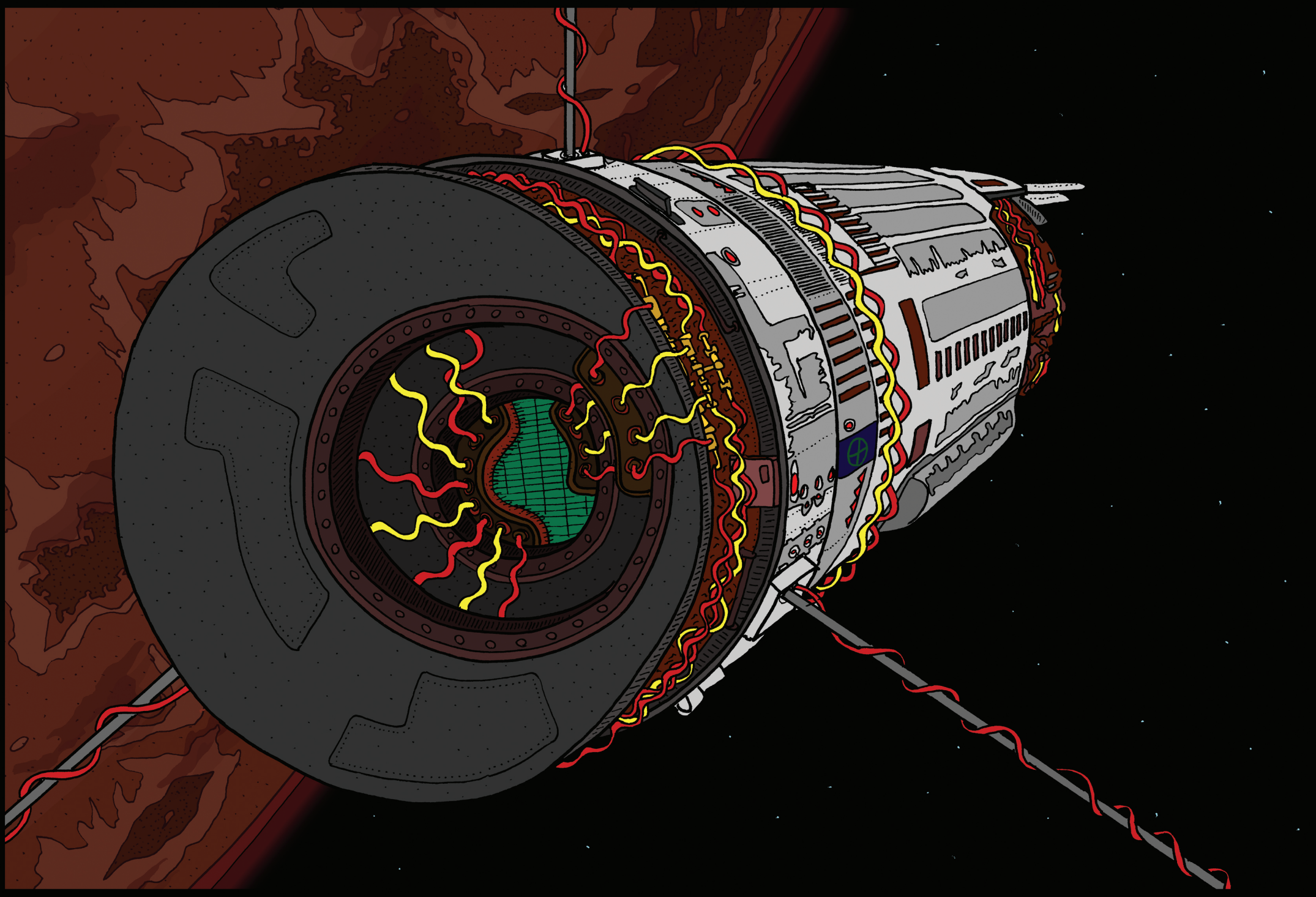

Finally, to the stars! Pre-game - Day 2/20

In 2750 the burgeoning technological and scientific developments let to the development of the Pohl ‘Spin Drive’ – a curious offshoot of gravitational and electromagnetic research which finally allowed a) the tenacious string theory solution to the problem of galactic orbital mechanics to be wholly discarded, whilst b) simultaneously opening the stars to exploration.

The ‘Spin Drive’ allows a vessel to accrue a colossal amount of energy within a battery web by orbiting a planetary body under charge. Subsequent orbits by a primed engine build this generated charge to concentrations of stored kinetic energy undreamt of previously. Whilst light speed remains an unbreakable velocity limit within our pocket universe, several orbits of a moderate world with a suitable vessel will be enough to facilitate rapid transit from a planetary system. At present, there remains two problems with this nascent technology:

1) Once a drive system is primed, it cannot be turned off without destruction of the ship.

2) Such destruction will likely tear apart the charging body. Initial tests saw the obliteration of numerous asteroid belt objects and some of the smaller moonlets.

From initial development until the present, ‘Spin ships’ of increasing complexity have been hurling themselves into the unknown. Hundreds of stellar systems have been scoped for resources, life and settlement suitability. Mediocre bases have been set up on several of the chaotically orbiting worlds af Alpha Centauri. Intriguing remains of previous sentient life seem to have been found within the wreckage of a shattered brown dwarf system. Wherever conditions are found to be suitable, self replication of organic systems seems the rule, rather than the exception. The great distances involved in flights have not required the employment of ‘generation ships’ – biological knowledge of the extended and augmented human species is of such a level that ‘Travel Coma’ pods are routine equipment, as are efficient and delicious food and water recycling systems.