

Near the Church

The streets of the city are quiet. It's night and the sky lacks stars or any moon. The whole place would be pitch black but for the occasional flickering gas street lamp and the fires in the distance. Thick columns of smoke appear to continue forever up into the night sky, underlit by the fires that started them.

There are no nearby signs of life that you can detect, except possibly for the sound of movement over there...

Walking past a church of somekind – stone, with columns and a spire, he hears rubble settle. Obviously this is the place he heard the collapse of earlier, even from here with the bad lighting, he can make out that part of the roof has collapsed.

There is a heavy thunk of rock and yes, some scrabbling – someone possibly moving in the debris. There is a faint cough heard inside.

Crashed Ship

In the flickering gas and fire light, what at first appears to be a somewhat modern building broken in two, spewing forth smoke seems to take on a more sinister aspect.

The brick frontage of only two walls of the building, surrounded by debris, cover an empty space behind – in which there appears to be a large, lumpy, leaden metal tower at an angle. Its bulbous body has a rent in the side as though it were cut open. Most of the smoke appears to be coming from the hole.

It's bigger than it first appeared – what was at first a cylinder at an angle, now as you approach closer, appears to be part of a large sphere. Hidden in the smoke and the shadows, ill-lit and covered with what appear to be a grid of squares.

It's the size of several houses, and seems to have taken out the surrounding buildings behind the brick façade that was first seen. As different angles are seen, it can also be made out that some of the smoke comes from what appear to be glowing engines at the back – although they appear to be going out now, the smoke lessening.

There don't appear to be any easy ways to reach the rent, and no obvious entrance door – unless it's buried under the rubble.

Konig explains the Faction

So, what exactly IS Faction Paradox? Well, that depends a great deal on exactly whom you ask.

To some they are just a group of insolent posers, bent on trying the patience of the High Council of Gallifrey with their “vulgar trappings of death and dried blood.” – Just a bunch of anachronistic anarchists thumbing their skull-clad noses at the old Establishment.

To others they are monsters; Worshippers of ancient things that have been lurking in the dark corners of reality since before the Dawn of the Time, and they sacrifice children yet to be born to those dark things deep within the halls of the Eleven Day Empire.

To others, they are a political movement, bent upon revolting against the countless millennia of repression by the Great Houses.

Others believe that their ranks are just pawns in a great game of chess over control of the Vortex, that the Grandfather started against his peers ages ago.

The truth is, they’re all right, although they haven’t done much baby sacrificing in a long, long time. But if you ask each of the Mothers and Fathers of the Faction; each of the 630 of them that make up the Eleven Day Parliament, you’ll get 630 different answers, and that’s just the problem. The Faction has gotten itself so caught up in its rebellion against causality, that no one really knows why they formed in the first place.

I have my suspicions, but I won’t bore you with hearsay. The only person who really knows the truth behind Faction Paradox, is the Grandfather himself, and he never even really existed.

Word of warning though, If I were you, I wouldn’t really go out looking for these answers. You might not like what you find, and that search would take you along the path the Grandfather treaded, and if you find him, you may wish you’d never existed either.

Outside Parliament

The crowd is a mishmash of strange costumes. Somewhere between a goth cosplay event and a BBC costume drama. There are frock coats, ruffs, cloaks, and many, many skull masks. All mixed in with the odd individual in bone armour – some with masks, some with them held idly in their hand. The mood of the crowd is chaotic and frenetic, bordering on hysteria.

As you trail after Mr Konig into the crowd, you can hear snatches of conversation between these odd people:

“.. about the Skasis Paradigm?”

“.. kidding, right?”

“...doesn't have to be your actual grandfather, but it can't be, say, a great aunt. 'Pity,' she said...”

“It's about time! Also, space.”

“...with this midwife yelling in German and me wearing only half a...”

“...the moral dimension isn't an actual dimension recognised by the philosophical framework of the...”

“...looking younger every day, it's getting quite beyond a...”

“Look, it all will have been going to be fine.”

“The syncotronic flux resonator is picking up some percussive resonance events. Better look into that! Could be a major event precursor.”

“Where your post-historiographic theory falls down is that it lacks an adaptive, holistic framework! That's all very well for day-to-day stuff, but it can't address the wicked problems of space-time multi-navigational infrastructure!”

Mr Konig grabs the nearest young person he sees.

“You there, Little Br.. Sister. Honestly, young bloods these days... Little Sister, what's your name? Forget it, don't care, take me to your leader!”

“Who are...?”, the young woman in victorian dress begins to ask before Craig yet again cuts her off.

“Your Fathers and Mothers, of course! I take it the Cousins are in the armour?”

“Uh, yeah, uh..”

An agitated old lady wanders past, “I'm sure I recalibrated the chronospectrograph! Well, I'm sure one of me did! I can't all have forgotten!”

“Forget it, I'll get a Cousin”, Craig lets go of the young woman and approaches one of the bone armoured. The skull mask does a double take on Mr Konig, scanning him up and down.

You overhear a young man in a crew cut and possibly a steampunk Star Trek uniform (for some reason), “Tralfamadore? Never heard of it.”

You are distracted by small group of what appear to be tight-wearing shakespearean fans:

“...either a complete breakdown of causality, or some sort of reiterative hypercausation cascade. Not good either way.”

“...could be caught in a self-repeating paradox loop. Could be worse – you...”

“...look, I understand that, but it doesn't mean anything to me unless we establish a common reference point.”

Lolita

You stare at the woman's body amongst the debris, beside what appears to be a derelict spaceship. You didn't recognise it as a body, to begin with. The first thing you see is a hatstand, propped up against the wall between some torches. After that, you see tiles, patches of off-white flooring torn out of the console room interior and scattered along the ground.

A sofa lies to one side on your right, but only half of it seemed to be there, the other being embedded in the spaceship's wall. An upturned bookcase lays beyond the sofa, vomiting out shredded pages covered in scrawls of circular, mathematical writing (High Gallifreyan).

You look at the woman at the centre of the junction, her spine pressed against the floor, her head tilted at an angle that makes her look as though she'd broken her neck. The entire left side of her body is missing. It's as if someone had drawn a line, a smooth contour, from her cheek to her ankle, and torn away everything on one side of it. Her left arm is gone.

Her right eye is intact. The left eye is in place, but the skin had been torn away, leaving a pearl of pure black that didn't even bother pretending it was organic. A thing, instead of an organ. An object.

There is some cold liquid on the floor. Water. Pooling around her body. Sucked out of the purification system that had been part of her.

You jump back, as a filing cabinet squeezes itself out of the woman's wound and is shunted across the ground - the matter left inside her is forcing its way out, piece by piece. Pus from the wound.

Back at the church

It's considerably better lit now, partially by the alien's torch, but mostly from the energy being emitted by the scanning device it appears to be carrying.

Standing in the middle of the room amongst the wreckage of pews, some of which it must have caused itself moving them out the way, the alien scans the rubble and the back wall of the church, behind the altar.

The alien is short, heavily muscled, wearing a leaden spacesuit that is obviously armoured. Its head is encased in a solid metal dome helmet with no neck.

[if talked to]

"General Kine has given orders to me to investigate this area. All other Sontarans that may have survived the destruction of their ships are to regroup. You must head towards landing zone."

He draws in his breath and you hear the sound of him licking his wide lips inside the confines of the helmet. Upon the helmet, is some kind of rank insignia. This Sontaran is not an average trooper.

"You are to proceed towards the clock tower and not to initiate violence with the Faction. While we may now be allied with them, they are not to be trusted – and you are not to tell any human or humanoid you encounter as to what you have seen here."

[coming out]

The bulky figure of a Sontaran in full battle armour marches out of the front of the church, knocking aside the already broken door of the entranceway as if it were made of paper, completely incapable of slowing his movement.

Attached to his belt are various large square devices of simple design, in his hands he holds a large bulky rifle.

Marching onto the street, he barely notices anything around him – certainly not the figures hiding nearby as he turns to face the entrance of the church. He fires, beams of orange light streaming forth from the rifle, distorting the air around them with heat. The noise of the gun a high pitched whine, the inrushing air to the plasma reduced path of the beam a steady rumble. The steady stream cuts a swathe through the supporting columns and wall of the building. The spire tilts forward slightly before collapsing straight down. Rubble spreads at the base of the church entrance in a pile around the now inaccessible entrance.

Satisfied, the Sontaran lowers his rifle and chooses another device from his belt. It appears to be a scanner of some sort. Checking the church he appears satisfied and almost lowers the scanner to leave, but then something appears on the display that interests him.

Saul

The man (or possibly woman?) in the bone armour defers to Mr Konig, even going so far as to say “Sir”.

The Cousin inclines its skull mask to one side, addressing Mr Konig, “What can I do for you M..”

He’s abruptly cut off by Mr Konig, “Craig”. Although the pronunciation is somewhat different to Sylar. Something that sounds more like “Kreeg”

”Craig Konig, is my name.”

”I take it that all the Fathers and Mothers are in session, debating what the hell should be done?”

”I don’t see how any of that is your..”

”I’m here too aren’t I? It is most certainly my concern! And my business!”

”..and?”

Mr Konig stares at the Cousin’s skull mask, making them uncomfortable.

”... and, Sir?”, grudgingly the Cousin overcomes its natural inclination to rebel against authorities – especially SOME authorities.

”..and I need to speak with them, of course! Show me to Westminster. Oh, and try not to do anything permanent to my entourage.”, Craig nods back at Jim, Sylar and David. “I need them. Therefore, so do you.”

The Cousin inclines its mask in acknowledgement, and also starts to take more interest in the group behind Craig. The attention received makes you feel somewhat uncomfortable, as though being judged on a bad performance in front of a live audience for forgetting lines you’d never learned – in someone else’s play you’ve never heard of.

[Sylar]

Sylar sees the shadow of Cousin Saul move differently than his arm and moves out of the way. A small nick appears in his cloak by his arm.

Cousin Saul immediately stops and inclines his head to Sylar, “My apologies Sylar, I did not mean to be impulsive. I’ve only recently been bonded and sometimes my concentration lapses.”

Mr Konig is highly affronted by this rudeness.

”Do NOT do that again!”

”I have no wish to... sir. If you’ll come this way.”, he starts to lead the way through the crowd.

Westminster

Clad in Victorian High Gothic façade, the towers of Westminster loom overhead.

Cousin Saul leads the group around the back to St. Stephen's entrance between Cromwell Green and the Old Palace Yard on St. Margaret Street.

In front of the entrance appear to be more Cousins in armour as well as a tall, bulky, powerfully built man in his (apparent) sixties. His hair is shaved and he appears to be in a heated debate with what could be favourably described as "a venomous old hag" just based on the genital-related epithets she hurls his way.

Saul stops and waits for them to finish. Konig, taking his cue from the Cousin, decides for a change that perhaps some diplomacy may be required.

[PCs listen in]

... the gist of the argument is what to do with the Sontarans. Godmother Quelch is in favour of sacrificing them to the Spirits whereas Godfather Morlock repeatedly points out that the Spirits have abandoned them.

[Konig goes forward]

"Koschei", Godfather Morlock greets Konig somewhat coldly.

Mr Konig reddens, "I'd not been called that for a long, time.."

As if expecting a reaction, Morlocks arm reaches out to restrain Godmother Quelch who moves forward when she realises who Konig is.

"It's good to see there is some justice in the world, after all, War King", Godfather Morlock turns to Saul.

Quelch, almost apoplectic in anger, interrupts, sputtering about "... how this [censored] Gallifreyan dares to show his face here after causing all this [censored] ..."

"Well, then Godmother, you'd be best to accompany him and make sure he doesn't get up to his usual tricks, hmm?"

Quelch eyes Morlock in disgust, "You're loving this, ain't ya?"

"And Cousin Saul, if you'd be so kind as to make sure Godmother Quelch doesn't do anything permanent to the War King, if you'd be so kind..."

Saul and Quelch accompany Konig into Westminster, leaving Morlock behind to face you

Morlock

Morlock's shadow appears to be wearing spectacles.

[To David]

"Ah, the dead man, hello. I'm sorry, but I wasn't told your name. You're reputation precedes you – and I must take this opportunity to apologise for your treatment by Cousin Shuncucker. She has always been somewhat impetuous, even when she was alive."

[To Sylar]

"Ah, one of the Banausic. Good and bad. Good that you're here to help, bad that we'll have to stop attacking your people. Not a plan of mine I assure you – typically heavy handed work by Godfather Sabbath. I'll have a word with him, but best you stay with your friends in the meantime. For your own safety of course."

[To Jim]

"I take it your companions know you're a Centillian? An interesting species if I do say so myself. But then I've always been keen on studying the non-physical feeding processes bordering on the uses for Artron Energy. I hope you haven't promised your body to anyone else in the event of your death? No? Solitary predation species are such rare finds..."

"What I find most interesting about you is that you actually appear to be from the 18th century of Earth – virtually no one else here is from that time period.", ponders Morlock.

[Parliament]

He turns and nods as there is an increase in noise coming from the interior of Parliament.

"Hmm, about least 10 seconds early in incensed recriminations there. The House must finding less solace in the additional presence of Saul and Sylar than I anticipated. No doubt someone in the audience has trotted out that old line just to insult him '... and you will obey me...' and all those shenanigans of his younger, far less droll days."

Morlock turns to almost confide in you, "I have my doubts that the War King will ever stop being a politician now, no matter the regeneration. Although possibly trauma... hmmm.."

"The War King will be a very good motivator to get folks interested in moving. He may have set the Sontarans on us, but at least he's now in the same boat. And it's sinking. It's the price you pay when you give creatures like Lolita orders they delight in obeying. They're twisted to their own purposes. Hmm, now I begin to see some correlation to the Arabic Djinn – a most apt allegory."

"He's well known for a heightened sense of self preservation from his days of wandering the universe as the somewhat pompously titled 'Master', and if the Fathers and Mothers recall his history at all, it will most certainly lend credence to his evacuation plans."

[Where are we?]

Striding up and down in contemplation, Morlock says, “Hmm, how best to explain...”

”Imagine the universe as a bottle. Now imagine that within that bottle, you have a smaller bottle that you have placed a city inside. Now take that bottle out of the larger one and put it next to it.”

”That’s the Empire in a nutshell. The problem we currently have is if you think of another small bottle inside the universe bottle – the outside is within the universe, the inside contains the Empire’s bottle and is outside the universe bottle.”

”Now if you think of the bottles as time, you’re halfway to being a Faction recruit.”