



**T**if runs harder than she's ever run in her life. She regained consciousness about two kilometres away from the Freighter... with a chunk of rock embedded in her suit. In the air supply system, specifically, and the communicator as well.

She's losing air, and quickly.

The Freighter is visible in the distance, but she's not sure she'll make it. Her oxygen is down to thirty percent. No, make that twenty percent. There's no chance.

She slows down, and catches her breath, panting. Only one thing to do.

Tif grits her teeth, and begins transforming herself into a vacuumite. Her body stretches – she screams, but knows the pain will be much worse when she goes back – and hardens, her organs modifying themselves into new shapes, her brain re-wiring itself (sans the small part of it that leaves her with some vestige of sapience, and the experimental augments that grant her the shapeshifting ability).

A minute later, with ten percent oxygen left, a vacuumite extracts itself from the space suit with elongated manipulators. The transformation isn't perfect enough to give her actual immunity to the vacuum, and she can already feel her new chest beginning to crack under the difference in pressure, but it might give her enough time to fix the suit.

Except it's not a piece of rock in her suit. It's a peculiar blue orb, engraved with some kind of pattern...



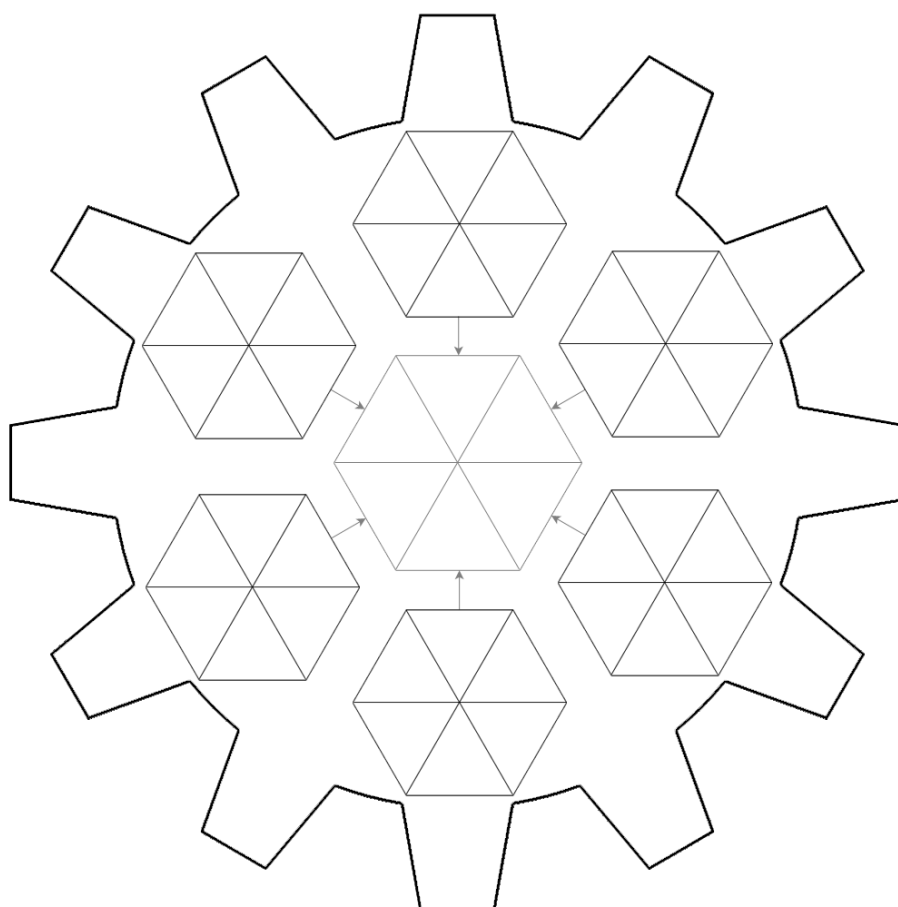
Art V  
Scene 4

# Hexagons

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