

Skydas

Skydas, roughly translated as “shield” or “wrath”, refers to a mythological [Senti](#) warship of supposedly legendary proportions. It was constructed between four and five hundred thousand years ago as a direct response to a potential extinction level event. The hull was constructed of [Burial Steel](#), and armored, armed, and weaponized with captured alien technology. Many details of the vessel have fallen into obscurity and myth, and may be generalized as hyperbole. However, what is known is that there is a cultural fear of this ship, a reverence for what it represented, and that it is often used as a children's tale about the dangers of wrathful actions.

Many Senti refer to Skydas as a deity figure, one dealing with necessary evils and unbalance, often invoking its name when performing an action they would normally see as evil, if it were not for circumstances. Generally speaking, the figure is considered a dark force, something to not follow, as it had to be forced back into balance and banished for the sake of everything known.

Most tellings of the myth follow a common arc, as follows.

Myth telling by Aliset Soren

We weren't always so peaceful. Hiding between stars to only come when needed. Once upon a time, thousands of lives ago, we were at war. Some unknown invaders came through our space on a crusade, extinguishing the three suns we called home. Burning our world. They hunted us, then. In a few short years, we went from hundreds of flotillas to scarcely two dozen. Billions dead, or dying. Trapped, where we could not save them.

There comes a time when one must fight back. So we fought, and eventually found a way to shatter their shields, drive them back. At great cost, we captured their greatest warship and dismantled it. We learned from it, how to fight and kill our ancient enemy. We rebuilt it, with the steel of those murdered by it. Crewed her with those who survived her hate. We made her our own, stole her weapons. Built new ones from her victims. We gave her the soul and the rage and the pain of all who couldn't protect their own.

Skydas, we called her. Shield. A defense made possible by turning the rage and pain and hate of millions of murdered souls against their maker, corrupting it with our flesh and bone, to be unleashed upon our enemies. A woman named Rüstybè was placed in command, the Captain with one eye red as the blood of her enemy and the other a shimmering blue-purple of the war touched souls we call Skydasir. She hunted them. Like they had hunted us. Skydas found their world, extinguished their star, and burned them from the Universe.

Her beams burned brighter than the Goddess's wrath and her shields were harder than the heart of any warrior. She should have been named for her wrath. Because when the fighting was done, we were fourteen small flotillas of scared people, watching Skydas try to find something to protect us from.

But there was nothing. None of our known trading partners spoke with us. They feared what we had created, as did we. So we took her crew in, and we sent Skydas into hyperspace, a jump with no target. She would await our desperation. And we left our home space. Cleaned up our mess, grew our families,

and left.

The crew became our Civil Service families. Our police and our paramedics. Our firefighters, our city workers. They are the reason we carry the service knife. A reminder to use our terrible gifts kindly. Use them to build. And to never act in anger or in vengeance.

One day, when we need her again, the descendants of her crew will be called to action, to once again fight for those who cannot. Win. Reminding our people once again, that peace may not always be the best choice, or the most sensible. Contrary to the pacifistic teachings of today, sometimes it is better to take one life, so hundreds more may live free.

Historical notes

Senti historians on Shurista, Turassiel, and Sutrata generally agree that Skydas did, in fact, exist, captained by a woman whose name has since become a unifying word for “wrath” across most senti languages. Rūstybė was a survivor of the destruction of the homeworld and fell into a form of induced sociopathy as she watched the planet be destroyed, and the star explode. According to historians, a single warship was responsible for the destruction of only one of the three stars in the system, the ejecta vaporizing almost everything in the system at the time and destabilizing the other two stars. It is unlikely that Skydas actually refers to a single ship, instead, a fleet project. Though some believe that, because this warship was built from the recycled remains of multiple destroyed flotillas, each approximately the size of modern-day Shurista, and crewed by survivors that had been trapped in the wreckage, that a single “Skydas Prime” acted as a supermassive carrier style megastructure, potentially thousands or hundreds of thousands of kilometers in length, likely with a single forward armored dish, shielding the vessels docked to it from fire while it made its jumps.

The fleet composition of such an endeavor would have been brutal and effective, making use of FTL weapons such as uranium core continuum distortion equipped kinetic torpedos, negative mass weapons, and other exotic or unusual weapons. It is likely that power requirements for such a fleet would have been immense, and even in the golden age of senti technology, a technical challenge that befuddles engineers to this day. In theoretical, Skydas likely used a multiple singularity reactor along its central axis to provide gravity and power that could be “beamed” to the rest of the fleet, or vented as a near luminal plasma lance capable of destabilizing the gravitational and magnetic fields of small stars. This would have been supplemented by a distributed nuclear or aether tap reactor system common among flotillas to both disguise the central supermassive reactor and to provide a more stable power network.

Any other ships in the fleet likely had their own independent power systems that were supplemented by Skydas Prime for high G maneuvers, allowing thrust to mass ratios approaching that of fighters alongside the capability of using superluminal energy and accelerated particle beam weapons.

However, these claims are all theoretical, based on the degradation plateau of senti technology over the last 500 thousand years as such things fell to the wayside. It is highly likely that weapons and fleet technologies are not the only things to find aboard Skydas or pieces of its fleet, and such a find would represent a significant boon to medical, navigational, and economic technologies, alongside its significant historical value.

OOO Notes

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