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Sample file

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A Road so Dark is a short adventure for **Fading Suns** for a group of 3 to 6 player characters that can be used as part of an existing campaign or as the start of a new epic. As written, the drama assumes that the player characters are part of a noble's entourage in the service of House Keddah. If the group is not associated with House Keddah, the gamemaster should feel free to make all necessary adjustments so that this story centers on whichever noble house the characters owe fealty. A selection of pre-generated characters is supplied in the **Appendix** of this **Shard** (see p. 21).

Running the Adventure

A Road so Dark is laid out in acts, but within those, the encounters can occur in almost any order. Of course, if the characters go off on a tangent, it might require some improvisation to get them back on track. There is only one choke point in the structure, which is the trip to Leagueheim. Everything before and after can be freely mixed around to suit how the gamemaster wants to tell the story.

This requires the gamemaster to have a good grip on the whole plot and the gamemaster character's motivations. Having a few colorful gamemaster characters ready to help steer the players can be handy.

A Road so Dark largely centers on information gathering and investigative work. The gamemaster should encourage the players to role-play their way through the drama, rather than resorting to simple Inquiry rolls.

Following the main text are suggestions on how to modify the drama to make it fit into an existing campaign, and how to use **A Road so Dark** as the beginning of a **Fading Suns** epic.

Adventure Background

Without the Jumpweb, human civilization would never have left Holy Terra. Mankind would have been locked in the confines of their sub-light sleeper ships, and the technological and social heights of the Second Republic would never have become a reality. In short, an interstellar civilization would have been unthinkable.

Even though every inhabited system in the Known Worlds has a Jumpgate, little is actually known about these gargantuan feats of ancient engineering. Indeed, very little is understood about the science employed by the Annunaki. A Jumpgate endures almost any kind of punishment and even seems to repair itself over time.

Many rumors exist about the Jumpweb. Some sound credible but lack substantial proof. The Charioteers Guild has the most interaction with the arcane Jumpgates, but if they know anything more than anyone else they have kept silent. The Jumpweb as currently mapped by the Guilds is not as extensive as was known during the Second Republic. There are many lost roads, and some people believe that the Jumpweb reaches only a fraction of its potential. Some even believe that the right codes could connect any Jumpgate to any other Jumpgate.

Spacers often brag about artifacts recovered that seem to control the Jumpgates. Some artifacts are capable of sealing a Jumpgate for years or even millennia, others can open new routes to previously unknown worlds, or worlds lost during the Fall. Rumors claim that the Jumpgates can be used to move people through time, or into other dimensions, or even into the dark places humanity was never meant to explore.

Jumpkeys became popular during the time of the Second Republic, as an easy and convenient way of storing jump coordinate information. Prior to that time, jump coordinates needed to be computed using a think machine and navigational array, a complex task that could take a day or more to complete. In desperate circumstances this can still be done today but the Guild frowns on the practice of 'unkeyed' jumps.

A Jumpkey resembles a narrow cylinder about 10cm in length. Styles vary and some are longer, some are very plain while others are ornately crafted. Charioteers usually carry their keys openly on a sturdy belt ring to display their status and standing within the Guild. Many actually carry fake keys, keeping the real ones safe aboard their starships.

Jumpkeys activate a Jumpgate with a coordinate sequence, each set of coordinates is unique to the Jumpgate and the Jumproad. Much of the technology contained in the key actually prevents it from being counterfeited or duplicated. All Jumpkeys are considered the property of the Charioteers

