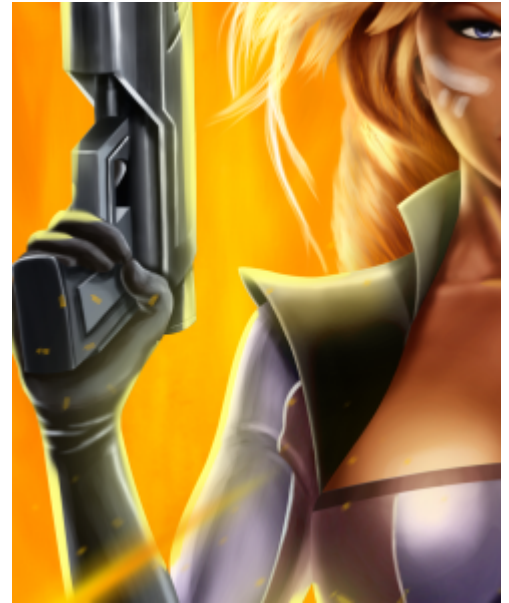


WARPAINT Snippet: Cady goes home again

By Holly Lisle

Here's the short set-up. Cady has picked up a crew of talented misfits to help her stop the genocide of humanity in progress by a deadly group of outsiders—and she's started her fight to save humankind on her homeworld of Cantata, and in her home city of Meileone.



Cady is currently in the company of the enemy, and once again in disguise.

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So my guide, who introduced himself a Yorg, and who looked like he couldn't believe his luck, led me toward the main gravdrops, giving me a well-practiced spiel on how to drop the first time without bumping into other people, how to maneuver through traffic, how to change lanes. He would, he told me, hold my hand.

I let him, and we dropped in the lane for the timid, new, and lost, while all around me citizens zipped through the drops

like fish in fast water, dancing through the beautiful maneuvers I yearned to embrace again. Once you know how to use them, the gravdrops are like flying from the top of the world to the bottom and back. I missed them, the way I missed skies made of stone and strellitas, the way I missed the comfort of enclosed space, the way I missed a city that strove always to embed the newest technology within itself, that embraced progress, that forever pushed through the barriers of what humans were and did to what they could become and might do. Meileone was in my blood, and when I dared sneak back at all, it sang the lullabies of my childhood to me, and made me ache to stay.

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