

IT was a miracle that they were allowed to make use of the shoopuf again after Jecht's transgression on the journey southward, but business was clearly slow: they were the only three passengers on board. This time, tired after the long and uneventful walk up from Djose, it was difficult not to be lulled into sleep by the slow, even step of the shoopuf. While Jecht sat at the prow, staring out across the still unfamiliar landscape, his companions stayed towards the back, sitting closer together than they needed – they had long since come to the understanding that physical proximity was the best way to alleviate some of the troubles of the pilgrimage – and it was no surprise that when the shoopuf ambled to a stop, they found themselves waking with their heads resting against each other's, Braska's fingers tangled in Auron's hair, his other hand clutching Auron's, and Jecht still discreetly looking in the other direction.