



ARISTEIA!

***ACCESS GUIDE TO
THE HUMAN SPHERE***



LIVE

HexaDome

San Pietro de Neoterra

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! VIEWERS ACROSS THE HUMAN SPHERE!
VISSIORAMA WELCOMES YOU TO CLOSE TO THE STARS, YOUR ONE-
STOP-SHOP FOR ARISTEIA! NEWS AND ANALYSIS. GIVE IT UP FOR
OUR HOST, VINCE MCMAHOGANY!**

- Thank you, thank you, dear viewers. The off-season is coming to an end this week, so it's time for us to dip our toes in the data stream before diving head-first into an exciting new season of *Aristeia*! As usual, I'm accompanied by five-time *Bahadur*, FinalBoss. Good evening, Boss.

FINALBOSS

VINCE MCMAHOGANY

LYDIA VÁSQUEZ

RHOD BOZZO

- Thanks for having me, Vince. Good evening to everyone.

- Boss, we are about to inaugurate the twenty-fifth season. In this momentous anniversary, how about we embark on a quick review of the history of the sport?

- How about it indeed, Vince.

- What we're seeing now are some of the first fights to take place under the *Yajurveda* banner.

- Dude, this is a nostalgia gut punch for me. In the early days, the sport was a much simpler affair: a series of synth duels broadcasted live. It was senseless, beautifully executed violence. There weren't any minor leagues or anything, and barely any sponsors. Of course, it can't compare to the athleticism and strategic thinking of today's players.

- Flying plastic parts and spraying synthetic fluids—that's *Yajurveda* for you. All participants were ALEPH Aspects operating artificial bodies.

- Such as 'Mama' Parvati.

- Exactly, FinalBoss. Parvati is still raising hell, despite the fact that we went from synth-only to an almost exclusively human competition.

- *Hoho!* Speak of the devil, Vince, here comes Shona Carano. A brutal fourth-season debut. Literally unforgettable; I still dream about this woman.

- No witty monikers for Shona, Boss?

- That's Mrs. Carano to you. Show some respect for a pioneer, man.

- Duly noted. There had been a few attempts by enthusiasts and even a former military man, but Mrs. Carano was the first non-augmented human to beat ALEPH's Aspects, which had been designed to mirror *homo sapiens'* biomechanics.

- If I close my eyes, I can still see her swinging that broadsword. Oh, man! Look, I'm getting goosebumps. ALEPH does a great job of recreating historical figures like Miyamoto 'Boring, in both senses of the word' Mushashi. But the audience craves something fresh and extemporaneous, and Shona Carano was art in motion. She showed the Sphere something real, something raw, like a 48-ouncer at a *Steakhouse Deluxe*.



- She did put on a show, Boss, and it helped *Yajurveda* reap record-breaking audience numbers across the Sphere, even on old Earth, where the show's reception had been lukewarm at best. It was a breakthrough that caused sponsor's ears to perk up. After that, everything changed for the better.

- These are lines of aspirants that came from every corner of the Human Sphere. They all wanted to be the next Shona Carano and share in her glory: Mark Friedssen, Othus Palarvi, Sarah Murray... *Hoho*, man, look! It's Purple Chimera!

- Purple Chimera was probably the first 'character' to participate in *Aristeia!* Before him, every aspirant fought under their real name. But then came Bakunin's own Purple Chimera and the merchandising figures exploded.

- Vince, it's such an old concept, isn't it? It's show business lol! You need a gimmick; you need a persona; you need a theme to go with your fighting style, knomsayin'? That way the audience can become emotionally invested in the outcome. Think about 'The Legend' Maximus; he's an icon. PanOceania is the greatest superpower in the Sphere, and Maximus embodies their values and aspirations."

- No one remembers anymore, but your given name is Andrew Hill and you're a Chimera as well, aren't you? How many implants and grafts have you gone through in your career, Boss?

- Dude, my mom's the only one who calls me that anymore. I think I was at fourteen by the time I retired. I'd like to point out that Purple Chimera opened the way for other mixed martial artists. His work was very important to Nomad players, especially fighters from Bakunin, like me. He's a personal hero and a mentor.

- As I'm sure he is for your compatriot 8-Ball, whose career and fighting style we'll examine later. Moving on! The tenth season defined the current competition modes: *Singles, Teams, and Open*.

- The introduction of competition modes was a huge deal, Vince. In *Singles*, for instance, we finally started seeing different weight divisions and weaponry categories. No longer would 250-pound fighters face off against featherweights, and no more bringing a knife to a gunfight. With the added balance, everyone had to refine their technique, and the game was all the more spectacular for it.

- That's right, Boss. And that showed in the audience peaks, particularly during the finals. Look, the fourteenth season, the first *Bahadur*.

-The Koorie Queen herself, Kylie Cosmen, everyone bend the knee. She inaugurated the title of *Aristeia!* Champion, or *Bahadur*, nowadays the greatest honor a player can aspire to. She must have cojones the size of a circular ship to step into the arena wielding a boomerang.

- This era also saw the establishment of the *Aristeia!* star system as we know it today. Cosmen starred in several holodramas, and three of her songs made the top of the charts on prominent Maya music channels.

- I'm guessing Rhod will know more about that facet of her life, Vince. Nimble as a puma and with the voice of a siren, she was a manager's dream.

- Since the days of the Koorie Queen, we've had some sporadic *Bahadurs*, and a few who have held the title several seasons in a row.

- Yes, Vince, and this season brings a new batch of aspirants who will be duking it out against *Bahadurs* dying to prove they still have what it takes. The level of competition is at an all-time high, and I'm loving every second of it.

- We're watching a quick sequence now. There's Maximus, *EiBola*, Rosebud, Wriezen... and FinalBoss, of course! Our very own champion, co-host and sports announcer here on *VissioRama*. The final images belong to a very stern Miyamoto and, that's it, the reigning *Bahadur*, Wild Bill.

Dear viewers, this has been a very quick look at the twenty-five years of history of *Aristeia!* FinalBoss, would you accompany us as we take a closer look at the eight members of the two teams that will be kicking off this season?

- No power in this world can wrest me out of this chair, Vince. This season is shaping up to be amazing. The Teams category is filled with squads that are more than the sum of their parts, and that's why they put on a more dynamic, more colorful show than the *Single* matches.

- Then, please, help me welcome to the stage the rest of the team. Our analyst, Lydia Vásquez, will be bringing scientific rigor to the table with a slew of technical data on each player and each team.

- Good evening, everyone.

- And the rookie, Rhod Bozzo, who knows everything there is to know about the lives of our heroes outside the HexaDome.

- And also everything that goes on in the locker rooms... Viiince! KissKiss!

MIYAMOTO MUSHASHI

"KNOW YOUR ENEMY; KNOW THEIR BLADE"



The Edge Unremitting

-Created by ALEPH for exclusive use by *VissioRama*, the end result of 'Project Duelist' was a Recreation of a renowned master swordsman born in 16th century Japan. Today, Miyamoto Mushashi is newly celebrated as an *Aristeia!* fighter by sports enthusiasts and martial arts buffs alike. His exploits have been described by the specialized media as 'awe-inspiring' and 'eye-catching.' Here's a quote: 'Mushashi possesses the skill of a master, the heart of a lion, and the élan of a tiger. We are witness to the re-rendering of a legend in the present day.' Talk about a rave review!

Remember that holders of *premium VissioRama* accounts can have their say in our live show. Lydia, Boss, what do you think? Is Miyamoto on his way in, or out?

-The numbers are very clear, Vince. Miyamoto is the best-ranking player in the general *Lever-V* scale right now. His partial numbers are some of the most balanced in the League. Consider that he's the third best scorer behind Gata and 8-Ball, all the while managing to maintain his lead as a killer.

-All fair and good, but still his name is often accompanied by qualifiers such as 'outdated', 'sub-optimal' or 'stale'. What say you, Boss?

-I have to take my share of the blame for this. For years I've been calling him '*boring, in both senses of the word*', but today I want to stand up for him very publicly. I've fought against him and by his side, and I have to say *Aristeia!* wouldn't be what it is today if it weren't for that meat grinder of a man. If I had the cash to put together a team, I would want him covering my frontline and no mistake.

-Plus he's a trendsetter. According to my analysis, his *Ken No Sen* strike is the most devastating move across the tournament. It's also the most mimicked in the minor leagues.

-Sure is, Lydia. And he makes it look so easy, standing there fixed in place like a mushroom, and then suddenly two of his opponents fall to the ground, hacked to pieces. *Hoho!* And then that bastard takes a restrained little step to the side, you know, to recover his stance, and *boom!* He's somehow made his way inside the scoring zone.

-Boss, you sound like you actually admire the guy.

-Oh, I envy the hell out of him, Vince. I envy him with that washed-up kind of jealousy that churns my insides like an expired yogurt. For him, each fight is still a duel to the death, a challenge that could be his last. The moment he stops believing that, he'll walk out, and oh how we'll miss him.

-I believe you're on good terms with him. Do you think you could put in a good word for us so he'll give Rhod an interview at some point in the season?

-Now you mention it, he owes me one after certain events following a night of heavy drinking. I might call it in just to see Rhod clench his ass each time he asks a question, not knowing whether he'll get an answer or a wakizashi to the throat. *Hoho!*



The Irrestible Black Sheep

B-BALL

"YOU KNOW ME; I SEE AN OPENING, I GOTTA PLAY BALL"

-Thank you, Vince. I'm at the press section, waiting for the players to show up for the pre-match interviews. Here comes one... Baller! Baller, a minute, please!

-*E mālie*, Lydia. You know I always have a minute for you.

-I appreciate that, Baller.

-Maybe thank me by freeing up a couple hours for me?

-Errr... sure thing, Baller. Recently you knocked out one of your most vocal opponents using one of your trademark combat maneuvers. What's your martial arts background? What do you call your fighting style? Did you train in Yu Jing or in a Nomad Commercial Mission?

-Hey, slow it down, babe! I'm still catching my breath here. Martial art? It's called Baller-Fu, what else? I'm the fucking Mandelbrot of Manhandling, I'm a kinetic poet and my medium is randomness; you know that. I just go with the flow. I'm sure Miyamoto would spit a *haiku* about the no-mind and cherry blossoms, but that's not my flavor. I learned to do my thing in the *dojo* of the streets, sweet-cheeks. There's hoods in Bakunin you need to know how to defend yourself.

-You're eighth in a lineage of *Aristeia!* victors, and after five seasons you have yet to win a title. Are you feeling under pressure? Have your fans lost hope that you will ever attain the rank of *Bahadur*?

-Lyds, what my fans want is to watch this body in action. That's inside the HexaDome—and outside also, you dig? You wanna talk pressure, let's talk about the pressure I put on Maximus every time I kick his steel-plated ass. One day I'll finally dislodge the stick he's got in there. Or let's talk about how I run circles around Billy, and how he starts eyeing his watch like he's late to his own wedding.

-You don't have many friends among the other athletes, with the notable exception of Gata. Is there more than friendship there?

-Puddycat is a nice girl. She's a breath of fresh air and let me tell you, it gets pretty stuffy in this business. She's the best wingcat a man could ask for.

-Speaking of star power: after wrapping up filming for *There Is No Plan B*, actress Ruth Kiesler described you as...

-An animal, I know.

-It doesn't bother you?

-Course not. I am an animal: untamed, instinctual, raw. I also happen to be an awesome anti-stress teddy bear, in case you're interested. *Grrr...*

-Thank you for your time, Baller.

-Thank you, babe. Hey listen, I'm throwing a little impromptu shindig in the dressing rooms after the game. If you show up, I'll give you another minute or two. Be there, Lyds.



MAJOR LUNAH

"YOU CAN RUN, BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE"



Deliberate and Lethal

-Don't be fooled, the stripes on our next fighter's shoulders are not just for show. Major Lunah holds the rank of *rā'id* in the Haqqislamite army, but the service sheet of this deadly sniper is so deep in the Top Secret rack we would need clearance to do her laundry. We know she participated in high-risk missions during both the NeoColonial Wars and the Ariadnan Commercial Conflicts, and we know she's seen some action on the Paradiso front, but dig a little deeper and you come out with a big handful of nothing and the word 'CLASSIFIED' stamped on your forehead.

The secrecy surrounding her past has only inflamed the imagination of the audience, and the ever-growing interest on her has elevated her to the status of unofficial spokesperson for the Haqqislamite military.

-She's definitely earned that position, Vince. Major Lunah has brought military-grade discipline to the wild world of *Aristeia!* Audience figures indicate that, in a sport where many affect military trappings and extol the virtues of war, Major Lunah gives the fans a taste of the real thing and they are eating it up. Furthermore, she has proven that a sniper can play as crucial a role in a team as any other combatant. Before she stepped into the League two seasons ago, folk wisdom dictated that long-range firearms wouldn't cut it in the hectic, fast-paced conditions of the HexaDome. Well, Major Lunah changed that.

-Hold it there, Lyds! There's more to this than figures and charts. Lunah shines because she's made an art of her tactical role, and that's because she thrives on competition. We can all agree that the level of precision that she brings to the table—with her stern rictus and her martial demeanor—are a sight to behold. Right when your eyes are fixed on the back-and-forth action near the score, *BANG!* She's peeking from the shadows on the other end of the 'Dome, she's smoked a key player, and the opposing team's strategy is suddenly falling apart. And when she does one of her trademark *ricochets*—Hoho, man! Makes me want to jump out of my seat.

Dude, two seasons in she's already taken some of the big dogs down a peg or two. That vid where she put Maximus out of commission with one shot? Maximus! You see that shit? It was like—*Bang! Game over.* It went viral. And in my time something like that would have been in-fucking-conceivable. And oh, boy, was Wild Bill pissed when he heard some analysts were calling her the perfect counter to his game. It was some of the best drama of the entire season!

-If I might interject, Boss, in her latest statements Major Lunah has been promising a sort of denouement at the end of the season. And I quote: 'The pieces are falling into place and soon my true mission in this arena will be accomplished.' Well, I don't know what she's got up her sleeve, but I sure as hell will be tuned in for whatever it is. Here she comes, the unflappable marksman! Major Lunah!



The Rising Star

GATA

"THERE'S NO SPEED LIMIT ON THE WAY TO THE TOP!"

-Our next guest has followed a very unique path to be where she is today. Most aspirants are scouted from the minor leagues before they make it to the big time, and they forge their careers fighting and training for years before they have a chance to prove their mettle against the top *Bahadurs*. But that's not the case with tonight's guest, am I right, Rohd?

-Absolutely, Vince. Not only has she never set foot in a minor league HexaDome, she's also the youngest athlete to make it to the professional circuit at only eighteen. That's not to say she's had an easier time of it than her teammates, no sir.

-Quite the contrary, Rohd. Before she became the household name she is today, she was just another orphan eking out a living on the streets of the Belagua favela on Acontecimento. But then she caught the eye of her current manager, notorious headhunter Sophia Kreuziger.

-I can't imagine what she must have been through, poor thing...

-You certainly wouldn't guess her humble origins if you saw her now. Please welcome to the stage our dearest Gata, Cátia Aparecida Saraiva!

-Thank you for having me, Vince. I can't believe I'm sitting next to Rohd Bozzol!

-Thank you for making it here tonight, Cátia. We know you keep a demanding schedule with all those adverts, interviews, even acting for the big screen! How do you even find the time to train?

-It's Sophi. Whatever else I'm doing, she makes me work out four or five hours every single day.

-No days off? Not even after blowing the roof off 8-Ball's cathouse of a mansion all night? Forgive my saying so, Gata, but that boy's way too intense for you. Speaking of intense, nobody saw you leave the morning after. Between us, do you have something to confess, a little HexaDome romance?

-Hahaha! Don't be naughty, Rohd. *O Bolinha* is just a good friend. He's always good for a giggle and he's helping me a lot with my career."

-Well, whatever help you're getting, it's working! The *Aristeia!* League is opening tomorrow. How will you juggle that with the promotion of your latest movie? Plus, there's the release of your fashion collection, *Purr by Gata*. My daughter Stephanie's dying to see what you have in store for us."

-You can thank Sophi for that, Vince. She's an amazing manager and she can draw up a mean schedule. I don't know what I would do without her! Your daughter won't have to wait long; Sophi says we're releasing this very weekend, right after the premiere of *From Paradiso with Love*.



PARVATI

Built for the HexaDome

"TACTICAL ANALYSIS COMPLETE. CONFIDENCE OF VICTORY AT 97.83%"



Today's opening match inaugurates the twenty-fifth season of *Aristeia!*, a momentous anniversary for a spectacle that stands head and shoulders above the ocean of media content supplied daily by Maya, our ubiquitous inter-planetary data network. The popularity of *Aristeia!* is such that it unites every corner of the Human Sphere, and even mega-celebrities like Go-Go Marlene follow the sport and its stars devotedly.

Let's do some history. Twenty-five years ago, ALEPH—the sole extant AI in the Human Sphere—designed a series of models for *Yajurveda*, the entertainment show we know today as *Aristeia!* The original pitch for the program was a series of fights between synthetic bodies controlled by competing ALEPH Aspects. One of those Aspects was Parvati. But, twelve seasons ago, Earth's own Shona Carano applied as a participant and changed the game forever. She showed the Sphere that a non-augmented human could go toe to toe with ALEPH's Aspects, and even beat them. The audience fell in love with Carano's fierce personality and physicality as she cleaved synths in twain with her broadsword. The trail Shona blazed was soon followed by more human fighters, and the Aspects were slowly phased out.

Only Parvati remains in the game, and she's the last vestige of the original scope of the sport. This Aspect's learning module was programmed to plot ways to protect her teammates. After years of experience, she has specialized so much that she's become an irreplaceable symbol of the sport in the minds of many sponsors. Of course, Parvati is devilishly effective at restoring her teammates to fighting shape, but what keeps her eye-to-eye with the great Bahadurs is her ability to score, cause casualties, and especially give her team a boost when they need it most.

One of the biggest questions at the beginning of each *Aristeia!* season is what form Parvati will take this time. She tends to choose a body in accordance with that year's theme. Last season, HexaDomes the Sphere over took on the appearance of the Ariadnan wilderness, and we got to enjoy watching Parvati rock the body of a rugged mountain woman. This year, however, Parvati has gone for a retro style that revisits her original form, updating that classic design but reminding us that deep down she's a highly sophisticated android.

After so many years in the spotlight, Parvati is a bona fide international celebrity, recognized for her work both inside the HexaDome and outside. And, with her learning module always collating and processing every game and every fight, we have to ask: is there a ceiling to Parvati's evolution?



The Enigmatic Gunslinger

WILD BILL

"I'VE DANCED WITH THE REAPER MORE'N A FEW TIMES MYSELF.
NOW SHE DANCES TO MY TUNE"

-He says his name is James Butler Hickok, and he goes by the same moniker of his 19th Century namesake. After five seasons we still have no clue whether he's a Recreation concocted by ALEPH, some kind of marketing stunt, or just a very dedicated cosplayer. Whichever it is, if there's one thing Wild Bill is good at, other than shooting, is capturing the spotlight.

-So true, Vince! I remember when he debuted five years ago. What an entrance! We were so excited about commenting on the first professional match on the planet Dawn, and this motherfucker rides into the HexaDome on horseback. On a fucking horse, Vince! I had to do a spit take.

-I remember it as if it was yesterday, Boss. A beautiful tobiano-pattern pinto colt, white on chestnut. And Bill was riding it wearing full cowboy garb, complete with a hat, a duster coat, and two handcrafted, pearl-handled revolvers. A sight to be seen!

-Don't forget the watch, Viiince! That wonderfully vintage timepiece he's always checking. They say it's a real old-west piece, completely analog!

-Of course, his iconic pocket watch. And the first words out of his mouth left us awestruck, didn't they, Lydia?

-If I remember correctly, he said: 'Howdy, pardners! My name is Wild Bill and I'm here to win this Aristeia! thingamajig. Now that I survived the Day of the Dead Man here in USAriadna, I need me a new challenge.'

-Hoho! You need brass balls to show up like that. But it worked out for him, that it did.

-Boss, how couldn't it work out? Have you seen his smoldering predator eyes? The way he swaggers and makes his spurs tinkle? Hot! And what about his oh-so-green waistcoat?

-He's all that, Rhod, but his green waistcoat didn't make him a *Bahadur*. It was his spectacular performance in the HexaDome that did it. Can we get some figures, Lydia?

-Sure thing. Since his debut, Bill has been consistently among the five most dangerous players of the league, averaging two-point-two-three kills per game. Thirty-one-point-three percent of his victims were inside the scoring zone. Furthermore, his tactical score in the *Lever-V* scale is nine-point-seven out of ten. I remind you that this scale is compiled by the official slave AIs of the league using a holistic analysis. Wild Bill's survival ratio is sixty-three-point-four percent, a figure that soars over the average of most other *Bahadurs*, such as FinalBoss."

-Guuurl, why d'you have to throw that statistical shade at my boy Boss?



hEXx3r

The Nomad Witch

"EXITUS ACTA PROBAT"



Nobody knows much about our next highlight star save for the scant information supplied by the league. She's a zealously private person with no known romantic or even familial relations, and her public appearances are limited to those contractually imposed on her by her sponsors. In her own words, 'Access Denied'.

Her fans blame her strained reputation on 'smear campaigns' by PanOceanian media, but the truth is she has slipped comfortably into the role of a termagant and used it to boost her mystique. So far, it's served her well. Her brand recognition numbers are outstanding and she's a well-loved figure among non-conformists and antiestablishmentarians even beyond the borders of the Nomad Nation.

Followers and detractors alike agree that she, more than any other hacker in the brief stretch that the discipline has been applied to *Aristeia!*, has changed the face of the game forever. In record time, hEXx3r has proven capable of turning the tide of a match by sending her opponents into disarray at the worst possible moment. Armed with nothing but software, hEXx3r gives the heavyweights a run for their money. She freezes them, exposes them, and then throws them into ambushes choreographed at the speed of thought. We've often heard players mutter about "that Nomad witch" as they're carted out of the HexaDome.

hEXx3r hails from the Nomad mothership Tunguska, and her... unusual hacking device reflects that. League organizers assure us that it complies with every regulation, but its inner workings are not known to the public. Experts believe hEXx3r's mask is part of a neural interface and that her gloves play a key role in giving her software access to the HexaDome fixtures, but beyond that it's all conjecture.

Compounding her mystery, recently leaked telemetry data from last season has sent the Maya community into a theorizing frenzy. Whenever hEXx3r fires her hacking device, her norepinephrine and dopamine levels shoot through the roof. In layman's terms, this means her brain is subject to massive strain accompanied by a severe increase in heart rate and blood oxygen content.

In the absence of an official explanation, everyone has their own speculation as to the meaning of the leaked data: from esoteric alien technology powered by the feedback of the stress it induces on the host organism, to experimental military backup wetware that allows her to assume direct control of the HexaDome, to the idea that hEXx3r herself was grown in a vat in some Praxis lab researching human telekinetic capabilities. My personal favorite theory cuts through all the mumbo-jumbo very elegantly: it's just witchcraft!



The Acclaimed Hero

MAXIMUS

"THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS PAIN, ONLY VICTORY"

-The audience is bringing down the HexaDome with their cheers! Truly, today Maximus has proven he will not be denied.

-You can say that again, Vince. A fitting end to an edge-of-the-seat match! Even I was rooting for Maximus at the end of his badass defense. Somehow he was able to withstand everything his opponents threw at him, and still muster the strength to push 8-Ball right out of the scoring zone for the win. Way to cap an amazing season!

- And we're back! That was a clip of Maximus doing what he does best in the finals. The man is a living legend.

-That's why his fans say he's the 'A' in *Aristeia!*

-I still can't get over how effortless he makes it seem, like... he's just this one dude hauling a ton of plate armor, and he looks like he's been nailed down to the scoring zone. Knomsayin'? But really he's the keystone of his team. We saw earlier how he shifted his posture juuust enough to deflect Wild Bill's gunshots with his *Jotum Shield*. Those shots would have sent Parvati back to the infirmary.

-With plays like those he shows he's on a different level.

-He's been around for a while, that's for sure.

-And we heard some buzz about retirement not long ago. But, seeing him now, he's in as good a shape as he's ever been. He's not leaving the game anytime soon."

-No way, no how, Vince. Maximus is one of the most well-rounded *Bahadurs* in the league, and a leader to his team. With his mastery of positioning he doesn't need to be as mobile as other players, or even bring a lot of firepower. He can succeed on his own terms, defending the zone, disrupting the opposing team, or protecting his teammates. For eight seasons he's been at the top of the game, and something tells me he hasn't peaked yet.

-That's exactly what makes him a PanOceania idol: his 'defender' persona. People see him as the shield of justice that protects us all.

Alright, dear viewers, we're coming up to the end of our show. Next up, we're connecting live with the HexaDome in San Pietro di Neoterra. Both teams are coming up to the vomitorium gates, ready to kick off a new season.

-Look, Vince! 8-Ball is facing off with Maximus! His body language leaves no room for interpretation, Vince; this is going to be a grudge match.

-Now Maximus is pointing to his Jotum Shield and beating his chest in a 'come and get it' gesture. Maximus is in his home turf, here. He's pointing at the PanOceania crest shining down on the HexaDome and holding his hand to his heart. The audience is eating this up!

Gotta respect this man's sense of showmanship. A well-timed smile at the camera and people lose their dang minds. The king of the hill will not be upstaged!





LIVE

HexaDome

San Pietro de Neoterra



-My dear viewers, this delightful evening we shared is coming to an end and I must say *adieu*. But before I go, join me in a big round of applause for the team that makes this show possible.

Someone has to collate the stats and cross-reference the data, and who better to crunch the numbers than Her Lady of the Figures, Lydia Vásquez! Thank you so much.

-Thank you, everyone.

-Fresh from the arena, armed with the personal experience to make sense of all the action, he's the only chimera with verbal incontinence, Andrew Hill! Thank you, FinalBoss!

-Thank you and your audience, Vince.

-We had to wrestle him out of a velvet sofa, and still he wouldn't let go of the silk cushions. He's the sexiest rookie of the season, the King of the Strut, Rhod Bozzo! Thank you.

-You'll get them pillows out of my dead hands, Vince. I love y'all!

-Wrapping up, let me leave you with a taste of what's to come, a little drop of ambrosia to whet your appetite. In our next show, we'll have with us the team that's on everyone's lips this season, none other than *Soldiers Of Fortune! Valkyrie, Laxmii, Señor Massacre, and Hannibal!* They will be taking our questions live, and you can submit yours from your *premium VissioRama* accounts.

I'm Vince McMahogany and thank you for sharing these few hours with us. But don't tune out! In just... seven minutes the action will reach a boiling point when we connect live with the opening fight of the season.

**Remember the first rule of *Aristeia!*:
don't blink or you'll miss it!**

ARISTEIA!

ACCESS GUIDE TO THE HUMAN SPHERE

Welcome, citizen.

This is the Interactive Access Guide to the Human Sphere. This guide was designed for people who, like you, are at risk of disorientation due to having lived in isolated regions— such as Ariadna—or having been resuscitated after a long period of cryopreservation or personality data storage. My name is Sibylla and I will be your online virtual counselor.



The Human Sphere is the collective name for the group of star systems inhabited by humans. There are eleven of these systems: Earth, Neoterra, Acontecimento, Varuna, Yu Jing, Bourak, Concilium, Svalarheima, Paradiso, Human Edge, and the latest addition—Dawn. [\[You can find more about these systems and their nations here.\]](#) O-I2, an international organization endowed with great powers, has been tasked with maintaining peace, enforcing the law and fostering collaboration between all nations.

The main human nations (PanOceania, the ultramodern Hyperpower; Yu Jing, its advanced competitor, born of Asia; Haqqislam, the new Islam of philosophy and humanism; the Nomads, anarchistic space wanderers; Ariadna, tough colonists stranded in a hostile world; and ALEPH, the omnipresent AI that pulls the strings from the shadows), along with the Tohaa, an alien race with its own mysterious agenda, must join forces to fight the outsider forces of the Combined Army and its master the EI, an alien artificial intelligence that plans to integrate the Human Sphere into its immense, all-devouring galactic empire.

O-I2 is in charge of all tasks that require supranational coordination, such as the maintenance and supervision of ALEPH, Humanity's Artificial Intelligence, which is in turn responsible for the administration of the major communications systems and infrastructures. ALEPH is the product of state-of-the-art quantronics (quantum-based electronics) and a key element in the advancement of the Human Sphere.

Part of the scope of O-I2 is to maintain the system of Circulars, immense craft used for transporting freight, passengers and smaller ships through the wormholes that connect the star systems. Their fixed, circular routes are the lifeblood of commerce across the Human Sphere.

The data network of the Sphere, its cyberspace where information is stored virtually, is known as Maya. ALEPH's home and uncontested domain, Maya is the greatest source of both knowledge and entertainment. The entertainment industry lives and dies in the Maya network, where cinema, music, sports and arts are on constant offer, along with every other conceivable form of recreation. The latest craze in extreme contact sports is *Aristeia!*, a circuit of professional duels and armed combats where life is always on the line.

Modern day medicine allows for indulgences like *Aristeia!*, and furthermore has opened the possibility of corporeal immortality—albeit a very costly, technology-based immortality.

In order to help you keep up with the day-to-day affairs of the Sphere, the Access Guide has an automatically updated news system that you can access at any time during your recovery process. [\[Access\]](#)

Cubes are sophisticated and widespread wetware implants, that is, quantronic microprocessors on a biocompatible substrate. Inserted in the cranium, they can register and store their wearer's personality and memories. Once the wearer dies, and thanks to advances by Haqqislamite researchers in the synthesis of the drug known as Silk, the Cube can be re-implanted into a Lhost (LiveHost), a clone-like biosynthetic body. The resuscitation process is exceptionally expensive, in part due to the high price of Silk, a monopoly held by Haqqislam. Additionally, those institutions in charge of regulating Resurrections—religious organizations in the case of PanOceania and the Party in Yu Jing, for example—restrict their licenses only to a select few who have proven their value to society.

«International» Backup troops deployed to Paradiso in fear of new Combined Army attack. The recent rise in small-scale incursions in the western front might indicate that the alien menace has regained strength... [\[More\]](#)

A combination of innovative biogenics and experimental Cubes, paired with the immense computational power of ALEPH, has led to the development of Recreations: sophisticated Lhosts carrying faithful simulations of the personalities of important historical figures. Recreations are always extremely charismatic, and their skills have been adapted to the modern age so that they can work as diplomats, soldiers, spokespeople and artists. They are bestowed by ALEPH on nations or corporations capable of justifying and financing their creation.

[\[To know more, access: Miyamoto Mushashi\]](#)


The most commonplace piece of quantronics, owned and used every day by most citizens, are wrist-worn personal computers, collectively called comlogs. Comlogs allow their wearers to be constantly connected to Maya and their local data networks. These devices have myriad functionalities: user ID, communications, data storage, news management, media consumption, mobile office, gaming, schedule management, medical monitoring, audio and video recording, payment, and many others. Information and images are displayed holographically or directly onto the user's retina by means of special contact lenses or inconspicuous eye implants.

«Sports» Wild Bill beats contenders Rosebud and Wriezen in hair-raising duel. Former gunman, Indian fighter and current *Aristeia!* star Wild Bill has put to bed the rumors about his physical condition in a 2v1 duel that called to mind... [\[More\]](#)

Comlogs have two parts: a small quantronic microprocessor and memory storage, usually implanted surgically inside the forearm, and an outer hardware platform, the wristband, which includes all network interfaces, holoprojectors, sensors, antennae, etc. Size and functionality vary wildly depending on model and price point. The smallest, most slickly designed are usually more expensive, while heavy-duty or military-use models tend to be more bulky and resistant. Comlogs have become an integral part of the life of most citizens.

Their use is intuitive and straightforward, but nonetheless this Guide includes an interactive tutorial should you need help with your comlog. [\[Activate Tutorial\]](#)

«Sports» Glaurung Cup enters its homestretch! Final preparations for the Challenge of Champions, the clash between the winners of the international tourneys. The legendary champion who gave his name to this elite competition held an official presentation of the event in San Pietro of Neoterra, host to this year's Cup... [\[More\]](#)



«International» Ariadna to denounce violations of Exclusion Zone by PanOceanian mining interests before O-12. PanOceanian forward units have been spotted escorting corporate prospection teams in areas of... [More]

«International» Haqqislam announces further increase in price for Silk and its derivatives. In a move that has been described as an attempt to pressure the O-12 Senate into accepting its new package of measures... [More]

«International» Political and military tensions on the rise on Svalarheima's borders. Recent statements have kindled hostility between Yu Jing and PanOceania... [More]

«Sports» Voltage team maneuvers into prominence. A streak of victories at the hands of Hacker-Pilot Olga Stolyarova has propelled the Nomad team to the top of the rankings in the current Remote racing season. The fabled PanOceanian team, Lightspeed, has acknowledged the threat to its long-held supremacy by... [More]

«Entertainment» The Go-Go Marlene Show still number one in Maya ratings. In a recent interview, the mass media diva said she 'couldn't be happier with her audience and with Oxyd,' which remains the most-watched Maya channel.

***Aristeia! is the ultimate sports spectacle in the Human Sphere.
Get into the Infinity universe!***

OPERATION: ICESTORM

STARTING POINT

2
PLAYERS



Are you new to **Infinity**? No problem! **Operation: Icestorm** is the perfect introduction to the Infinity universe, containing everything needed for two players to take their first steps into the game. This box includes an introductory rules booklet that explains the basics of the new edition of **Infinity N3**, guiding the players through a tutorial campaign of five scenarios. It also includes fourteen excellent metal miniatures, two of them exclusive to this introductory pack, along with all the markers and templates needed to play the tutorial campaign, six customized faction dice, and a complete pack of easy to assemble scenery, ready to play. **Operation: Icestorm has all the basics in just one box!**

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