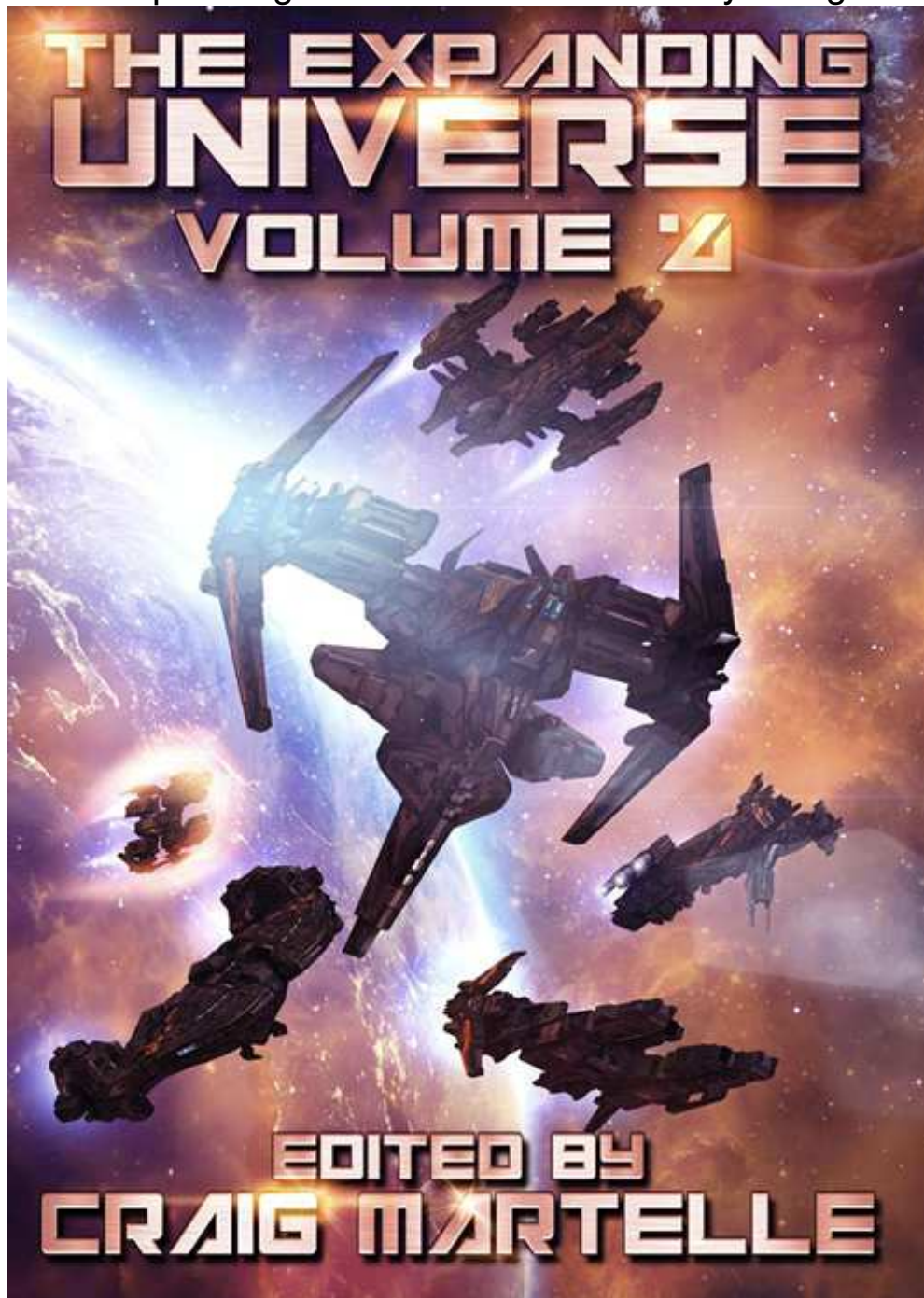


# Lights Out Behind the Scenes

Based on the short story by Kayelle Allen  
from The Expanding Universe Vol 4 Edited by Craig Martelle



# Lights Out

By Kayelle Allen

<https://kayelleallen.com/lights-out-save-mankind/>

This book is a behind the scenes look at the characters and setting in Kayelle Allen's short story, Lights Out, found in the Expanding Universe Vol 4, edited by Craig Martelle.

*He can save mankind.  
After he does one important thing.  
Die.*

Join the Ghost Corps, they said. You'll live forever, they said. You'll save mankind, they said. They didn't say that first he had to die.

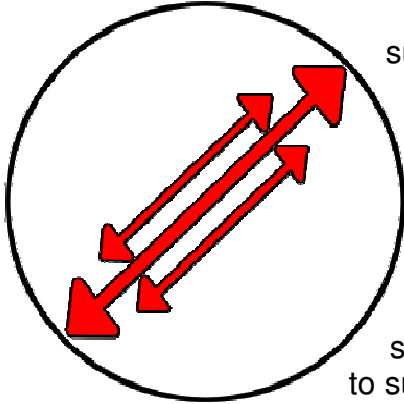
When Tornahdo signs on the dotted line, he puts his life into the steady hands of the mighty Ghost Corps. Three grisly deaths and three agonizing resurrections later, he's assigned duty on the space station Enderium Six.

He's facing his most dangerous mission yet, the very reason the corps exists.

Do they expect him to win? Fat chance. Tornahdo and his team are already dead and this mission is code named "Lights Out." No, there's more to this than he can see.

To discover the truth, he must face an unbeatable, unkillable enemy, and this time--somehow--find a way to keep himself alive...

## A peek at the Ultras



In the twenty-seventh century on Earth, genslaves were supreme among all humanity's genetic creations. They fulfilled man's every desire. They recuperated from disease and injury so fast they were all but immortal. Their strength far exceeded man's.

Bred to require little rest, labor-genslaves performed menial and repetitive tasks, with enough intelligence to work, but not enough to aspire beyond their station.

Warriors possessed unmeasured strength and massive size. They fought humanity's wars, died so man didn't have to suffer, and were reborn to fight again.

The physically weaker classes had more intelligence. Healer-genslaves obtained vast amounts of skill in medicine and designed cures for disease. Artists created beauty. Nurturers and teachers cared for humanity's children. Scientist-genslaves created additional genslaves, to make man's life even more pleasant.

All classes were designed with genetic shackles of obedience, making them content to remain subservient.

While humanity relaxed, secure in a position of power, genslave-scientists created a new order of beings with free will, unhampered by genetic restraints.

They took the name Ultra, and did as they pleased. Ultras were brains *and* brawn. No matter how difficult the problem, Ultras solved it.

No matter how horrific or grisly their wounds, Ultras survived. Disease did not touch them. Starvation did not stop them. Even death did not hold them long.

The creation of Ultras changed *everything*.

## Give Us Freedom

When Ultras demanded freedom, humans claimed them soulless, inferior, unworthy, and undeserving of equality. Humans tried to silence them, and when that failed, punished them. The Ultras seized their liberty by force.

Emboldened by the Ultras' success, other genslaves rebelled, and began calling themselves Ultras as well. The First Cycle of Wars devastated half the galaxy.

In the Terran Crescent and the Colonies of Man, power tilted toward Ultras. They ruled the starways. Ultras tightened restrictions and limited trade, allowing mankind meager freedoms, and no more mercy than man had shown them. Humans served, subservient to their former slaves.

## Human Pure Movement

Some Ultras concealed their genetic differences and abilities, and lived among humans--as human. The rumor that genslaves hid among them spawned the Human Pure movement. Purges wiped out non-human traits and those with enhanced sensory perceptions. Humanity weakened itself by outlawing genetic healing or correction. They identified anything and anyone considered *unnatural*. Anyone *different* hid it or faced death by fire, from which Ultras could not revive.

For the human underground, the weapon of choice became a flamethrower. But humans were still downtrodden. Under Ultra rule, few had rights. Humans needed a way to fight back.

How do you kill an unkillable foe? You send in a soldier who is already dead...

## ***Ghost Corps - Shadows of the Fallen***

*The Ghost Corps symbol - a black funeral urn on a white field or... white on black?*



Our story begins with a simple premise. The immortal race called the Ultras is impossible to defeat. No matter how many times you kill them, they come back.

But what if you bestowed human soldiers with that ability? Would it give humanity a chance?

What if, by infusing the blood of an immortal Ultra into a special ops soldier who'd died, you could resurrect a fighting machine with the ability and courage to defeat an Ultra? And with the recuperative powers of an immortal, what if that soldier could turn

the tide for mankind?

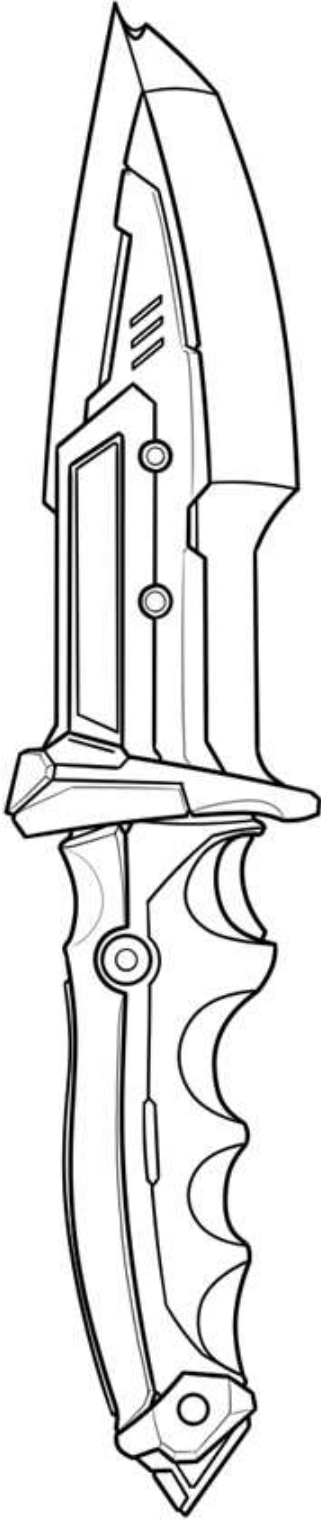
Enter the Ghost Corps.

The motto, *"the death and rebirth of a ghost is the salvation of mankind,"* became a rallying cry that changed the war. The Ultras agreed to peace talks on Enderium Six, a space station near the center of the galaxy in the Colonies of Man, not far from the planet Cape of Hope.

## ***Ghost Corps Weapons***

Most weapons used by the corps involve burning, searing, or chemical attacks and may include plasma and energy fields, targeted beams, explosive blasts, plus high-speed and/or directed projectiles. The weapons below were commissioned on DeviantArt with sci-fi weapons artist Nano-Core. Curious about the feasibility of these weapons? Check out a sample of my research at the end of this booklet and info about the artist.

## Charon's Blade



# Charon's Blade

Art by Nano-Core for KayelleAllen.com

Named for the Terran mythological Charon, god of the Underworld who ferried the dead to their final resting place.

Charon's blade is a heavy dagger with a hidden poison-filled core for hand to hand combat.

### Technical

Upon stabbing, a twist of the handle/blade ejects poison into the victim. The poison kills humans on contact but renders Ultras unconscious only the first time it's used. They quickly gain immunity.

Upon learning of this effect, Pietas, leader of the Ultras, required his elite corps of followers to poison themselves as a preventive measure.

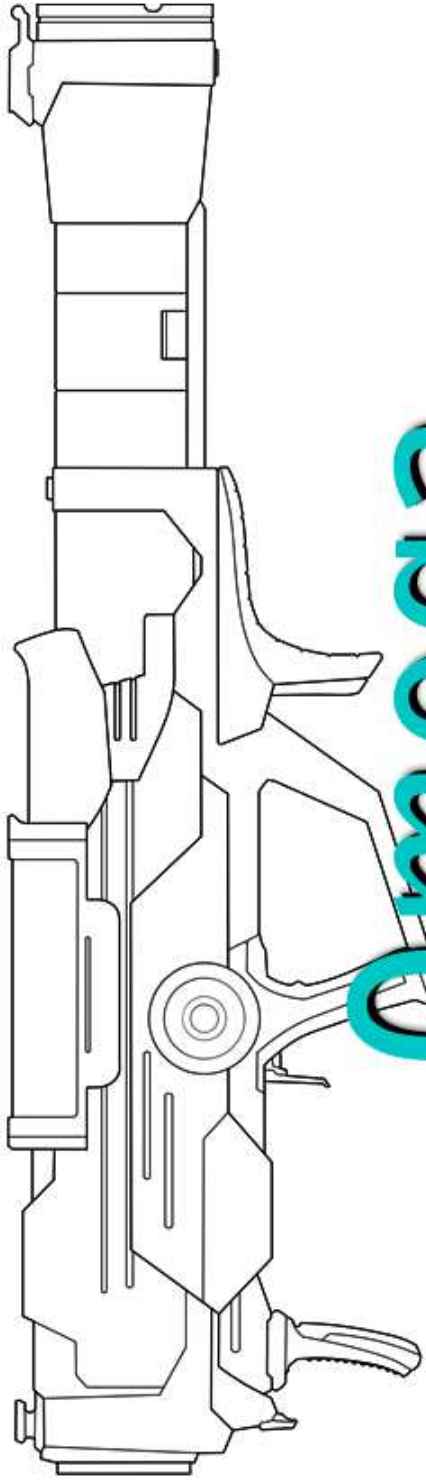
### Noted for

Users must wear protective gear. Blade can kill or maim its wielder.

Pronunciation: Kha-ron



## Omega



# Omega

Art by Nano-Core for [KayelleAllen.com](http://KayelleAllen.com)

This shoulder-carried launcher fires exploding warheads.

### Technical

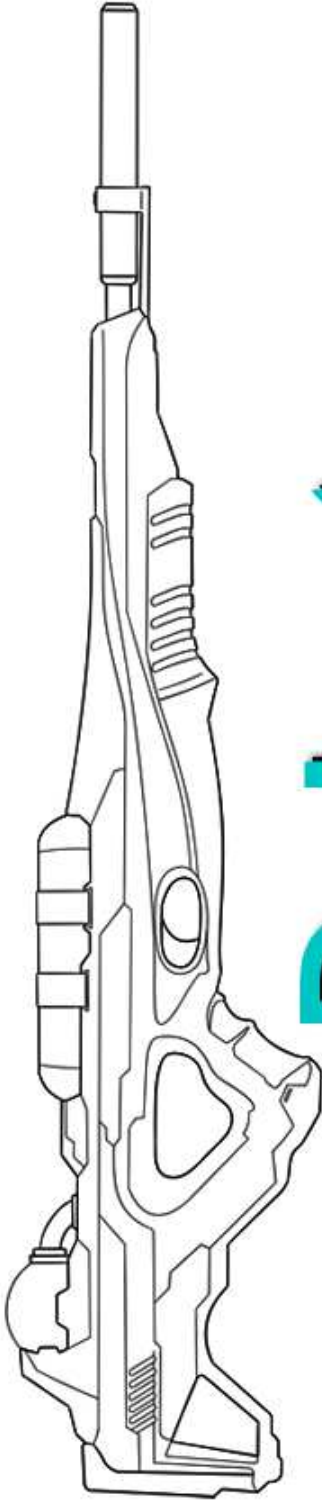
A light, compact, and easy to carry bazooka type anti-personnel weapon. It fires two types of projectiles; a blunt, rounded nose L&E (lob and explode) grenade for close work and an incendiary rocket for distance.

The flash initially blinds the enemy and drives troops out of hiding. Comes with chemical warheads attachable to either projectile type.

### Noted for

Ghosts call it the Omega because it's the last weapon they need.

## Priest



# Priest

Art by Nano-Core for KayelleAllen.com

The weapon of choice for ghosts.

Called the Priest because victims need last rites when used, it is considered good for burning "heretics." In other words, anyone who does not agree with the Human Pure movement, or anyone who supports the rights of so-called lesser beings. Lesser defined as any creature not purely human.

Also used for chemical attacks. Attachable canister permits addition of liquid ingredients of various types.

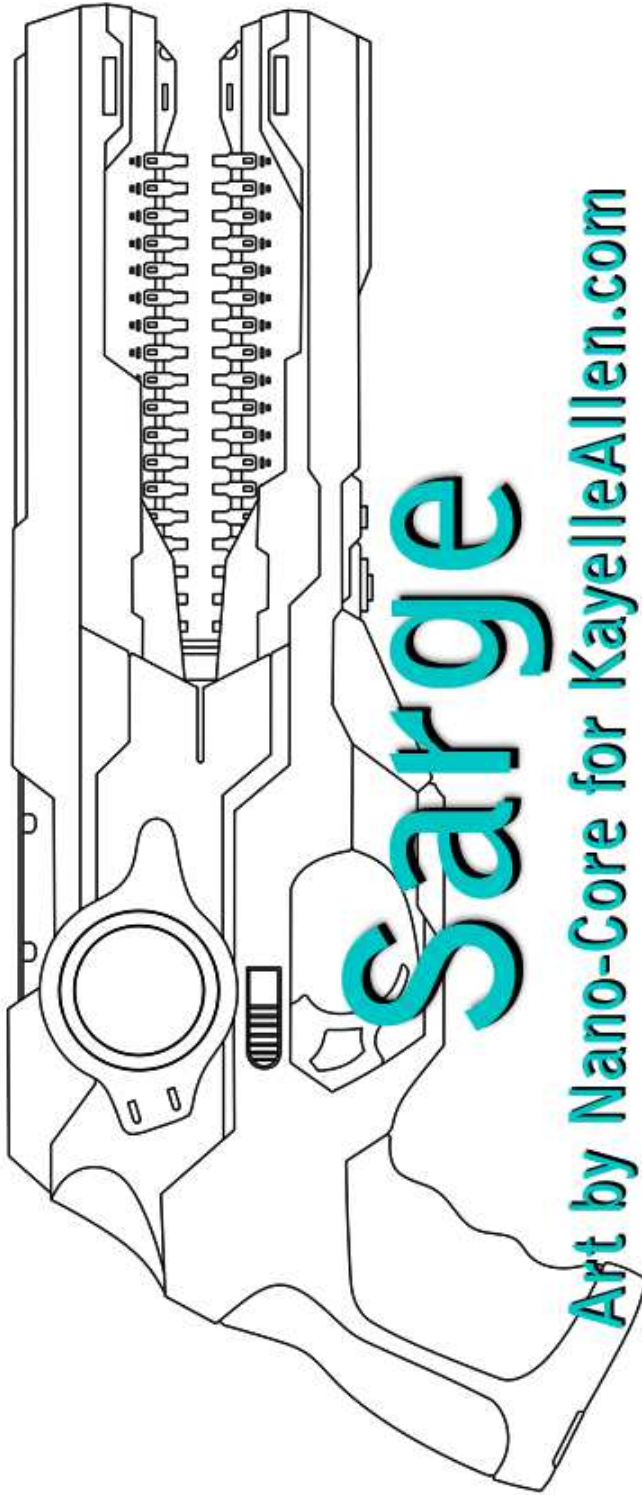
### Technical

Long-nozzled gun fires rapid pulses of haptofuel to blister skin on impact. When victim tries to remove residue with water, substance combusts. A water rifle with chemicals.

### Noted for

Ghosts refer to its use as spraying Holy Water.

## Sarge (for SRG)



Called the Sarge, a pronunciation of the letters SRG, which stand for Simple Rail Gun. Fires twice in rapid sequence. First with combustible energy particles, then an activation beam that sets particles on fire.

### **Technical**

Armed by loading a clip in the rear of the gun. Discharges a focused field of high-powered particles followed immediately by an energizing beam.

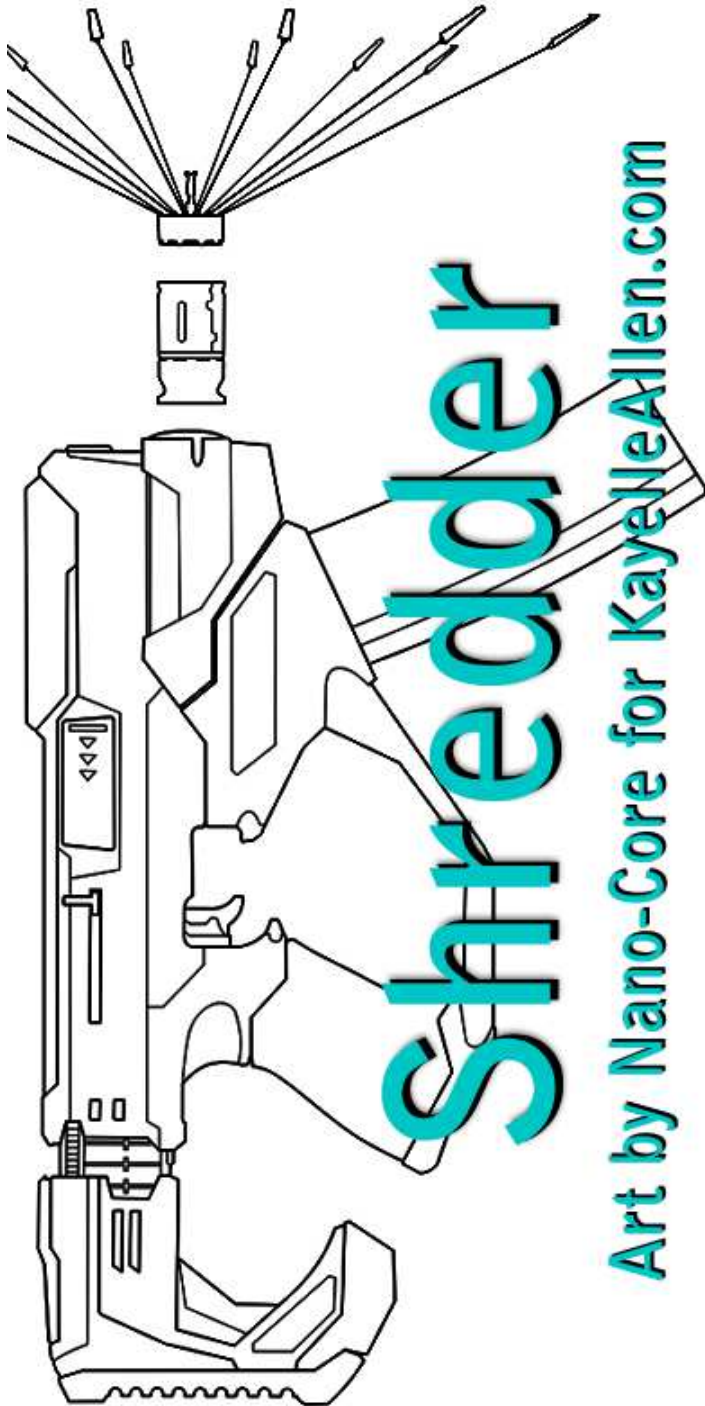
Because this weapon presents such a direct threat to human life, it is never carried loaded.

### **Noted for**

Particles cover the victims and instantly set them on fire.



## Shredder



The Shredder fires combustible shrapnel in ropelike filaments. This weapon rips apart any target it hits.

### Technical

Advanced handheld small arms weapon designed to use with a tracking device implanted in the user's eye. Upon impact, armor piercing rounds release combustible shrapnel.

Can house ropelike shrapnel or pellets.

### Noted for

What you see is what you hit.

## The Characters

Characters in Lights Out consist of humans, Ultras (the immortals) and ghosts (humans infused with Ultra blood). Here are the major players.

### ***Human: Tornahdo - Ghost Corps Master Sergeant***

*Tornahdo, Hispanic-Terran, thirty-seven years old*



Same stuff.  
Different day.

The life of a soldier consisted of endless hours of boredom punctuated by moments of abject terror.

When given the opportunity to make a difference in the war to save mankind, Tornahdo took it without hesitation. Once he died in action, his body was brought back, infused with Ultra blood, and he was raised to walk again.

Sadly, Tornahdo's family believed him dead or missing. He couldn't go out in public. After all, a

ghost didn't get a new face, just a call sign, a fail-safe if taken prisoner. The enemy wouldn't find out who his family was, or who other ghosts were.

He'd earned his name by the way he fought, which, according to those who'd been resurrected with him, was a tornado.

*"No, he's Hispanic-Terran," one had said. "He'd pronounce it different. We'll call him Tornahdo."*

To which he'd offered a sweeping bow. *"Sí. Gracias."*

Like any cover story, the more you lived it, accepted and believed it, the more solid it became. He was Tornahdo. Every minute. Every day.

Lights Out is his story.

## ***Human: Ravenstongue - Ghost Corps Master Sergeant***

*Ravenstongue, thirty-five, mixed race, born on an Earth colony*



All ghosts are master sergeant rank or above, which means sometimes, soldiers inducted into the corps are promoted far above their previous rank. That is true of Ravenstongue, much to the annoyance of his fellow ghosts.

Because other ghosts determine an individual's call sign, not all of them are happy with what they've been named. Ravenstongue, named for his tendency to lash people with words, berates those around him and flaunts the fact he was resurrected first. To

him, these few minutes grant him a longer "time in rank."

His constant companions are two soldiers who hang around him like buzzards on a death wagon.

Though they are not named in this story, Tornahdo thinks of them as Short Ghost and Whiny Ghost.

## ***Human: The General - Ghost Corps Commandant General***

*Referred to only as the General, she is feared and obeyed*



Unnamed in this story, this tiny female holds the rank of Commandant General of the Ghost Corps Colonial Armada. The corps is under her direct command and she undertakes that responsibility with the utmost gravity.

Not prone to softness, her directness and piercing gaze puts soldiers in their place. One does not disobey the general.

She appears in several scenes in this story and not always in a flattering light.

However, her absolute devotion to the corps is obvious in

everything she does. Ghosts follow her command without hesitation.

Little is known of her personal life. The one glimpse Tornahdo sees is when she is called out of bed at three in the morning to discipline him for his part in a minor disaster. While she appears all the more human, the general is not pleased one bit with his screw up. Any softness that peek might have afforded is swept away by her displeasure at the event that has just unfolded.

Her swift decisions during this scene set the tone for the rest of the story.



## ***Ultra: Pietas - Chancellor High Council (King)***

*Pietas is one thousand nine hundred and sixteen years old*



With his ability to literally strike fear into the hearts of humans, the Bringer of Chaos controls the emotions of others. The skill allows Pietas to manipulate others with ease. Often, when facing him, the enemy surrenders without a fight.

While he appears human, he possesses enhanced physical strength and is seven Terran feet tall.

His psychic abilities include Chaos: creating chaotic feelings, anxiety, turmoil, distraction without outside resources.

This is his strongest

gift, and when he inflicts it, the effects can last for days. His second most powerful ability, Compulsion, creates an urge in others to act against their normal will. He is said to play with this power, using it to "push" a person to do simple things such as turn on a light, bring him an item, or leave without speaking when they had entered a room to talk to him.

Pietas and his twin sister, Dessy, are the only naturally conceived Ultras. All others were created and carried in surrogate wombs. One reason for this is when Ultras heal, their cells replicate and then burst. If they did not, Ultras would twin themselves each time they experienced rebirth.

The title Chancellor is an elected position and equates to king. Although not well known at the time of Lights Out, Pietas had planned to overthrow the current Ultra government and take command as emperor. The events in the Bringer of Chaos series, which follows Lights Out, cover his fall from power.

See end credits for more information on the model for this character.



## Redeemable? Humans?

Among Ultras, leadership arose that considered humans redeemable. These leaders sought to allow humans more freedom, and give them a voice in their own government. They hoped a kinder relationship would bring an end to galaxy-wide conflict. They hoped peace would halt senseless death and destruction, foster growth, and increase trade.

In 4536 AD, after centuries of war, Ultras and humans planned peace talks to discuss a place for humans on the High Council. And that brings us directly into the Bringer of Chaos series and the prequel, Lights Out.

## Excerpt, Lights Out

The air reeked of antiseptic and starch stiffened the pillowcase. If only the mind-numbing jabbering would stop.

Tornahdo pried open his eyes. The flattened blood bag above him, stenciled equipment and gray walls screamed military hospital.

He'd died. Again.

Spanish curses slipped out. His *abuela* would've taken a switch to him. He made the sign of the cross and kissed his fingertips.

After yanking the tube out of his arm, he pressed a thumb over the entry point. Thankfully, this time, he wasn't writhing on the floor in agony. Well, not yet.

A faceless android in a Ghost Corps uniform loomed over a bank of equipment displaying Tornahdo's name and vitals. First impression was right. Military hospital.

The weapons-grade yapping continued.

"Did you hear?" a youthful voice bragged. "He killed six of 'em last night."

"Yeah, but they don't stay dead. They never do."

"If Ultras didn't come back to life, their plasma wouldn't bring our own people back."

The transfusion of enemy blood healed the hole in Tornahdo's arm in seconds. He thumbed off the red smear and rolled over on the gurney.

An open door led to a sink and toilet built to let gravity do its work. Which meant this was a planet. You hadn't lived until you were in space, floating in zero gravity while your body's final twitches sent your corpse spinning.

Notices on the wall confirmed this was San Xavier in the Colonies of Man. Same place he'd bought it the first time.

This was getting old.

## Read more...

The Expanding Universe (Vol 4), edited by [Craig Martelle](#), features Lights Out (Save Mankind) from the Bringer of Chaos series.

99 cents on Amazon

Free on Kindle Unlimited

<https://amzn.to/2QxKBGB>

Check out this page for more about Lights Out and the universe in which it takes place. You'll also discover more about The Expanding Universe Vol 4 anthology, and the many authors, story worlds and characters.

<https://kayelleallen.com/lights-out-save-mankind/>

## The Sequels

### **Bringer of Chaos: the Origin of Pietas**

Pietas must do the one thing he detests. Trust a human...

<https://books2read.com/u/4DovO7>

### **Bringer of Chaos: Forged in Fire**

An exiled, immortal king, a ginormous panther "kitty" and the most dysfunctional family since forever...

<https://books2read.com/u/bpW7Kg>

### **Bringer of Chaos: Watch Your Six**

To save his friend, Pietas must abandon his pride, turn his back on his people, and violate a vow made in his darkest hour...

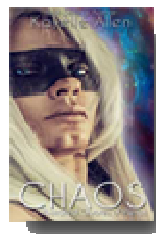
<https://kayelleallen.com/chaos-watch/>

~ *COMING SOON* ~

## ***Disclaimers***

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## **Connect with Kayelle Allen**

Kayelle Allen writes Sci Fi with misbehaving robots, mythic heroes, role playing immortal gamers, and warriors who purr. She's a US Navy veteran who's been married so long she's tenured.

Website <http://kayelleallen.com>

Twitter <http://twitter.com/kayelleallen>

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## **Connect with Nik Nitsvetov (Pietas model)**

Nik Nitsvetov is photographer and award-winning cosplayer. A gamer and anime fan, he often cosplays characters from popular series. He lives in Russia and is a strong supporter of Russian Cosplay. His personal photography ranges from cosplay to portraits and often includes animals and nature. You will find him online through various social media.

Patreon <https://www.patreon.com/onframe/posts>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/nitsvetov/>

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Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/OnframeCosplay/>

World Cosplay <https://worldcosplay.net/en/member/Onframe>

VK (Russia) <https://vk.com/onframe>

## **Connect with Nano-Core (Ghost Corps weapons artist)**

Livius, also known as the artist Nano-Core on DeviantArt, Artstation, Facebook and Twitter, is a "Digital Weaponsmith." He creates fantasy and science fiction weapon designs for sale and commissions. His interests in horror and SciFi are reflected in his art. He also creates environments, mechs and other objects. Communication is key and he loves to work out concepts for the best possible result of functionality and design. He enjoys taking a client's design and bringing it to life on the screen. If you are interested in commissioning him, find him on DeviantArt. Once at his profile, send a note with a basic idea so you can work out the design together.

DeviantArt <https://www.deviantart.com/nano-core>

Twitter [https://twitter.com/Nano\\_Core](https://twitter.com/Nano_Core)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/n4n0c0r3/>

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## ***Research Notes***

**Charon's Blade** Mythology of Charon <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charon>

**Omega** How bazooka type guns work <https://youtu.be/b8C3zhGxxgk>

**Priest** Haptofuel = name derived from haptophytes, a type of algae being researched today as a source of fuel. <https://www.who.edu/oceanus/feature/jet-fuel-from-algae>

**Sarge** Railgun testing video <https://youtu.be/i737rM6FqxqE>

**Shredder** Radically Invasive Projectile (RIP) <https://youtu.be/mJGH7cDFw7c>