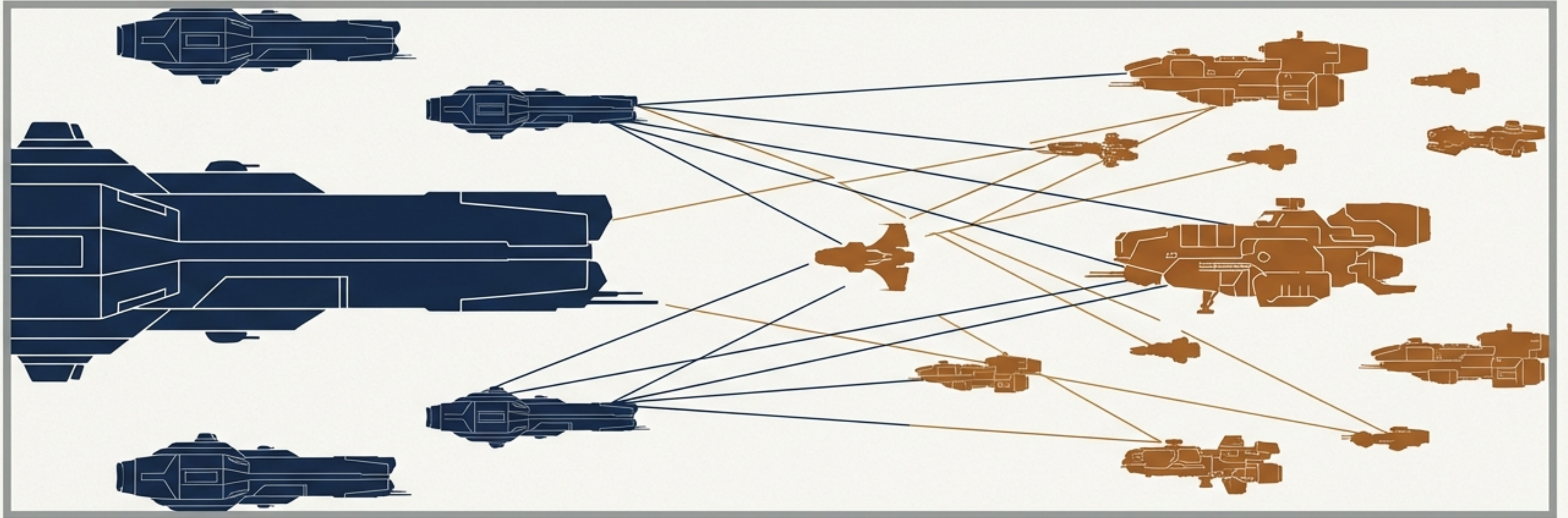


# Two Futures for Humanity



A Player's Guide to the Ideologies of the Settled Systems

# A Choice Forged in War



The Settled Systems are defined by two powers: the United Colonies and the Freestar Collective. Not long ago, they were locked in the brutal Colony War, a conflict that ended with a decisive Freestar victory at the Battle of Cheyenne in 2311. Today, an uneasy peace holds, but their deeply intertwined histories and opposing philosophies shape every corner of the galaxy. Your journey will force you to engage with both, and your allegiance will help define the future.

# Path One: Order and Progress in the United Colonies

A Space Thriller of Political Intrigue

As the oldest governing body in the Settled Systems, the UC represents structure, military might, and a unified vision for humanity. Joining the UC Vanguard thrusts you into a grand conspiracy, peeling back layers of political maneuvering and high-stakes action. Their questline is a journey from a simple assignment on Tau Ceti 2 to the heart of a secret that threatens the entire UC.



# Path Two: Freedom and Justice with the Freestar Collective

A Space Western on the Galactic Frontier

In the Freestar Collective, independence is the highest virtue. Their story begins with a classic western trope: a bank robbery standoff in Akila City.

As a Freestar Ranger, you are the law in the untamed corners of the galaxy, investigating crimes and unraveling a mystery that threatens the rugged individualism the Collective holds dear. It's a tale of straightforward justice and satisfying conclusions.



# The Tools of Ideology: A Comparison of Rewards

## The Uniform of the Elite



Earn a legendary quality spacesuit and extremely powerful weaponry. Top-tier tactical gear for a top-tier military force.

Receive a Freestar deputy's outfit and a beautiful revolver to match the space cowboy aesthetic.

## A Badge and a Revolver



## A Gilded Cage of Compliance



You are granted a swanky penthouse apartment overlooking New Atlantis. A symbol of status, but one that requires citizenship to acquire.

## The Ultimate Tool of Independence

The Star Eagle, a powerful Class A ship with strong weaponry and ample cargo space. The Gamer calls it the "best and most practical reward" between the two factions.



# A Cultural Divide: Bureaucrats vs. Cowboys

## United Colonies: Sterile Halls and Red Tape



The UC is filled with paper-pushing bureaucrats and characters who can be rude and annoying. Their government environments are often sterile and lack personality. The shining capital of New Atlantis hides a literal undercity, The Well.

## Freestar Collective: Earnest Hearts and Dirt Roads



The people of the FC are more laid back, earnest, and genuine. The Rangers wear their hearts on their sleeves. However, their capital, Akila City, is criticized for its “demoralizing infrastructure,” with dirt roads and wooden walls despite being a major power.

# Beyond the Rewards: The Price of a Passport



The gear is temporary. The ship can be replaced. But the true difference between these factions lies in a single, fundamental question: What is a citizen? To understand the choice before you, we must look past the surface and examine the very foundation of United Colonies society. The answer is more complex, and more troubling, than their recruiters let on.

# SERVICE GUARANTEES CITIZENSHIP!



This is the core tenet of the United Colonies. Citizenship is not a birthright. It is an exclusive status that must be earned. Even if you choose the 'UC Native' trait at the start of your journey, you are not a citizen. You are merely a resident, a lower class of person, until you have served the state.

Source Reference: As one player on Reddit noted, "UC citizenship requires being in the military apparently, I don't think being born there is good enough.. It's like Starship Troopers in that respect where you 'earn' your citizenship."

# The Path to Privilege

For the player, citizenship is the reward for the Vanguard questline. For an ordinary resident, the path is much longer.



## The Vanguard Route

The “fastest” path. Join the Vanguard, pass the piloting exam (Tier 3 minimum), and complete 5 key missions: *Supra et Ultra*, *Grunt Work*, *Delivering Devils*, *Eyewitness*, and *Friends Like These*.



## Time Commitment

An average person requires a minimum of **ten years** of service. An ace pilot might earn it in 3. The player achieves it in a matter of hours.



## Other Paths

Service can also be completed through the regular UC Navy or in civil service branches like science and administration, though these are described as highly competitive and harder to get into.

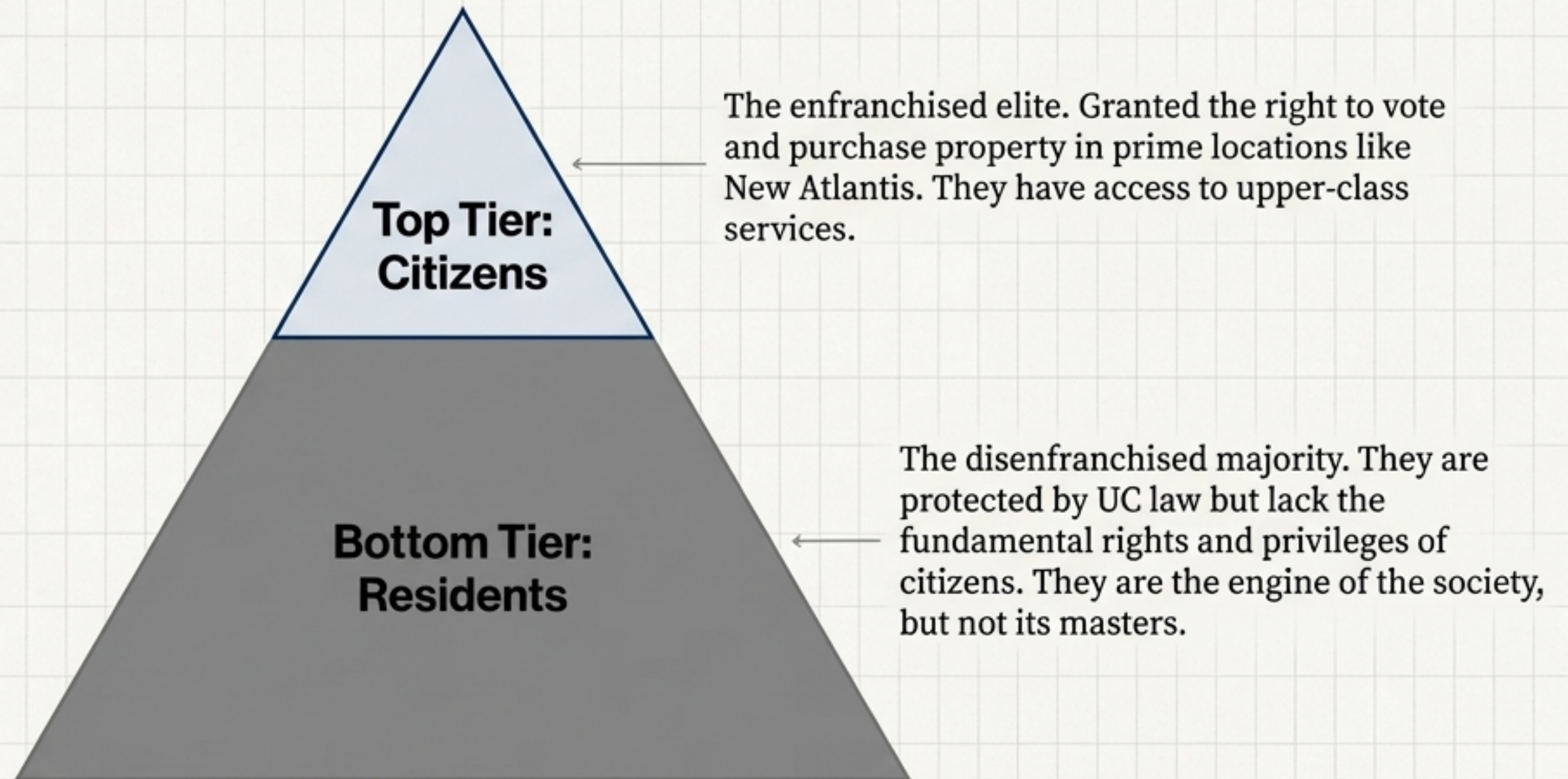


## Prerequisites

A clean legal record is required. All bounty fines must be cleared before you can be considered.

# A Society of Tiers

The UC's system of earned citizenship inevitably creates a two-tiered society, a "caste system" as described by players. Upon completing the Vanguard quests, you are not just granted citizenship—you are awarded "Class One Citizenship," implying other, lower tiers exist.



# The Voice of the Settled Systems

This system has not gone unnoticed by those living under UC rule. The shiny surface of New Atlantis hides a darker reality, and players have been quick to analyze its implications.

“The more I learn about the UC, the more I regret working for them... they literally have different levels of citizenship?”

“Any tiered system of rights enfranchisement inevitably leads to abuse and exploitation.”

“The Well exists and people live there is proof enough. Like the sewer society in Demolition Man.”

“UC citizenship is legit evil. You need to serve in a branch of government to grab it... The UC keeps suffrage to a minimum. Evil as F.”

# The Freestar Collective: An Imperfect Alternative

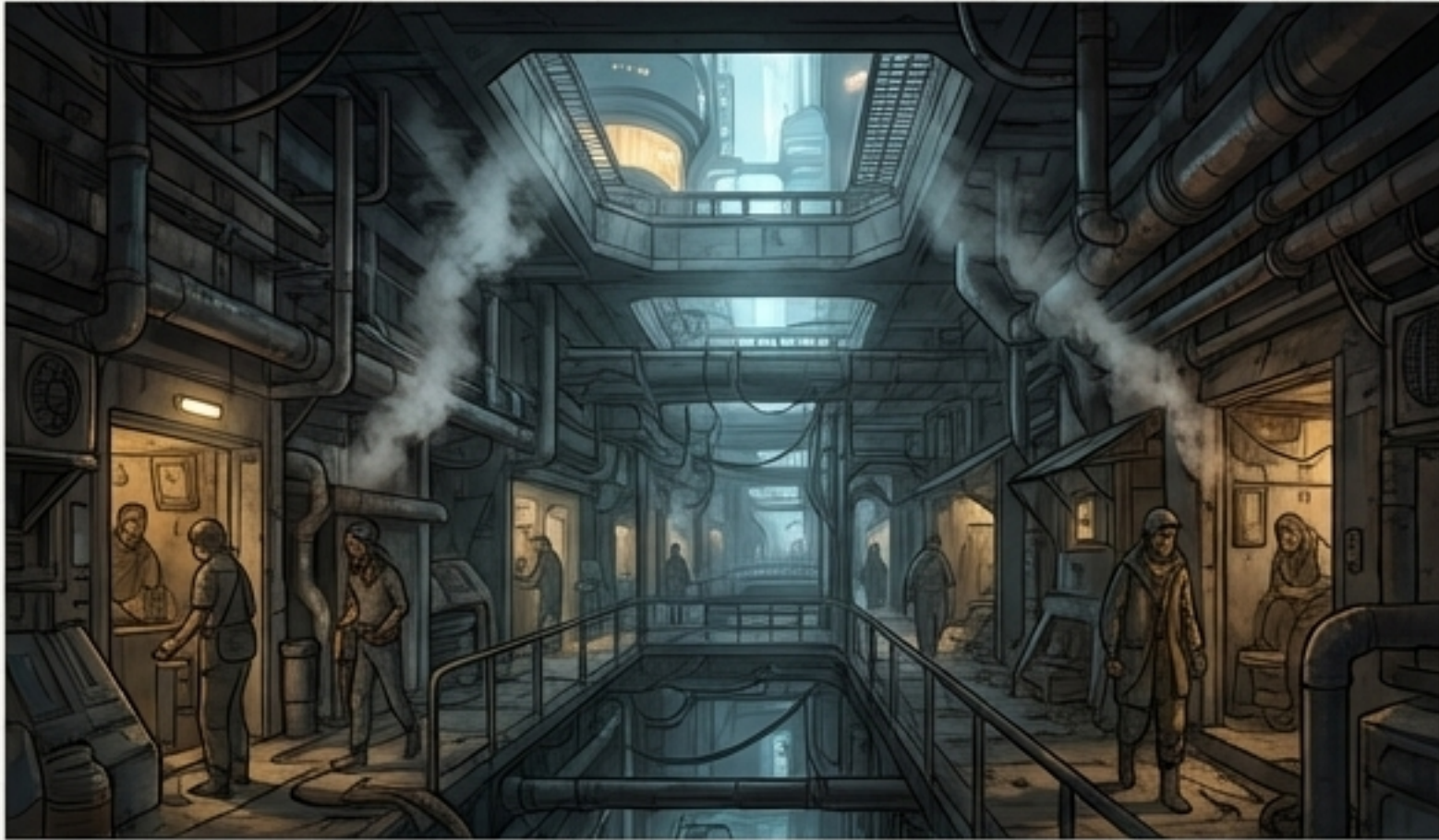


**Key Insight:** Instead of a stratified society built on service to the state, the FC is at risk of becoming a feudal society built on service to corporations. As one observer puts it: “The Freestar Collective is maybe a generation or two away from straight up space feudalism.”

## The Freestar Collective

The Freestar Collective offers a stark contrast. There is no mention of tiered citizenship; freedom is for everyone. However, this extreme libertarianism creates its own form of dystopia. The FC is described as a “borderline corporatocracy” where corrupt businessmen on “The Council” hold immense power, sometimes more than the Rangers themselves.

# A Tale of Two Underclasses



## **The Well.**

A product of a managed, authoritarian society with weak social programs and a rigid caste system. Residents are segregated and forgotten, living directly beneath the feet of the citizens they serve.



## **The Stretch & Ebbside.**

A product of a hands-off, libertarian society. Corruption is rampant, lawlessness is common, and the government would rather let people starve than spend a dime to help them.

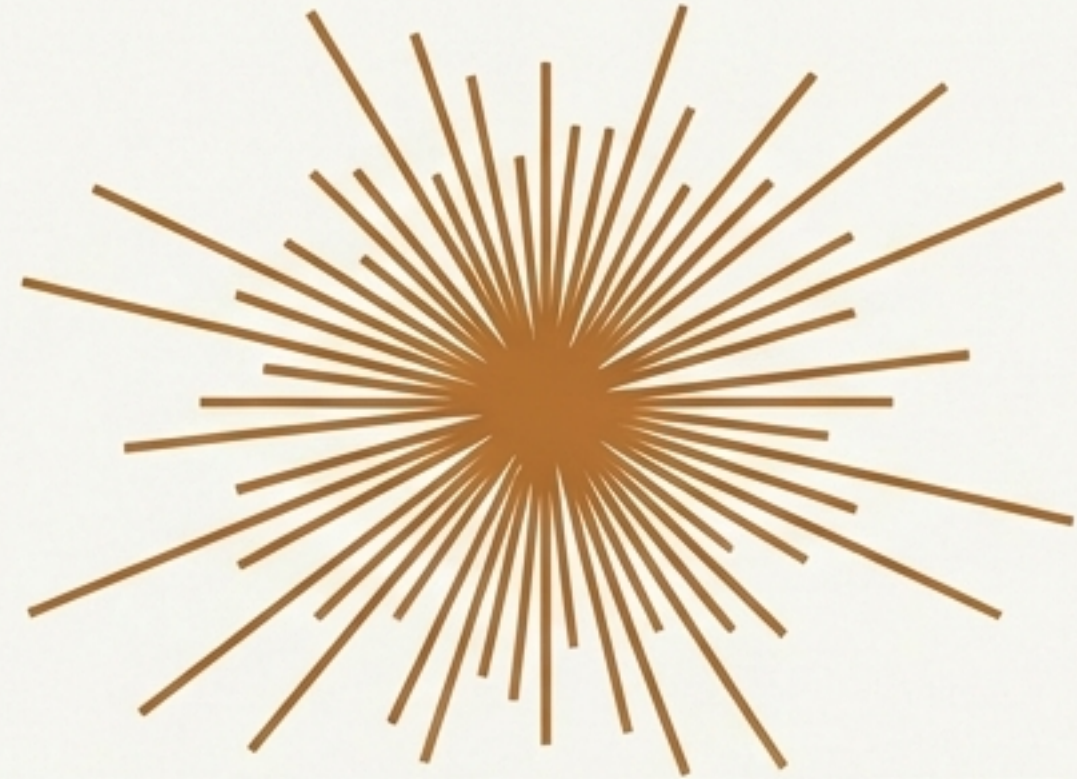
# Two Visions for Humanity's Future



## United Colonies:

An authoritarian, technocratic republic. It promises order, security, and technological advancement. In return, it demands service, compliance, and the acceptance of a rigid social hierarchy.

*The Question: What will you sacrifice for the good of the state?*



## Freestar Collective:

A libertarian, individualistic confederation. It promises absolute freedom, personal responsibility, and boundless opportunity. In return, it offers little security, infrastructure, or protection from the powerful and corrupt.

*The Question: What will you do with your freedom?*

# Order Through Service, or Freedom with Flaws?

The choice between the United Colonies and the Freestar Collective is not one of good versus evil. It is a choice between two imperfect, deeply human attempts to build a future among the stars. One path offers the stability of the group at the cost of the individual. The other champions the individual at the cost of the group. The future of the Settled Systems is a choice between these imperfect ideals.

