<u>The V-System</u>

Background

After the people of Vega successfully fend off the angels, the next order of business is restarting society. The reason that a caste system (i.e. the V-System) would be implemented would be to ensure the successful resurrection of law and order. Certain fundamental freedoms would be forsaken for the greater good. In such a situation, it makes the most sense for the caste system to be directly tied to job function. That is, in order for a society to function, certain jobs *must* be done, and if economic motivation isn't a possibility (given the collapse of the global marketplace), then force—physical or social—can serve as a motivating factor. Hence, the V-System.

Based on what's present in the pilot script, there are a few different ways one might flesh out the V-System. Below I've given you two proposals: One more radical that I think is more manageable; and the other more conservative, but slightly harder to get a handle on. The first might require the script to be tweaked a little bit; the latter will fit right in with what's already there. Both options are outlined below.

Option 1: Dual Systems

As an ideal option, I propose a radical reorganization of the V-System as it exists in the script. We have six V's already (plus V-0), but I propose that we change what they stand for. Specifically:

- ❖ V-0: *Outcasts*
- ❖ V-1: *Defense Core*
- ❖ V-2: *Agricultural Core*
- ❖ V-3: *Engineering Core*
- ❖ V-4: *Medical Core*
- ❖ V-5: *Spiritual Core*
- ❖ V-6: *Regal Core*

The way this system is conceived, the number of individuals in each caste should get progressively smaller, with the exception of V-0 which, ideally, would be quite small or nonexistent. The reason that the V's are ordered the way they are is because they address a human's basic needs in order. Specifically, if one is being killed, one can't worry about anything else (V-1). If one doesn't need to worry about fending off angel attacks, one has to eat (V-2). If one can stay alive and has food, one must have shelter or

they'll die of exposure (V-3). Once all that is taken care of, medicine is needed to cure illness and ensure a long life (V-4). Once all that is taken care of, one can worry about spiritual, mental and emotional needs (V-5). And finally, where all these needs are met, law and order is required to ensure that individuals with nothing better to do don't impinge on others' freedoms (V-6).

Now, in order to ensure that there are enough people to fill each V, mobility within the V-System would, of necessity, be absolutely forbidden. One's V status would be passed on to one from one's parents. Essentially, there is only downward mobility: One can get kicked out of their V into V-0, which is basically like getting thrown into jail in our world.

If there is no possibility of upward mobility, though, it would soon break people's spirits. As a result—and in order to help with the internal organization of the V's—I propose adding a second system that will structure each V. Obviously, the V's themselves were reduced because we didn't want to give the audience too much to learn, so this second system will need to be recognizable to any viewer without explanation. I believe I have such a system.

I propose that all members of a V be given ranks that are aligned with the Greek alphabet. The Greek alphabet is something just about all viewers are somewhat familiar with from fraternities and sororities. Furthermore it's something that never needs to be explained. Once one learns that an Alpha is the lowest rank and an Omega is the highest rank, they'll simply assume the rest. I don't imagine we'd need to go very deep into the alphabet:

❖	Α	*Alpha*	Rank 1 (Lowest Rank)
❖	Β	*Beta*	Rank 2
❖	Γ	*Gamma*	Rank 3
❖	Δ	*Delta*	Rank 4
❖	Ε	*Epsilon*	Rank 5
		…	
❖	Ω	*Omega*	Highest Rank

So, to give a few examples, V-1 generals would be Omegas, and grunts would be Alphas. Having further ranks within the V's, though, will give citizens the possibility of upward movement. Perhaps a V-4 Alpha is an orderly or someone who works at the desk, but by undergoing the training available to them (on account of their V), they can move up to a Beta (staff administrator), a Gamma (EMT) or a Delta (nurse), and so on

until they're a doctor or surgeon. Organizing the system this way will ensure that people's spirits aren't broken by the rigid caste system. It's kind of combining an American way of life with a more militant way of life.

Arranging the V system like this may necessitate some changes within the script. For example, in scene 13, we have this dialogue:

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          JOHN
Exiting the city with a vehicle is
a realigning offense. You're gonna
get purged down to v-0, an
Untouchable.

          ALEX
I can live with that... Better than
making a home in Michael's ass to
be a v-3 like you.
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So instead of saying "to be a v-3 like you", maybe Alex will say "to be an Omicron like you". In other words, they're both V-1, but John's a much higher rank. Then later in scene 15 when Alex gives his designation, he might say, "V-1 Alpha. House Rysen. AA Corp."

If the V-System were arranged in this way, this is approximately how I think each V would break down, and where dramatic conflict might arise.

❖ V-0: *Outcasts*
  ‣ <u>Overview</u>: Presumably if V-0's aren't left to die, they'll be imprisoned and will be made to do menial labor (sewer cleaning? maintaining the exterior walls? serving as manual labor for the other V's?). They'll need to be fed and clothed, but presumably this will be done with whatever is leftover or donated by members of other V's.
  ‣ <u>Ranks:</u> As they're not a part of society, presumably there would be no actual ranks in V-0.
  ‣ <u>Potential Dramatic Conflict:</u> If V-0 gets to be too numerous—or perhaps too homogenous (racially, ethnically, religiously or socially)—it will be ripe for rebellion. If society is going to be overthrown, the revolution will start amongst those who suffer the most from the status quo.

- ❖ V-1: *Defense Core*
    - ‣ <u>Overview</u>: V-1 comprises Vega's front line of defense. They fend off attacking angels, man the town's defenses, and maintain law and order within the city.
    - ‣ <u>Ranks:</u> The different branches of the military will each have their own Omega. I imagine three main divisions: Infantry; ballistics; civil (i.e. the police). Below each Omega will be scores of other V-1's. In the infantry, Alphas would be front-line infantry (a.k.a. cannon fodder). As you move up the alphabet, you get to cavalry, snipers, captains, commanders, etc. Basically each division will be arranged like it would be in modern day America, but their designations would be Greek letters.
    - ‣ <u>Potential Dramatic Conflict:</u> As they have all the weapons, V-1 could, at any given time, arrange a military coup. Vega is literally dependent upon V-1 for its survival. By relying on V-1 so heavily, the citizens of Vega are giving them a lot of power. It's up to V-1 Omegas whether or they take advantage of the situation.

- ❖ V-2: *Agricultural Core*
    - ‣ <u>Overview</u>: Somehow, the citizens of Vega have to eat. Whether they're farming within the walls of the city or raising animals for slaughter, V-2 will be in charge. It's their job to feed the entire city.
    - ‣ <u>Ranks:</u> Those who have a background in agricultural science—or who were, in fact, farmers before the angels came—would be the most likely Omegas. Depending on how many farms or slaughterhouses there are, there may be one Omega per location. Alphas will do the manual labor, with middle grades (Epsilons, Iotas, etc.) working at distribution centers.
    - ‣ <u>Potential Dramatic Conflict:</u> This may be the worst line of work out of any of the V's. Without proper compensation, I foresee V-2's being the most suicidal. One cold snap can destroy a crop, which could mean that an entire city goes hungry. It's an awful lot of pressure, an awful lot of hard work, and none of the social prestige that should come with it. It behooves Vega to keep their V-2's happy, or else something bad may happen to their food.

- ❖ V-3: *Engineering Core*
    - ‣ <u>Overview</u>: This is the most diverse V. Basically every structure that needs to be built or maintained is under the control of V-3. There

may need to be more V-3's than V-2's, but since it requires specialized skills, it was, of necessity, more selective at the outset.

‣ <u>Ranks:</u> The most obvious divisions would be electrical, architectural, nuclear, ballistics, hydrological, automotive, etc. Each would have its own Omega and an internal structure much like modern day unions.

‣ <u>Potential Dramatic Conflict:</u> As the V-3's are literally the architects of society, much of the regular functioning of the city depends upon them. If they're not satisfied with their treatment, they're also the most likely to have experience organizing themselves. I could see them joining forces with the V-2's to put on a pretty devastating strike.

❖ V-4: *Medical Core*

‣ <u>Overview</u>: Any and all who were capable of wrapping a bandage or applying a tourniquet likely became the first doctors of Vega, whence V-4 sprang.

‣ <u>Ranks:</u> Depending on how many hospitals there are in Vega, there may be only one Omega. The Omega would be the equivalent of the chief of medicine. Below them would be the various surgeons and physicians that have the most advanced medical knowledge, and below them nurse practitioners, nurses, EMT's, orderlies, etc. Pharmacists and psychologists, if they still exist, may constitute separate branches of V-4, each with their own Omegas.

‣ <u>Potential Dramatic Conflict:</u> As with auto mechanics, those who don't understand medicine are utterly dependent on medical professionals. Consequently, corruption would seem to be a natural consequence, with those of means (or those of higher castes) getting better treatment than, say, a V-2 alpha.

❖ V-5: *Spiritual Core*

‣ <u>Overview</u>: Religious guidance undoubtedly becomes a cornerstone of life when humanity learns that angels and God are real. It's for this reason that holy men and women occupy such an exalted slot in the V-System.

‣ <u>Ranks:</u> Depending on how many actual religions are allowed to exist in Vega (this, I feel, is a separate, albeit fascinating, discussion), there may be multiple Omegas. The Omega would have the power and responsibility of the Pope within their sphere

of influence, but that sphere of influence would, of course, be quite small, as it doesn't extend beyond the city walls. Ranks would derive from old church structures, but would adhere to the Greek alphabetic system.

‣ <u>Potential Dramatic Conflict:</u> Given the fact that actual angels have attacked and continue to attack humanity, desperate humans everywhere will look to their religious leaders. This gives those religious leaders a lot of power, and the potential to sway the whole of society one way or another. Though subordinate, the V-6's will, in many ways, have to answer to or at least be on the same page as the V-5's. After all, if the V-6's don't do what the V-5's want, the latter could always declare the former to be heretics.

❖ V-6: *Regal Core*

‣ <u>Overview</u>: The V-6's will rule over Vega and represent its citizenry when they come into contact with the other city states. They'll also mediate disputes, acting as judges, attorneys, arbitrators and mediators for disputes between V's. They'll essentially be the ultimate authority and the keepers of the keys.

‣ <u>Ranks:</u> There will only be one Omega: The leader of Vega. Others will be advisors or civil servants that work with the other V's to ensure that they're doing what they need to do for the good of the city. It also seems to me that the V-6's would be in charge of educating young children. They'll be able to control what they're taught and ensure that *all* children grow up knowing the proper history of Vega and how society is supposed to function. Once children get older, each V will have its own education system to train older children in their future professions. The main point is that the V-6's are there to ensure Vega stays Vega.

‣ <u>Potential Dramatic Conflict:</u> Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

I think the biggest pro for using this system is that it's a nice, stable framework for the functioning of a complete society. There isn't a lot to learn or memorize for the viewer, but it should be fairly simple to maintain consistency moving forward. The obvious con is that the script may need to be modified to account for the some of the changes required by this option. Personally, I think it would be worth it, because it will neatly define the function of Vega in a way that should be fairly intuitive for an uninitiated audience.

Option 2: Fluid V's

The way that the V's seem to work in the script suggests that what you have is actually not a caste system, but a class system. In a caste system, upward movement is, in effect, impossible, and downward movement would only happen via marriage or disgrace. Based on the dialogue, though, it sounds like you could actually work your way up the ladder and become a higher V if you did the right things, knew the right people, etc. It also seems that the V's are spread around throughout society, so you can find V's 1-3 in every industry, not just the military (or medicine or the church, etc.).

In order to make this work, then, the V system should simply be a class system like this:

- ❖ V-0: *Outcasts*
- ❖ V-1: *Orphans*
- ❖ V-2: *Lower Class*
- ❖ V-3: *Middle Class*
- ❖ V-4: *Upper Middle Class*
- ❖ V-5: *Higher Class*
- ❖ V-6: *Ruling Elite*

Now what will make this system caste-like is its implementation. One can imagine that it was created with the best of intentions. Perhaps in order to ensure that there were enough bodies to take the bad jobs required to build up society again—and also to ensure that everyone had housing and could be accounted for—the de facto rulers created the V-System to instill a sense of order. They would have named themselves V-6, and then went down from there labeling the populous based on either whoever they knew, whoever was capable, whoever served most faithfully during the war—or whoever managed to bribe them. If it was created as a ranking system (as in the military), upward mobility would have been possible through hard work.

However, after a few years, perhaps the V-6's—and even the V-5's—realized they liked being in power. So perhaps when it came time to fill positions at, say, V-5, rather than promoting the most deserving V-4, which is what should have happened, they gave it to one of their children or cronies, who would have inherited their V designation. In this way, it creates a ruling elite at the top of a ranking system. This would mean there'd be a kind of glass ceiling either above V-5 or above V-4 (depending on where you want to slot it), so that you could rise from V-1 to V-3, let's say, but no higher. Again, this would be a de facto way of life; the system wouldn't have been designed that way.

After a decade or so, a system like this would produce the same kind of inequality we see in American society today. Basically, there'd be an in-group and an out-group, and the in-group would fiercely protect its status. This would lead to unrest in the out-group. The in-group could probably try to quietly contain dissidents by offering them perks (i.e. pulling an *Evita* and giving rabble rousers V-4 or V-5 status). The upgrade in quarters would probably be enough of an incentive, as the V-1 living quarters could never compare to a V-5 suite.

As for maintaining the system, it makes sense (if V status is tied to the type of work one can do) to have a kind of placement ceremony for children. The way that this would have to work is this:

- ❖ *Stage 1*: At birth, a child lives with their parents in whatever V housing their parents live in.

- ❖ *Stage 2*: Once a child reaches, say, kindergarten age, it would make sense for them to go to a single school, regardless of their V status (though one may imagine that eventually the V-5's and V-6's would set up their own primary school to separate their kids from the "rabble"). It'd be more cost-effective and simpler to give all young children the same education, and would also ensure societal cohesion.

- ❖ *Stage 3*: At age 12 (or 11—somewhere around the US equivalent of 6th grade), children are given an aptitude/placement test. This test determines if they're suitable for high-level work (maintaining the nuclear reactor, architecture, etc.). It's at this point in time that V reassignment occurs. It stands to reason that the majority of children will remain in their parents' V, but there will be some that rise to higher V's. There should also be some that are placed in lower V's, but this would be a source of strife amongst kids and parents alike.

- ❖ *Stage 4*: Once kids take the placement test, they go to the equivalent of boarding school for their respective V. A V-1 school won't be exclusively a military school, or a V-3 school exclusively architectural, etc. Rather, they will offer a variety of professional training options suitable for a child's V. (Needless to say, the upper V schools will be of *much* higher quality than the lower V schools.) Children will stay at the school year-round, but will be able to visit and stay with their parents periodically, even if they're no longer the same V.

- ❖ *Stage 5*: Upon graduating their V's academy (different ages for different V's), the new young adults will be given a job and a place to live suited

> to their V. At that point in time, they become functioning members of society.

For adults, I imagine anyone could apply for reassignment at any time. It'd probably take a long time to actually get to take the test, as a lot of people will want to raise their V status—and, necessarily, there will be vanishingly few spots. Consequently, reassignment as an adult will be quite rare, *unless* you know the right person who can pull a few strings and bump you to the front of the line.

I think the most obvious pro of a system like this is it can be fitted right onto the top of what's already been written in the script. The problem is that it's *highly* unstable, and not technically a caste system. If the latter isn't an issue, though, then this system should play dramatically.

Final Thoughts

The thing that would really sell either of these systems (and would especially solidify the second system) is if V-Status was strictly tied to living status. I forget if this was already mentioned and it's already an idea (I think it is), but if, for example, all V-1's lived in Excalibur, all V-2's in Circus Circus, etc., that would help to make the systems tangible. It's probably much more desirable to live in the Venetian than New York, New York, so if only V-4's could live in the Venetian, the elevated status of the upper V's and the desirability of *being* an upper V would be immediately evident to the audience.

A side note on both systems. The only thing that isn't encoded in these systems is the presence of an economy. Buying and selling goods is something that holds absolutely no importance to people who are fearing invasion. As time wears on and peace is restored, though, an economy may emerge. If that happens, those who become the merchants may achieve a special status of their own. In the first system, it seems like the merchants are most likely to arise from the lower V's (i.e. selling goods and services may seem more attractive to them than whatever it is they're doing). In the second system, wherever commerce emerges, those who excel will be able to bribe their way into the upper V's, meaning the most successful (or, perhaps, most aggressive) merchants will work their way up to the upper V's, forming a kind of *nouveau riche* (new banking elite, perhaps?).

As a final note, I also recommend that we not use the term Untouchable for V-0 (cf. scene 13). Really any other word will work, but calling the V-0's Untouchables ties it *directly* into the Indian caste system which was (and is) fraught with controversy. It seems like something that could potentially cause offense, but which is also easily

avoidable. As a potential replacement, I suggest calling an Untouchable either a Retrograde or an Unmutual.

Also, this is just a first draft. Neither option is set in stone; either can be revised. Let me know what you think, and I can take a crack at a second, more final draft.