

Junior Division (16-20)

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### **Ida's Encyclopedia of The Horsehead Desert (Excerpt)**

From the surface, this planet can be breathtakingly beautiful. The nebula sprawls across half the sky, its cycle determined by the rotation of the planet and its orbit around the small sun (known here simply as The Shine). The purple splendour of the nebulous gases envelops the night sky entirely at midnight on the solstice of the time known as winter, and entirely backdrops the shine at noon on the solstice of the season simply not known as winter. The colours of sands found on the surface are more varied than you might think as well. Pink, salty sand covers one area around a crater, another region is made of gravelly, black sand, another of tiny sharp blue rocks, another of white sand that's almost as soft as a blanket, and many other smaller variations that most don't care to notice. The light of the shine plays off each in a different kind of beauty. My favourite scene possible to see here, by far, is the setting of the shine over the pink sand sometime near winter, when the nebula rises and paints the sand cool hues around the shine's sliver of warmth.

Apart from the nebula, another thing that twinkles in the sky are The Scrap Fields. This is where the rest of the fallen from the great battle float around, and where the first to call this place home originally settled, before descending down to the planet. Those people are possibly responsible for the satellites that give this place an atmosphere the humans can breathe, though it could've also been the people who did battle, or the people who dumped their garbage, nobody is quite sure. In any case, a lot has happened since then, and the Scrap Fields have developed into a monarchy, while this planet remains unruled, despite the long line of Scrap Kings' best efforts to claim it as a full kingdom. The monarchy maintains the atmospheric satellites because they need the people on the surface to survive as a source of people, while the people on the surface have kept their own kind of order, for the most part, particularly in the rise of a rebel group known as The Peacekeepers, in an effort to resist being carried off to the Scrap Fields as slaves.