually a few questions. How did Katerina have security turn a blind eye to let Grantham Sky onto a highly guarded facility? How did Grantham get ahold of those

explosives? The answer to both these questions is the same: quanta.”

“I knew that airhead couldn't have pulled this off without help. It was you all along, Rishi,” Maximilian goads.

“It was not me. It was the quanta. The quanta paid a few people to keep one man away from collecting his Life Lotto ticket. The quanta convinced some “no future” terrorists to part with a small cache of their explosives and give it to an old man. The quanta convinced some soldiers to look the other way as the same old man slipped into a highly guarded facility. The quanta says Alphas aren't as good at protecting places as they think they are.”

“If you think you can pull that same stunt here, you are mistaken. All the men in this room are loyal soldiers.” Maximilian said with a deadpan face. Such blind confidence.

“No, my dear Admiral. You are mistaken. It was not me but the quanta. The quanta talks you see? But why would it talk to a multitude of individual soldiers when it can talk to a single person?” Rishikesh took a noisy sip from the remnants in his cup.

“You are mad. Arrest...” Maximilian was interrupted by a soldier wearing a captain's bars attempted to hand him a communicator, “I am not to be disturbed! Who?” Maximilian was no longer grinning. He snatched the communicator and nodded a few times before stiffly returning it to the soldier. Without a further word, Maximilian stood and strode to the door. To a nearby soldier, he said “Release Katerina Klein.”

At the door, Admiral Maximilian Powers said over his shoulder, “The Fleet Admiral sends his regards, Rishi,” before marching out the door, a loyal line of soldiers in tow.



What a fiasco, Doctor Winder thought to herself after she retreated to the safety of her laboratory. She never did finish her presentation. If they didn't want to listen then there is little she could do about it. She tapped a table surface and the final hologram of her presentation filled the air. The image of a woman drifting in a vat of liquid, cables and wires extending from the top of its lid into the back of the woman's head.

"I am sorry your family got caught up in this, Nicole," Doctor Winder said with a tinge of regret.

The image animated and a Kyrium protective shell lowered down over the vat. On the side of the shell, printed in bold, were the words "CAUTION: AI CORE".

After the UEF ban on sentient AI, so much of the research was lost due to willful negligence, Winder sighed. Even if the knowledge was still out there, it wouldn't be found in time to be installed on the Arkships. A proto-sentient AI that used a human brain as scaffolding was the best they could do in the little time they had remaining. It amused her that the UEF only allowed this lesser form of AI in the name of safety rather than admitting it is all they were currently capable of.

"I expect great things from you, Nicole. Until then, sleep."

Doctor Winder tapped the table. A red prompt appeared to hover over the blurred hologram "Delete? Y/N".

The door slid open. Grantham strode in wearing a knee-brace and holding a MK3 handheld railgun, a blue light blinking slowly on his

temple. Questions presented themselves to her in regimented rows. Why was Grantham here of all places? What did it mean? The possibilities arranged themselves into the only logical conclusion.

“The Admiral sent you, didn't he?” Winder stated more than asked, “He always has been a proud man. He would not let an embarrassment like that pass. Soldiers he can silence. Talkative faction representatives less so. It is still an awful risk to take. I assume from the dust coating you, that at least one of Klein or Murphy are already dead. Perhaps both.”

Grantham gave no reaction. He stood in the door, pointing the railgun at her, light on his temple blinking faster. Winder swore. An overused compliance chip was about as reliable as a dog astronaut replacing a satellite's broken capacitor. A rabid dog at that.

“I know you are beyond understanding me,” Winder said, as she slowly shifted closer to her concealed weapon strapped to a holster under a table, “But Nicole is something special. Only ten percent of the population has the capacity to become the core and of those very few had a high compatibility ratio. Nicole's was in the upper nineties, the highest that I have yet seen.”

Did Winder imagine Grantham reacting when she said Nicole's name? "Nicole." Winder stated. Yes. A twitch. Perhaps she could break through his programming.

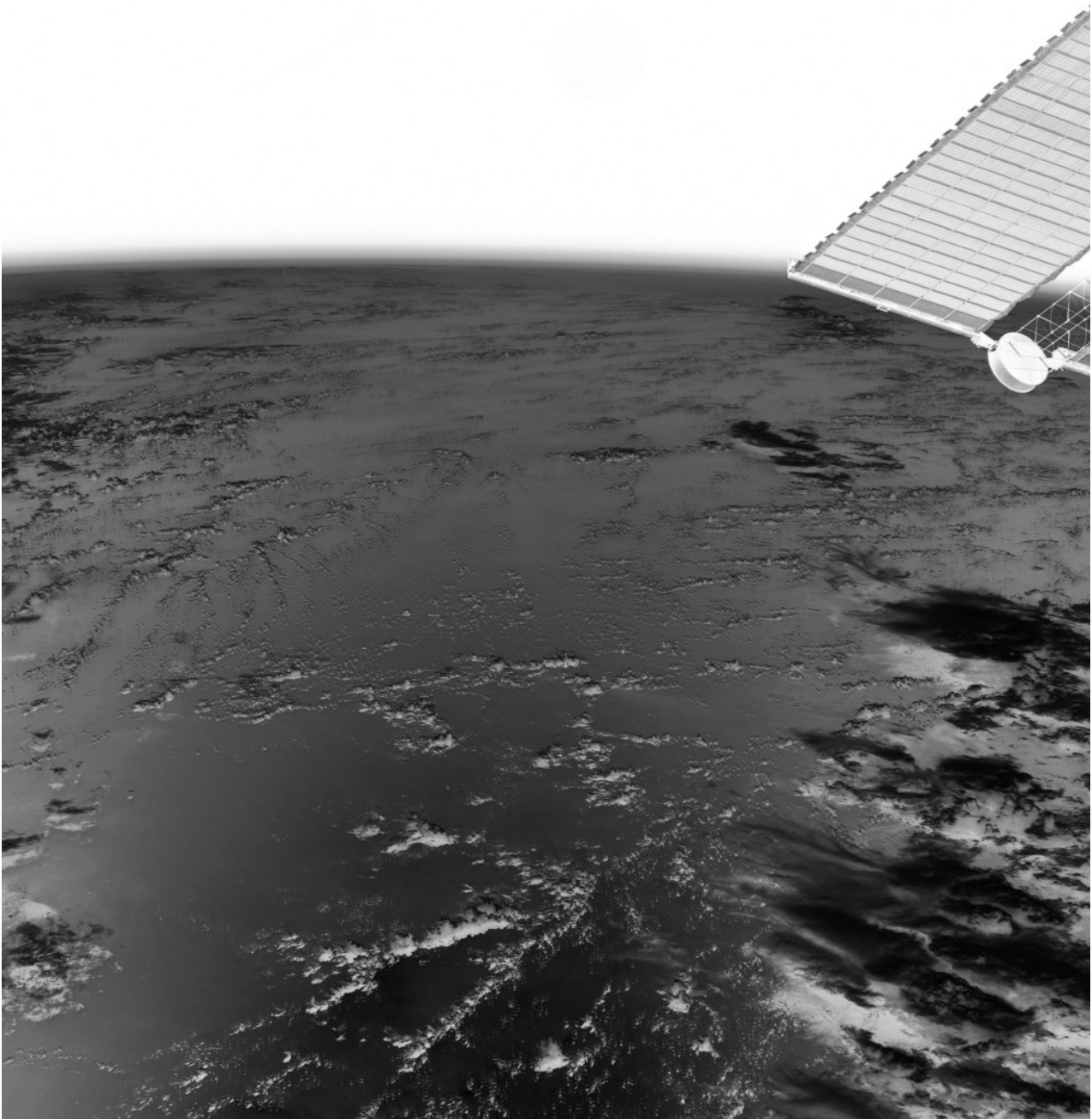
Grantham pulled the trigger without aiming at anything in particular. Pop. A small hole appeared in a canister mounted on the wall. Material tensile strengths and pressure differentials swam through Winder's mind, congealing into a messy unavoidable outcome. The wall of her laboratory exploded outwards into space, taking her and Grantham with it.

She and Grantham floated away from the double spoke-wheel space station in orbit around the blue marble they still called home: Earth. The space station's name, shared with the city-state it housed within, Prosperity, was printed in large bold blue letters across each revolving wheel. Winder was not watching as the sun rose through the Earth's atmosphere. As she asphyxiated, she was annoyed to catch herself wishing she had created a backup of her presentation.

In the completely silent laboratory, the red delete prompt illuminated the edge of the gaping hole into space. A piece of debris floated through the prompt, leaving "Yes" selected for a few seconds.



The hologram was replaced with the glowing red text “Hologram presentation: Aphelia deleted” before it too faded into the darkness.



## About the Author

Kurock is one of the more popular authors writing for Dual Universe. Between juggling his children, he lives behind his keyboard in South Africa and says he doesn't want to go outside. Going outside would mean not playing pen and paper RPGs, boardgames, and most importantly Dual Universe. Two time winner of the NovaWrimo Community Vote, Kurock encourages other authors to enter their stories in the next NovaWrimo: Just DU it. You can find Kurock everywhere in the community, most prominently running DICE, the Dual Universe gaming commission. But if you want to know more, you can read Novaquark's [Community Spotlight](#).

## Picture Credit

Page 1: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

Page 34: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

Page 36: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

## About Dual Universe

Dual Universe is a continuous Single-Shard sandbox MMORPG, developed by Novaquark and currently in its Alpha development stage. The game is taking place in a vast Sci-fi universe, focusing on emergent gameplay with player-driven in-game economy, politics, trade and warfare. Players can freely modify the voxel-based universe by creating structures, spaceships or giant orbital stations, giving birth to empires and civilizations. The planned release date is 2021, the game's pledge system allows access to the testing phase.

*Dual Universe Website:*

[www.dualthegame.com](http://www.dualthegame.com)

## NovaWriMo

NovaWriMo is Novaquark's official writing contest related to Dual Universe inspired by "National Novel Writing Month" (NaNoWriMo). Participants can submit stories and win prizes. The 2019 edition of NovaWriMo is currently ongoing and will end during January 2020.

*Rules and more information can be found here:*

[Novark Archives](#)

# Dual Universe Fanstories



Serious Spaceship Drama