While it is unnecessary to have read either of the first two books of ARC29 to enjoy the following, it is important to note that these events take place immediately after the end of Book One. Cyril has given Captain Patrick a new uniform and transformed him with a haircut and shave, all in an effort to prepare him for his next challenge: taking on new passengers aboard ARC29!

Trying desperately to keep himself grounded while assuming his new role as Captain, Patrick has decided to build himself a home in the ancestral style of his childhood planet, Demeter.

This is where we join them, inside the house that is nestled in the woods of a private biodome that sits atop ARC29, let's say two minutes before the end of Book One.

Well Patrick, be honest now, what do you think of it?
Cyril, it's perfect. I love it. In fact, I think I can finally say it --

What, exactly?

I'm ready.

That's great because I've just been waiting for some sort of a sign that you were actually prepared for this.

Now don't get mad but we're currently in orbit around the first colony in our path, Abadon, and have been for about a week already.

Awesome! Let's do it!

Okay, sure. Give me 36 hours to prep the shuttle and supplies.
So, I'm expecting six people to join us here on Abadodus.

An adventurous family of four plus a man and a woman separately.

I've prepared a document for you to study before we head out.

How do you want it? Printed? Audio file? Interactive media?

Uh, audio is fine. It's about the passengers?

Sure, in part.

Some of it covers the particularities and traditions of the locals as well as a detailed plan of approach.

We need to come off as both confident and welcoming. Well, listen to the file, you'll understand what I mean.

I'll have to hang back and stay out of sight. At the very least, you'll look the part.
FEELS LIKE YOU DID MOST OF THE WORK WITH THIS NEW LOOK.

AND I'VE GOT 36 HOURS BEFORE WE GO?

OH YEAH, AT LEAST.

WHAT'S THAT?

I'M GOING BACK TO ORLANDO'S HOUSE, I HAVEN'T READ HIS JOURNALS YET.

OKAY, COOL. THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO DO FIRST.

WHAT?! IT'S BEEN MONTHS! PATRICK, YOU'RE IMPOSSIBLE!

I KNOW!

I JUST ASSUMED YOU DON'T WANT TO SHARE THEM WITH ME!
CAN YOU HONESTLY SAY YOU'RE SURPRISED? YOU'VE WATCHED ME AVOID EVERYTHING SINCE HE WAS KILLED, JUST FOCUSED ON THIS HOUSE.

WELL, IT'S TIME TO RECTIFY THAT.

TELL YOU WHAT, WHEN I'M DONE I'LL PASS THEM ON, IF YOU'D LIKE TO READ THEM.

ABSOLUTELY! I'M SO CURIOUS TO ASSEMBLE THE ENIGMA THAT WAS ORLANDO SHARP.

OKAY, I'LL SEND YOU A MESSAGE WHEN WE'RE READY FOR LAUNCH AND IF YOU COULD GO OVER THE FILE BEFORE WE GO, THAT'D BE GREAT.

OF COURSE.
The life and times of
O. Shrop.
Volume 23.

I HOPE THIS HELPS.
ORLANDO.

I HOPE IT HELPS TOO.
HELLO PATRICK, IF WE'RE HERE, I MUST BE DEAD, HEH.

KNOWING YOU, IT PROBABLY TOOK YOU A WHILE TO MUSTER THE STRENGTH TO READ THIS.

THAT'S FINE, EVERYTHING IS TIME, RIGHT?

NOW, I'M GOING TO STOP DRAWING MYSELF AS THE OLD MAN YOU KNEW AND CHANGE INSTEAD TO A YOUNGER, BETTER VERSION OF MYSELF.

AND RATHER THAN ADDRESS YOU DIRECTLY LIKE THIS...

HOLY SHIT, ORLANDO! HOW MUCH TIME DID YOU SPEND ON THIS?
I'll simply include you in the scene like this.

Welcome, lad. It's nice to see you again.

Now, you'll have to put up with things looking like this. Chalk it up to my limitations as an artist.

And of course I'll be imagining dialogue for you, literally putting words in your mouth.

Is that why I'm crying?

Hahaha! Yes! You've always worn your heart on your sleeve. I'm just having some fun with you.

And this is an emotional reunion, is it not?
LIKE, HOW DID I KNOW I'D BE KILLED, OR WHY DID I KEEP THE CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS SECRET FROM YOU?

YES! EXACTLY!

WELL, MAYBE. IT MAY NOT BE TOLD HOW YOU WANT AND IT CERTAINLY ISN'T IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

PERFECT. I'LL ANSWER ALL THESE AND MORE, OR RATHER, I ALREADY HAVE IN THESE JOURNALS I LEFT FOR YOU.

AWESOME.

I'LL PUT IT TO YOU LIKE THIS—EXPECT NOTHING AND YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED.
Whatever, I'm just excited to know the truth.

Sure, but even that will be subjective here.

My intent is to tell you stories, not necessarily private diary entries.

So I'll be extrapolating, inventing scenes and dialogue to support the story.

Fine, as always, on your terms. Eh Sharp?

Hah! Yes, I suppose so.

The more things change...
So, to be clear, this first one isn’t answering any of the questions I mentioned earlier.

Instead it tells of how I came to be captain of my first ship:

The Phantom Artist!

More of your secret past.

Fine, let’s go.

Just remember to leave your expectations right here.
A little introduction to my home for you: I was born on a colony named Kaylion. It was part of the first wave of space expansion and is a moon of a gassy giant. It's close to a network of populated planets which itself is not too far from Earth. Mostly covered in water, there are a cluster of habitable tropical islands where a handful of prosperous cities have established themselves. The colony's wealth is mostly in off-shore mining for rare minerals, valuable for trade with neighbors.

My dad, a former interplanetary officer, was now operating a successful shipping company with my mom while I was growing up. Until I was about ten, my time was split between the surface and my parents' first spaceship. By the time I was a teenager, the business had expanded to a small fleet.