

Galaxy Hiding Underwater - World Collection 2023

Release IV of *WindySilver's
World Collections 2023*

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Galaxy Hiding Underwater - World Collection 2023

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About this collection

Galaxy Hiding Underwater (as it is currently titled) is a sci-fi world set into the future where the warlike species of Fiirddokha has invaded and razed Earth, forcing its inhabitants to seek asylum either among friendly extraterrestrial civilizations or in the underground and underwater shelters built long ago. These stories focus on those who took shelter under the surface with hopes of remaining out of the reach of the Fiirddokha invaders.

Most of the stories in this world are unconnected aside from the same setting. However, there has been a major focus into one of the underwater sanctuaries, one dubbed the Heavy Metal Sanctuary. The stories focusing on it and its three factions of inhabitants — the metalheads, the shamans and the unaffiliated — are [*Heavy Metal Sanctuary*](#), [*Heavy Metal Voice*](#), [*Legends*](#), [*A Metal Ballad*](#), [*Nearby Wreckage*](#) and the middle part of [*Mother Earth Dying*](#).

When Everything Changed

Collected in [*The Journey's End*](#)

[Prose-ject 2020](#) day 2. Prompt: *race to the top.*

That day was supposed to be a fun day. Olly and I had organized a charity run for us kids with our friends: each participant would pay the one-euro participation fee and we would all race to the top of the hill just outside our town. The winner would get an ice cream of their choice from our local sellers and the money would go to the local animal shelter.

And man, race we did. Each of us ran as fast as they could, but no one could beat Olly's BFF, Wayra. He was unbeatable in racing, as always. He had always said that his name meant "wind" in Quechua; if it was true, it definitely fit him.

While Wayra was the one who won ice cream, the rest of us also bought our own cones and enjoyed the pretty summer day. Life was normal and simple. While each of us had a tough time in one way or another, we were happy nevertheless. We had each other, after all, and life wasn't too bad.

Little did we know that that day would change our whole planet forever.

We had just dropped the twenty-two euros in addition to the forty or so euros adults had chipped in as donations to the shelter when the bombing started in unison with the blaring alarms. Then parents started to call us to get into a bomb

shelter, that we were under attack, that they'd come and get us once the bombing ended.

Some kids' parents never came. The rest of the adults took those poor souls under their wings all the while the news told about only one thing: one of the warmongering civilizations had chosen to attack Earth. Our bombing wasn't the only case: it was happening all over the globe, all at the same time.

In panic, many started to flee to parts unknown with hopes of finding shelter someplace too uninteresting for the attackers to bomb. That was the last time Olly and I saw Wayra; his family chose to return to their roots in the Andean mountains while they still could. We never heard from him again after his ship to South America departed.

Eventually, my family fled to an underwater compound, hoping that we would be the safest there despite of all the water overhead and the risk of drowning, should the structure fail. They said that the attackers didn't like water, so we would be safest there, in the middle of it.

The day we left for our underwater shelter was the last time I saw Olly — or anyone else who participated in the charity run still around. Our ice cream sellers had died in the first bombing to a ricochet — it still chills me to this day that had we been some tens of minutes longer there, we would've all died there — and the animal shelter had been reduced to ashes with all the animals and the little remaining personnel in a later bombing.

With communications cut down, I have no idea where my friends went or if they're still out there somewhere.

No matter what has happened to them, I can't help but reminisce the race day and everyone who took part in it every single day.

Someday, I will join everyone who's lost their lives to the bombs. I can only hope that the Bjerkes are still making and selling ice cream on the other side when I get there.

Day 57 of Repairing

Collected in [*The Journey's End*](#)

[Prose-ject 2020](#) day 23. Prompt: *delivering joyful news.*

It is day 57 since my crew and I had to abandon our underground sanctuary in Germany for the underwater facility in the Baltic Sea after the attackers discovered it.

While most of the refugees were relocated to another underground facility in the country, we made the dive into the Baltic Sea; the facility there had been out of service for decades, but now we needed it desperately. We *had to* get it back up and running or else we would soon run out of sanctuaries to relocate to when our underground ones were discovered and destroyed.

Fixing the flooding had been the easiest part; the air pumps had been operational all this time, just not online due to getting no power. Portable energy cells had done the trick and the newly pumped air had pushed the water out of the facility, while patching the hull was easy due to the lack of significant damage. The generator, however, was another story: because it had been flooded for years, it was brimming with algae, fish and water. Cleaning it took 11 days as we had to take the whole thing apart and clean every single part we could save. Putting it back together took four days, two more to get it running. Fixing the power lines all across the facility, on the other hand, took nearly 20 days.

The rest has been cleaning and restocking the facility so that we can take refugees. There is still a long way to go for this to be like the other facilities because as of now it's heavily depending on the supply chain, but for now the most important part is getting it operational enough for refugees to come in. We can add greenhouses and growbeds later, when top-priority things are done.

Today, after almost two months of working nonstop, I have joyful news to deliver.

The Baltic Sea's sanctuary is online and getting refugees as we speak.

Refugees

Collected in [Hunting Inklings](#)

While our humanitarian work was a point of pride for Earth, I must admit that the system took a heavy hit when our allies, the Glieseans, lost their home planet in the Gliese 667 system. With a planet and population far bigger than our own, even when the rest of the Inter-Galactic Union (IGU) did their part in taking refugees in, we were stretched thin. There were simply too many of them for us all to accommodate. IGU's efforts to stop the warring civilization, which we have only learned to call "Fiirdokha" — "Ravagers" in the language of the Lllladdrres, who were their first victim as far as anyone in IGU knows — have been insufficient. Because the Fiirdokha don't belong to IGU, there is rather little that IGU as a union can do, especially without suddenly amassing an inter-galactic military big enough to rival them and fighting to death and recoloring many planets' soils with blood and its equivalents.

I know a lot of people were frustrated when the humanitarian system was clogged by the Gliesean refugees, but now that we are the refugees, I'm sure everyone who lived back then understands them better.

Unfortunately, we have no one to help us because we are stuck on our own planet. Any non-Fiirdokha ship going in or out has been shot down at the orbit.

We have to play the long game and hope for the best.

Freedom Underground

Collected in [The Journey's End](#)

[Prose-ject 2020](#) day 16. Prompt: "They may take our lives, but they'll never take our freedom!" -*Braveheart* (quote)

When the warring civilization attacked Earth, many a good person went to war with them, quoting an old movie from the 1990s. They were blinded by their own ideals, their excessive belief in themselves and our war technology despite of Earth being heavily into pacifism and commerce over war and conquering for a couple of centuries.

None of the people I heard going to the war shouting "they may take our lives, but they'll never take our freedom" did not return. Their deaths were in vain, a useless sacrifice that only caused grief to their loved ones. Their sacrifice did not do anything to stop the invasion or prevent any attacks on us. It merely thinned our already thinning numbers.

I was grateful for each life that I saved by convincing people not to go into war, and after seeing what had become of those foolhardy ones who refused to listen, many of them came to me to thank me for talking them out of getting themselves killed.

If only the others had listened, too. Then we would have so much more manpower operating and restoring the underwater and underground facilities that we now have to use as sanctuaries. With the flood of people coming to the sanctuaries from all over the planet, we could use every

single person capable of working with us to keep us from starving to death under the surface.

I'm most worried about the underwater facilities; as the invasion had kept advancing, many have speculated that we have to either abandon the underground sanctuaries for the underwater ones or permanently flood their surroundings to keep them as sanctuaries — neither of which are good, easy options.

Although, as long as we keep working to live under the circumstances that have been imposed on us, I suppose the old quote is right. They may take our lives, but they'll never take our freedom as people, no matter where we are.

After all, our neighbors a galaxy away have already proved that it is correct: while they lost their home, they still live as free people on other planets, our Earth included.

When we get through this, we will emerge from the water and the ground as free people. That I am certain of.

No Place Like Home

Collected in [The Journey's End](#)

[Prose-ject 2020](#) day 27. Prompt: "*There's no place like home.*" -The Wizard of Oz (quote)

They say that there's no place like home.

I say that they're right.

I don't want to complain. The people running this underwater sanctuary are doing their very best to keep us all alive, and the underwater scenery is nice, but I miss my home. I had to leave a lot of my possessions behind either at home, where they are going to get destroyed, or into my personal bunker underground which might go down in flames as well. Those who were not working for museums and such were not allowed to haul much with themselves.

Fortunately, I was allowed to take my computer system with me. I miss my shelves of literature, collectibles and games, but I have their copies saved on my computer — aside from the collectibles, of course; I have images of them instead — so I'll be able to live without them.

I only hope that the cable systems won't get damaged by the destruction on the surface. If they do, we will eventually lose all our interplanetary communication networks and get cut off into underwater and underground pockets with little to no contact to others. Most of us have friends and family elsewhere, and the communication cables will be their only way of keeping in touch once the wireless systems go down

completely — which will be the first communication system to fall as these fuckers have the habit of razing the surface to a dusty wasteland, which means that all communication towers that matter and are interconnected will be destroyed sooner rather than later.

We have no other choice than hiding here in these sanctuaries, keeping everything valuable alive and undestroyed and waiting for the time to return to the surface and restore our beloved planet, both its ecosystem and our infrastructure, back to what it was.

I hope I'll live to see that day.

They say that there's no place like home.

I guess it's time we make these sanctuaries our homes because there's no going back to where we came from for a long time.

Tiresome Rivalry

Collected in [Past Mistakes](#)

As an exception to my challenge for FFM 2019, this story did not use a Flashback prompt since the Flashback prompt given was the same as on the previous day, and it was still that way by 8 PM my time, so I opted to post a story without it. The Flashback prompt has since then been changed to *You can see it in her eyes. She isn't real.* by [OnLinedPaper](#) (Year 2017).

Challenge: Roll a d8 to get the main character's occupation and roll a d4 to determine their relation to their rival. Optionally, roll a d4 to get the setting. The elements I rolled were *Military, Brother/sister* and *The story takes place entirely underwater.*

"I'll beat you to General Bleak first!" my sister told me, her eyes burning with hatred.

"Sis, I'm tired of this rivalry," I said for the umpteenth time.

"Just look around yourself." I gestured at the metal corridors and the underwater scenery coming from the windows. "The civil war is over. The war against the common enemy is over too and we lost. There are no human factions anymore.

There are only the survivors here on Earth and the survivors out there somewhere. We're all on the same side now."

"I'll still beat you to General Bleak," my sister hissed.

"If he heard you call him that, you'd get a serious reprimand," I reminded, tired. I had had a long scouting flight with my dearest brother-in-arms, Sergeant Lyad, and thus I cared even less than usual for this bickering my sister kept up even though the civil war over the remaining resources was already over. The leaders had managed to

negotiate peace for the common interest of survival but the same will to survive even if it meant cooperation most certainly did not reach everyone in the ranks.

My sister rushed off, almost literally fuming anger. I sighed and headed to my quarters to sleep. General Kory - or General Bleak, as my sister called them - knew to wait for my report until I had rested. They knew from experience just how tough the scouting flights were on the surface with the invaders still out there.

It's too bad that my sister didn't understand it or anything else about the situation we were in, blinded by her hatred towards me as she was.

United

Currently uncollected

As a historian, I know for certain that the humanity of old times would have gone extinct, had the Fiirddokha attacked Earth during their time. It's not just because they lacked the things that are vital for our survival today: the current technology, the facilities underground and underwater and the infrastructure to support them. The people back then simply could not have united their strength for mutual global survival, a feat only their descendants were able to achieve after centuries of feuds, wide-scale wars and so on.

I don't mean that our society was perfect or without conflicts, but at least we were able to unite when it mattered the most.

I just hope that our descendants will keep the world peace alive.

Failed Scouting

Currently uncollected

The scouts were already back. Or more like some of them were.

"They bombed us out of the water, sir," one of them told.

"We lost a squad."

I knew better than to swear aloud, so I nodded. "Very well. If you're not hurt, go file a report and get some rest."

Seems like those bastards located this sanctuary. No wonder we've been cut off from supplies.

This is going to be a long day.

Reminiscence from Underwater

Collected in [The Journey's End](#)

Prompt: [Tree of Life Design](#) by [pixelproart](#).

Once, we were a space-faring species, one that had learned from its mistakes and managed to save its planet from the second round of the global warming.

We had learned from our money-and-power-hungry ancestors and fixed the economy so that no one had to steal to survive – perhaps our greatest cultural accomplishment alongside achieving proper world peace.

We had learned from our warlike history and thus when we met another intelligent species, we sent ambassadors, not soldiers, in the name of galaxy-wide peace.

Everything was fine; the inter-galactic commerce and tourism flourished, scientists and students from multiple planets went on inter-galactic exchange and we learned a lot of not just each other but also ourselves and the galaxy around us.

I dare say that we became an even better version of ourselves thanks to our fellow sentients, something I can be proud to have witnessed.

Then we met a species just like how we used to be, except to the power of ten with none of the positive aspects: a militaristic species that wanted nothing but more power and money – and instead of cooperation and coexistence,

earning or trading what they wanted, they took it by force with their weapons no matter the casualties. Their planet was but a barren wasteland devoid of all life and resources, all of which they had killed and hogged while trying to gather everything for themselves, leaving the poor to die of starvation, illness or conviction for stealing among other crimes.

Unfortunately, our efforts to protect our friends from them led to our planet becoming the next target.

I still remember the broadcast about it. The leaders of our world were truly pained – they knew that we stood no chance against these invaders. Any attempts at stopping them would only lead to countless of casualties.

Our only hope of surviving was to go underwater and preserve everything we could so that one day, one day, we could return back to the surface and restore our home.

Today, it's been three decades since that day. The vast underwater world is thriving, and we have a generation of people who have never been on the surface. This is the world they know. No, this is *all* they know.

Me? I hate life in this fish tank. While the underwater parks are lovely replicas of our world, they cannot hide the fact that we're living in metallic tubes and buildings with countless liters of water over our heads. Water that the invaders, fortunately, cannot stand at all after being accustomed to dry worlds void of water for who knew how long.

The fish and the underwater world were beautiful at first, but it eventually got old. Now, all I want is a true open space, the edge of the atmosphere as my limit.

Unfortunately, even the most recent report from the scouts says that while our world has become a dry wasteland, the invaders are still here. We cannot leave our sanctuary yet.

I turned my back on the window to look at the tree of life, a gift from our allies back when we had formed a friendship. We had been fortunate to be able to preserve it here; while we had done everything we could to take our allies and everything they had as refugees here, they had acted too late to save everything. A lot has been lost for good only because one species wanted to hog everything for themselves.

I can only hope that the tree of life is worthy of its name and capable of helping us restore not just our world but that of our allies as well when it's safe to go back to the surface world.

Until that day, I shall wait here in the fish tank and dream of open skies.

Heavy Metal Sanctuary

Collected in [Hunting Inklings](#)

Challenge: The story must include one cataclysmic event and two genres – one literary and one musical – and three survivors. Optionally, include Destiny Child's *Survivor* or some other song with survival-based themes.

My choices were the invasion and devastation of Earth by another civilization (the Fiirdokha), sci-fi and heavy metal and the three groups of people who made it into the heavy metal sanctuary despite of the invasion: the metalheads, the shamans and the rest of the survivors. Naturally, the song *Survivor* was included in the story.

If the movie industry ever recovered from Earth getting invaded and thoroughly ravaged, the first soundtracks would be mainly heavy metal: loud and aggressive just like the destruction over our heads on the surface. I had found myself in an underwater sanctuary filled with artists and... quirky people, so my personal soundtrack was whatever the musicians happened to be playing. It echoed down the metallic halls every day in the small facility we were stuck in.

The musicians usually played heavy metal, pouring the destruction, loss and death into their lyrics and melodies. It was virtually impossible to escape it; the powerful bass and drums could be felt at least slightly in the floor and walls no matter where you were.

I wonder how the nearby fish and such took the music. They must have heard it; the rumbles were powerful enough to

traverse in the water for sure.

The shamans, as they called themselves, certainly minded it. While they had tried to talk the metalheads into keeping it down, their efforts were fruitless to the point I feared that the two groups might start a miniature war inside the sanctuary. However, despite of being seemingly kind of detached from the normal society, the shamans knew better than to try and pick a fight with the metalheads. I'm pretty sure that the incident in which a poet played an insanely old pop song — *Survivor* by Destiny's Child, if I recall correctly — then insulted the metalheads and got beaten up for it had something do with it. I personally didn't mind the incident much since the poet's taste in music was boring, but I'm sure that everyone in here knew not to mess with the loudest of us after that.

Until the surface is safe to walk on again, we shall live by the tunes of the heavy metal sanctuary.

Heavy Metal Voice

Currently uncollected

Mother Earth was crying. She had been crying for so long already.

At first, my fellows and I thought that the blaring music that had become one with our sanctuary — perhaps even the essence of it, as its name suggested — blocked her voice. It was infuriating, even frightening how I thought I could no longer hear her because of the others. Yet, eventually, I learned something:

Mother Earth was talking — no, shouting her pain out — to us through the metalheads and their powerful songs. When I realized that, the music became soothing, in a way, despite of its aggression and power.

They may not be shamans, but at least they were all right; whether they could hear Mother Earth themselves or not, she had chosen them to be her voice in these testing times.

That realization... was the beginning of a whole new, unprecedented alliance.

The alliance of the Heavy Metal Sanctuary.

Legends

Currently uncollected

Prompt: *Musical idol* (in the honor of Flash Fiction Month's David Bowie Day)

They say that legends never die. That their bodies might leave this world but their stories, their work, the impact they made on the world remain forever.

When I was young, I did not believe that. However, eventually I found a legend whose work many of us, each confined to the sanctuaries under the surface, are now relying on to keep our heads straight just like those who listened to them before us and our time.

The anger of *Given Up* and *Forgotten*, the melancholy of *Leave Out All The Rest* and *Iridescent* and the power of *Numb* and *The Catalyst*, all by a band called Linkin Park from an era long-gone echo in the hallways of the Heavy Metal Sanctuary. Back before the invasion, our band tried long and hard to replicate their powerful instruments, the legendary scream of Chester Bennington and the speed and versatility of Mike Shinoda, but we could not match such legends, so we moved to covers, to doing our very best to do justice for the legends whose music spoke to us — and so many, many others throughout the time.

Now, as we broadcast our takes on these old songs for the humanity to hear, we can feel the power of the old legends. The bodies members of Linkin Park died long ago in different era but they still live on as the legends they are.

The legends are with us still and they will never die.

That is our message for us all.

Do not ever give up.

"When life leaves us blind, love keeps us kind."

A Metal Ballad

Collected in [Birbs](#)

With the ongoing tension between the shamans and the metalheads, I would have never expected to hear a collab from them. Yet there I was, shut in a sanctuary with masses of water surrounding me, listening to a metal ballad about peacocks. An excellent metal ballad about peacocks, in fact.

I had expected this predicament to bring out the worst of humanity and cause a miniature civil war inside the Heavy Metal Sanctuary, but now it's starting to look like I was wrong for once.

That's good news.

Nearby Wreckage

Collected in [Birbs](#)

The blaring metal music was cut shorter than a silenced mecha-crow's call when one of the scouts from the recently departed team rushed into the main room, ash-covered and bloodied.

"Ceros, what's wrong?" one of the shamans asked before any of the metalheads could.

"Wreckage," Ceros gasped. They collapsed on their knees, coughing blood. "Fiirddokha wreckage. Outside. Crashed into it." By now, the metalheads had put their instruments away and rushed to the shamans' side.

"Meredith," Anne, one of the metalheads, addressed the nearest shaman, "take them to med. Leo and I will go and have a look."

Meredith nodded and turned to her fellows. "Viola, Lonu, let's go."

Anne and Leo rushed to the hangar and looked at the mess there. The ship was just about completely inoperative, yet Ceros had somehow managed to maneuver it back inside and live to tell the tale.

Leo whistled. "I knew Ceros is one heck of a good pilot, but I didn't know they is *this* good."

"I'd bet even they didn't know themself." Anne made her way to the sanctuary's surveillance computers, skipping even trying to get any data out of the remains of the ship.

"If they crashed into the wreckage, it must be close." A look at the cameras confirmed that. "Yup, there's the fugly thing. Looks like we need folks on looting and clearing duty."

"Did anyone else crash?" Leo asked.

"It's hard to tell since Ceros's ship was broken to pieces."

Anne scratched her head.

"I'll go and have a look in the tower. Let Rufus know." Leo turned on his heels and headed straight to the nearest ship with proper towing equipment.

"Be careful! We can't lose one of our only guitarists!" Anne called out as she typed a message into the administration channel.

"I'm planning to haul anyone stuck out there back here, so don't worry, I will!" Leo jumped into the tower, already suiting up.

With Rufus already handling the administrative side of things, Anne could only watch as her fellow maneuvered the — luckily far-slower-than-scouter — tower through the airlock and towards the wreckage lying on the seabed and hope that there were no non-Fiirdokha casualties.

Mother Earth Dying

Collected in [Hunting Inklings](#)

Prompt: "*My washing machine is telling me to file for bankruptcy.*" by [WindySilver](#).

Challenge: Write 369er (3 interrelated but separate 69-word stories) in the order of future, present and past, with a conflict at the center of all three of them. The first section must take place after the conflict occurs (in the future), the second must take place during the conflict (in the present), and the third section must take place before the conflict occurs (in the past).

84 years after Fiirdokha invaded Earth, they finally got enough. We resurfaced into a barren wasteland, equipped with oxygen tanks because the atmosphere was mostly carbon dioxide then.

We knew immediately that restoring our planet would be the biggest challenge humanity had ever had, but we were up to the task.

Ten years have gone by and Earth is now starting to look more like itself.

We will succeed.

We shamans have been listening to Mother Earth weep for four decades now. Her cries have grown quieter over the years.

The greenhouses and zoos in our sanctuaries and on other planets are the only hope of restoring her after the invaders tire of hurting her. We must guard them — not just we shamans, but all still living humans.

If we don't cooperate, Mother Earth will die for good.

"Honey, the washing machine is telling me to file for bankruptcy!" I called out from the laundry room.

"You downloaded something strange into our network again, honey!"

"No!" I knew I sounded too undignified to sound convincing. I looked at the message and admitted my defeat under my breath, "Okay, I did."

"Told you so! Running the cleaning process!"

I sighed; our network cleaning process was always a pain.

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