

Skies of Glass Macro History

Introduction

This document contains the macro-level back-story for Skies of Glass. Since the game will focus on local culture and events, we will only need to create enough back-story to enable smaller scale development. For more information on writing the back-story for a new game, download episode 31 of Fear the Boot.

I. Foreword

Prior to the nuclear holocaust of 2109, modern civilization was already in decline, unraveling under its industrial weight and social malaise. The lifeblood of society included too many resources that were either running perilously low or lost inside of war zones. Meanwhile, the soul of society seemed stricken by the cancer of apathy and nihilism, resigned to a downfall that was not yet inevitable.

II. The Resource Wars

Throughout the 21st century, the militaries of the world found themselves entangled in wars over dwindling sources of water, fuel, and ore. Most of these conflicts were unrelated, but historians would eventually lump them together under the common name of "Resource Wars". The Resource Wars were complicated by the rise of military and technological power in previously weak nations, guaranteeing that fields once ripe for the picking were now brier patches of the worst kind.

Weary populaces disinterested in war spurred first world nations into the development of green technologies, improved recycling, new materials, and better manufacturing efficiency. So-called "processing frames" soon dotted the landscape. These portable structures were designed to break down any available waste into more useful, constituent materials, and then move elsewhere to repeat the process.

Perhaps the most unusual technology to come from the Resource Wars was the creation of genetically modified animals for use in a wide variety of industrial and transportation roles, capable of matching the performance of the machines that had once replaced their natural-born ancestors. Farm fields -- rather than oil fields or mines -- could now sustain a portion of the nation's infrastructure. While this was no help to countries already squabbling over food and water, nations such as America with a surplus of arable land made extensive use of these beasts.

III. A Momentary Reprieve

During the presidency of H. Lawrence Bradley, the United States government unveiled Project Armstrong. The centerpiece of the project was a directive for NASA, private corporations, and interested allies to begin the industrial exploration of the solar system. This directive was accompanied by a campaign to elevate the project to a matter of national pride, bringing the citizenship together under its cause.

Though the project required a monumental investment of time, money, and research, a permanent colony was operating on the moon by the end of Bradley's presidency, complete with a test mine for helium-3 and sufficient facilities to house several dozen workers and assemble the ships that would later colonize other parts of the solar system. Throughout the decades to come, the moon base was significantly expanded and eventually used as the launch platform for an even larger, more self-sufficient colony on Mars.

While Project Armstrong was a success in one regard, its drive to elevate national morale backfired. The generation that put permanent settlements beyond Earth was so pleased with itself, that it grew prideful and complacent.

IV. The Humbling of Man

In 2101, Jonas Maxwell, a retired Governor of New York, took the oath of office and began his Presidency. He was a tireless diplomat who had done a great deal of good for the world even before taking federal office. To deflect criticism of his defense credentials, he had chosen Reno Haller -- an outspoken hawk -- as his Vice President.

Throughout Maxwell's first term, he placed great emphasis on building bridges with America's adversaries in Asia. However, his incorrigible Vice President took every opportunity to criticize these negotiations, suggesting that America's best path to unity, security, and economic freedom was to revitalize its neglected military and engage in "a few good wars". When talks with China collapsed, it was blamed on mistrust created by Haller's posturing. The veracity of this statement was widely debated, but since Haller had become a political liability, he was dropped from Maxwell's 2104 ticket in favor of the moderate Senator, Marsha Lorenz. Outraged, Haller disappeared from public life.

Skies of Glass Macro History

Near the end of Maxwell's second term, as Vice President Lorenz was preparing her own presidential campaign, Haller surprised the U.S. by reappearing to add his name as an independent candidate. He was laughed off as an outsider with minimal support. However, when tensions with China escalated into full war in July of 2108, a string of humiliating military defeats -- culminating in the landing of Chinese troops on America's west coast -- transformed him into the nation's favorite candidate. Haller rode that wave of support to an easy election win.

Though Haller made his best efforts to focus America's military on the now-defensive war, he was fighting an uphill battle with an army that was not up to the task. In despair, he gathered his advisors to devise a radical new plan to turn the war around. What came next was a string of events that would change the world forever.

At 2:00pm on February 24th, 2109, America launched its nuclear arsenal at China and her allies. According to the sketchy, early reports, the missiles were not aimed at military and industrial targets, but instead at population centers. Stranger still, nuclear detonations were observed over countries that had been largely neutral in the conflict. The response from America's enemies was both swift and predictable, destroying the U.S. and her allies.

Since the world's media network collapsed less than an hour after the American launch, details on the reason for and execution of the attack are scarce at best. Survivors have only the rumors from surviving military personnel to work from, and their statements shed little light on the affair. Most spoke of an emotional breakdown suffered by Haller over the loss of America's Pacific seaboard, in which the panicked President ordered the launch, causing a great deal of confusion amongst his subordinates. Others spoke of a more calculated conspiracy. Unfortunately, the only people that knew for sure were believed destroyed by the warheads.

V. Following the Bomb

The few urban centers that had been spared a nuclear fate went through a terrible collapse as shock paralyzed most citizens, leaving some in such despair that they simply wandered about like ghosts until finally falling dead. Those that found the will to act were stricken by panic, starvation, and disease. For each story of selfless heroism, there were many more stories of crime and abuse, since few cared much for order when their very lives were on the line.

The remote communities of the world fared better than their urban cousins. They were neither targeted by the nuclear warheads nor heavily reliant on the now-extinct cities. However, even they had to adjust to the new order of things. Scavengers were looking hungrily toward their rural towns and isolated farms, and neither help nor supplies would come to relieve them.

Yet as the dust cleared, humanity found a way forward. Local governments, churches, criminal gangs, vigilantes, and entirely new organizations stepped forward to take control. Even in the most chaotic places, people grouped together in the interest of survival. And though humanity had a lot to relearn about surviving off the land, farms and workshops sprang up, and mankind limped along.

Regarding the nuclear holocaust, some looked longingly to the safety of the pre-bomb age, while others cursed it for birthing this fate. However, the pressing question was what to do with the fallen world and what sort of society to build from its ashes. This is the new trial of the human race.