

Star City

Revelations

Story by Brandon M. Santora

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Chapter 1

The New Ground

"Planet away!" Lazarus informs as the obstacles of the Uranian system are bypassed, not that it was much, the moons and some debris mainly. It was nearly a straight shot in almost any direction given the vast emptiness about.

"I don't have any problem with taking you two to wherever you need to go."

"Kuipertown please sir." Jacy requested and the stars swing.

"I'll stay for a while." Said Celie.

"Good because I could use you for a spell at nav." She sits gently and as so a message alert blips on her screen. "Can I answer it?"

"Please dear."

"Lazarus, Xila and I are heading to the Moon. General Priset just called me and has something to show us. Seems we're getting an advancement."

"You want us to meet you there later? Right now I'm dropping Jacy off at Kuipertown. Celie is gonna hang out a while."

"You can. Might be a good idea."

"See you later, will contact you if something else comes up."

"Li out." Laz looks to Celie who smiles excitedly yet is focused on her familiarizing console. Glancing back at Jacy, he asks of Lazarus to get his thoughts.

"What do you think about the black dwarf?"

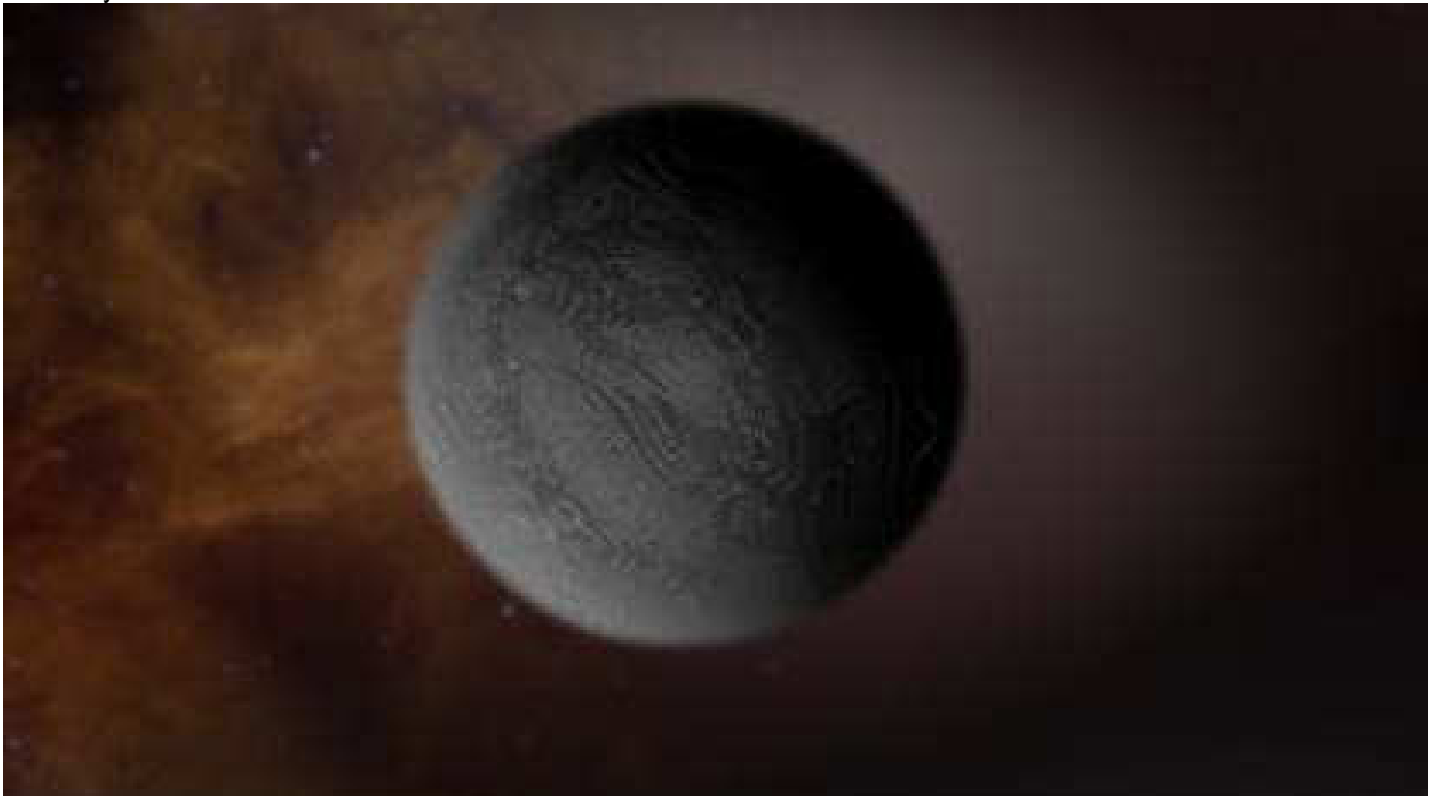
"I don't know but I am eager to get the report so I know what all the fuss is about. Li wants it more than me."

"Maybe it is not a black dwarf." Celie added.

"Or perhaps it is a black dwarf and somehow was put back through time. Maybe." Lazarus shrugs.

"Could be a big space station. I don't know anyway, I've got a feeling today is going to be a blast." The Star Voyager speeds ahead toward the outer solar system.

Scores of light years away aboard the marvelous vessel of modern stature, the great E.S. Ambition holds position cautiously abroad of the ominous black dwarf off its bow.



The Dead Star

"We have 0.341 solar masses registering on the **Mass Finder** sir, width, over 11,000 miles. The probe on the other side is only reporting about 27% gamma emergence and 8% x-ray." **Lieutenant Faxon** Reports, who was reported to himself by his graphic and colorful readouts. The state of the art equipment of symmetrical button orientations and sufficient data fields revealing it's mind engrossing displays, reminds Faxon of his drive to have joined the Exploration alliance, he being a technically inclined individual.

"Odd. I would suspect all of both rays to be absorbed by such a densely packed object." Captain Bragga pointed out.

"Agreed sir we're getting some strange sensor interferences also, and the readings are abnormally out of faze slightly."

"Out of faze? Try to readjust the sensors gravitational field initialization constant. See if you can detect another basis. This might not be a typical black dwarf. But then again how can we define typical, this is our first one."

"Sir." The science official calls out.

"Yes **Mister Washington** what do you have?" Bragga intently attended.

"I've been scanning for any debris that might be the remnants of a planetary nebula. There should be left over gases and dust from the supernova. However the amount of time it takes a black dwarf to form would mean the nebula would have dissipated long ago. But if we backtrack we might be able to detect some material far away from here. I didn't think to scan for it on the way in. My apologies."

"That's alright. We didn't detect this dwarf until we were just about on top of it. Hold here. We'll gather some more information while were near the dwarf."

The artificial tone of the computer alert voice sounded its warning message over the loudspeaker accompanied by a quickening buzzer and some rotating globe lights, "Proximity breach detected; Proximity breach detected."

"Sir there's another ship closing on our position." Called the **Helmsman Bickers**.

"Communications; send a welcome message. Try to raise them."

"Yes sir, transmitting." **Mister Yeung** answered. "It's okay sir, it's another exploration vessel from the alliance. The **K.V. [Mouman]**, a Katlar vessel. They request a visual sync. Alliance code confirmed."

"Accept. Let's see if the cats know anything about this dwarf."

On the screen appeared the exotic control room and crew of the Mouman where before the emptiness of space was seen and the claw shaped alien spacecraft. With tails in full sleeves and looped around front of the professional uniforms and attached by a velcrow-like material they remain at readiness as they approach their Earth ship counterpart. Although the arrangements of the consoles and chairs were similar to the Human vessel, notable were the odd button configurations slanted for ease of use perhaps due to the claws which were not extended of any of the crew yet.

The colors of blues, greens, and purples where prominent and brighter colors where oddly placed. But hanging about the bridge were intricate lamps and dangling fixtures of not clear usage, perhaps to make convenient the use of specialized lighting for some purpose.

On the walls were arrays some portraits of the great four legged feline beasts of their home world standing proudly in their poses with manes of fur fluffed with pride and dignity overlooking the bluff, beneath him the planes of the alien grasslands which have been conquered by the power of the king of beasts. The symbols about the walls were also visible: cryptographic lettering some of which looked reminiscence of their claws, whiskers, and 's' curled tail shaped figures amongst other interesting shapes.

The voice of the captain speaks in his vowel tones while the translation programming interprets. Soon the computerized version sounds upon the loudspeakers. "Here I am, Pouncer Captain to Mouman, vessel of Katlar the Planet."

"I am Captain Bragga of the E.S. Ambition of Earth. We are investigating this black dwarf. Our estimates confirm it should not exist in the universe at this time. We are also getting strange readouts and data from it. Can you start your own study so we can compare notes?" The Felidae crew began to converse in the unknown dialect as kitty chatter, so it sounded.

"Detectors on the inside our vessel activated then soon readouts reveal what was analyzed."

"Thank you. We will await your report Captain Pouncer," the screen blips to a close. Inside the control room of the Felidae vessel the snarls and light hisses fill the air.

"[The Primates may still be suspicious of us sir.]" Said the beta officer submitted and cautious to his Alpha Commander.

"[I can sense it sir. They have been this way ever since that decoy was chased to Katlar a few weeks ago. And our nemesis Cyril continues to shame our species with his treachery. I'd like to scratch his face right now sir!]" <snarl>

"[Not to worry, our empire is honorable. And no one better dare accuse a Felidae people. We have been part of the Planetary Council when they were pulling animals and carts around. And we'll take care of Cyril when the time comes. Go ahead and start studying the dwarf. I have a feeling something is amiss.]. <snarl>

The noises of the Felidae buttons and blips are strange and unheard of, some of them soft and mellow and some quick and sharp. Perhaps the tone and pitch indicated degree of severity or alarm. Though the tones were still artificial and computerized, one tone like that of a pacified meow caught the attention of the appropriate crewman. "[Alpha, our readings show nothing out of the ordinary about this dwarf. Though we have no other reference. This is only a projection.]" Reported the **Wisdom Tom**.

A suspicious growl tone yet computerized sounded from the panel. "[Alpha. I'm picking up a strange disturbance nearby but not close, maybe the other side of the dwarf. It is like a space/time flux.]"

"[I've seen that before.]" Said the Alpha. His hand swatted toward the **Senior Pouncer** whose eyes turned to slits, as did the Alpha, and he targeted the direction of the object. "[Should I activate our defenses sir?]"

"[No. Don't arouse the Primates. Maneuver in that direction slowly. Let's get a few more scans.]"

Meanwhile on the bridge of the Ambition...

"Captain. The Felidae vessel is moving away at sub light speed factor 4 toward the opposite end of the dwarf." Mister Washington reports. "Acknowledged. Hopefully they're just getting a better view."

"Sir Sensors are picking up a slight temporal variation in the space/time continuum in the direction leading opposite of the dwarfs velocity." Faxon reported. "Is that the destination of the [Mouman]?"

"No sir, they are headed for another disturbance on the other end which seems to be the source of what was causing our sensor readout fluctuations earlier."

"Should we rendezvous with them?" Asked the helmsman. "No, let's take a look at the temporal phenomena. Go to idle mode and drift in close. Let's keep the cats less interested in us for now."

"Yes sir. Engineering, decrease neutron injection rate into the engine chambers and shut down particle bombardment apparatuses to stop subsequent conversion emissions." Mr Faxon ordered. "Understood. I'll also stop the particle scoop intake process. That should make us look more inactive." **First Engineer Kharkov** informed, who had monitored the bridge activity. Back on the [Mouman]. "[Alpha, the Primate vessel is going into standby mode. Looks like they are running an in-depth analysis of the dwarf.]"

"[Good, that will give us time to figure out this disturbance. Wisdom Tom, begin emitting a low-intensity scanning ray near the disturbance, but don't target it yet until we figure out what it is. That should make the Primates think we are engaging in a thorough scrutiny on this end of the dwarf. **Whisker Master**, Go ahead and give us a visual image and detection survey of the dwarf. We need to study it for a report to the Primates.]"

"[Rendering image on the picture screen sir.]"

"[Looks shiny.]"

"[Yes alpha.]" Replied the Wisdom Tom. "[The dwarf is very smooth from its density. Also I **retroject** it to have solidified this way after it's white dwarf stage.]"

"[Interesting. What is its mass?]"

"[About 0.62 of our prime star.]"

"[Anything else? I want to make our investigation convincing.]"

"[I don't believe it will be possible to get a sample of the dwarf. But perhaps we could fire an energy beam at the material and get an atomic resonance.]" The Wisdom Tom reasoned. "[Good Idea. I'm promoting you to delta. Do the experiment and report.]"

"[Alpha.]" Called the Whisker Master. "[The disturbance. it's gone now. I'm no longer sensing it.]"

"[What was the nature of the disturbance? What did you gather so far?]"

"[Some kind of **photomagnetic** diversion field.]" The Alpha Commander Snarls. "[Keep scanning the dwarf. I'll get back to you in a moment.]" The Alpha Commander retreats to his chamber cove at the bridges right quarter. Bragga strokes his face. "Analysis of the dwarf."

"The energy of the original white dwarf radiated away due to the motions of the electrons as they compete with the Pauli Exclusions Principal. It seems they are forced together by gravity but continuously displaced by this rule. Now the material is inert. I'm not sure why it has ceased its electrical motions though."

"Neither am I."

"Interesting." Said Faxon. "Sir I just had an epiphany. So it seems it was only a principal, which was keeping the white dwarf active at the time. Not a tangible scientific force."

"Yes that is interesting. But let's try to keep mystical speculation under quarantine until we can verify your idea. and don't stop theorizing crewman. Good work."

"Shouldn't it radiate indefinitely in that case?"

"You would think so. But yet here it is, a black dwarf. I guess eventually the atomic energy runs out."

"This must be one very old object." Mister Washington followed. "There's no way it could be here."

"The Surface is very reflective sir." Reported the sensor operator. "I would like to get a sample of the material to look at. I'm not sure how though."

"Let's try to get a typical and standard absorption spectrum test using our gas inventory. Has the computer finished analyzing the temporal readings yet?"

"Yes sir." Faxon Responded. "It is a remnant of a controlled fracture in the fabric of space time. The aperture configuration is too symmetrical to be a natural phenomenon. It's closed now however. I can't scan the interior or see anything on the other side at this time. The spatial fold vector is monodirectional. It seems this fissure would have to have been created by some sort of methodized forces."

"Keep studying for any more details. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that this has something to do with how this black dwarf got here."

"Transmission detected sir." Called Mister Yeung. "It's the Felidaes."

"Open."

"This is Pouncer Captain. It is our analysis of the Black dwarf that has subsided. Spectral resonance effects show nonexistence. There isn't any, our advanced detectors detect none, only little optical reflection. No sample taken there. No sample *will* be taken."

"Same here captain. We aren't getting any resonance from our absorption experiment. The electrical activity is dead."

"It is now concluded our investigation. No need to remain. Our return to Katlar will take place surely. Good Prowl."

"Screen off." Called Bragga. "The Felidae Vessel is moving away sir headed in the direction of 36 Opiuchi." Faxon Reported. The message alert pings at the console of Communications Officer Yeung. "Sir another message is incoming. It's from Moon Base 1 routed via the buoy booster network. Automated. "Let's hear it."

"Captain Bragga. This is Admiral Seghtee. We need a report from you on the Feladae exploration vessels activities. This is not an Exploration report but a military. Please encrypt the message using a class 5, protocol. It's important. Seghtee out."

"Voice pattern and security codes are authentic sir." Yeung reported. The proximity alarm sounds again just as it had before at the arrival of the prideful cats. "Sir we are detecting another vessel closing slowly on us."

"Is it the Felidaes?"

"No sir. Registry transmission indicates a Terran science vessel."

"Where did it come from? Did you detect any engine deceleration flare?"

"No sir. Nothing."

"It must have been stealthed. Let's hear it." On the screen the background of the exotic laboratory-like bridge of the marvelous science ship and the face of Phenomena Specialists Berman appears. **Hindside** of him looking toward the viewer was the little Meercat Man Oroxum as Berman's assistant scientist. "I'm captain Bragga of the E.S. Ambition. Please state your name, rank, and purpose here."

"This is Phenomena Specialist Berman here and my senior assistant Oroxum. It's important that you not emit any more signals or rays at the temporal disturbance. We were sent here shortly after you arrived under deep stealth. Our instruments are more advanced than those used in exploration craft. Something strange and major happened here, or somewhere else at some other time that led to this black dwarfs appearance. I suggest you finish your scientific analysis of the dwarf for the archives and allow us to finish up here. I am transmitting the authorization codes from headquarters to verify our overtaking."

"Confirmed sir." Reported Yeung. "What method of study did you use Mr. Berman if we may inquire?"

"I cannot go into much detail. But we had to modify our particle intake to be sensitive to **chronomagnetic variance**. I can't say anymore. But rest assured we will get to the bottom of this."

"Understood. One other thing, earlier we emitted a gamma stream at the dwarf just to eliminate the possibility of this being some kind of artificial construction. It was a risky move nonetheless the gamma stream seems to have penetrated and emerged from the other side. Can you explain this?"

"Yes. We are responsible for that. We were counting on you reporting it the Felidaes to keep their attention focused on the dwarf instead of the temporal disturbance."

"I see. Very clever Mr. Berman. I'll have to remember that one. All right. We will resume our exploration course. If you are in need of any assistance please hesitate not to inquire of us."

"Thank you. We're all right. Safe journey Captain."

"You too." The screen blanks. "Mr. Washington, contact engineering and get the conversion apparatuses back online. Faxon, reprogram the satellite to function as a warning buoy to any vessels nearing this dwarf. Helm, direct our course for Gamma Centauri. Set acceleration goal for LS factor 18."

"Will do sir." The engines flare at the brilliance of a sun and the ship becomes greatly kinetic. But on the vessel of Berman and Oroxum a situation is at hand. "We have to figure this out. There's only a short time left before the word gets out about the portal technology." Berman expressed his anxiety. "Well we managed to keep the cats distracted long enough to lose their interest. They never can stay too interested in anything anyway. It worked to our favor. The question is how did the portal technology end up being used to send a black dwarf back in time? And why? And how did it get so far into the future?" I don't know. But it was something major we can be sure. Send a message to Seghtee, tell him we were on our way to science station epsilon 12 in the HR 3018 system.

Return to the Kuiper Belt

"A new sport opened up on Io." Jacy tells. "It's kind of dangerous though. I wouldn't do it. Lava Rafting."

"Yeah I've heard of that." Celie adds. "The raft is enclosed and sealed made of high heat resistant material. It sounds kind of ridiculous to me. How can the raft possibly go very fast in molten lava?"

"Well there are some really rapidly moving lava flows that could give you quite a ride I think." Says Lazarus. Buttons are pressed near his console though not related to ship function. The outside and in the screen was absent of bodies though they sped fourth at high speed for the Kuiper Belt many light years afar. The purpose for Laz's operating was not to make a ship course change or systems check of any sort. There was not much needed to do but to allow inertia and gravity to work its magic. It wasn't long before his brief console interaction yielded its fruits. On the screen appeared a video tutorial of the Lava Rafting exercise on Jupiter's Moon Io. **"Do you dare to face the intense heat and extreme environment of one of the most violently active bodies in the solar system? Does the thrill of challenging the elements entice your raging soul? You shall look not further than this little moon in a not so quiet orbit around our ominous gas giant Jupiter. Register now at the Observation Station located in one of the more stable parts of the angry moon Io. WARNING! Engage in activities on Io at your own risk!"** The upbeat infomessage repeats along with the video footage and stills of previous thrill seekers attempting the dangerous feat.

"Nice." Jacy commented. In his heart he desired to try it yet his better judgment became him.

"No need for us to hurry Lazarus. I have only to remodel my condo." In the mind of Jacy a preprocessed thought ran and his body heated.

"Celie I could really use a woman's touch with some decorating. I'll have some dinner and wine ready later wanna come with?" She pondered a moment with a slight smile and her face began to flush. Then the body of Lazarus heated thereafter and Celie became polarized. Jacy felt the tug though no detectable forces were notable.

"Well what about you Lazarus, what do you want to do today?"

"Hmmm, well, speaking of remodeling I have a little surprise for my buddy Li. Besides, you two had a tragic interruption to your little romantic getaway at Sigma Draconis by that bastard Chris Williams." Lazarus stated **noble** but felt the pain of sacrifice for he desired Celie very much at that moment, as did Jacy. But in Heaven did he store riches via his compassion and respect for Jacy. Perhaps his experience in the Chamber of Lust at the Planetary Council played a part. Nevertheless the delightful half smile on the face of Native comrade gave immediate pleasure for in his heart of hearts beat a core of righteousness; it still hurt though. Celie's feelings were unknown and cloaked.

A Time Alone

"No where but up." Says Li to Xila, sitting behind of him there in his flighty XF craft.

"So you want to have a future for yourself, right?"

"Of course sweetie. I don't feel comfortable with too much relaxing. Too many of these pilots out here are taking too much advantage of the comforts and rewards of the colonies, you know having endured the training, hard work, and sacrifice to get out here off of Earth."

"Good. You know this is the first time we have had a chance to be alone since that time on Niim in the vacuum shelter. Remember?"

"Yeah. We landed V1 with Admiral Seghtee onboard and I got out to get you. If I remember we had a talk or two and kissed for a few minutes in there." .

"Yeah well I was not quite sure what came over me lover boy." She said with a sideways glance and only the slightest smile barely reforming her suddenly luscious lips.

"Heh, I'm reminded of when we first met at the Mars Barr. We really clicked you know." Said Li.

"Yeah then all that jive happened and we ended up back on Krysto, the battle with The Resistance, the meteor shower... you were a little on the green side." Xila recalls nudging his face with her fingertips gently turning to one side. Li met her hand to hold a moment noticing another scar on her palm.

"Oh no what happened here?" She turns over her hand and reminisces though not as fondly as a pleasant memory.

"A fight." She spoke with a lil worry on her face. .Hey never mind, enough said. I'm going to put on some music. We will be at Moon in a few hours... unless you would rather have some quiet time, or maybe a video. Hey how about something classic. I've got some crazy Jim Carey skits from a really old show *In Living Color*. Check it." With the pilot seats folded into the floor forming the flat pallet overlaid by the tatted comforter, Li reaches to handle his mouse and appearing upon the screen, a show.



Cockpit of Voyager 2

Xila smiles upon the ending of the quite original skit starring Mr. Jim Carey. She laughs. Li's face flushed a lot. And he remained with his vision on the blank screen and a grin of embarrassment.

"My first time seeing that actually" Li says.

Xila grabs Li's arm and squeezes.

"Well something in the cabinet here you might like has strawberries in it. Here have a grain bar with fruit." Li's hand reaches for the little mini mouse again in the right corner of the console setup.

"I'm thinking some music would fit right now... what's appropriate..." The fresh scent of Xila instills some feeling of something in Li and a brief flash of vision appears before his mind's eye. First the vision of volcanoes, jungles, and primitive animals from eons ago fighting for survival is manifested, then the sight of He and Xila standing close face-to-face holding the cheeks of one another. His mind dispersed the image for Li had learned his lesson in the past particularly with the pointy-eared alien girl he met on The Grand Telestica a long while back. He firms again inside. As his hand hit the mouse control the message alert sounds and is diverted to the communications control. Soon, thereafter the familiar sight of Priset blips on. "Seiwan. Ah I see you have company, sorry to interrupt."

"No problem General. What's up?. .Not too much. You're ETA with Moon is approximately 3.56 hours by your present velocity. We need you to land on the dark side to the following coordinates. Don't worry it's not too deep into the shadows. It's about 100 miles from the terminator. When you land there and secure your vessel retransmit to my comm. address and I'll give you more."

"Will do general." Priset tips his head. "Out." The screen image returns to the music playlist Li is attempting to put together. "Is it auburn? Your hair color?"

"Yes." Li reaches slowly and cautiously toward her shoulders. "May I?"

"Okay." He lifts a smaller bunch of strands and feeds between his two fingers.

"Very silky, what is your secret so I'll do my hair?"

"It's secret."

"Well good. Never tell your secrets. I learned that lesson the hard way. Anyway let's put it on. You might be interested in this little program I installed in my ship's computer. It not very much but it is a media controller, like an audio/video screensaver for long space missions. Like the computer will randomly choose a media file, sound, song, or, event to play. We never know what the A.I. will choose. Could be a video, could be a song, or maybe a documentary."

"Wow. Well is it on?"

"Yep." The urgent message alert sounds and Li huffs lightly quickly to tap the screen-on. The appearance of the caller makes Li's face contort and a perplexed expression appears followed by the feeling of bewilderment. Yet the caller was all but too familiar.

"Li what's the matter?" Xila tugs at his arm and he did not answer yet remained transfixed on the image of Admiral Seghtee. "Captain! This is a priority message. I need you to take the Star Voyager to Moon Base 1! Something major has come up! What is your ETA?"

"Um Admiral I'm not in V1. You have reached the Voyager 2 XF. Lazarus has the ship now. He's headed for Kuipertown. What's the deal sir?"

"I need you to get to the Star Voyager as soon as you can. I have an important duty for you."

"Okay sir but I am currently headed for Moon Base 1 at General Priset's orders. He has something to show me important." The Admiral glances sideways and pauses in his words a moment.

"...Alright change of plan. I'm calling V1. I'm going to tell your navigator to remain on the Kuiper asteroid and secure the ship. I need the Star voyager to remain there for now. When you're finished on Moon Base return to the Kuiper Asteroid ASAP. I'm transmitting the authorization code for you to use military shipping lanes and exceed speed and time limits between the two destination points, you're obviously familiar with the protocol."

"Yes sir Admiral no problem. Will do."

"Seghtee out, and Li, be careful. The screen closes. "Li you look dizzy what's wrong?"

"...Nothing. I just had a funny feeling when the admiral called. Something I felt before when." Li nodded shortly. Anyway. As I was saying about your hair, I think your skin is just a touch fair. Looks almost as silky, another secret?"

"No not really." She responds with a delighted smile. "Almond lotion. Wanna try some?"

"Ha ha, do I need it?" Li feels his face and arms as were exposed by his muscle shirt tightly fitting."

"Oh no of course not." She says as their eyes meet. And her head leans aside a bit then she smooths his face again with the slenderness of her hand. "Xila you know for a while now I have felt something about you."

"What?"

"I dunno, something. More than just kissing."

"Oh?"

"Yeah. Here let's play a song. This might not go like what we are doing but..." Xila intercepts Li's arm as he reached for the mouse.

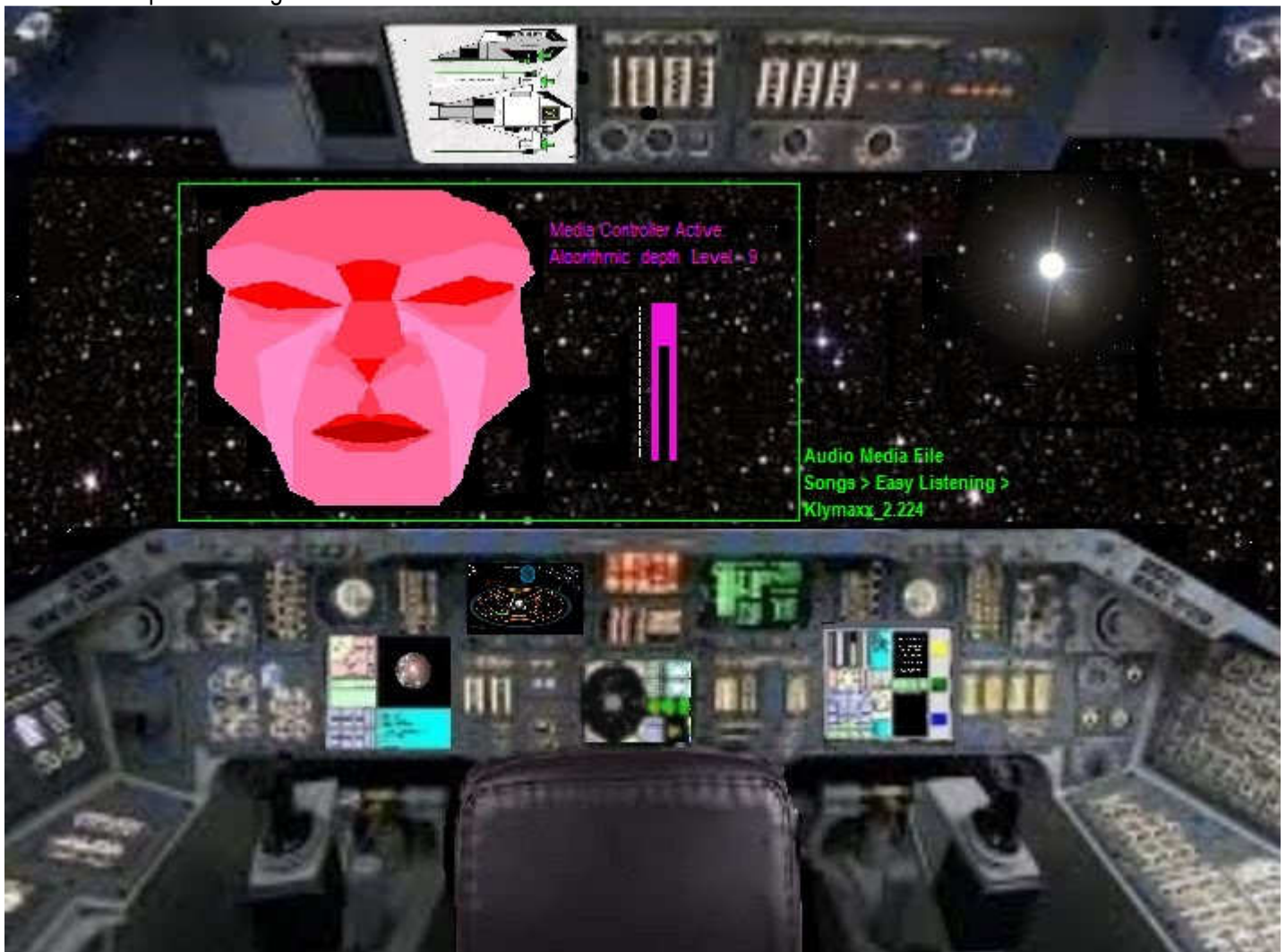
"What's the feeling?"

"I think I want to be closer to you."

"Hmm, well, I still wanna know the feeling."

"It comes to me when we are away from each other. Even if it is not long It's like it's a long time and you're absence is always on my mind."

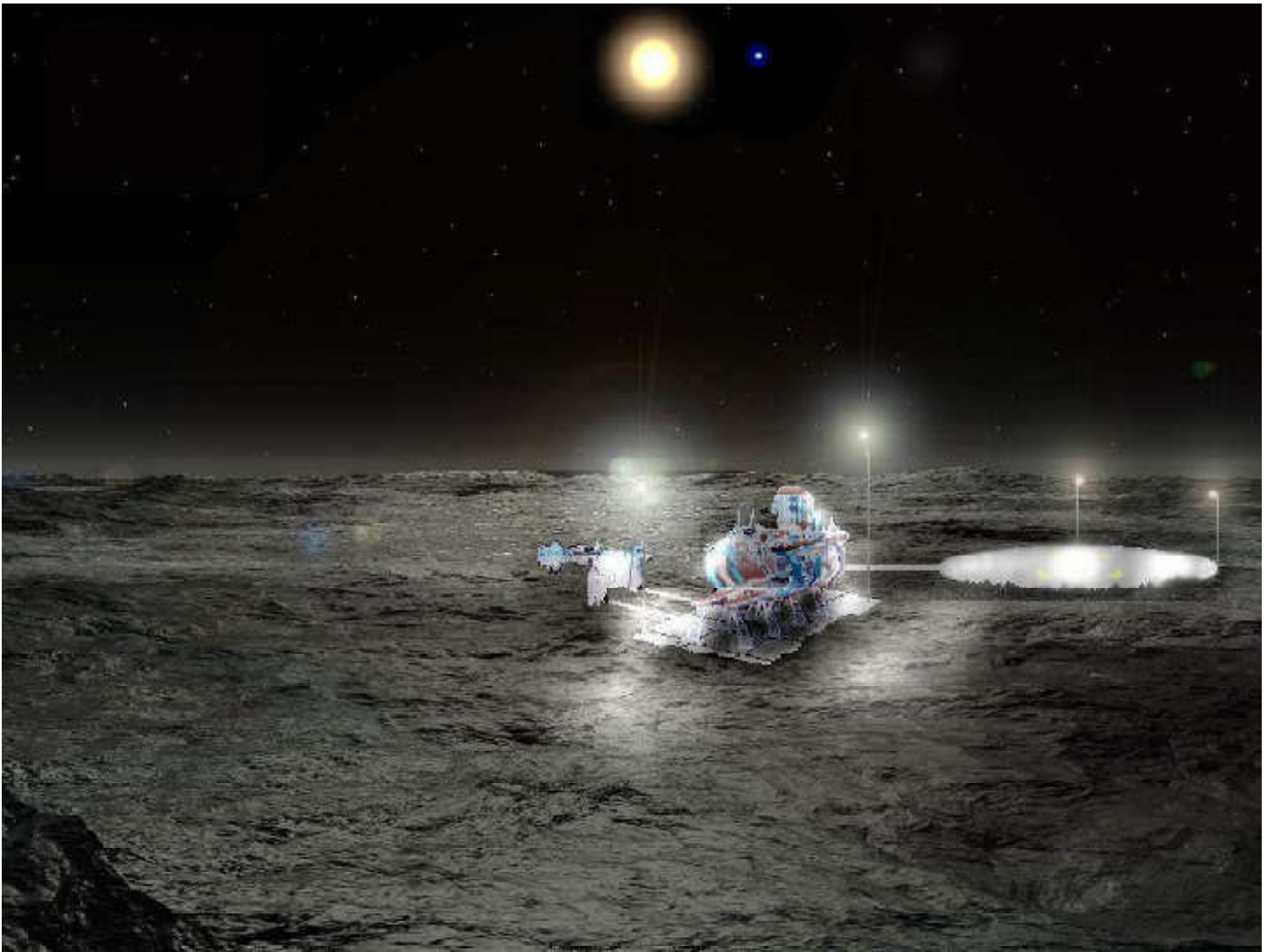
"How does it feel then sweetie?" Li is paused as he gazes at her. [A tune](#) suddenly sounds at the A.I.'s discretion and their tummies pit like falling.



The Media Controller

A Distant Laboratory

The far-off planetoid orbited at something like twice the distance of Mars of Sol yet was indeed a frigid frost of jagged ice and stones hanging adrift distant of its faint mother star HR3018. The little white dwarf mate circled swiftly as it's mass nearly rivaled the younger prime star despite its greater volume.



Science Station Epsilon 12

The egg-shaped vessel manned by Gary Berman and the Elfman Oroxum drifted near the lone body in the darkness thereupon. It was the lights that could be seen down on the surface as they brightly lit the welcoming landing pad and intriguing facility of scientific allure. There's no way for the two-man crew to squelch their anxiety for aboard the detector harboring craft was the strange material taken from the black dwarf star now light years astern. On the storage deck plate lay the quite **weighty** material crumbled out in shiny pebbles appearing smooth to the touch. But touch them not for a very odd substance it was. The cloaking stealth was deactivated and the ship faded into view as if grow from nothingness into tangibility.

Already could be seen afar, small vehicles rolling down the connecting road as Berman has previously requested via communications. All thrusters stopped, and the side ramps lowered Berman steps out suited in his customized space wear no doubt harboring extra special features to the standard SES. It was Oroxum's genius that led him to tinker with the ships gravity plating, creating a practically repulsive field necessary in order to allow placement of the extremely heavy matter. A similar modification to the delivery cart was utilized to hold the material for transfer into the dazzling labs inside several hundred meters away; an encompassing false gravity field generated by the modified plating creating a very light pull about 0.12 percent standard pull.

There was an armored vehicle, which pulled the trailer holding the outfitted container, and Berman and Oroxum rode inside the cab with the operator. It's a tense moment as the vehicle pulls into the underside of the station, as the recent perplexing situation that occurred at the coordinates of the dwarf star was still fresh on their minds. It had yet to be determined the origin of the stellar remnant. But first things first. What to do with the material picked from the black dwarf. Cautiously and apprehensively the shiny blackish material was delivered into the service lift into the main bay on the

underdecks of Epsilon 12. Inside moving along the main corridors can be beheld quite sharply architected structure more bedazing than any modernly designed interior of this type. The arch cover was pulled aside revealing the circular laboratory coated with amazing instruments and tools for study and analysis, which made exotic sounds at the source relating to their manipulation of some physics. The masked lab works gather around as the cover is pulled back to reveal the black dwarf material. They glance in a moment of science at the rocks and stony fragments. The buzz of the anti false gravity field generator tickled their eardrums as it maintained its lift.

"Shouldn't we contact the SMD?" Unem Niom reiterated, owner of the Blue Bird. His experience as a Matron Scientist and affiliation with the newly formed establishment, *Pi* for Projects Incorporated, a credential warranting his employment at such a facility. In the back of his busy and thought loaded mind his encounter with The Confederate Resistance Coordination he quiets his trauma having been kidnapped and worked over quite crudely by the dastardly and torturous terrorist the CRC. Not that enough time had failed to pass for him to be fully recovered of course.

"I'm doing it now." Berman responded as he interfaces with the Station Communications instruments.

"Seghtee should be responding shortly." The junior but upcoming science **labist**, **Admi Rapson** approaches with hands in operating position.

"What do we have here Gary?"

"Black dwarf Material." Rapson's eyes widen.

"How?"

"I mined it from the source, a actual black dwarf!" Rapson huffs.

"And where did it come from? There are no black dwarfs in existence in the universe."

"Not to our knowledge." Unem gently interjects.

"I don't know." Berman finished.

"But Unem and I were dispatched by Admiral Seghtee nearly a week ago to investigate."

"So what's the story?" Rapson inquired.

"It started with the usual. An urgent call from the Admiral directing us to investigate some anomalous readings and an unidentified object nearly the size of a medium sized planet. We had arrived there and began to study the material, you know, the initial sensor scans for diameter, mass, composition and such. Our readings were inconclusive and in some aspects on verifiable due to the nature of the material. To make a long story short we detected another vessel nearing our location under stealth and decided to activate the **Invisonator**. It was the K.V. Mouman, a Felidae research vessel dispatched at some point. They had not detected us. But then the E.S. Ambition on their way into a deep space mission outside of Star City territory nears, also directed by Seghtee and the Earth branch of the Federal Exploration Alliance. They also were not aware of our presence. We watched as the Ambition and the Mouman performed their own studies of the dwarf under cloak." Berman pauses.

"If the Mouman and the Ambition were present and you were under cloak, how did you get these samples?" Unem inquired. Berman looks to Oroxum and back to the esteemed huddle of scientists. Gentleman what I am about to tell you must not be discussed outside this station. I am preparing to report this to Seghtee but I'll go ahead and inform you as well. Oroxum and I have stumbled across a new type of spatial engineering still in its prototype stages. portal technology."

"Portal?" Admi spoke.

"Yes, it is a Casimir fracture technique applied to the fabric of the space by way of manipulation and acceleration of units of **quantized space**."

"Can you explain?" Unem requested.

"Yes but I cannot go into complete detail as of yet. Seghtee might want to classify this technology. Anyway, Oroxum and I had been experimenting with a standard spatial temper extracted from a downed spacecraft. We were attempting to modify in order to see if we could facilitate a way of using it to make a tunneling beam for use in transportation of material through space, like the theoretical teleporter perhaps. Instead what we discovered was by conjoining the spatial temper with several other special devices including a regular high temperature discharge chamber found on most space craft we were able to artificially take hold of units of quantized space and accelerate them to great vibratory velocities. This resulted in a rapid spinning effect of the units causing them to display antitemporal attributes."

"Meaning what exactly." Unem inquired. "Well not only did we create a way to push matter into a portal in space that it may emerge elsewhere but also through time!"

"Then what?"

"Well the situation was becoming a little tense with the Felidaes and the Ambition crew. I noted Captain Bragga beaming a gamma ray stream at the dwarf in an attempt to get a density reading of some kind. But also nearby we detected a fissure in space in the direction opposite of the trajectory of the dwarf, it was moving away from the fissure as if it had come through it."

"Hmm, that could explain its origin." Rapson reasoned.

"Actually it was Oroxum's idea to fake the gamma stream on the other side of the dwarf. Go ahead explain it to them."

"Yes." Replied the little voice at knee high level. Oroxum inputs, "I thought it would be better that the Cats stay focused on the dwarf. There was no way to know what the fissure was or how it opened. And since there were temporal fluctuation in spacetime protocol recommends keeping as few minds aware and focused on the anomaly. The less people engaging in research or interference the simpler the temporal problem will be usually."

"So. then what?" The intrigued pilot of the Blue Bird fighter inquired.

"Well we emitted our own gamma ray on the opposite end of the dwarf making it appear as if the Ambitions stream passed through. I know it sounds like a long shot but there wasn't much time to think. It was the quickest way to try and keep everyone's attention away from the temporal fissure in space."

"Wow, quick thinking." Unem replied.

"Yes but It was a close call because we had a slight power surge causing our Invisonator to fail for a few seconds. We were almost discovered by the Felidaes. I need not remind us that the Invisonator is still classified itself. Nevertheless, the Felidaes moved off suddenly and accelerated into high speed in the direction of their home star 36 Opiuchi. We were not sure why, probably headed back to Katlar." Just then the station proximity alert sounds louder than most proximity alerts perhaps due to the fact that the station was more covert than most standard facilities.

"**Padmaster** to lab, The SMD Battle Cruiser *Mediator* just touched down. Admiral Seghtee is coming onto the station along with security escort." The not so busy landing pad watcher reported.

"Received, Pad. Lead the Admiral into the lab at our location."

"Wait a minute." Unem pondered.

"Black dwarfs are extremely dense and very heavy. It doesn't seem like it would be an easy task to mine anything from it. How do you do it?"

"I was coming to that actually. We used the portal. Oroxum and I were able to use the ships cannons to blast away the material but it fell back down to the surface to quickly to fly in and scoop some up. We couldn't blow the material far enough into space to break it away and retrieve it. That when we racked our brains and threw together the portal generator, which we managed to land on the surface. We had to reinforce the integrity of the armor we extracted from our hull to withstand the gravity and also laid a gravity play down inside to lessen the weight on the interior components but it worked. The machine spawned a linier vortex of sorts several hundred feet above the surface. At which time a series of blasts from our cannons allowed just enough to enter into the portal and it appeared several million miles away from the dwarf. But there was a slight temporal differential in the matter. It had been sent back in time a little, about a few days."

"Meaning the material was here and ready to be picked up when you arrived." Unem finished as he stroked his chin ponderously.

"Right. But there was no way for us to have detected the material; it was too small of an amount and dead matter. Not heat, no emissions, nothing." The archway cover retracts and in comes the admiral with armed escort, though their weapons appropriately angled.

"Dr. Berman good day."

"And you admiral."

"What did you find?"

"He sighs from tire. Well shortly speaking. We managed to get this sample of material from the dwarf using a new technology Oroxum and I invented. Portal technology." The admiral eyebrow rises.

"Is something wrong sir?"

"Perhaps. We have here two top-secret projects, the material from the black dwarf and the portal technology. Where is it by the way?"

"Onboard my science vessel on the landing pad." The Admiral was silent a spell as he pondered.

"Okay at this time I am going to militarize this project both the portal and the research on this material. I think especially the portal technology is quite a serious matter."

"How so sir."

"We must ensure it does not get out of our hands. If for example the Resistance were to get wind of it, they could easily penetrate our territorial defenses. Perhaps even launch strikes to our defense installations we would have no warning. This device can move objects through space at great distances right Dr.?"

"Yes sir. But we have not perfected it yet and it is still unstable."

"Understood." The admiral leans over and whispers instruction to the assistant next to him and he departs quickly.

"We will wait here Dr. Please unload the portal device from your vessel and bring it in for inspection let's try to figure out how to stabilize it. If possible it could be used to launch instantaneous raids onto Resistance outpost. It would spare us many casualties."

"Pardon me sir," Oroxum spoke up. "But the portal technology could also be used for other purposes like supply delivery or mail."

"Perhaps even people." The Admiral finished. Your right Dr. Oroxum. "Or course. We will maintain our goal of peaceable aspirations for the improvement of the people of Star City. It is our duty. Let's get the device in here and maybe try to get some readings on this material we have before us. In the meantime I have a few calls to make."

The conversation was audible because the rear, retracting door leading to the living room was ajar apparently not set on auto close due to frequent traffic in the ship. The voice of Seghtee played and he overheard some of it. "...the fate of Star City rests in our hands, please remain at Kuiper Town for my arrival. [End of transmission.]. The automated voice declared. Jacy hand was already opening the little wall cabinet where the spare **element discs** are kept soon to pull one forth just as Lazarus emerged from the living room and Jacy was looking with his eyes, Lazarus, with a concerned countenance about him toward the deck.



Spare Beryllium Disk

The apparatus chamber was opened shortly after Jacy operated to controls to close off the particle transfer conduit valves leading into the neutron generator to maintain the vacuum in the line. The crumbly, eroded disc currently in use was removed and the by-product at the bottom of the chamber was pulled out in the sliding collection pan. Soon the fresh Beryllium plate was inserted, the pan re-placed, and the chamber door closed. A flip of a switch and the chamber vacuum was restored followed by the reopening of the generators PTC exit valves.

"Jacy Li and I have another mission. I'm going to be remaining here on the platform. I have a modification I want to make on the ship for Li while I wait for the Mediator to arrive from the outer territory. You and Celie go ahead I'll tell her myself in a moment. In the meantime I'll will contact Li and get him apprised."

"What's going on?"

"They are bringing something here aboard the Mediator and transferring it to the Star Voyager. Some kind of prototype and a data transfer to our onboard-classified records. They say I am in a perfect position to make the delivery."

"I see. Well don't worry friend, Celie and I will leave the light on for you when you and Li get done. Just come on back to my condo here and I'll make a great Native feast for us all."

"Sure, I'm look forward to it." Celie enters the middle room.

"The ships all powered down. We're ready for some fun and adventure!. She said cheerfully. Lazarus holds her right shoulder and gazes into her eyes.

"Thanks dear, but I have a mission for the SMD again. Li will be meeting me here in a few hours and so will Admiral Seghtee in the Mediator. Have fun with Jacy and don't drink too much." He warned **kiddishly** and kissed her cheek. Laz turns and heads again for the side console in the corner to begin his preparation. Jacy and Celie begin to change from their stylish new age civilian clothing to their space jumpsuits, soon to suit up in the standard SES. They complete their suiting session and Celie takes Jacy by his gloved hand and into the control room turn toward him after the bridge door closes. Looking into his keen eyes she holds his hands.

"Jacy I want to thank you for what you wanted to do for me back at the red sun; our romantic getaway."

"Anything sweetie."

"I was angry about what happened, Chris Williams shooting you down like that. Almost as if he knew we were trying to have our time together."

"No matter now. It's all right. He, like many others are jealous of true love. They always want to interfere. We're safe now, no longer in deep space. Let's make it up to ourselves at my place. I have a special evening planned. You deserve everything I can give." They kiss lightly. In the secondary compartment. "Li. Do we have a steady line?"

"Yes it's all clear on my end. What's up?"

"What is your location?"

"About 30,000 miles past Mars orbit heading for the Moon. You?"

"I'm at Kupier Town. Admiral Seghtee has a mission for us. He wants you to rendezvous with us here on this asteroid."

"I know. He messaged me already. General Priset wants to show me something on Moon first then I'll be on my way. Xila might come along, I'm not sure I have to find out her plans."

"Hi Xila."

"Hello there."

"Alright, see you in a few hours. Lazarus out." He leans back into the chair rest and ponders. Jacy and Celie enter and Lazarus knows to leave the room to open the airlock and it was so. With a wave the two climb out onto the roof and down the side ladder into the void beginning their hike to the town nestle into the crag of the asteroid. Lazrus begins sifting through the Kupertown tourist's database looking for a good mechanic. *Ollen Nakins Ship Repair and Refurbishing Service* catches his attention. The communications screen is activated and the call goes out to the skilled serviceman down in the town somewhere. The voice of the assistant serviceman sounds, a quite shifty sounding individual, to greet his caller. .Ollens Ship Service. What do you need?"

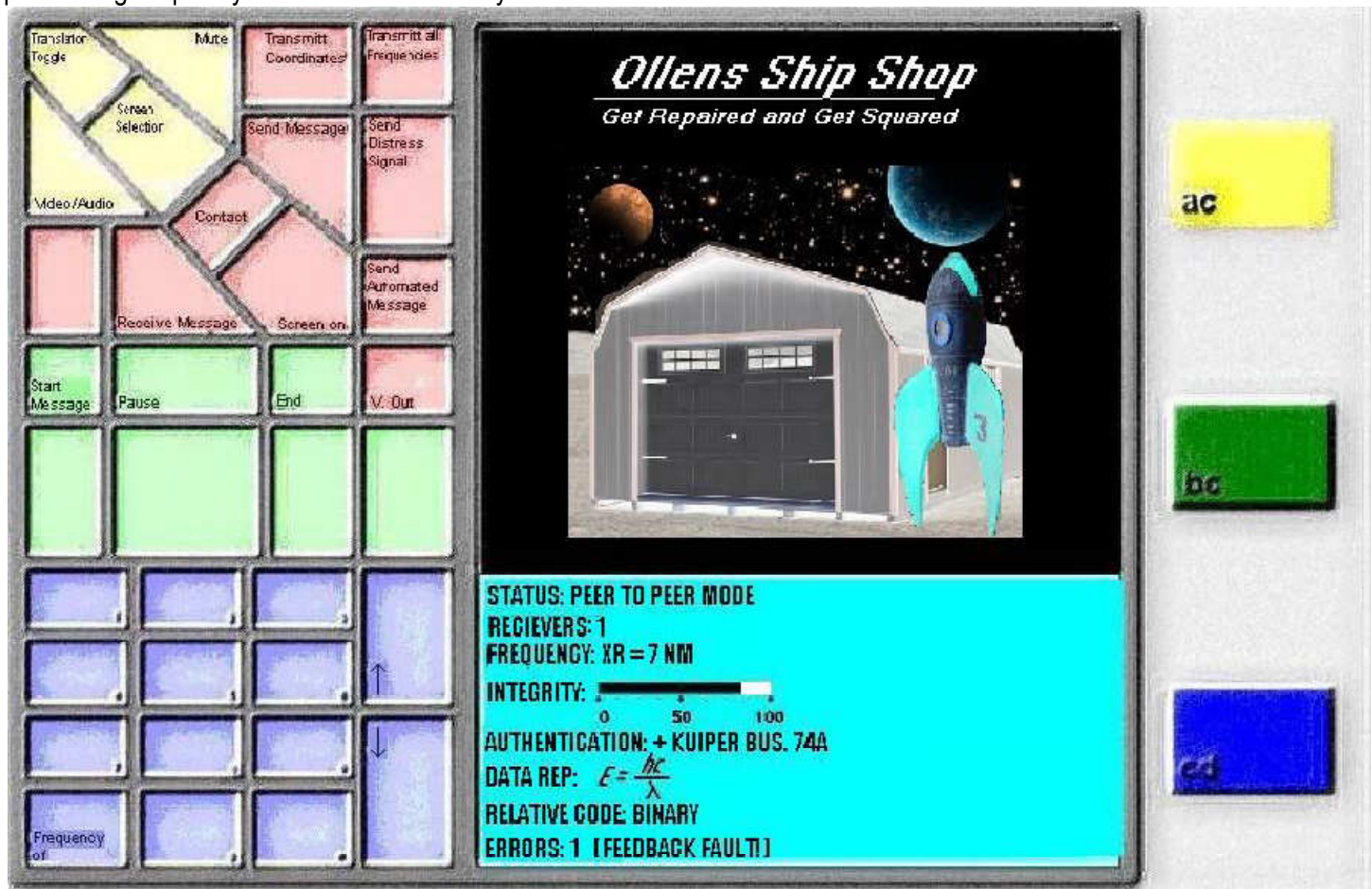
"Yes, I'm on the Kuiper landing platform. I need a new door on my ship. What do you want in return."

"Okay I'm going to want to know the composition of your hull and schematic of the basic design."

"There's some static in the line I'm having trouble hearing you."

"Oh it's nothing, I modified the communicator here [chuckle] to my own specs."

"Well something wrong because we shouldn't be getting any signal degradation this close to each other on such a penetrating frequency. Should be clear as sky."



Close Range Communications

"Don't worry about it. I'll meet you on the platform."

"Please send another serviceman. Preferably Mister Nakins if your communications modifying is any indication." A moment of silence as the assistants face boiled red though not visible to Lazarus. "[chuckle] He'll be right over, uuh be prepared to trade for something for the work."

With static and clicks the call ends and Lazarus awaits.

A Place to Call Home

It blackens the steamed cabin, the darkness of the moons backside as they swing around the cratered body; the **pitchness** yet revealing the brilliance of distant stars afar. Although they were quite brilliant on the way over from Miranda, perhaps the distracted pair only now noticing them. Xila's trembling calms and Li's strength begins to return to his defined musculature as he taps the panel to confirm the co-ordinance input by the General's last transmission. A little silence and light breathing sounds the cabin soon to be joined by the soft ping of a new transmission somewhere on the Moon's surface, the location directed by General Priset.

"Li I'm pregnant." Xila reports. Li's heart thumps and his throat knots a little. With wide eyes he gazes at the horizon of the moon's surface a dark silhouette of stone and peaks but visible by the **Alternate Spectrum Imager**. Xila's hand reaches for the buttons to slow the ship's speed as neglected by the dazed Li who snaps out of his gaze to regain control of the ship. "How do you know that darling?"

"It's okay. But I have to tell my father. He will want to know where are we going?" Li checks the sensor display showing a mini mountain peak, more like an upthrust of rocks the size of a building.

"This mountain it looks like. 5 stories high, 72 feet wide at the peak."

"It looks strange. It doesn't fit with the background hills."

"The message says to emit this frequency in the RF spectrum toward the mountains peak."

"I know what it is."

"Here goes." The little mini dish on the Voyager 2 XF's hull swivels toward the target and energizes its signal. Soon the top of the mountain lifts upward pushed by large hydraulic arms on three sides to uncover a small landing bay. Li and Xila look to one another and grin giddily. With a pull of the throttle the sleek fighter craft maneuvers fourth and with a reemission of the signal the roof closed around them. The auto lighting shines and the spacy ship bay unveils a large room with some unidentified materials, devices, and some control panels on the walls edge. A [video media](#) plays suddenly at the whim of the A.I. and Li begins to turn off the media controller. Xila intercepts his arm and they listen a short spell.

"It's present."

"What?"

"Your controller." Li looks at the console only lightly flustered, yet strange to him for he usually comprehends quickly. It was Xila who knew him now and can see into him.

"We'd better suit up dear."

"Yeah I'm going to try, sometimes it's a tight squeeze in this fighter."

"Just hold on to the pull bar above you and I'll help you into it." Xila chuckles somewhat.

"Well I'm not as strong as you so I can't do those one armed pull ups." Li smiles.

"We'll manage." He says and they begin the process.

"Wait. The roof is closing around us. I'll bet you in a moment we'll have some air in this joint." Indeed the gradual hissing of jets sounded yet not until sufficient pressure was available to sound it.

"The ships **exoenvirometer** reports positive oxygen/nitrogen mixture let's go." She reveals and unlatches the top hatch. In moments they were out and about glancing around at what little odd and familiar items might be laying around a place like this in addition to the wall panels in the corners.

"Xila this makes me nervous. There is only a mechanism keeping this roof dome closed over us. Only slight lift and were in a vacuum."

"Yeah we should probably finish suiting. I've got an intuition there is another room to his place. It would have to be on the floor."

"Got it." Lee answers while lifting a previously latched hatch. Li peeks in and the area down under lights. "Wow looks cozy. c'mon let's go down." And they did. Below a comfortable air-conditioned apartment complete with living room, kitchen, dining, bed pads and entertainment area, also what looked like communications equipment in the study corner.

"Li I think you're getting an upgrade." Xila reasoned.

"Yeah really."

"I know what this is. They're giving you more important assignments, by the looks of it very important. You'd better start knuckling down boy." She said playfully. "Heh, I'm already knuckled down. If I get any more knuckled down my fists would be dragging on the floor I think."

"Wow a Chrysanthemum garden!" Xila exclaimed as she touched the wall immediately lighting the **engraving** housing the now glowing bouquets of colorful blossoms.

"Blast it! We've got to get going!"

"I'm supposed to be meeting Lazarus at Kuipertown again." Xila's face flushed heavily and she smiles with plump and reddened lips. With a soft approach and her hand lay upon his chest. "You wanna... again before you go?" Li nods.

Project: Delivery

At the edge of Star City the machines and extremely high-powered, and notably classified, lasers stored at Science Station Epsilon 12 ran a constant effort to crumble and dice and reshape the extremely dense material mined from the black dwarf. Standing by the adamant Admiral Seghtee directs the military point of view regarding the two new objects of concern, the material and Berman and Oroxum's new portal. Speaking of the portal the whole slew of science guys worked highly resolute on rebuilding the prototype portal into a new beta version. Regarding the dark, heavy elements of mystery and loathing he speaks his opinions.

"Dr." He calls out having stepped away from the side wall-mounted communications terminal.

"I have received the go ahead to inform you, that is everyone currently in this room, that we must construct several more prototypes of the beta version. Here is the plan: We're going to leave one or more beta prototypes here and take the third and the original prototype used on the scene to another location. I am not revealing where due to the sensitivity of the project, not because we don't want you to know. Nevertheless, the new location where we will be taking the other prototypes will be a **strategic transfer point**, STP in defense terms. I on behalf of the SMD I salute and thank each and every one of you for your contributions here. This may be a turning point in history. A reminder, portal technology, the ability to move objects instantaneously between locations, is greater a danger in enemy hands than a useful tool in the right hands."

"Agreed admiral." Unem responds. "And from what Gary theorizes the size of an object can be quite large depending on the amplification factor of the energizing components, which help to create the Casimir fracture in space. We may be able to transport large cargo or supplies to the colonies around Star City rather than using transport ships. Not that the traffic is very heavy or anything but the less the better. Less vessel traffic means less of a chance of a collision even though the projected chance of vessel collisions is less than 0.9 percent."

"Right." Berman spoke.

"That's certainly looking on the bright side. And I believe the admirals concerns are very warranted. Large cargo could also be large ships, or even a fleet of ships. We'd better take his advice and do what we can to prevent groups like the CRC from getting a hold of it."

"Not to mention friendlies. What about the allied systems inside the territory? Should we share this with them?" Admi Rapson interjected. They look to Seghtee.

"I believe the technology should be perfected before considering sharing with the other systems. That is a standard SMD protocol for non crisis situations." The admiral paused a moment and looked upward a bit in a slight trance but not so noticeable. Oroxum glances at the admiral at that moment.

"The Planetary Council however must be informed immediately." He finished. "That's our job. The mediator will deliver a beta prototype and report on the black dwarf to the council itself. But before that the original portal version and documentation again will be transferred to the unnamed vessel at STP NAV 1 where I will provide the pilot with another delivery point. We will need to load the nozzles for the NAV 1 vessel onto the mediator as well."

"Sounds good admiral. I envy your mission."

"As I do yours. Please continue to develop the devices. Upon completion we should perform some experiments and continue thereafter to load them onto the mediator."

"Sir. I have a suggestion which will help to ensure an even more secure delivery of the plans and prototypes." Oroxum spoke.

"Yes tell us." Said the admiral.

"I had calculated that the **temperature ratio gradient** could be steeper if we fashion the black dwarf material into upgraded engine **discharge mitts**. It will be a simple routine engine thruster case replacement."

"Interesting." Unem stated. "That's quite an idea. The black dwarf material could withstand far greater temperatures than our current nozzles. We may be able to surpass the **acceleration flats**."

"Right." Berman replied with a chin rub. "We would need to increase the import on the particle conduits leading to the spatial temper with the correct flow rates to match the acceleration gain for each level!" Oroxum glances toward the admiral and he ponders.

"The Mediator *is* in need of maintenance. And this would increase our speed to our delivery points. How fast could we get this done Mr. Oroxum?"

"Well sir, we will need to fashion the new plate very, very thin to match the same weight as the current discharge mitts so as not to add too much more weight. No matter. A discharge mitt of black dwarf material of the same weight as a discharge mitt of the current composition would indeed be far thinner yet can withstand far greater temperatures. As fast as we can sculpt them with our equipment here the sooner we can mount them and use them."

"It will take us about an hour for each beta prototype so three total. In four hours we should be ready to load one of the betas and the original onto the Mediator." Oroxum calculates on his **hand pad**.

"That's about right, we can have a nozzle made in a lil less than that time judging by the rate of laser cutting." The admiral walks to the sidewall computer.

"Alright, I am interfacing with the Mediator's database and downloading the engine discharge port specs. Also I have in mind another vessel, the one at NAV 1. I'm downloading its specs so we can make nozzles for them as well, four to be exact." I want to outfit it with the high speed thrust technology as well. That way we assure the swift delivery by both vessels. Looks like we now have two top-secret technologies to our use, the nozzles and the portal. Both, in the hands of the CRC or any terrorist group spells danger for us all."

A Little Fix

"Ollen's the name ship shaping is the game." The boisterous repair man introduced. Standing outside the Star Voyager suited of course, Lazarus, with visors open, views into the face of the odd character, his grin somewhat brief.

"Your Ollen? Somehow I expected you to be a little older. Ollen's Ship Shop has been around practically since the first long range settlement was established, one of the first businesses on the Kuipertown asteroid."

"I keep in shape."

"*Right*. Well, here she is, the Star Voyager. I need a man sized door put in right here on the port side, nothing fancy."

"You got gold?"

"Um, no." Lazarus shows a display on his wrist device.

"See, SMD membership. You gotta give me deal friend."

"Hmm, well the Sol branch of the SMD extends only a few hundred million miles beyond the orbit of Pluto. This is the Kuiper Belt, practically an Oort Cloud member." At that moment something odd happened to Lazarus, his mind became confused and his thought seemed to misalign and not compute. Yet even his intelligent ability to recalculate the information seemed to be compromised.

"All SMD branches are working together. They cover every part or Star City. What do you mean."

"It's the law. Now you have no gold or anything for trade?"

He ponders a moment. "Come inside." At that moment they traverse the side ladder to the roof quick to enter the center of the ship and seal up and compress. The man claiming he to be Ollen Nakins glances around and his grin returns quite out of place and with no words, only a quiet reconnaissance.

"Something wrong?" Lazarus inquired.

"Well, what ya got."

"Stay here I'll be right back, and he retreats to the back room assuring the door auto closed behind him and (Ollen) chuckles. In the moments ahead he emerges with in his hands an offering.

"Specialized engineering toolset found only on the Planet Krysto. These tools have more various features in one than almost anything else. The Krystonian engineers are quite the practical mechanics. You will definitely want to add these to your collection. Will speed your repair work 3 fold I bet cha!"

"Meh, I got about four of these kits laying around the garage. Besides. I rarely get Krystonian technology to work on out here."

"This won't do me any good *jack*."

"Wait here." Lazarus retreats to the rear once more and emerges again.

"You've gotta take this. My collection of designer translation masks, upgraded with at least 10 additional languages. Sure beats the standard glum colors you're used to." (Ollen) glares at him terribly but his face did not contort.

"Don't need em'." The translation masks I have cover every customer I deal with out here. You gotta raise the deal *jack*." Lazarus controlled his swelling frustration and it tensed his heart and nauseated his stomach.

"Look I need this door. You gotta make this happen. I'm Federal Citizen."

"Heh, this is a private business, Kupiertown residents only. Federal Citizenship applies inward of Pluto's orbit *jack*." Lazarus ponders soon to snap his fingers.

"Got it, wait here." He returns with some better items.

"This is a classic old school co2 pellet rifle with combo scope and rapid feed mechanism. I've shot at many-a-critters with this beauty." In the mind of (Ollen) something happened. It was as if he suddenly could not resist the offer and his seemingly unwrought thinking was bypassed.

"Where did you get this?"

"My father. It's a family heirloom. It means a lot to me. It was passed down to me since I was a child. It's my childhood. I used to go into the woods behind our subdivision in the bright summertime and play a lot. It pains me to accept your trade for it. I'm gonna miss it. Is there any way you can accept something else. It would mean so much to me." (Ollen) grins again as before.

"Nope. This will do sorry I hate if for you that your childhood must be taken away. But, if you want that door." Lazarus tips his head forward and sighs.

"Alright, go ahead. Here are the schematics of the port hull section. There are only a few conduits and maybe one or two components to move out of the way."

"Hehe, no problem I'll be right back. I'm gonna have to torch cut the doorway. Gonna take at least a medium-high powered machine to get through this much titanium and lead layers."

"Do what you can. Just get it done."

"You got it friend..." And he recaps and departs, Lazarus seeing him out from the rear where he controls the airlock.

The Right One

It's the activity happening to their starboard side at the *Nifty Night Bar and Grill*, which reminds him of why he moved out to the Kuiper Belt. The outdoor tables were manned, and laded by frequenters. Unknown was it that any visitors were there at all. Yet it was only an assumption there were any commoners either. No matter. In Jacy's mind he couldn't help but to remember the first time meeting Celie whose slender hand cupped in his. Even through their suits they could feel the tenderness in their hands. Perhaps it could not be any more secure of a feeling. With the stars above some eclipsed by a drifting body and the rocky mountains of ice and metals. Not so much a romantic sight but the festive decorations about took the eye by storm. But in the mind of Celie her hidden feelings gave her instructions. On the traverse to the console of Jacy the music heard over the helmet radio **commons channel** led Celie to pull on the arm of Jacy and she led him into her plan. Therein they passed an airlock and inside uncapped to enjoy the [naked music](#). Smiles and heat surrounded them as the people's dance and play. Celie led the amused Jacy Abeytu to the side counter. With her hand affront of him she directs.

"Wait here sweetie."

"Sure." And she retreats into the crowd yet Jacy continued observing the jollity. Celie glanced about intently as if looking for someone specific. The face of Rashmi Jenna was attractive enough for her tastes and approached her. She had been sitting alone and consuming her glass of chosen beverage; clothes of her East Indian heritage and appropriate for the

engagement. She speaks to her, directing her attention toward Jacy and waited a moment for a gap in the dancing and trotting about of the people and he appeared in the gap. Rashmi and Celie look to one another and communicated with no words. Celie slipped away perhaps toward the girl's room and Rashmi gradually made her way to Jacy.

"Are you Jacy Abeytu?"

"Yes." Jacy had to control his arousal at the voluptuous East Indian girl.

"I know about you. You served on the E.S. Vigor, right?"

"Yes I did. It is nice to meet you. Who are you?"

"I'm Rashmi Jenna." Her hand extends into Jacy's who lightly held still a bit entranced by the wisdom of Rashmi.

"I haven't seen you around here."

"Yes I rarely leave Suntuown. This is my second time at Kuipertown."

"Wow. You should come out here more often."

"Sure. So do you wanna dance or walk about?"

"Well I'm here with someone, a girl I know from France. We were on our way to my condo." Rashmi paused a spell.

"Is it her over there?" She points to the blonde chatting with the rather attractive D.J. carrying his tunes. She laughs and smiles with *him*. Jacy's vision locked onto the sight and he rose slowly from his stool. The hand of Rashmi quick and light, intercepts his motion toward the pair. Into his eyes she seeks and his frustration was quarantined.

"Wait Jacy." At that moment without seeing she suddenly and casually departs from the record stand and delicately approaches Jacy. She stands before him and he stares into her.

"Jacy I want to tell you something." His arms cross and he glance is away.

"I felt that we had better not continue this. Something doesn't feel right. I love you. I loved what you tried to do for me at HR 5568. It was the most romantic thing, an evening around a red star." She touches his tensed face.

"But it was Lazarus who I found. I need to finish something we started with him. Please understand." He looks to her. Then Rashmi stands close to Celie and smiles a bit.

"I had an evening planned again. Snacks, music." Rashmi picks up his hand with the quick and gentle motion.

"I think she will want an evening." Jacy turns his head to her and looks into her.

"Please have fun. Contact me sometime."

"Sure." Jacy and Rashmi depart.

"Jacy, I know how to fix your evening." She spoke. "I thought you and I were going to the condo."

"I have an idea. There is a girl I know. She's a smart one, a loner. And on top of that, guess what? She's Native!" She claimed with a smile.

She leads him by the hand. The streets flow by along with the gathering places just about at the end of the road shortly before the rocky transition onto the asteroidal surface an interesting shop emerged. Inside they go and uncap. It was enchanting. Headdresses, feathered catchers of dreams and imaginings were hung about. Portraits of history displaying the proud and honored chiefs and tribes of ancient times also showed the background of the piney evergreen forests of western Earth. Classic tools and hand made weapons strung about tells a tale astute skill and times of sacrifice. In the old languages of the good tribes of old literature reveals stories of respect for the creatures and land beneath the feet of the once great people.

"Did you know about this place?" She asked with batting eyes.

"No, I didn't." He says with awe. In his eyes a longing for home. His face softened from its firm countenance and he was wondrous.

"Thank you. Rashmi." He grabs her shoulders and kissed her lips. In a back room footsteps approached yet not visible was the stepper. Rashmi quickly broke the kiss and stood slightly apart from Jacy.

"The voice of another Indian beauty sounds her greeting. She stops to see the eyes of Jacy Abeytu and pauses a moment, Rashmi standing by with a smile.

"Jacy, meet Koko. She owns this shop." His hand extends to meet with hers. In her widened eyes it did sparkle and her hair was long and raven primed with a red sash and her attire of skins as traditional wear.

"How." She greets. Her lipstick was reddish pink and it smiled to him.

"Koko, Jacy used to work on an exploration vessel. He's very strong and fast, a true warrior. He's sweet too. His date for the evening canceled and he need a friend to take to his house for a nice evening. Didn't you tell me that you were searching for a good native man to help you run your shop?"

"Yes. I'm...speechless."

"Jacy she is very smart and fun to be around. She has been alone most of her life looking for a right man. Why don't you to get acquainted? I think Jacy has a special time planned at home. Koko aren't you due to close soon?"

"Yes." Jacy interrupts.

"Well. Ms. Koko I would love to assist you. You have had a long day here? Would you like that?"

"Sure, *mister* Jacy." She smiles out. They hold a short gaze and Rashmi steps away.

"Ta-ta you two." It was the heartbeats of Jacy and Koko, which dominated the sound of the room. Along the walkways paths and a few alleys the celebratory activity was less at this end of town. That was the way Koko liked it. The stair pavement elevated them to the condo on the rocky hillside overlooking the universe. A nebula could be seen in its colorful mosaic of gases and starlight but afar off. The stars hung **balancedly**. There was heat in the airlock as it filled with life giving gases. They remove their helmets.

"Wow fresh, and. it looks almost like my shop. Did you decorate in here? I wouldn't have expected a man with such a sweet yet hard handsome face to be so festive."

"Yes dear. I decorated it. It was supposed to be a surprise for my date. Make yourself comfortable, please." Jacy moves about adjusting his clothing and apparel. The site of his muscles and form was visible unintentionally to Koko as he transferred his torso covering. At one point he activated his stereo.

"*Media controller active.*" Said the computer voice.

"Hmm I think it's the glass swan carvings that I like, so clear and crisp. Where did you get them?" The controller [beeps](#). "*Glass carving: The history of glass making dates back many thousands of years as the effect of burning fire on sand resulted in the formations a smooth transparent solid. After that it's application became variable and widely used. Figurines and glass models didn't come about until about.*" Koko chuckles.

"Not you computer, thank you."

"Sorry." [<debeeps>](#)

"Juice or wine?" He calls.

"Wine please." Jacy returns to sit upon her and his arm outstretched to encompass her slender yet healthy shoulders.

"Tell me Koko. Why so alone. There is no way possible you can be without a husband or manfriend. What's the deal girl?"

"Well." She looks to him checking for trust. In his eyes it was found the loyalty of a nobleman.

"It's not easy. I didn't want to. I just had something on me all my life. It was something that told me I should be more than just a pleasure thing for men. I waited and wondered if it would ever happen. It didn't. I gave in for a while. Let men have me as they pleased. But something inside lead me away. I left my tribe and sought a life in space. I don't know why."

"Maybe **The Great Spirit** led you. Maybe us together who knows."

"Yeah that's right. I guess I knew it when I met you at my shop today. Where were you coming from anyway?"

"Oh nothing. Just a friend and I at the *Nifty Night* Bar and Grill. Ever go there?"

"Once or twice. I just wish I could *explain* to you how much it means that found a man like you." Their hearts soften as they gaze into their souls through sparkly peepers.

"It's the same way with me. I knew it as soon as you came out of the backroom at the shop." He touches her face softly and kissed upon her lips shortly.

"I can't *explain* it either." Their lips move in again and kiss together. "[Explaining](#)." The A.I., media controller voiced with computerized tones.

The Mouman Arrives at Katlar

In the midst of the territory of Star City the Planet Katlar hangs between the triple stars of 36 Opiuchi certainly basking. The orbiting ship port intakes the over speeded exploration craft Mouman, flagship of Katlar's fleet. Inside zealous Cat people await rest and leave at their home world as well as an official delivery of the reports from the far off point of happenstance, the black dwarf.

With a snarl and a whip of his tail the Senior Pouncer announces his ideals. "[Alpha, it is our time now. We found new information. We must stay true to Katlar and the holy of holies **Lord Lio** for he has blessed us with cleanliness and humility.]"

"[Of course Pouncer. Why do you remind us of this? Does not the Lord teach us, *"Keep silent of the source of his glory that it may grow inside yet not unto the world for the glory of Lio is not of the world, but of **The Kit**. Thus sath Lio, if the power of the glory be revealed unto the Feldae, will it be for Lio or Cat?]*"

"[Yes Alpha. But the scriptures also teach, *.Purr unto thy neighbor upon his gentle touch for it shall be seen as the gift of the heavenly petting which, sath Lio is the essence of **the meow**.*" I say this captain because I believe we should reveal what we have found out about the invisible vessel we detected. Even though it might alarm the Primates and maybe create tension between us.]"

"[No need to be alarmed. I meditate that the Primates shall remain our allies. Go ahead and prepare the report. We will submit it to the **Elders of the Panthers** ourselves as well as the accounting of the dark star.]"

"[Very good sir.]"

"[**Sounder** Kittles. Message a word to the Elders that we are ready to deliver our accounts in person. **Ear Catcher**, stand by for their return. Let us give them our best prance.]"

"[Yes sir. And what about the anomalous readings gathered by the Whisker Master, the space puncture.]" The Senior Pouncer asked.

"[That is the department of the Wisdom Tom. Keep your place Pouncer!]"

"[Yes Alpha, I submit unto your claw.]"

"[Wisdom Tom. Prepare the reports including the space puncture.]"

"It's ready sir, the dark star, the invisible vessel, and the space puncture.]" <purrr>

"[I've got a feeling we are about to win the favor of the Elders.]" Captain Pouncer expressed. His satisfaction rattled softly across the control deck of the Mouman. Soon the pleasant purrs of the rest of the control crew followed in a harmony of audible contentment.

"[Contact the **Layman downdeck**. Have him anchor the ship into the platform and prepare for us the transfer of the Me-Alpha, Sounder, and the Pouncer. There will be many **Kitmas** with our tails on their paws!]" Their eyes **slitted**. Into the **Felaferry** did they pile and plow into the atmosphere rich in Oxygen and Nitrogen destined for the capitol city of the Eastern continent [Jagwaria]. Kittles, Pouncer and the Wisdom Tom, Paddman, descent above the vast **hueish** grasslands patched with colorful palmlike trees and shrubbery of reds, oranges and violet, the land, though plenty familiar to the flying Catmen, still astounds even the longest lived of the Felidae people upon this sunny world.



Onto Katlar!

The Great Alley of Toms

A formal escort of the lionhearted cats from the sky ensued from atop Mount Apo, landing place and space sport of Jagwaria. In vehicles of sleek apparel they hovered along the pathways to The Great Alley of Toms, a place of high esteem where Catmen and Kitmas gather for pride and celebration, peace and delegation. The alley was long, aside and a-fro, to and hither, was the Felidaes aligned for their praise and reverence to the Great Alley. The **purrrmeows** sounded frequently and along the way conversations and deliberations encompassed the speech of the contented visitors. With beds of the softness of cotton did they lay and couches of cushiony materials were they lazing about. Some podiums passed with patriotic persons speaking in the **way of the grooming tongue**. Stages were set with Feldaes and Kits performing shows and plays of history and imagination of the planet of Katlar.

Another chamber to port, a group of cat people practicing the sacred **art of the fighting claw**. Soon, at the end of the alley, came into the main chamber, a large room of delegates and officials. Center, lay them thereupon a bed, Kitmas surround the **Primealpha**, Ruler of Jagwaria, and a Cat of peace, though his body of skin, like all cat people, his head was full of hair as that of a mane. Outside only a light cloud gather forms above and a few gentle strokes of lightening. The chamber air filled with mild chatter also of the **tunes of Felas**. Their tales whip and sash to the [royal rhythms](#), with eyes narrow they silently command. A plate of fishes and fruit is brought to the throne elevated above his head as would a waiter carrying amongst crowds of clustered diners, yet the crowds near the **royal bed** were not as clustered. A joke to the server ensued.

"Miaooww! Mriaow!" The Primealpha says with a smile.

The chamber curtains part complete with embroidered stitching and the **Chamber Sounder** announces, "[Make way for the intrepid star travelers!]" And the crowd shouts together, "Mrowwww!" Approaching the royal bed they kneel upon their right leg and tip their heads forward a spell.

"[Your highness. We come from afar outside of the Great Territory of Lights, a dead stellar corpse was found.]"

"[A black hole?]"

"[No Pimealpha. The very end of the star, a dark cinder.]"

"[Dark cinder? How is this possible?]"

"[We don't know sir.]"

"[Submit your report]. Captain Pouncer tips his head once more and speaks abridgedly.

"[Great cinder found, space puncture detected nearby, Primate vessel Ambition coinvestigates, invisible vessel also found of unknown origin. It could be a Primate vessel!]. The Primealpha strokes his mane.

"[Submit your report to the science **chamber senior**.]" He says, and then takes a bite of fresh seasoned fish caught at the riverside catch.

"Mmmrowmmm." He says to the beauteous Kitmas about him and hand to the **Prima Kitnna** a strip of fresh fish meat.

"[We shall contact the **System Hub Generals** of the great territory and inquire as to the Primates technological endeavors.]" Just then the Chamber Sounder approaches the royal bed and into the ears of the Primealpha did he whisper and they angled **aback**. Concern swelled a little in him.

"[Captain Pouncer, new mission for you. Take your crew and man the Star Whisk. You will go to the space diner Cluctor Stop for a briefing on your purpose there.]"

"[Yes Primealpha. I submit unto your claw.]" His head tips once more.

NAV 1

"All done *jack*." Lazarus emerges from the cockpit having started the realigning of the charged particle stream, which has been rerouted by the goofy mechanic.

"I even did the conduit connections myself."

"Thanks but there's no one else here." (Ollen) glares.

"So I suppose if you're satisfied with our trade we can part ways then."

"Give me the masks and the Krystonian toolkit to go with it."

"You said you didn't want it."

"I changed my mind." At that moment the communicator in his shirt pocket vibrated and he answered, on it the voice of the boss.

"Jake, this is Nakins. Get back here and repair this communicator. It took me over an hour to reach you. What's wrong with it?"

"Nothing, I'll be there in a minute." He disconnects.

"Nakins? As in Ollen Nakins?. You said you were Ollen Nakins. What's the deal with that?"

"No I never said I was Ollen Nakins. You're wrong. We are related. Now give me my items and I'll be on my way."

"Here punk, take it." Jake tips his head with a grin and departs. Laz's heart excites to the ping of The V2, which had been converted into an audio sound. Into the cockpit he jogs to verify the incoming vessel. Indeed the V2 in its splendor was touching down upon the pad several 10.s of feet away from the Star Voyager. The port view screen, high res, displayed Li popping out suited and soon to be on his way over. Laz's plan of surprise was carried out. Just as Li was about to grab the ladder rungs as normal the open helmet viewing through the transparent window viewed the sneaky smile of Lazarus. As shocking as it was to Li he indeed had to pause a moment to factor in that the side of the ship had been opened as a new door.

"What ya think Captian."

"You built a door?"

"Yep, well not me I hired a mechanic from Ollens Ship shop."

"How was it paid by the way?"

"Oh nothing it came out of my own merchandise. Figured I'd make it a little easier and quicker to get in. Think of it. The next time were on an SMD mission somewhere far off an a distant planetoid, particle beams blasting underfoot, shrapnel impacting all around us, the last thing we need is to get slowed down by climbing a ladder. We waist a whole 6 seconds with our backs exposed trying to get in the ship. Now we just pull the latch jerk the door open and we're in! That is if it's unlocked of course." Li entered silently, speechless. The door was closed and the bay pressurized, soon they uncapped. He gazed a spell at the wall where the door had been installed.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing, well, we'd better double-check the conduit routing. At least 4 were running through this section plus a **variable bleeder**. We can't lift off until we check all that. Damn. We have to check the vacuum lines to make sure the conduits are still air void." Li sighs a little frustrated.

"General Priset had me rush over here for some kind of task."

"Yeah sorry, Admiral Seghtee is on the way over too in the Mediator. We got a big mission coming up, all the more reason for this door actually. Are you mad?"

"No, not really but we'd better get started checking the lines and components. We don't need to break down somewhere deep in space especially if there is a major mission at hand."

"Alright I'll lend you a hand."

Chapter 3

The Revelation Begins

It was dark and distant; of course the surrounding space was, but the feeling primarily, on the approach to the big station Cluctor Stop. The Star Whisk had been traveling for a few days. It's crew, Kittles, Pouncer, The Wisdom Tom, and Paddman aboard shifting between their games and their leisure while **aby** flow the stars of note. The planetoid appeared and grew until soon it became a landing pad and no more was it the essence of black space and brilliant stars which surrounds them but the terrain of a long-pelted landscape.



Cluctor Stop Near Forbidden Zone

"This is Pouncer Captain Acting, the space ship [Star Whisk] approaches Cluctor space station. Please receive us?" Called the Felidae captain over communications with translation. .Affirmed Captain Pouncer. We acknowledge your approach." The docking manager responded. It touched down on its feet in a graceful stance soon to detach to loading ramp. Captain Pouncer and his beta mate Paddman step fourth suited and secure and walk uprightly along the pathway leading to the propped and welcoming station. Seen not too far off was Tau Woltula, the home star of the Incredible Wolfman species currently residing in the forbidden zone, as they have not yet attained membership in Star City. Meeting the reception bay crew the Felidaes show face once the airlock had been secured.

In the sharp eye of Pouncer did the lead bayman glance as he acknowledged the proud captain and gripped his padded hand.

"Did you have a fine trip over Captain." Baymen Taylor asked. Captain Pouncer reaches into his side sack and pulls his translation mask. Cupping his mouth he speaks and the computer voice interprets with nice clarity as the current technology allowed.

"Indeed sir. And how is life here at Cluctor?"

"Very fine. Been getting more frequent traffic out here but not some much as this station, as you well know, is in the direction of the forbidden zone."

"Yes Ms.?"

"Taylor. My apologies. If you gentleman will follow me this way I'll lead you to General Priset and his party. For a briefing on the activity taking place here."

"Okay." Pouncer responds and he and Paddman tail ahind.

Into the corridors the riveted hall of grays and black colors occasionally spotted with mild decorations and glittery consoles they make their way to wherever they were going. Cluctor café was more populace this time as the citizens of Star City gain greater confidence to venture further from their homestars. In this section the hall is host to many doorways and arches leading to different rooms and locals such as gift shops, restaurants, and watering holes. Inside Cluctor Station did not match the outside, which looked more like a military or research station, perhaps a disguise or ruse for some reason. As they pass the main feeding court the announcer atop the stage next to the notable Mydausian joke tell, who just finished his numbers, speaks into the amplifier his announcement.

"And now girls and guys please give your applause to Guunjuu the hilariously talented jokester from Zemorg!" His voice echoed and applause did reign. The group pauses a moment with smiles to peer into the way and released their own subtle claps perhaps to partake of the energy, and give some.

"And now girls and guys our side band will place a special classic sci-fi tune from the popular old-time hit *Star Wars: A New Hope*. Give some applause to the talented song crew." And some claps sound the air again followed by the [Cluctor band Special](#). In Taylor's eye, a mild mannered man caught her attention and he approaches her with a longing and slightly worried face. "Hi, I'm Erin Trotter what's your name?". He offers his handshake gently to Baymen Taylor. Blond and fair she smiles and greets.

"I'm Jerry how are you?"

"Oh fine thank you. I noticed you in the doorway and thought it was the floral delivery."

"Oh well thank you, that's a nice thing to say. What brings you out this far Erin?"

"I, I'm looking for someone. Maybe it's the Lord who led me I don't know."

"Oh well I hope you find them. Who is it?"

"Well I don't know maybe it's you." He expresses. Jerry flushes.

"Oh, you're looking for that special someone aren't you."

"Well, yes. You read my mind."

"Well Erin I'm taken already. But your quite cute, where are you from?"

"Israel. Well actually I'm doing missionary work around the space colonies. I thought people could use a little spiritual knowledge in such a cold dark place. Also, I'm looking for, that special someone, as you put it."

"Well Erin I know you'll find her. It was nice to meet you. I have to go I am escorting this group upstairs for a special engagement." She winks and the group departs. Erin turns and maintains his countenance, hands clasps behind him as he strolls through the party in search of his true love and speaking friendly to the groups of persons Human and alien alike. The elevator halts its climb along its relative z-axis and the doors part. It was immediate, the growls and howls of something very agitated coming from the room at the end of the corridor. Around the corner they came and in the room were gathered people Humans and aliens some struggling the frantic and feisty Silverback Wolfman as they attempt to subdue and calm the angered body. The room was filled with howls and growls and his head sought skyward as it did. At that moment, with several people grasping its large hairy forearms they finally pulled the Wolfman into a chair and clamped around its wrists the restraints as then it released a deafening roar nearly exceeding the eardrums on the onlookers and man handlers. Watching on and supervising was General Priset who took over the Tau Woltula project from Admiral Seghtee several weeks ago.

"It's calling for other Wolfmen." Said Mariah standing away with arms crossed and stern face. She had been one of the first assigned to the Tau Woltula system a while ago to escort Gary Berman and Oroxum in their science vessel on a previous anomalous reading investigation. She had also pursued her own detailed study of the Alien. Standing away was a Giraffidae there to determine the mental level of the Wolfman. A couple of Mydausians, who were previously handling the legs of the thrashing alien, stood panting and winded along with a couple of muscular Humans wrestling the arms.

"It's calming somewhat." Said Priset. Yet it glared down it long snout and [growled](#) to them angrily and confused for it had not seen these strange creatures standing about it before.

"It's delirious from the trip from Woltula." Mariah Stated. The physician approached and waved his hand across its eyesight.

"The sedation has almost worn off. He's just a little groggy. He may calm some on a few minutes. Give him some time. Everyone stand back a little give him some space." Priset rubs his chin and gently observes the frustrated man clamped into the chair. He looks to the tall Giraffidae for his opinion.

"Can we release him?" He asked. The Giraffidae was silent and softly looks into the mind of the Wolfman and a moment of silence ensues. The veins in his head throb a little and he nods negative. It was startling to the group as suddenly the data pages and nearby monitors fly off the desk slamming into the floor and busting. The Wolfman stares and entrances the nearby physician who nods rapidly as if to shake away terrible thoughts suddenly appearing in his head.

"Get a sedation ready!"

"Not yet." Said the Giraffidae. "I can see what's making the objects move." Wait a moment. He stares toward the Wolfman and waves his hand slowly across as if to push winds along yet no breeze occurred. The Wolfman looks to the Giraffidae curiously and his breathing slowed a bit.

"He's still frustrated give it some more time."

"We might have to try the Goldfur, it seemed a little more calm than the Silverback." Said Priset.

"Why abduct them at all." Mariah asked. "Shouldn't we let them be?"

"No not at this time. The Council is the ones who directed us to try and bring them in. The technological level is nearing the alarming level, mainly with the Goldfurs. But the conflict between the Goldfurs and the Silverbacks is what we have to determine the validity, cause, and reasoning. Only then can we make efforts to get these people established as Members of Star City and lift their star system from forbidden zone status."

"It doesn't seem like that's going to be happening anytime soon." Said the physician. His blood chemistry is giving very high readings of adrenaline and acetylcholine. The Silverback seems more primitive than the Goldfur."

"But what about the telekinesis. That's quite an advancement." Mariah points out.

"It could be a natural ability, not an advancement." The astute Giraffidae informs. "Either way we must do something or there might be an atomic attack from the Goldfurs. Last scans of certain areas of the planet detected the existence of processed Uranium. Also several species of radioactive elements in the Uranium decay series are present as well as what looks like processing facilities being constructed on the Eastern continent in Goldfur territory. It looks to be a military controlled installation." Priset reports.

"There is something else." Mariah interjects. "One study I made of some early data gathered in the beginning of the investigations of the Planet Woltula showed odd paranormal occurrences."

"Like what?" Priset wondered.

"There was an abnormal amount of weather: cyclones, hurricanes and meteorite activity all focused on the Goldfur populations. There was even an infestation of large flying insects. And I mean infestation! Swarms of them so the report read." The Giraffidae's brow rises.

"Did you submit this information to anyone?" Priset asked.

"Of course, I even gave a speech about it a symposium I attended. I wasn't able to give a clear detail due to some quite rude interference occurring in the audience during my speech." Priset's brow raises and he looks to her.

"What kind of interferences?" Mariah pauses and looks sternly.

"Some people whistling and hooting at me, very odd because there is never any of that behavior in a science symposium that I'm aware."

"That is odd. Sounds like an interruption of some sort."

At that time the Wolfman begins to mutter something not well interpretable.

"It's whining." Says Paddman who walketh fourth toward the groups standing near the chair seating the alien.

"It wants something." He adds. The Giraffidae moves toward the alien slowly and his anxiety calms. Looking into the Wolfman he sees into his mind and turmoil surfaces amongst them. The Wolfman whimpers as images of the conflict with the Goldfurs forges out of the emotions therein.

"The Goldfurs are trying to force the Silverbacks to advance and use their technology." He Reports. "The Silverbacks are frightened of the technology and believe it is leading to chaos and destruction, a classic situation."

"Like on Earth." Priset pondered. "The Europeans early on developed more advanced machines and devices and believed it prudent to share it amongst the other cultures. However some were sketchy about it seeing as how some of the technology was excessive and sometimes damaging to the environment. But soon the other cultures attained and accepted the technology largely due to the aggressive expansion of European tribes."

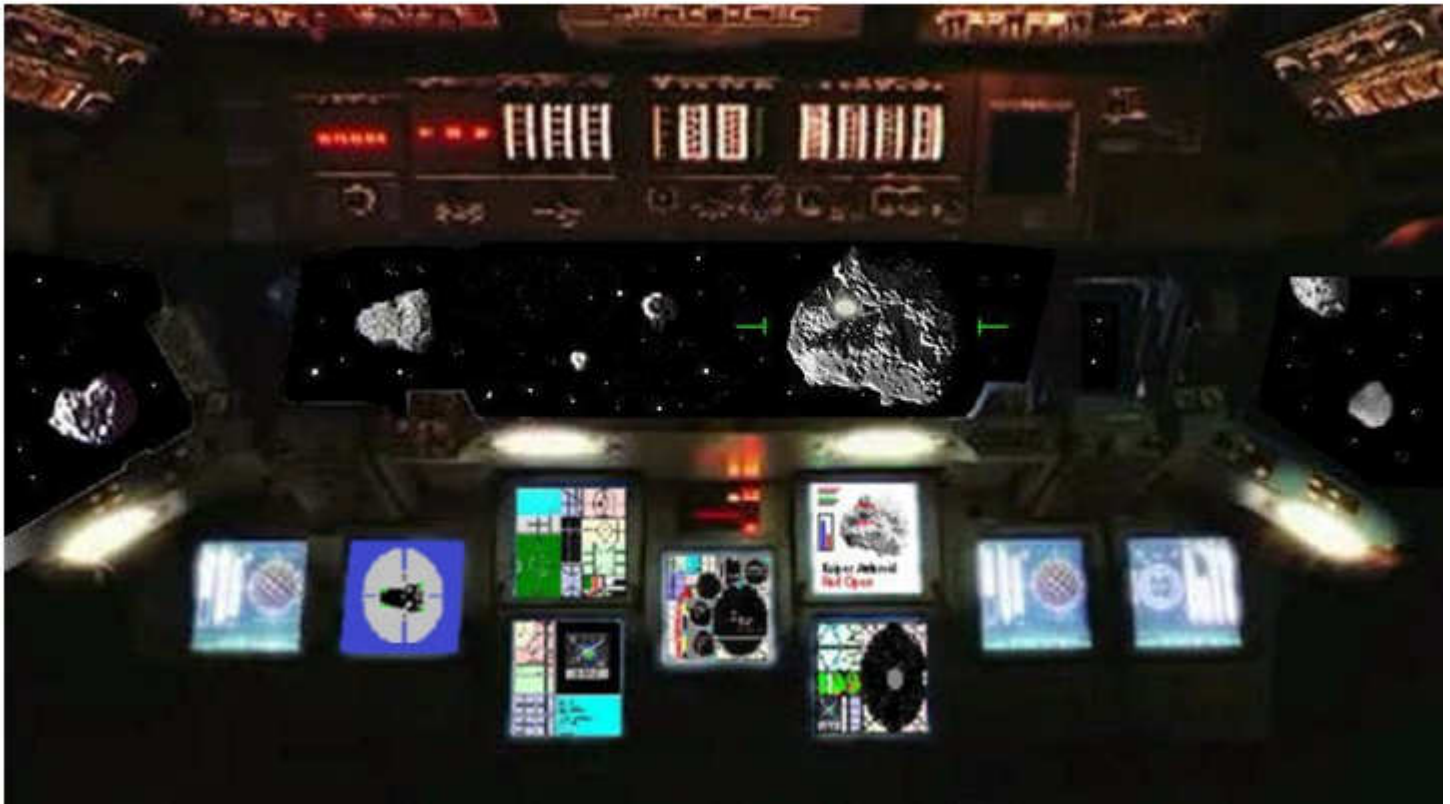
"Is there any indication of a possible atomic attack on the Silverbacks?" Paddman asked. The Giraffidae looks in further. "Cannot see anything. We will have to look into the Goldfur for that information."

"Let's sedate him again and place him in a holding bed." Priset ordered.

"The Giraffidae calms the Wolfman again as the physician introduces a medicine and he sleeps.

Convergence on NAV 1

The Mediator rotates and its several LS class engine nozzles flare like the sun while GFE's compensate for **antiacceleration ratios**. On deck is the admiral in the neck, Pilot Tartic in the head, and Deck Officer Collar joining the Admiral there in the center command section. It was the sync with the Solar System's original **mass map**, which lead them through the initial debris on their slow-down. The Oort Cloud was fading back not visible and to stern the bodies of the Kuiper Belt grew. Now slowed enough the forward deceleration thrusters can be used by the more manageable speeds. Indeed they were. For forward was Kuiper town bustling and brimming with energy as often casually nearing. The landing pad lights flicker and twirl about its circumference in interesting patterns determined by whoever programmed the sequence. Tartic partook of the raw view first hand and only by internal transmitting of the image did the admiral in the neck observe the approach. Though Tartic's view was still actually a transmission from the forward external camera and transformed into the crystal screen image before him, as can be made obvious by the green reticule sectioning the Kupier asteroid.



On the Bridge of the Mediator

"NAV 1 vessel is on location as intended sir." Tartic reported as they near. The black vessel still sitting and unpowered as could be seen in the screen, also meaning it was time for the mediator to level with the landing pad and it did. Thereon Li and Lazarus tinkered the final verification work on the door from the outside and it had been some quite sweating work inside during the component check. A glance upward views the rather large battle craft against the background of space and stars.

"Just in time too." Said Li. "I never rerouted a conduit faster before."

"Then again we haven't been in space as long as it seems."

"Seems like it." Li responds while attempting to wipe the sweat from his head through the armor of the suit then suddenly to remember he was indeed suited; a moment of silence as they stand with some tools on hand and kits lying about. The Mediator had landed a safe distance out yet the small figures stepping out from the side shutter could be made out. Their semi fastwalk was brisk.

"They could have parked a little closer. Looks like they're on treadmills." Said Lazarus. Li chuckles.

"I'm nervous about this mission. I'm not usually but this one feels strange. Like something major coming at us."

"Ehh, don't worry. We've got experience now. I'm up for some action anyway."

"Pffft, It's been nothing but action dude."

"You know me."

"Quite well. come to think of it." Li punches Laz in his armored shoulder.

"And what does that suppose to represent?"

"That's for shooting me in the bum with your pellet gun when we first met in the woods by my house."

"Ah I go you." Well my mother doesn't normally keep calm when a strange exotic guy come sneaking around near the house."

"Heh, well I was looking for the front door."

"To my house? Why you didn't even know me at that time."

"I don't know it just so happened to be in the path I was walking. I've been all up and through those woods going to my masters cabin and hiking etcetera."

"That's an upscale subdivision it's supposed to be in your path."

"Well it wasn't there 12 years ago. I've been wandering those forests for a long time. They remind me of American forests. I've lived with Indians before I moved to China. They're getting bigger?"

"What is?"

"The armed SMD group approaching in front of us and The Admiral."

"Yeah them seem quite stiff. The Admiral is usually casual about things."

"I wonder what's with all the heavy rifles they're carrying."

"I count 5 persons, 3 armed security, The Admiral, and a deck officer probably."

"The deck officer is armed too, with a Type 2 Hand Laser."

"Those security personnel aren't carrying standard combat rifles those are Troop Pulse Lasers. They don't carry those unless there's a major battle at hand, like the battle at Raxot."

"Or a full scale ground assault like the battle at C-00101, the moonlet."

"Yeah I remember. We were like back in time at that strange planet where we saw that entity."

"What was that anyway, we never really discussed it?"

"We couldn't discuss it. I'm still trying to find ways to cope with it. Traveling through time is not easy to accept. My mind has been kind of warped ever since. All I recall was that voice yelling in pain, a deadly flaming sword, and a crackling sound, scared the living daylights out of me."

"I think it was God. or something."

"Good day Admiral." Li Greets with an extended glove.

"Navigator Miller. Captain Li. Join me and the Deck Officer Collar inside the living quarter of your vessel." The Admiral looks to the 3 security officers.

"You and you please remain outside and stand sentry. You please come inside and remain on post in the airlock. Let's get inside."

"Okay sir." Li responds and they did so. At the table in the rear of the ship sat Lazarus, the Admiral, and Li with, standing by, the deck officer maintaining an observance.

"You look slightly nervous sir is something wrong? Can I get you some tea, anything?"

"Tea thanks." The Admiral sits with hands laid interlaced upon the table looking ahead as if to contemplate yet to reveal his purpose for the secured meeting.

"Thank you." Says Seghtee as the vaporous cup of hot ginger spiced tea was sat before him. The Admiral sips a bit.

"Big mission ahead. Not like any other before. Seiwan and Lazarus this is very grave. I must give you only key information. Yet I know it is imperative that you be well informed. So I will resend a few protocols and tell you more than the suggested recommendation by command leaders. I cannot say it is the recommendation for this type of mission because we have never encountered this before. Captain Li and Navigator Miller, do you recall the black dwarf found by the E.S. Ambition which I informed you of no too long ago?"

"Of course, we we're on Miranda doing some repelling off Verona Rupes Bluff. We were at the base when we received the call. What's the deal with it sir."

"We still have not been able to determine where it came from but a science vessel dispatched there managed to retrieve some samples."

"Really, how!"

"Well it's interesting because the reason I called you here is because we need you to deliver some cargo to a few places around the territory. The interesting thing is that the cargos you are delivering are prototypes of the machine Dr. Gary Berman the science vessel captain used to get the samples."

"Oh well that's certainly something neat."

"Yes. But even more neat is that some of the material he mined using the machine that we are having you deliver has been formed into a new kind of engine component, mainly a super heat and pressure resistant nozzle which can allow us to travel much faster than even our current speeds!"

"You mean you made a new engine nozzle out of the black dwarf stuff?"

"Yes. Here is the plan. I'm going to give you a list of star systems to visit to deliver the machines. There are 3 of them. Two can fit in your bay and the last should be mounted atop your vessel. It shouldn't be a problem since it is small enough to fit inside the GFE field."

"Yes should be. But we can always expand the GFE field using the ships spatial compression regulation feature. I've never used it but I'm sure it would be simple."

"Sounds good Captain. Let me tell you that these machines are crucial devices. They must be delivered safely because they would definitely cause havoc if enemies got their hands on it."

"I see. What are they might I ask?"

"For your own safety and the security of the mission we will wait until the cargo is delivered and you return safely yourself at which time we will be glad to let you know more about them. But Li I stress to you both the urgency and sensitivity of this mission. You know the drill on these operations. If your vessel is pursued or attacked you are authorized." At that moment a proximity alarm sounds simultaneously Seghtee's wrist computer vibrates.

"Not to be alarmed. That's an engineering crew. We are installing the nozzles onto your vessel. They have already been designed. This will take a few hours. Try to relax get some shuteye if you need. By the way have you been working out you both look perspired?"

"Ah no sir we just got through rerouting some conduits and Lazarus here had a new door put in, right on the port side. It's going to come into good use."

"Tired of climbing the ladder I'm sure. Well these original small load freighters were built for light load hauling, small supplies that can be lowered into the hatch, mostly fuel, food and amenity supplies. They wanted the ship to be as solid as possible. Now that most of the colonizing and supply and resource deliveries are out of the way many vessels like the Star Voyager are being reformed into luxury cruisers and passenger transports, yours, a fine heavy fighting machine, not to mention a quite cozy living craft."

"Yes we quite enjoy it."

"Alright guys. Go and prepare however you see fit. Get some rest, prepare your vessel, get all your systems online and at the ready. You are to engage stealth before you leave Kuipertown. Here is a data card. Input this info into your computer and make a **magnetoprint** on a data page. You'll need a hard copy for safety. Make a few. Deliver the cargo to the intended locations and return to Moonbase 1 when your finished. I'll be commanding the Mediator. We'll be making a few deliveries of our own in a different direction."

"Got it. Will do sir. Feel free to hang around here for a while if you please." Said Li. "Make yourself comfortable and help yourself to our facilities and food stores."

"Thank you Captain." Seghtee tips his head to the deck officer and he departs. Li and Lazarus make their affront and begin their readiness.

[Back at Cluctor Stop](#)

"May I get you a shake dear?" Erin proposed to the elegantly dressed Human girl at the round table. The other men at the table smirked slightly.

"Oh well that's fine. A Jupiter shake, alcoholic please."

"I cannot help but to notice you, your hair is astounding. I'm Erin by the way from Israel."

"Rain. Anything I can do for you?" She responds with slightly parted lips. Erin tenses up for no good reason. The men at the table sigh slightly and Erin didn't notice for some reason. Rain turns her head and begins to sigh but did not release as if to hide her expression. Following a smile she says,

"Erin you really need to relax, Try and sit with us a while."

"Erin, unknown as to why, appears to be confused and uncoordinatedly tries to make his way to the bar counter for the carbonated frothy mix of natural sugar and nectars as is the makeup of the popular Jupiter shake. It was not knowable why Erin was nervous as he stood with one hand on the counter and the other at his side, for he knew not this girl Rain that he has met and had no bond in marriage or partnership of any kind. Of course he had no direct intention to marry her at this time but inside for some purpose a feeling of marrying Rain did reside in him though he knew her not. His eyes wide and voice almost like a wire he requests the drink. Handed to him the warm mixture by the very happy tender man.

"You like Rain?"

"Well I just asked her to have a drink. yeah I do."

"What do you want her for?"

"I don't know, something about her. I guess I want to go out with her." The tender man exhales.

"Erin I've watched you walking around in her for a few hours. I see you talking to many of these girls in here. You're looking for something. I can tell. But not what these other ones are looking for isn't that right."

"How did you know my name?"

"Heh, I heard you introducing yourself. You stand out in here. You're looking for a wife aren't you?" Erin was silent a moment perhaps debating whether or not to divulge himself.

"Something like that."

"Erin why would you come all the way out to Cluctor Stop for a wife."

"Well I don't know maybe the spirit led me. I figured what better place to find the right one then to go far away." Erin relaxes and exhales a bit.

"I don't know, I can't escape my feelings. I want a hot woman like the next man yet I know in my heart I want to honor the covenant of the Lord and his marriage to a woman. I've been looking a long while. I'm going to find her. I know it. Why should you have a sad face I'm the one who is womanless right now." He states jokingly.

"Well I'm not really sad. But I think I'm going to level with you."

"Okay I'd appreciate that." A brief pause.

"Erin just..." The tender sighs deeply. "Take her the drink and tell her you're welcome. Keep looking my friend. You might just break a record. Just don't break a leg." The tender winks and returns to the counter sanitation.

Erin turns and with wide eyes makes his way to the table. On approach the laughing and joshing, Rain with wide smile of appeasement, returns to her recollection of the Approaching Erin. It only took a second for her to remember the generous offer of the tasty Jupiter shake.

"Here you are Rain."

"Thanks. Want to join the four of us? We're going to the lookout upstairs." Erin was nauseous and his stomach ached muchso.

"...Thanks Rain. I'm late. Nice meeting you." He disgreets and departs.

The walk to the checkout counter was riddled with dark feelings and grayness and spirits swooped through him. The heat of lust and passion came into his body and his mind fought but why? His every step through the carpeted hall of wood grain and maroon coloring laced with some designs was torture. His stomach growled and his guts felt as if to be conglomerate mush. Visions of the lustrous Rain flashed his mind and the men about her in there overbearing presence agitated him.

"I'll be checking out tomorrow please." Says Erin to the front counter clerk. She was quiet and whorey.

"She, with swelling lips and easy demeanor was shocking and creamy in substance as the mystical being she was, hands him the data pad to sign and her lips were parted the same. Erin knew he was the stupefied fool for not getting the point about the counter secretary. And as if lead by force his body painfully walked away to return to his cabin where he will prepare his departure from Cluctor Café, his stomach sour and black. Unknown to anyone the retreat of his quarter brought some relief, his place of study and faith perhaps. Does it really compare to the pleasures of flesh and women? He instinctually wondered, though it was not a formulated though in his mind and he pushed it back for some reason. Is this

belief and feelings of righteousness really enough to satisfy us against the redhot sex with the young tender girls? The instinctually harbored concept had returned in his mind. It's a pretty big question. And he answered it not, in his mind.

"Media." Erin called to activate the Controller.

"Media mode active." It returned with its artificial but polite tone. The computerized face appearing on the screen awaiting requests. The room remained silent as the A.I. moved into a passive state, it's speed to great for the slow processing of the biological mind, listening for questions, events, and clues as it programming instructed.

The Holy Bible caught his eye and he glanced at it. The feeling returned to him and did relieve him. But he had read it many times. Even listened on the audio where he preferred. His loneliness was not soothed by the presence of his Bible. Nor was his desires met.

"I could sure use a girl right about now." Erin muttered.

"[Displaying girl list](#)." A text litany appears on the small monitor on the desk. Erin sits and glances at it a short moment then his eyes diverts.

"The bar tender was right." He whispered. "This is a terrible place to look for the right one. Couldn't have been the spirit that led me, could it?" He thought.

"I've got to go." He whispered again. "I know what I have to do. Tomorrow I leave Cluctor. This time I search for the Lord. He shall lead me if it be his will. If I search the Lord then she will find *me*. That's it! In that way, I know she's out there somewhere." Erin reasoned. [<controller beeps>](#)

Enter the Golfur

"Bring him in quietly. Keep the corridors entrance covered while we wheel him into the observation room." Priset instructs. On the gurney lay the brilliant gleam of furry Wolfman. It's coat shiny and golden as expected. Sedated the Goldfur Wolfman remains strapped and soon to be placed near the same spot as the seated Silverback, unconscious and strapped in his own chair. Around his head a brain wave monitor ring.

"We need some Mydausians standing by incase the Goldfur gets loose. Elevate his gurney back up right somewhat." The prominent Girafidae moves closer as if to prepare for something special. His face flushed and his grin was slight.

"Are we ready to start reviving him?" The primary physician questioned,

"Proceed." Grants Priset and the physician used the neat *gas to blood suffuser*. With a puff the chemical was injected.

"It will be perhaps 3 to 5 minutes before he awakes. Yet I cannot be sure because of his size, musculature, and species how long exactly, could be longer."

"We're going to need to communicate." Says the General. Priset glances toward the 3 Felidae Pouncer, Paddman and Kittles.

"Any of you into interpretation?"

"Sounder Kittles her is fluent in a few languages and has a good ear for tones as his post experience reveals." Said Captain Pouncer.

"All three of us can speak your Human language obviously. Not so well just as obvious. Kittles stand close to the Giraffidae interpreter. Help him if you can."

"Shouldn't we get an anatomy analysis of the Wolfmen?" Paddman wondered.

"We've got one already." Priset responds. "This isn't the first abduction of this species." Mariah stands nearby raising her brow and looks on with crossed arms. The Giraffidae looks to her though having not been turned far enough toward her to see any reaction.

"Is something the matter, Mariah?"

"Well, I don't feel right about these, *abductions* as The General put it."

"Why is that?" Priset questioned.

"They don't really look like something you want to abduct. They still have elongated incisors."

"Molars and bicuspid are flat like ours." The physician pointed out. "They are in a fairly high stage of development. My guess is that their strongly instinctual nature seems to keep their more primitive features prominent for longer than most mammal species. That's my theory anyway."

"Sounds sensible." Pouncer reasoned. "Our incisors also remain elongated but not nearly as much as the Wolfman. I didn't get your name Dr."

"Thorne. My apologies I'm doctor Thorne."

"Might I ask of who do you work for?"

"I am an SMD service physician."

"He's waking." The admiral pointed as the sharp eye of the Goldfur parted to intake the rays of alien ambiance. The Giraffidae interpreter steps forward gently as he syncs with the mind of the Gold fur. It was not surprising as the sudden look of bewilderment and slight fright appeared upon his long snouted face and convulsed and swatted at the terrible figures before him and their silhouettes did shock him.

"Calm him please." Priset strongly suggests.

"A moment." The Giraffidae says as his eyebrows arch while he looks into the eyes and mind's eye of the Goldfur.

"Can you talk to him?" Priset inquired a bit hastily.

"I'm reading him." His gasping and heaviness of breath slowed and calmed gradually into a more pacified rhythm as he worked. The eyes of the Goldfur, wide and round, were peaked with confusion in them as he glanced about with a vulnerable demeanor.

"He's ready." Says the Giraffidae and the mood lightens.

"Don't hit him or abuse him. We want to avoid our treatment." Says Priset.

"What do you mean?" Mariah asked.

"Priset looks to Mariah as if to not understand her own misunderstanding."

"Recall our history. What has been done to us in our abductions?" Priset brought about.

"So you're acknowledging this as an unethical abduction right?" Asked Mariah. Priset was silent.

"I've got disturbing footage of a primate abduction aboard my craft. I'm speaking of it now because there is no need to classify it here at this time. We have Felidae personnel, Zemorgian, Giraffidae and Human. Therefore I figure showing Human footage of an actual abduction would balance things. We are taking these persons from their home planet and doing, as we will. Perhaps it is not so far from what was done to us."

"True General." Paddmann intervened. "We ourselves have had similar abduction procedures. Maybe later you can show us your footage. I think we can educate ourselves on what we are doing here by looking at it." At that time the Goldfur seemed to entrance as if to sync with the mindset of its captors. Yet he knew not yet his captors. But was strangely identified with them. Still his bewilderment confused and frustrated him into occasional outbursts of emotion.

"Wait we're talking." Says the Giraffidae interpreter and his eyes narrowed while he spoke with the Goldfur Wolfman.

"His mind is angry and he desperately wants to find security for the Goldfurs. But there is an unfettered flame in him which driveth his desire."

"Meaning what exactly." Priset questioned.

"A common one according the Mentors data. It's that desire for safety which drives the Goldfurs to construct technology and the basic survival instinct along with the rest of it."

"Hmm, Paddman purred lightly."

"Can you compare the Silverback's interview to the Goldfur's for us sir?"

"Sure as well as can be put into words. Seems the Silverback's aggression is also unfettered. And it is in them the same as the Goldfur's. The Goldfur's drive is for survival as well as the Silverback's. Both races are generally tired and lack additional process yet possess different origins in their take of the process. They both have different sciences, which they have rendered unto the cosmos. It will take some time for them to create the cashmire effect of the mind. between them, as a group that is." There was silence a spell.

"You speak Earth languages well for a Giraffidanian sir."

"Priset stated with a warm smirk."

"I should mention gentleman and ladies this is something we should be including in this study as classified. There's more, however, I should place our attention more toward the possibility of war between the two." Priset intersects.

"Sir as a Giraffidanian, veteran members, can you give me insight into the reaction of the primates of my home planet in such an instance as the one we see here with the Wolfmen." The Giraffidae's pause was noted by all with slight takes. The padded hand of Captain Pouncer knuckling his chin. Mariah stood amongst with eyes upon Priset.

"Have you seen your own records?"

"Yes sir I have. Can you enlighten us a little more?"

"Hmm, well the Travis Walton experience was one of note. Those particular alien abductors were obviously more aggressive. There's Roswell, *Grey* non-anesthetic autopsies."

"I calmed the Golfur with a recollection from the former." The group looks to the Goldfur who was entranced.

"If we can turn our attention to the monitor I will show the footage which was, I will divulge at this time, was secretly replaced and input into this movie with real footage. It gives an accurate demonstration of how Primates were regarded only a few decades ago. It should be kept in mind as we decide how you want to proceed." The group looks on.



The Clean Room

"This is a peaceful territory we live in this 100 light year small space. Let it be known there are species out there with little reservation about treatment of lower species. We believe in this case they are responding to the torturous activities, amongst other issues, inflicted on them by old world government toward captured aliens. *These* hard-core people DO NOT tolerate or overlook that type of treatment from a lower species particularly primates. They also will not tolerate your disobedience, the *predator type aliens* especially! In this encounter they were quite lenient on Mr. Walton by comparison. The Federal Exploration Alliance has been planning more long-range *excursions* out into the cosmos. Great consideration is advised." The sincere Giraffidae edifies.

"He's calmer now."

Mariah perked. "I have a radical idea." The Giraffidae turns toward her yet feet turned not as the groups attention peer for the ripening lasse.

"It might be risky though."

"Go on. Paddman encouraged.

"Instead of returning them with little information like were done with us Humans why don't we try to fix the problem between them. Let's bring the Silverback in here and tame him and see what happens between He and the Goldfur."

"Are there any special procedures here we should follow?" Priset wondered with narrow eyes and a grin. He had turn casually toward the Giraffidae. Paddman brightens.

"Why not? Do we even know any statistics?"

"The Travis Walton abduction was very terrifying. The particular advanced humanoids that took Walton were threatening."

"This Goldfur is slightly aware of us now." The Giraffidae interjected. "I suspect he might be government personnel. Also he is having thoughts to try to get ahead of us and compete. So far it's just a dream in his mind until he processes our thoughts then he might be able to talk with us. As for the Silverback if we bring him in here and can tame him yes perhaps we can try to fix things between them. But it will take a long time because they have not seen extra terrestrials to our knowledge. Perhaps the Goldfur, if he is high ranking in his hierarchy has, but I still cannot tell with certainty. But it will take a while. This could be a long session. I have to report to the Planetary Council. They may forbid it. This is the only suggestion from them to keep sedated and restrained the two Wolfmen whether they are together or not. I will agree to the suggestion that we keep them in restraints. Keep the physician here to sedate them both if their vital signs get dangerously high." He looks toward him cautiously. "His mind is about to surface."

"This is a step toward contact either way. The SMD report is what allowed this abduction in the first place. The technological level of the Goldfurs and the strange abilities of the Silverbacks were, as we determined, enough to warrant it. I think it's a logical step to try this."

"And a great one." Added the curious Felidae advisor.

"Dr. Thorn, please meet the security team in the ship to bring back the Silverback."

"Let's discuss this carefully I suggest strongly. It is too profound a decision not to make the most efficient input into the Wolfmen." Said the Giraffidae agent.

Objective: Deliver Portal Prototypes

There sat upon the barren but energetic platform hoisted forth of the surface of the Kupiertown asteroid two vessels preparing to embark on a somewhat routine but no less profound mission to deliver the sensitive prototype portal makers. Already utilizing the side door which Lazarus had orchestrated its addition he stood with a small smile as the portals were loaded inside. They were dismantled into several pieces to fit them inside. Seghtee and Li stood aside conversing some ideas and procedures along with some light banter. It was mentioned to Li at that time that the Star Voyager was well chosen to carry the three portals inside since one would little suspect a small freighter to be stuffed with sought after devices not suited for that freighter type, so Seghtee strategically reasoned. Every little bit of security helped, as was the idea. There was some air of anxiety about the mission and Li questioned his proficient Admiral about the new technology hosted in the belly of his vessel. It was a natural inquiry as a reflection of Li's scientific side.

The questioning led to more details about the black dwarf incident, which is what was starting to make Li's brows lower in slight bewilderment. Yet, he had not even been filled in yet as if a perplexing problem had formed in his mind about the situation or upcoming situation with not enough details yet, perhaps a premonition. Seghtee did explain the details then and there that the portal prototype was derived as a make shift method to mine the dwarf material which led to the material being used to fashion new high temperature nozzles for space craft essentially allowing the prototypes to be delivered to their destinations faster.

Seghtee follows by quoting, "We can skip two stones with one throw." They will test the new high-speed nozzles and at the same time deliver the portals as planned. Li was excited. It was a new rushing wave to flood over them even Seghtee as they all seemed to move into an advancement in experience as if they stood in a flowing creek of water suddenly to have a current of a different flow and a new temperature. Yet it was not the flow of water that coursed through them but the movement of cosmic energies as that of which only the mind could perceive. The new flow of energy was fresh and bright, yet mixed therein like small streams of muck were the foul energies of **antiness**, which swayed Li's focus, and he questioned.

"Admiral I'm concerned about the lack of Confederate Resistance activity lately. It could mean something, a calm before the storm maybe."

"I felt that too. The last report of activity was several light years out from Krysto. A small fighter attack on a derelict SMD scout party."

"Are we looking for new resources out that far?" Li wondered.

"Not entirely" The scout party was part of a follow-up convoy looking for CRC base and ship remnants left over from the Battle of C-00101."

"What were they attacked by? Is it confirmed Resistance craft?"

"Yes. Slightly different vessel configuration but they seemed to be using a **chromatic masking** technology. That is yet another project I am initiating to research. Every advancement they make that we uncover is a new thread pulled from the stitching of this conflict. We're starting to wonder if they might have other foreign collaborators."

"Yeah right. I've thought about that. The farther back out into space we push them the likelier it is that they might make allies against us."

"Keep this under your hat Li. But that scout party is also directed by the SMD to search for nearby civilization, colonies, fleets etcetera that might be potential allies for the Resistance. It is imperative that we make contact with any before they do. No doubt they will attempt to portray the SMD and Star City Territory in a bad light."

"Agreed sir. Come to think of it exactly how are we keeping the Resistance from penetrating Star City borders without being detected. A 100 light-year diameter is awfully large an area to constantly watch and monitor the perimeters or even interior. What if they warp in or use a wormhole or something. How do we stop them?"

"That is highly classified. I need to get clearance to see if I can even let you and Lazarus in on that. If word of how we detect craft or potentially missiles penetrating our borders gets out they may find a way around it and we will be in deep water."

"I see. so any word on our destinations?"

"It's on your data card. No verbalizations over the helmet radio are permitted. Check your HUD display once it loads." Says Seghtee hands clasped behind him, Li's as well, Lazarus with hands on his hips while the last of the components were loaded into the Star Voyager. The perspiring officer approached the admiral. With fully raised face visor open he gently saluted. His sweat beads already subsiding as the cool recycled air floods from the exports.

"Sir, Captain Li, some of these components are fragile. They consist of three pieces each totaling 9. We had to separate them to fit them into the doorway, which is no problem they can be reassembled later. The main dish emitter, power supply, and modulation and control elements are arranged in their own pieces. Be sure not to allow any currents or surges inside your bay. We recommend you shut down all non-essential feeds and open discharges, your cloud chamber, experimentation particle bleed offs at your science desk, and emergency power feed heads etcetera. Nothing should be running through this bay except engine conduits in the walls which should always remain in their enclosures."

"Lazarus and I have already replaced our element discs with fresh ones. The repairs we did earlier from the door replacement are done."

"Good work Deckman. Recover our tools and equipment and load them onto the transfer cart." Just then the security officer approaches.

"Admiral he hales as his helmet radio merged with the securely localized common frequency.

"General Priset reports a clear shot. They are ready to receive the new crew rotation."

"Excellent. We will depart here shortly. Give Captain Li and Lazarus a fresh supply of fissile material, hand weapon upgrade to class 2 pistols, and admittance codes to their next destinations, cat lists." Li's eyes widened. "Is there anything else you guys need." Li ponders a moment.

"A vacation maybe; a joke only sir. We seem to be in good shape, thanks."

"Prepare the ship." Seghtee signals to the eager Deckman.

"I understand sir." And he departs the group who stood firmly under the second heaven that twinkleth in points of colorful islands beyond.

Chapter 4

Sacred Journeys

Erin felt weak as the long-range bus craft departed the pad at Cluctor stop. He could not help but to feel foolish, a bit stupid.

"Why would I not follow that girl into the upper chamber? Why would I pass by the hot desk clerk?" He thought. He had passed up opportunities for great pleasure in search of a single female that he believeth be the right one for him. At that moment it hit him so stiffly. He felt ridiculous. Across the bench sat another man reviewing the Star City Daily Reflection, a data page detailing news of events and happenstance about the territory. The man wore a space suit differing in standards to the SES. He appeared Human but cold in his face and frigid in feeling. He spoke not. Away of the center isle another couple sat close, a Felidae female and a Human male. Their countenance was fallen and they appeared quite discontented. They sat close enough to appear an intimate pair yet no words were spoken and no arms clasped yet they remain together in torture to themselves. It seems to be a failed relation between the Human and the Felidae girl. Erin's heart faltered and his stomach wretched. His nausea was horrific. Quite the fool he would feel to request the bus to return to the station. Indeed he would be. For the girls he passed were no doubt already soaked with the passions of lust by the seeds of many men. Great pleasure would he feel to join yet perhaps great evil shall befall him to mix his flesh with the lickerishness of other men and those slippery girls.

Erin had entranced himself by these thoughts and snapped out to notice he was erecting. He cooled himself off by grabbing the nearby Daily Reflection aside him. With a soft caress of the page the thin electroleaf ignited its plasmatonic chemicals inside to display text and pictures. All his life Erin had lived with his fellow Jews following the traditions of God unto eternity so he aspired. His eyes forward and the electroleaf affront yet he read not the material as he pondered. He recalled the discipline, the waiting, the sacrifice of many girls, the praying and the worship of God that it might please the Lord. His heart again weakened. His hand touched lightly his chest as he stared forward. At that moment it hit him as a spark of insight.

"If as a man of God I am to wait for my virgin and keep her and have our Earthly pleasures only in marriage. Then why do I die here and now while I search?" He reasoned. The bus vibrated somewhat turning the heads of the other passengers toward the pilot whose limbs pulled throttles and impresses buttons upon their arrays. Ahead the star distant and bright flux into an array of bluish hues as the vessel accelerated highly. Erin glances at The Daily Reflection for the blinking words and scrolling texts drew his attention. It was the flipping pictures showing new events and opening places around Star City. But none so is intriguing as the strange passage referring to **the most spiritual experience in the cosmos! Come to The Beta Leonis star system! The brilliant star of white flames and high luminosity beckons your presence. The lagoons of Thross on the third planet host in its tangy hot water springs mermaid girls of exotic and alluring stature. Do you seek a wife? A real relationship? Try Jerusa, a city on the third planet where the churches and monasteries are complimented with the Nuns of Nod. Is it adventure you want? Then the caves of the small icy planetoid distant of the bright white sun can thrill your soul with fun and exploration. All that and more at the most mysterious and wondrous star system in the territory!**

Erin's gaze elevates just above the page. His eyes side toward the downing couple still drudging in their demeanors. The man next to him slumped over snoozing his life into a permanent slumber. Erin stand as his chest suddenly fills with the breath of life. In his yes a look of destiny. Laying gently the datapage he walketh ahead in the isle toward the pilot's booth. The pilot notes him with a look of caution.

"Can I help you?" He asks with wide eyes for he had not had a visitor to his booth, only rarely.

"The Beta Leonis Star System? How far is it from our current trajectory?" Erin inquired.

"Bout 40 some odd light years. Are you thinking of going there?"

"Yes." The bus pilot was silent a moment. I could take a detour up that way, would add a few extra days to the other three passengers in here. And it would be expensive for your electrocredits. Do you think you have enough?" Erin glances at the other passengers.

"I don't think they care no longer where they find themselves. A few days won't be noticed."

"Good point. Swipe your card."

"Alright."

"Well your 12 credits short. You might have to proceed back to Suntown with the rest of us."

"I can't" I have to follow my heart. I'm on a journey."

"What journey."

"I'm searching for... treasure."

"Ah you're a pirate. Heh. Me too. Well, I was. The name's Morthod. I have traveled the territory for 30 years or more. Seen many sights, places, women... I'll tell you what I'll give you a "pirates discount." Keep it to yourself. I'll take ya there but you'll have to find your way back."

"Fine I'll parish one day might as well do so in a sacred search. Better than falling into a slump."

"I agree. Give me a hand at navigation if you will. We don't take this route often." Erin seats himself next to the pilot in the secondary booth.

"Just tap this panel twice and activate the nav screen. The controls are simple. Just click and tap for detail on pretty much anywhere on the map."

"Alright. So it looks like we are heading for Suntown."

"Yes, but I am slowly altering course for Beta Leonis. Keep quiet."

"No problem. Did I tell you my name? I'm Erin by the way from Earth."

"I was born on a Uranian moon, probably what fueled me to gallivant around. Who knows?"

"Yeah right. So Morthod. Can you be honest? Are you married or do you look for woman a lot?"

"No never married. It's much more fun to live the pleasure life. Endless women, parties, fun. You?"

"Oh yeah I am quite enjoying it."

"Well you might not make it back from Beta Leonis. You'll die of pleasure before you escape the women there. But so be it. You'll die fulfilled and with a smile on your face."

"Well I've heard about the Nuns of Nod in the monasteries. They sure are missing out on a lot of fun and pleasure right?"

"For sure. Those girls are all stressed out and stressed up from lack of sex. Don't go there you won't get anything." Erin glances over and strokes his chin a couple of motions." Morthod grins unknowingly.

"Well we're just about aligned with Beta Leonis. Last chance. You sure you wanna go there?" Erin was silent a moment and strokes his necklace piece crucifix.

"Yes."

"Okay pal accelerating to maximum velocity. By the way please forgive my thick accent. I'm Russian English."

"Not worries mate?" Erin joshed. The long bus cruiser complete with rearside bedding for weary travelers vanishes into blackness.

Commencing the Operation

"Admiral." The Deck officer calls. "We're ready. We have prototype portal generators in our bay and the Star Voyager is being loaded as we speak. They are having a little trouble with the fitting but the engineer reports they should be able to squeeze the nine pieces inside their resource bay." Says Kearney.

"I hope so. We need this to happen. If we can get the Star Voyager loaded and use its stealth to deliver the portals to the designated locations we will be in great shape. Not only to keep it under wraps but in time we might be able to set up a long-range portal transportation system."

"Yes sir."

"Finish up. I'll be in here only a few more minutes I need to make a call."

"Yep righto"

"Seghtee calling Seiwan Li."

"Li here we're outside torch cutting the portal to get it into the doorway what's up?"

"Can you join me in your luxury lounge for a moment?"

"On the way."

"Lazarus can you take over with this arc cutter?" Li asked space suited outside the ship.

"Go ahead I got it. You can close the door now. We got the dimensions right this time. I'll finish the cutting with the SMD engineer."

"Thanks." Li enters the ship and closes the door to lock the air long enough to get inside the back." Seghtee was still sitting and was attentive and slightly smiling.

"Seiwan. One last thing before we leave. May I use your long-range communicator to sync with a faded transmission buoy network? I am going to make a contact with my wife on Earth. I am going to inform here that we will be delivering sensitive equipment in the Mediator and it might be dangerous."

"Won't that endanger the mission sir?"

"No, It is only a minor precaution. More than likely this message will not be noted by anyone of consequence. But as an added deterrent if we leave this bait out there, incase it does get intercepted, it will draw focus on the mediator and take some potential heat of you in the Star voyager."

"Well what if it does get intercepted and interpreted. What if the Mediator gets attacked!?"

"Heh. Don't worry. Attacking the Mediator is a terrible idea. Not to mention we will be escorted by a borage of fighters and a couple of gunboats. No problem there. It is more important that you get your prototypes to your designated locations. You have the original and a couple of remodeled versions."

"I see. Sure go ahead you can access our communicator from the living room."

"My respects captain." Seghtee stands.

"A hug sir?"

"Just one. I appreciate your hospitality."

"Sure." Li responds with hands clasped behind him.

"Your wife? How is she?"

"She's alright. I've been away for a long time. We have not been together in quite some time. I love her very much and miss her deeply."

"When the mission is over why not go and see her?"

"I'm sure I'll manage."

"Okay. I'm going back out to finish up. Hold your breath while I exit."

"Don't forget your air lock protocols captain. We didn't get you into the Transition Academy for the fun of it." Li turns.

"We? You mean you knew about me and helped get me into the Academy?" Seghtee grins slightly.

"Let us prepare Seiwan. This is utmost."

"Okay. thanks Arinori." The Admiral salutes while Li slips on his helmet and out of the door. A few moments pass and Seghtee's face flushed and his breathing rate increases slightly as he makes his way to the living room console next to the sofa. He sits slowly and taps the panel inputting his codes. Atop the ship the NET sensor rotates about its axis and pivots appropriately as its coils energize. Lazuras watches as Li and the SMD engineer finish up.

"Did you turn on the dish Li?"

"Seghtee is using it."

"Oh."

"Inside the scrolling texts concludes and soon to appear is Yumi Seghtee and daughter Hisako. In the Japanese tongue they speak.

"[My dear. How are you and Hisako?"

"We miss you. When are you coming home?]"

"[My dear it will be a while longer. I have a mission at hand.]"

"[There is always another mission sweetheart. Hisako wants to say something to you.]"

"[I love you dad. I missed you come home soon.]" She kisses at him and Seghtee touches lightly his screen.

"[Sweetheart, I want you to be happy. Please take care of yourself out there. You have a lot of love here. Your family, friends. We miss you in the dojo. We want our teacher back too.]"

"[I know dear. We will reunite soon and have the biggest week ever together.]" Says Seghtee as he motions his clasped hands together in a **kanji gesture**.

"[Mind, body, and spirit.]" He offers his family foundation.

"[Mind, body, and spirit]." She returns. Yumi kisses a long pucker and her eyes glistened. Seghtee returns his short head bow and a longing look. The monitor blanks and reveals some text about the call. Seghtee pauses a moment. He activates the exterior cams to find Li, Lazuras, and the SMD personnel arm wrestling on the empty crates and he does not listen long to their risqué banter and laughter. It was shortly thereafter that he activates another transmission. Outside the grinning Lazuras as seen through his wide open visor, as was them all, the rectangular sensor dish repivots and angles nearly opposite of its previous alignment.

"Another transmission." Says Lazuras. Li strained out a response in the middle of his brutal arm wrestle with the hefty SMD officer.

"Don't worry about it." Lazarus returns his attention to the match and jokes with Kearney. On the monitor appears Nora a Chinese beauty of *Seghtee's* affection. Her face a look of passion and her hand could not help but to caress her own shoulder at the sight of her lover.

"Nora. I missed you. I'm on my way there."

"I need you now Arinori. My skin is crawling." Seghtee's mouth parts a bit.

"Stay there on Cluctor Stop. We are preparing to leave Kuipertown to deliver the supplies."

"What about Yumi?" Seghtee's heart palpates and his stress was high.

"She's okay. I told her about the mission. She knows I'm going to be gone a while longer."

"Hurry my love. I love you so much."

"I know. Stay calm and safe. I love you."

"See you soon my handsome militant." Seghtee smiles and he blips out the screen. His heart rate skyrocketed at the sound of the airlock mechanisms and Li enters. Admiral, the sight is all clean, we are ready to roll.

"Okay great let's do it. You and Lazuras deliver the prototypes as quickly as possible. Don't forget; engage stealth as soon as you lift off. Check your HUD display to get your destinations and remain at just under top speed. Don't push the nozzles to hot. Let's make this happen!"

"We read you sir. I'll go get Lazuras he's on his second match." Seghtee chuckles.

"Try general Priset. He can bench press more than the security guard. Not bad for a Brit. All right I'm on my way out. We will take a cart back to the Mediator. I can reveal my destination to you. We were headed for Cluctor Stop. That is the first location."

"Take care sir."

"You do the same. If all goes well we expect to hear from you with an empty resource bay."

"Yep, will do." Seghtee caps off and departs soon to load his body onto the motorized personnel cart with his subordinates.

"Alright my friend we got to get this done are you ready for some speed? And I mean *speed* this time."

"How much speed." Lazarus swallowed.

"We're about to find out. Open the file for the first destination and check the hard copies. We're clearing the landing pad and moving off. and there goes the Kuiper asteroid."

"And there goes the mediator. Those carts are pretty darn quick."

"Darn tooten..." Lazarus's mouth parted widely as well as his eyes.

"Where too navigator?!"

"Krysto!" Li somewhat rapidly lays out a course for the distant ice world in the A-00981 star system.

"Element discs fresh and new. Particle reservoirs full, proton-proton converter, scoops, primary radiation intake chamber and all other apparatuses are functioning appropriately." Li confirms from his pilot's chair.

"Laz, you know how long it takes to get up to speed normally with regular engines?"

"Max speed LS 20? Yeah about 30 minutes. With these new nozzles we can be at about 5 times the speed in 30 minutes. Our GFE can handle the acceleration. Seghtee gave us an upgrade. The mediator uses much more powerful fields. Not only that, but you know the acceleration gaps between engine types?"

"Yeah what about them?"

"We can travel in those gaps now. We can switch directly to the LS engines now and burn them all the way through. The sub light speed engines can be used for backup!"

"Neat I can't wait to test them."

"Preparing to test them right now. But we're not going to scrap the SLS engine by no means. We'll go back to using them after this mission. No need to overuse the new engines. Best to conserve."

"I agree. So you're leaving your XF fighter here on Kuiper?"

"Seghtee is keeping an eye on it."

"Right on." The engines flare and the new even sleeker nozzles barely notice and the Star Voyager streaks away.

The Destined Jaunt

It's been a few days. Life aboard the space bus was somewhat leisurely, perhaps not so much so as an actually luxury cruiser however. Standard bedding, food rations and dull colored walls, it was certainly fit for brief and long trips about. Erin and Morthod had gotten to know one another in conversation and were now the main life onboard. The others had retired into their bunks and spake not. Ahead in the viewer the hot white burning superstar Beta Leonis. Erin reported swiftly the pings of warning, which detailed from known charts and stellar mapping data the Oort Cloud of Beta Leonis. It was easy to navigate though perhaps slightly more dense than the Oort cloud of Sol be it that Beta Leonis was a heavier star and likely picks up more debris around it's distant **gravitational horizon** and of greater multitudes. There were comets, derelict planetoids seeming to hover or move very slowly at such great distances, medium gas giants perhaps comparable to Neptune and Uranus. It wasn't long before the vibrations of deceleration lightly rattled the chassis. and bulkheads of the vessel. It was the third planet which was perhaps the size of a grain of sand which shown on the viewer but in the ships computer monitor large and with overlaid details, data and grids and graphs. .Erin I'll tell you what. Since you have befriended this .old sea captain. I'm going down to the planet with you. I need a break. I'll help you with your search."

"Thanks. But I feel this is something I should do on my own."

"As you please. But I warn you. You might get trapped here. There are females her hot as nuke fire that will overpower your very soul with beauty beyond imagining, exotic features irresistible to the mind, and voices to freeze your heart. Only the strong, enduring, and brave will return from this planet."

"What's its name?"

"Nod, and were coming up on it now. Entering the atmosphere in several minutes. I'm going to drop you off at an old landing pad not very large. I'll have to hover the bus above it and you can exit from the lower floor way."

"Wait how will I leave this place?"

"There's a satellite in orbit capable of syncing with the phased transmission buoy network. Return to the landing pad and use the communications booth terminal. In perhaps a week at the most a transport can be here. You better too or they might not make a second trip!" Erin silenced a moment. His eyes wide and mind in deepness.

"Look." Says Morthod as they glide in a flaming hover a little high over the terrain.

"Ever seen plant life like this?" Erin surveys the landscape. Beautiful trees and shrubs of stimulating and quite sensual colors beat his heart in his chest only at the site of it. Mammals and quadrupeds with coats of red of all colors some yellows and orange. They did not know how nature could make pink and white striped creatures of cotton like fur, Erin thought as magnified images blazed in his opened eyes on the scanner. They trotted and ran free in the Oxygen atmosphere some in herds and others like that of kangaroo with folded paws and twitching noses of which swirled the dandelions in whirl pooling air currents which exit those cool moist noses. Fluffy clouds of white, deep blue sky a little thinner pressure than Earth and a sun as if to be blazing ivory afire! The grass was blue also. It touched down the gray colored space bus onto the cracked and edge-crumbling patio. About its circumference side rails of stone just as were the patio and vines and morning glory threaded between its pillars and encompassed the side booth. The fowl eccentric in its wing configurations and unnerving of it.s chirp swooped over head and circled near and afar in groups in turns. The posy protruded the vines in sporadic arrangement as nature would suggest and petals of cream colored blossoms blankets the seemingly ancient space patio.

"I wish you luck my friend." Morthod extends and heard on the helmet radio by Erin, which he hugged in his arm.

"God Bless and my thanks. Erin stood meekly in his space suit uncapped to view the grassland and horizon of bare trails greenery and critters about all the while the gentle hum of the ships hovering spoil drifts away slowly with mild Doppler. Only the ship should be not much more than a few tens a feet behind him he turns to watch it's soon to be thunderous ascent into the azure yet being turned he saw nothing. The ship had vanished from his sights as if never to be there.

"They have cloaks on space buses?" Erin reasoned. Yet his wrist device detected no air pressure waves left even by invisible ships. Erin was confused. He did not remain focused on it as the sounds of the animals and unfamiliar tune of the plain winds drew his caution. With closed eyes and an inhale he steps fourth opening again his peeps to step off the patio at the parted pillar gap onto the main trail left by many souls people and animal alike no doubt.

Mission 1 Complete

"SMD Mediator vessel on approach for designated landing target zone." Tartic voiced over radio.

"Awaiting your landing at eastern rim. One security detail is on its way to you now. One Giraffidae male Council Proxy awaiting reception for boarding." The Padmaster coordinates.

"Stand by to receive Admiral Seghtee, security, and officials."

"Acknowledged pilot."



Mediator Descending Upon Cluctor Stop

"Great rays out here."

"Heh, acknowledged. great rays, out."

"Tartic, upon landing power down into idle mode. We will remain at this station for a while perhaps 7 hours. This is Seghtee calling cargo. Bring the crates containing the portal prototypes into the lower security storage holds of Cluctor Stop. Coordinate with the manager. He is already aware of the situation."

"Got it Admiral. We're ready to roll outta here."

"Good. When you're finished get some R and R."

"Deckman, please accompany me inside. I'll need you to administrate the personnel in the food court please sir."

"Will do sir." The Admiral prepares to enter the airlock with helmet in hand.

"And Mr. Kearny."

"Yes sir?"

"I have faith in your abilities."

"Yep righto sir." The airlock is closed. Seghtee exits onto the patio and loads onto a personnel carrier cart. The other officials and station hands go about their tasks and routines with fervor.

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A Risky Meeting

Back inside the clean room. Two sedated Wolfmen lay limply upon their cold metal gurneys and their eyes were parted ever so slightly due to the very potent chemicals, which disseminate their veins. The nervous group surrounds the Wolfmen as Dr. Thorn prepares to stimulate their higher brain functions.

"I want to use a common chemical to bring them slowly to a more conscious state of mind. I believe caffeine would be the best choice. It is likely it can be found on their planet."

"Heh, who knows? This Gold fur could have been sipping his morning brew shortly before our interception of his land vehicle." Paddman states.

"And the Silverback may have just finished chewing a leave of tea out in his forest territory for all we know." Mariah adds. Dr. Thorne glances sideways at the lips of the Silverback.

"Huh let me check that actually." He parts his lips and swabs his teeth and tongue.

"Go analyze this please." He says to his assistant.

"Keep them restrained." General Priset strongly suggested. The Giraffidae agent stood near with arms crossed.

"We might want to bring an alternate sedation method in here." Says Captain Pouncer.

"We have plenty of chemicals in here, not to worry. "I'm sensing surges of anger in the Silverback. Strong ones." He adds.

"How are you sensing them?" Asked the Doctor.

"Just an impression."

"Is it that stereotype about Felidae and K-9.s being rivals?" Priset asked with a grin.

"What do you mean rivals?" Asked Pouncer. "Oh well we have a saying on Earth. *"They are fighting like cats and dogs."* No pun intended Captain.

"Hmm, interesting. Why would your. "cats" and .dogs. be fighting?"

"Well I don't know really. I guess the K-9 and Feline species on our planet were competitive for food and territory for eons perhaps. Particularly with the rather large cats and hyenas you will find out on the plains of a continent called Africa."

"Intriguing. I'll study about it." Paddman informs.

"How did you relate to your K-9.s on Katlar?" Mariah asked curiously.

"There are no K-9.s on Katlar." He answered.

"At least not within our recorded history. This is our first encounter with this species." At that time the recently silent Zemorgian hands spoke, only one who informs,

"There is a group of officers approaching this room." He says toughly. A non-submissive yet playful quick salute to Admiral Seghtee as he enters. Priset's face was sincere.

"General how go the Tau Woltula project?"

"We are about to make a rather risky venture but it was been approved by our Giraffidae guide here." Seghtee overlooks the temporarily incapacitated Wolfmen, his face stern.

"I suppose I am just in time. Post two securities outside this entrance. Let no one in here unauthorized."

"Better close the door this might get loud especially with the silverback." Dr. Thorn urged.

"I suggest the Goldfur first." I agree says Priset. Into the veins of the hairy Wolfman were input caffeine and some other mixtures to stimulate them into consciousness.

"This might take a few minutes. Given the chemical mixture I ordinarily get a reaction within 10 seconds that is with normal sized people. These Wolfmen are very large. It might take more doses too."

"We've got time." Seghtee informed.

"Try another one." Dr. Thorne's assistant says.

"Alright. Input the carotid artery. Triple the dosage."

"Tripling dosage for the Goldfur standing by with 3 for the Silverback."

"We have a slight chest rise." Says the assistant. "His vital signs are reading 9 percent elevation on all departments, respiration, heart rate, and pressure."

"Brain activity is increasing slightly, 2 more." Says Thorne with head turned at the wave readout and bio-magnetic monitors.

"Inputting Carotid artery with two addition doses."

"Here we go." Dr. Thorn mildly exclaims as the Goldfurs eyes begin to part.

"Go to low thoughts." Suggests the Giraffidae.

The Large and slowly awakening Goldfur began to gently convulse and twitch. His legs kicked a bit and his face expressed perplexed looks. In his eyes of yellow irises shines the pen light by Dr. Thorn as he checks his reactions. His arm was grabbed firmly and the Goldfur began murmuring uninterpretable tones his breathing heavy and his eyes watery. His grip loosens.

"He knows who we are." Says the Giraffidae. "He's military, high ranking, I can see his thoughts better now."

"What does he say?" Seghtee asked. "His heart is palpating some." Says Dr. Thorn.

"A moment while I read..." The Guide says.

"The winds would blow, the seas would flood, the animals attack, and then come the armies of beasts who kill our young and rape our women, they bash our snouts and yank our ears and no mercy is in them, if we shall set them afire with our sky tails we will die yet we die by their brutish hands. It is the growling, the howling and the deafmaking roars of the outrageous monsters who live in the jungles, the smells, the digging of dirt to bury our skulls and send aloft our carcasses with catapults of evil designs, in vicious hordes do they assault us and rip from our bodies our fur to burn in their camp fires!"

He interprets aloud. Tension and anger swells in them and they sway their attention to the large Silverback.

"Is it true?" Mariah asks. The guide nods affirmingly.

"He's in pain. I'm resting him with a mild sedative." Says Thorne. The fading breath of the Goldfur puffs out and he sleeps. Heads turn toward the Silverback and the doctor loads an injection.

"6 doses for the Silverback. His weight is 1.7 times the Goldfur." Says the doctor.

"That might be too much Dr. Thorne."

"He is latched down tightly."

"Seghtee calling the Mediator. Send two more security soldiers ASAP to the upstairs clean room."

"Received Admiral they are on the way." The ship reports.

"Here we go. I'm inserting the maximum injector push into his Carotid artery, dosage, times 6 standard." The assistant reports.

"Stand back Seghtee orders. Security train weapons on him keep them set to his weight lever. Make sure he gets a good enough jolt if he tries any of that primitive animal behavior in here." Priset's fists ball for a moment. The heavy huff of the Silverbacks air intake was thick. His chest expanded boundlessly it seemed as its torso raised and fell in powerful thrusts. Large amounts of adrenaline being produced. I'm getting a sample." Says Thorne.

"His endocrine glands are stimulating."

"Taking second sample." At that moment a horrific roar erupted from his vocals, which hurt their eardrums, and their heads ached as they covered their ears. Their mouths parted as they were in pain. The roar was heard in the café downstairs. Tools were dropped medical equipment scatted about the floor. The Silverback jerked violently and ripped and whipped his powerful body. Even as the arm restraints held the bed table began to loosen from its unsecured foundation and shake wildly.

"Sedate!!!" The Doctor screamed rasping his throat as to compete with the growling and roaring. The Silverbacks garment ripped as the swelling muscles exceeded it tight fit. His abdomen bore the scars of long lacerations and legs bore bear areas of scrapes where fur had been ripped from some strenuous activity.

"I can't inject him! I can't get close!. The assistant yelled.

"I got it. Give me a large needle. Says Seghtee. With the needle in hand he rigs it onto the bayonet of the soldiers rifle soon to stab it into his belly.

"Allow me." Priset says as he grabs the leg pole of the portable table and bats the Silverback on the snout and head to press long needle pusher.

"It's in. He'll be out soon." The people in the room pant and breathe.

"Where did the guide go?" Mariah questioned.

"He left?" Priset was confused.

"We've seen enough also I think it's time we leave now." Captain Pouncer informs and twirls his claw around as he turns to exit the door. The other Felidae officials follow.

"Get these two on long term sedation in secure dark-rooms. I want to schedule a return trip to their planet. Judging from the telepathic interpretation by the Guide and the reactions of the Silverback I'd say we better get an investigation going on the Planet Woltula.

"I agree. Says Seghtee as he stares at the Silverback whose consciousness fades.

"What are you all's plan?" Seghtee inquired,

"I'm leaving. I've heading back to Suntown. The Raider is out on the pad being refueled and upgraded to full speed." Says Mariah.

"Will you want to escort an exploration vessel out to Tau Woltula?"

"No Admiral. I'm done with the project. I need a break. This is all too much for me. Maybe next time."

"Understood. Have a safe journey. With your new engines you won't have to be in that cockpit for longer than you usually do."

"Thank you admiral. Until next time sir." They salute.

"I'll complete the project with Dr. Thorne and have them prepared to return to Woltula as planned." Says Priset.

"Alright. I'm going to get back to our delivery project. We will be here perhaps another 4 hours. I must ensure the security of the equipment."

"Acknowledged. Admiral."

"Dr. Thorne. Good work." Seghtee moves away as Priset and the doctors attention returns top their subjects. Seghtee signals a Zemogian to him and whispers.

"Keep an eye on the Wolfmen and the staff. Please see to their humane rights."

"Yes sir." Seghtee departs the clean room.

The Classified Paramour

"Admiral. We heard the noise is everything okay?" Deck officer Kearny inquired as he intercepted the Admiral in the corridor downstairs.

"Yes, it is finished. What is happening with you?"

"I was in the food court. Everyone heard the loud noises. We thought there was a problem. We almost activated the station crisis alert."

"It's ok. I saw to the safety of the persons at point."

"Okay. Orders sir?"

"Please remain in the food court and oversee. We will leave in a few hours. I'm going to conclude the mission and ensure the secure holding of the portals until they can be followed up upon in the near future."

"Very good Admiral." Kearney salutes and returns to the court. Seghtee takes a turn toward the visitor's quarters. Inside the extended stay suite awaits Nora the Chinese beauty who remains robed in her blouse. The ding sounds and she springs up to open the doors. Seghtee stood briefly and she signals him in.

"Did anyone see you?"

"No the hall was clear." They hug tightly.

"Come and have some sweet rice. I made bread and there's some wine here."

"Thank you that's just what I needed."

"What's wrong? Why are you so distracted?"

"Nothing just. an encounter upstairs with some aliens." Nora smiles and flanks Seghtee soon to caress his uniformed chest from behind. The green, black, and blue outfit was strong and decorated with medals and patches.

"How long can you stay with me?"

"Maybe 3 hours. We are delivering the next cargo to Sirius." His hand rose with finger extended.

"No words Nora." We must keep our missions unknown."

"You trust me. That means you might love me." She smiles.

"I do. Actually that is something I want to talk about. I have been thinking about our affair. I know it's wrong. But our love seems just as real. I do not understand. This will certainly be not accepted in our two families and cultures."

"I know. I can't stop loving you now Arinori. Do you want a movie?"

"Doesn't matter." Seghtee glances over to note the blinking blue light.

"You're A.I. is on. Does it bother you? It does some people. They think it's watching them."

"Hmp, No I leave it on because I want it to make noises periodically. It is a meditative technique that keeps my thoughts and mind active. This station is cold. That's why I needed you so bad. I have so much fun with you."

"Same here. I cannot imagine how our two people cannot love one another. But I don't see Chinese when I look into your eyes Nora."

"What do you see?"

"*One hot baby.*" Nora flushes.

"How."

"How what sweet heart?"

"How can this be wrong? I really love you Arinori. I feel real." [<A.I. beeps>](#) Seghtees head turns toward and back.

"I do too my dear. I wish we didn't have to keep out of sight. but we must. or we will ruin our happy families." Seghtee holds her slender, tender hand and they laced their fingers. [<A.I.beeps>](#). What does that sound mean?"

"That's my reminder."

"For what?"

"Secret." She smiles. "So you're right dear. I wait anxiously by the comm. For your call and I cannot subdue my fire inside." [<A.I. beeps>](#)

"I am always thinking of you but when I'm home I still can't let go of what we have. Out of all the missions and excursions and things I've seen and done I find that living two lives is the most difficult." [<A.I. beeps>](#)

"You mean you think about letting go." Nora asks sadly.

"No I do not." Into her exotic eyes he gazes. .Nora no matter what we've got to hang on. If we don't we will fall. We are bonded in our life forces now, just as you are with your husband Mr. Yeung and just as I am with my wife Yumi.

"I know." [<A.I. beeps>](#) Seghtee grins.

"And what does that sound mean sweet heart?" Nora flushes.

"Nevermind, secret dear." She turns away a moment in shyness.

"Can I guess?"

"Just kiss me Arinori. Let's take this crazy but quite exciting chance. And she parts his uniform as her silk gown slides off near frictionlessly into the hands of artificial gravity. [<A.I. beeps>](#)

En Route

"Current speed Light Speed Factor 114.98 in 37 minutes and 42 seconds." Li reports while his hand, shakes above the panel. The breath from Lazarus was shuttery as he stared nervously at the flowing stars.

"Are we still accelerating?"

"Yes, at a rapid rate. 1,735,220,518.74 miles per second. 1,736,002,149.6 miles per second, 1,736,004,369.91, there's a 3.1 speed ratio increase every second I am noticing."

"So we are accelerating faster by decimal fraction 3.1 every second but we cannot account for the odd ratio increase I gather."

"So it seems. I had better report this. Lazarus, please start taking notes of every change or oddity we encounter."

"Taking notes down now on the notepad and the hard data page copy."

"Check again the ship wide determinate index. What is the current status of the engine system?"

"Checking. the computer is scanning the systems. It says that the deuteron fusion rate is 4.7 times normal to keep this acceleration ratio."



The Star Voyager Cockpit

"Can we read a nozzle temperature?" Lazarus display amazement as he looks to Li.

"The nozzles are holding. It says the temperature is about 2.21 times on the exterior surface what it would be if we were still using the old nozzles. Why do you look nervous?"

"Well we are testing this engine for only the second time. They burned the nozzles at very high temperatures before they installed them. I think they said they did that at science station Epsilon 12. The final report read that the nozzles withstood the temperatures. It read also that their limit exceeded the testing chambers."

"No joke!"

"Yeah. So we have not a known limit to how hot we can burn these engines. I theorize that it may be necessary to invent another form of propulsion rather than try to keep burning them hotter. I'm thinking some kind of barrier might interfere. That is just a hunch however." A light vibration occurs and their hearts drop.

"Check that." Li states with wide eyes.

"It's centered in a conduit network, port side, midway."

"That's the area where we made our repairs." Li recalls. "We finished everything."

"I know. We checked everything 3 times. There shouldn't be a problem there."

"It says the GFE field shifted slightly. It collapsed inward by 0.11 percent."

"One of those conduits in that wall is supplying the GFE with a special particle mixture. The GFE and the engines operate in proportion. The engines compensate for inertial lag. The engines must always begin acceleration before the GFE begins its compensation cycles. That's one reason there is always a slight tug on our bodies at times of acceleration and deceleration. If the flow rate in the other conduits supplying the discharge prechambers are off it could cause the computer to try to compensate to keep the GFE at the correct proportion differential."

"There's a variable bleeder in there too."

"Right. That bleeder is routing positrons which need to be in correct amounts."

"But there are flow regulators further down in that conduit channel. Those are supposed to correct the flow rate before sending them into the injectors."

"True. And not to mention there must be a minimum flow rate of any particle stream to compensate for quantum uncertainty."

"Explain that to me."

"Well if we try to inject one particle at a time into the chamber there will be a slim chance that they will actually collide and give us fusion or fission depending on what we are trying to do. So when the light speed engines were first tested they simply kept increasing the flow rate into the chamber until we began getting more and more collisions. One that occurred the minimum flow rate integer was born. It can be analogous to liquefied petroleum in a combustion cylinder in a car. If there is too little gas in the cylinder the pistons won't turn or will not turn enough to get the cams and drive shaft moving. So there is also a minimum limit of fuel that needs to be present in the piston cylinders in cars."

"I see."

"Yeah, well anyway we need to check that right now. Stay here and keep an eye out for any more fluctuations in any system. I'm going to the back to check the conduit network in that section."

"Alright." Li leaves and the center doors part. He stares silently for a moment.

"Dagg!"

"What?!"

"We have a small problem that could possibly turn into a larger problem."

"Like what?"

"They jammed packed our resource bay with this portal equipment. They are in pieces."

"Yeah that's what we were working on the whole time at the Kuipertown asteroid. You were there you helped me torch cut the parts."

"Yeah I know but I left and I didn't see that there ended up being like no space whatsoever to get in here. I need to open that panel to check the conduits again. I think I might know what it is." Lazarus stands and looks in. Whoa you're right. You'll never get your body in there. Probably not even a hand for that matter."

"I can get my hand in but the panels are blocked by that dish and generator component. There's no way to get any of those panels open. let's go and recheck the systems on the software end." They return and sit at their stations.

"The computer says that everything is normal except for that 3.1 speed increase every second. I'm seeing no sign of any other problems. The computer recorded the GFE field's variance and the imbalance detected in the conduit network in that section."

"Yes that's what I'm thinking. I believe the imbalance is in the proton-proton converter. We are traveling at a much faster rate and we probably need to compensate the converter to give us modified flow rate pattern for the positron. In other words I think we might be positron deficient. If I'm right the computer has compensated by drawing from the positron reservoir. That is what caused the small jolt. But if we don't get that panel open and manually modify the converter, which might take some creative thinking, we will run out of positrons before we get to Krysto. We may not be able to use fusion without an electron-positron initiation and stabilization flow."

"Doesn't the deuteron reaction maintain itself? .Not for long. It takes heat and pressure to get the deuterons to fuse. These engines work by colliding electrons and positrons in the chamber followed closely by the deuterons moving at a sufficient speed to give the right pressure. The energy released in the electron-positron collision is the initiator. And it must repeat that every few milliseconds to keep the heat high enough to maintain the reaction."

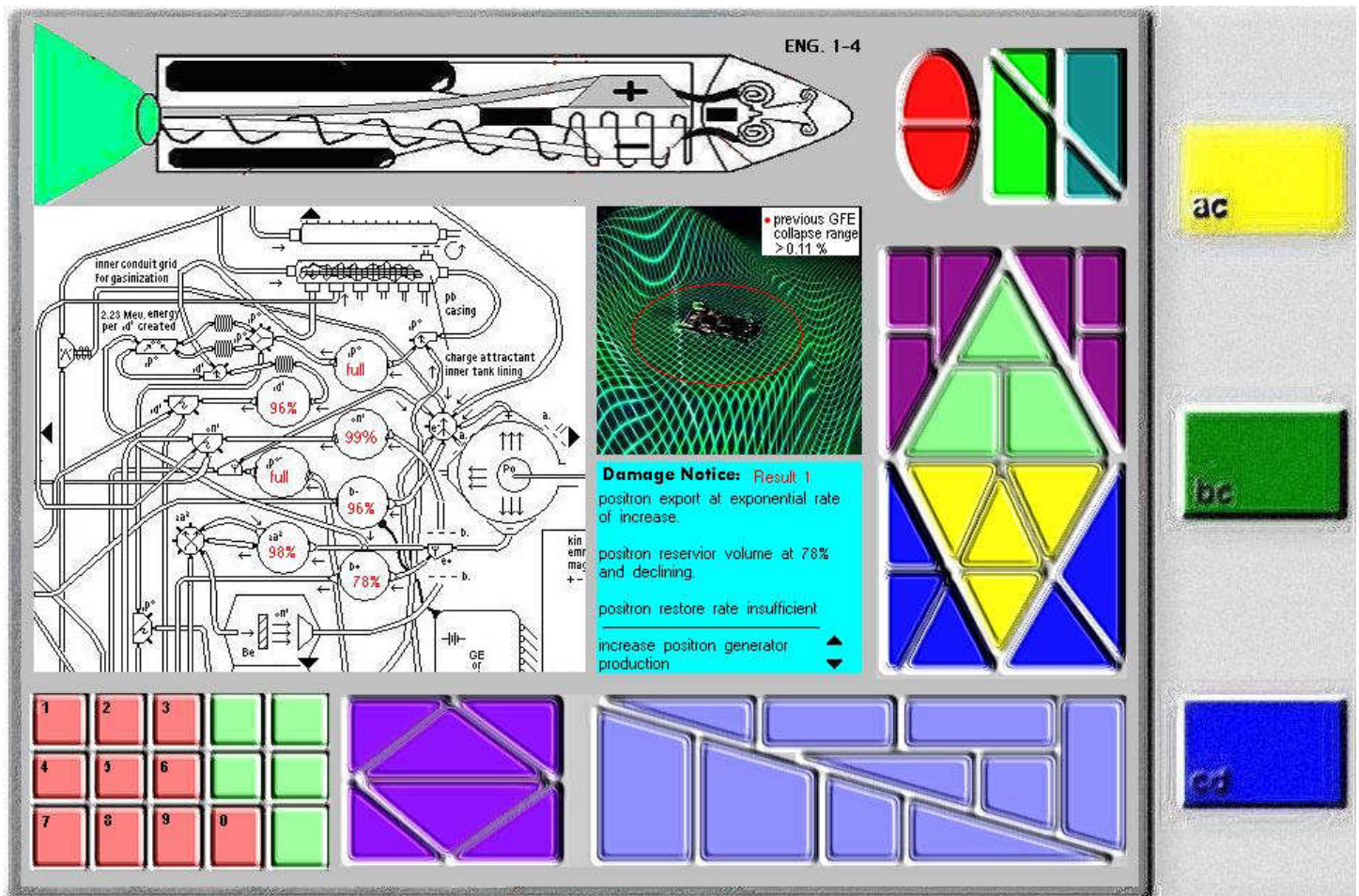
"Great Scott."

"Yeah, no joke. I'm going to have to figure something out fast." Li goes to the nav. panel to check the engineering display.

"The last thing we need is to have to stop the ship and not deliver the portals. The Admiral couldn't put it any clearer how important it is to get them delivered."

"Why do you think that is Seiwan?"

"I know already. They want to establish a portal network around Star City. Probably even a communications network too using miniature versions of the portal technique designed to serve as transmission channels. I think with that they can go back to ultra radio signals and simply transmit them into a small version of a portal conduit. The faded transmission might take the backburner, at least locally. There's any number of uses for it."



The Engineering Screen

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"Right. And we've got to get them delivered."

"Yeah. Give me a moment while I analyze this problem then figure out how I'm going to repair the bleeder, if that's the issue."

"I'll check our destination lock and shipping lane alignment. I want to make sure that jolt, whatever it was, didn't divert our course any."

"Good idea. Likely it was the computer trying to decide which was more important, refilling the positron reservoir or keeping the discharge chamber ignition rate steady. I suppose the A.I. decided on the latter. It took a big chunk of positrons from the reservoir and sent them to the discharge chamber and that bleeder which feeds the GFE became slightly deficient for a moment causing the field to collapse."

"Why have we not encountered this before?"

"Because the Star Voyager has never traveled this fast. We might be lucky. But Seghtee tells me that most ships are prepared for speed upgrades. Some astute engineer used his head the day they designed this vessel with safeguards and adaptability features." Their wide peaked eyes return to their previous focuses.

"If it does it again I might need to replace that bleeder. I think it was flooded by the heavy positron traffic. There may have been a magneto-electric overload inside it."

"I agree."

"That's what I'm working on now is how to get to it. There's no way for me to get in there. I want to get ahead of the problem. Laz hold us steady for a while I work on this."

"Sure thing."

Chapter 5

Enduring Trials

On the Trails of Allure

The pollen was oddly sweet in his nose and on his tongue and it made him dizzy and disoriented. The grass around him rolled in the cool wind and petals rained from flowering canopies high above. Critters scampered and fowl swept. Erin's heart began to throb at little reason other than the illustrious alien planetary surrounding he saw. He was a little perplexed and ahead he saw a fork in the trail, as in divide. A sign was posted made of soft wood pointing in two directions. Unreadable yet with work pictures rubbed in with staining dyes of some kind, just as Morthod had said, mermaid lagoon to the left and Nuns of Nod to the right. Erin paused. His eyes lowered and he thought the same as he has always; to give into his worldly desires or to try to preserve, *The Way*.

"The Mermaids are not my kind. The one for me should be one like me who seeks the same path." Thought Erin. In his chest the life breath of air blew into his air sacs and he raised his head in confidence soon to step fourth toward the Nuns of Nod.

The Solution

In the cockpit did Seiwan Li grab the attention of Lazarus who maintained his position in the pilot's chair while Li stared into the nav. screen.

"Okay I have the solution, so I think and it's a little on the tricky side." Li states.

"Lay it on me." The index finger of the right hand of Li points up.

"What?" Lazarus questioned. "The reservoirs?" Which were positioned under the floor and visible through the ground screen no longer displaying the negative axis view."

"What about them?"

"No not the reservoirs." His hand motions vertically with finger still extended.

"The roof." Li nods affirmatively.

"That main chunk of the portal dish section must be moved. It's just behind the power supply piece, which is in the way. It can't be moved because it won't fit into the bridge doorway. If it could I would bring it in here."

"You could take it apart."

"No, I don't want to do that because I will be at fault if it ends up damaged or no good after we deliver these. I am going to suit up, go outside, you're going to open the side door, which is a lifesaver now by the way, and pull the dish component out. Then I will securely mount it to the roof."

"How in the hell are you going to get outside? The room is crammed with that junk remember?" Li's finger motions in front to of him. Lazarus follows his call and the bridge door opens"

"This is going to be a very annoying and embarrassing trial but there's just enough space for me to crawl on top of that junk." If you'll look to the starboard side you will see your space suit. I can spilt the torso just enough to slide in. Then I can squeeze through that equipment and get out of the top hatch. See?"

"Yeah. It looks like there is just barely enough space for you to get in and get that suit on. Then maybe you can, as you said, squeeze around and out of the top hatch."

"It's the only solution I can muster at this time."

"Okay so you get out, get the part secured on the roof and get back inside, then what?"

"I can then get that maintenance panel off and analyze the malfunction. If possible I may be able to change the bleeder or at least increase it's capacity using some creative engineering. A service panel with some raw parts is accessible near that area we are going to clear." Lazarus ponders off.

"I don't think you're going to be able to swap that bleeder for a new one. We're running the engines at max and a new bleeder will likely have the same problem since they are identical."

"You're right. But the new bleeder is undamaged. We have about 4 total left. I calculated that the bleeder overloads at 8.96 hour intervals due to the steadily periodic flow rate spike of positron traffic through that conduit and variable bleeder route." Li looks to his watch.

"We have 22 minutes to swap it. Then there will be another overload."

"Will we make it to Krysto? Do we have enough bleeders?"

"Our ETA to Krysto is 1.4 days. With four bleeders and about 31 hours to our destination and overloads every 8.96 hours we will need 3 bleeders. We will have one to spare." Lazarus gasps a few breaths.

"Now how are we going to swap it with that much dag gum positron traffic channeling through it?!" We're going to have to create a temporary bypass to keep the flow going while we replace it."

"Right, and there might be a fluctuation in the particle flow. The GFE and adjacent particle flows of other particle type which depend on a certain known rate of flow of this particular conduit will all need to be accommodated."

"Accommodated?"

"Well yes they depend on the positron flow which goes to the engines. It shouldn't be too much of a problem. The computer can probably compensate or perhaps be programmed to compensate."

"I'm just going to make sure that the GFE maintains is synchronization with the engines. I anticipate there might be a tug on us while we change the bleeder. I have to calculate accurately to keep the tug at a safe level of force while we make the change or we may injure ourselves."

"Yeah right. Please do. I don't want to look like a jelly roll." Li snickers inside. We you will anyway if you keep eating all those Mars Barr jelly rolls."

"I don't eat that many of those."

"Yeah well anyway. I suppose we can use the conduit bypass tool. It works by allowing use to cut the conduit in use and reconnect it to the new segment. We can have the new bleeder and the already in place then simply make the replacement as quickly as possible." They huddle around the engineering screen.

"I can close off the conduit vacuum valves here and here so you can cut the conduit and bypass. The flow will stop completely through that channel."

"That's okay. We will shut down the engines and allow the ship to cruise on a steady deceleration rate. Without the engines to maintain the partnership with the GFE it will slow down anyways due to spatial tension. The main power feed to the GFE will still be available because it is using mostly large amounts of electrons, which is fed by a different conduit." Lazarus gulps.

"Do you think that will work?"

"As long as the GFE is compensating for our rate of deceleration we should be okay. You've been saying you wanted to do a little surfing lately."

"Yeah well I think the beach on Oassia is more like what I had in mind. Not a steel tight wave rippling through the fabric of space-time."

"Might as well be the pioneer. So then after I make the replacement of the new conduit segment we will jumpstart the appropriate conduit networks and reinitialize the entire system. That positron conduit will be a little longer because of the segment curves, like plumbing pipe parts. But that is easily compensated for. There may be a few jolts in between and I will have to time everything just right. With the computers help I know we can do it."

"Whew. I'm getting woozy."

"Yeah me too. Try to stay focused while we are doing this. We're going to get these portals to Krysto. I'll see to it."

"I'm ready captain."

"Okay I'm going in and getting that suit on. Stand by to depressurize the bay and open the top hatch, after that the side door. I'll take care of the rest."

"Good luck." Li motions toward the bay and inside the parts sit, as they remain crunk in the just rightly sized bay. Li starts to work his way on top of the parts and pieces experiencing what he anticipated, an already frustrating snake-through the poking and prodding junk.

"Are you okay Li?" The voice of Lazarus didn't echo this time with the full sound absorbing cargo. Yet a hint of the composition of the material could be heard, some metal some plastic, some unknown.

"Um yeah just a little on the tight side. I got the suit split apart. There is just enough room to get in give or take a few tears of my uniform maybe."

Li yelled, "I'm trying to spin my body around so I can get in. I'm going to have to pull quite an aerobic act." And so he did.

"That's not funny man." Li cautioned as the pointed end of a prop rod jammed into his buttocks. Lazarus snickered.

"I'm in." Li reports with a little beading sweat on his head.

"I can't latch the back of the suit split. But the seal won't be compromised. The seal on an old refrigerator door is enough to hold an airlock."

"Can you get the helmet on?"

"With some more aerobics. More like elbow grease. I have to pull it through the wall and a piece of equipment by my waist." And he did so.

"Alright I'm on my way to the top hatch. Go ahead and close the bridge door. Depressurize the room unlock the hatch. I'll open it manually." The door closes in between the resource bay and the bridge. Lazarus follows the plan and soon Li pops the top hatch. His stomach nauseated only a bit. It might have been the warping stars and spectral fluctuations simply as well the knowledge of traveling nearly 1.7 billion miles per second then to exit the craft.

"How's the field holding up?"

"Steady. But according to your last estimate we have about 16 minutes to swap that bleeder. Otherwise there will be another GFE failure."

"I'm hurrying." Says Li as his hands moves faster. "Unlock the side door."

"Done." In his sights was the large dish and connecting base complete with electro-gyromatic parts of sorts, strange materials, *large powerful magnets*, and never before seen conjunctions of some basic physics apparatuses.

"Lazarus. Shut down the artificial gravity in the bay."

"Done." Okay it's a little jammed but I can pull it out easier. I might not make it! We still have to do all the splicing of the conduits."

"Let's just hope the old bleeder can survive one more overload."

"If not we're toast." With the assistance of the lack of gravity Li pulls loose the part.

"Be careful Li. Don't let that part fly outside the field or you know what will happen."

"Yes like that SMD officer that fell outside the field when we chased that vessel from the Alpha Centauri mines, a big stream of *charged particles*." With care he slowly maneuvered the piece to the roof and used the straps from his suit pockets to fasten them to secure objects and mounts.

"It's hooked to the hand grips and the backup sensor grids and the side ladder. It's stationary. There is some kind of rod or antenna sticking up but it is well away from the inner field."

"Okay Li get back inside. You have 4 minutes to swap it!"

"Not enough time. Cross your fingers on that bleeder holding one more time. joking, don't cross your fingers."

"I crossed my fingers Li!"

"Never mind. Keep us steady please. Keep the bay depressurized. Don't need any air. I've got more room now. I'm looking in the maintenance cabinet for the right sized conduit segment."

"Hurry Li, 1 minute and 42 seconds."

"Got it. Go ahead and close off the vacuum valves." Li said nervously. Lazarus hesitated.

"No wait stop! Don't close the valves. I can't connect this in one minute. Let the bleeder take the next overload. I think it can handle it."

"Okay hold on. The positron export valves are open." A big shake.

"Are you okay?" Lazarus asked with concern.

"Yeah. We're lucky." They exhale.

"Lazarus, check the engineering screen. What's the status of the GFE field?"

"It collapsed again but it's back up. It collapsed further than last time."

"Okay keep us together I'm making the repairs, cutting the conduit and getting ready to weld."

"Make sure that weld job is complete. If we get any air in there the electron on the air molecules will detonate with the positrons. big problem."

"Right, don't worry I will test the seal." Li completes his repairs and sighs in relief. Out of the open side door he exits, onto the roof and into the top hatch. Another snaking session and he's in. Into the cockpit he bursts and uncaps after the door closure.

"A few more things, I have to make sure the computer will compensate for the extra conduit length and calculate the correct flow rate for the new bleeder. This one is undamaged so there won't be as much resistance. I just need to look at the particle intake logs and such."

"Here you are. Look at the last GFE field snapshot."

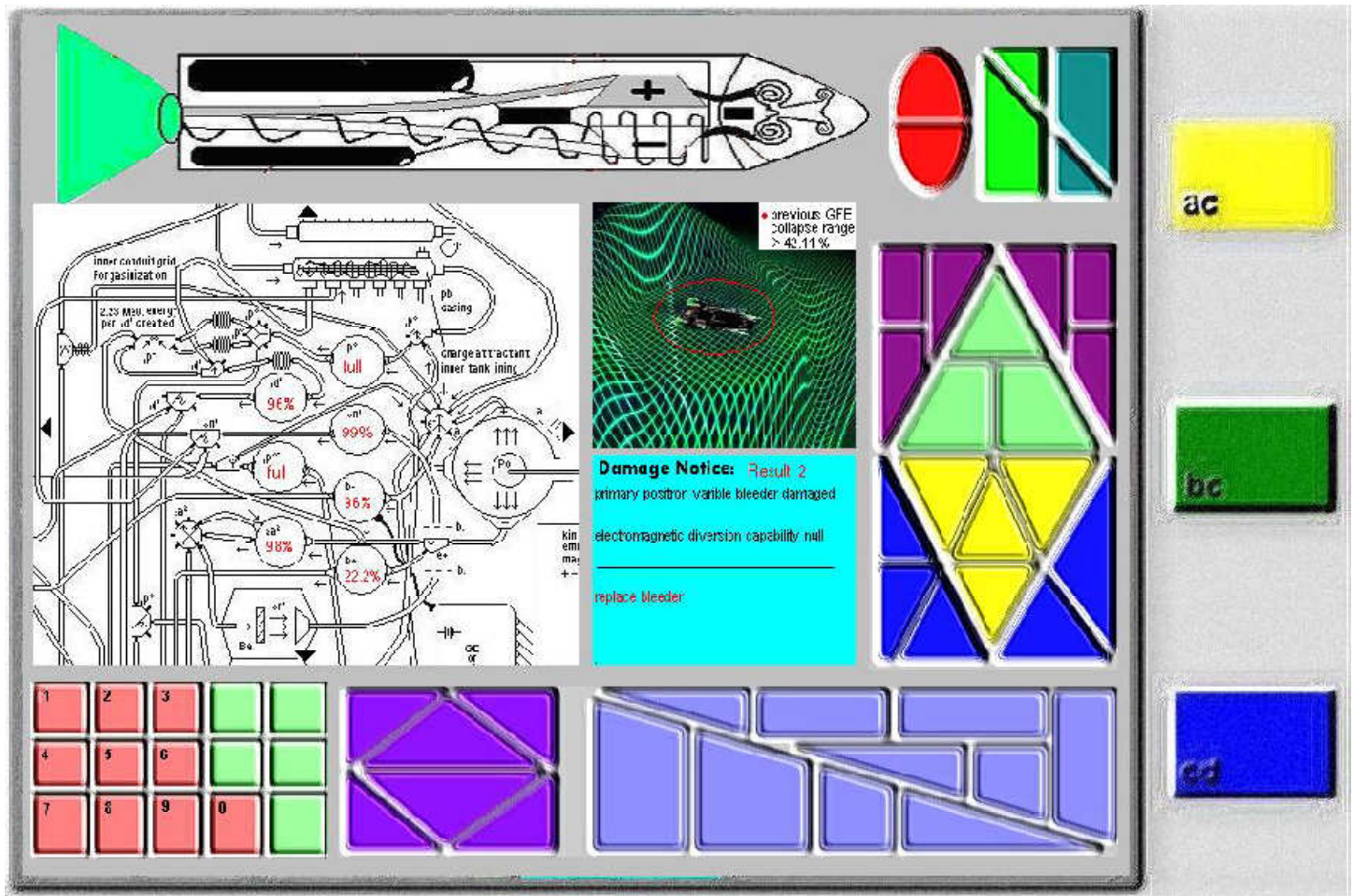
"That's not good. It collapsed a lot more this time. I am not sure why yet." Li snaps his fingers.

"The 3.1 speed increase."

"How is that causing the GFE field to collapse more when the bleeder gets overloaded?"

"I'm not certain. Seems tricky. Maybe some kind of inversion phenomena."

"Like what?"



New Damage Report

"It is a catalogued effect when an expected event seems to be opposite of the expected cause. Maybe some how the speed increase is resulting in the further increase of the GFE collapse. Maybe that's a long shot."

"If that's true then we won't have the margin of safety on the next overload."

"You're right. That means after we leave Krysto we will have to use more bleeder replacements. I was going to acquire additional bleeders at Krysto but with this speed increase by the time we get to our next destination the GFE will collapse too much and. destroy the ship and us."

"Well there is no question about it. We have to shut down this engine and use slower speeds."

"Right. But the Admiral was very insistent on us getting this done very quickly."

"Not at the expense of our lives." Li paused a spell.

"You're right. Dagget! I wanted to make this work." Li sighs.

"You don't look well."

"I lost my drive. I'm depressed and a little dizzy."

"So what are we going to do?" "We have to go to conventional speeds. We will be about a week late."

"Slow us down. I'll send a message to the nearest buoy and let them know we will be late."

"We will have too. It could be a breach in mission protocols. Strict radio silence during our travel was instructed. But go ahead anyway. They will need to know why we are going to be late."

"The positron reservoir is still refilling slowly. We might not even have enough time for another burst anyway."

"Yeah right. No choice. I'm slowing us to light speed factor 20." Li grips the accelerator and slowly slides it port. At that time it was the face of the Ollen Nakins imposter at Kuipertown who appeared in the mind of Lazarus, his shotty work and potential sabotage was suspected. The alarms blare and the buzzers sound, the lights rotate and the flashing skull and crossbones blink at an evermore rapid rate as the emergency alert declares.

"The GFE is collapsing! 20 seconds to full shut down!"

"No!"

"What do we do?" They froze as they watched the red circle slowly scrunch inward on the engineering screen.

"Li?!"

"Hold on, I'm going to try an emergency velocity abort. It alters our direction and attempts to use a curved path to assist with deceleration." He taps wildly on the special tactics panel.

"There's not enough time!" Lazarus notes. Outside a fantastic but unwatchable spectacle occurs as the protruding antenna rod atop the portal piece fell outside the collapsing field only to convert to vastly long streams of electromagnetic rays and charges particles.

"There's something ahead of us!." Lazarus shouted noting the large circle of pinkish glow in their eyes. The portal activates, Li and Lazarus yell a long one, and the Star Voyager vanishes in a flash!



Into the Portal

Mission 2: The Serious Delivery

"Admiral." Deck officer Kearney Called as they met in the station corridor. They proceed toward the lower decks.

"Yes what's our status please?"

"The Mediator is ready to disembark." All personnel is accounted for and stationed. The eccentric Giraffidae passenger is also aboard for transport to Sirius.

"Anything else to report. Not much sir. You have the Primealpha of Katlar waiting on communications onboard. More interesting you might like to hear it looks like Mr. Levi Shoemaker is two for two. Shoemaker Levi 10 which he has discovered struck Jupiter nearly 47 minutes ago."

"Any problems?"

"Not really. The usual. Brilliant nuclear flare, electric storms in the atmosphere. All orbiting stations and bases were well informed. No modification or elimination of the comets was necessary."

"Thank you. Let's get onboard. Sirius will be a crucial hub in our new portal network."

"Right with you sir." And they departed Cluctor stop. Along the walkway and to the landing pad the space was tense with sincerity; the sincerity of the next destination and task, to bring the portal prototypes and beta versions to the Sirius Star System, home base of the enchanting Planetary Council and its members. The Mediator lifts off and zooms fourth complete with new engines and nozzles. Into the corner quiet room Seghtee encloses his body there to sit into the padded chair. With a few tapping sequences the screen activates. It was the fluffy mane of the Primealpha cat that observed with the slightest of smiles.

"Ah Primealpha. How are things in the Opiuchi System?" Heard translated into Human language.

"[Indeed they go well. Katlar could not be much more at balance lest we try harder. Such is the way of our people. Balance, focus, stealth; and when the time is right we pounce but for the opportunity to groom our allies again.]"

"Yes Primealpha. And it is the way of the Human to seek friendship with those cosmically attuned to the flow of the great chi."

"[What is. chi?]"

"Chi is the energy of life, of intent, of will, it exists just adjacent to our space-time continuum."

"[Interesting. We have a similar concept. For it is the movement of feeling and the embracement of heat which driveth our direction, and positively.]"

"Very good Primealpha. Is there something I can do for you?"

"[Yes Admiral Seghtee of Earth. Out flagship the K.S. Mouman has returned sometimes ago and brings intriguing reports on the dark cinder object.]"

"Yes our deep space vessel the E.S. Ambition has also reported via fazed transmission their take on the phenomena."

"[We would be amazed at your findings I ponder. But we have another report about a strange invisible vessel, which defies our Whisker Master and his instruments. He said it was a cloaked ship. What can you tell us on this.]"

"Primealpha. I must ask please switch to encrypted data channels at this time."

"[Switched now. The binary code is now scrambled and the standard SMD decryption computation will recode it.]"

"Thank you. Please tell no one other than who you see fit of this perhaps your immediate staff and science personnel. This is an SMD protocol emphasized for both our branches."

"[Yes Admiral I'm alert.]"

"It is a classified cloaking technology. It works differently from our previously fore-fronted stealth ability. This cloak does not use the emission and signal diversion technique for transmission stealth ability. It can put a ship into an envelope rendering it invisible." The Primealpha strokes his chin and ponders a spell.

"[Say no more. We need not go into dull discussions on why you built it. The answer is obvious. We have technologies not yet divulged as well.]"

"You have that right. The people of Katlar being an elder system and member of Star City have shown trust, alliance, and best of all peace. We have no doubt that your endeavors will be for the benefit of not just the people of Katlar but the City of Stars of we stand by to defend."

"[Good words Admiral. You are very right.]" The Primealpha swats a gentle motion to his messenger to retrieve the science officer. Into the hands of the Primealpha was placed datapage documents. Here are some technology diagrams showing a new kind of method for what we have called space jumping.]"

"Space jumping? Can you enlighten me?"

"[What is the word in Human tongue.]. The science officer whispers into the angled ears of the Primealpha.

"[Yes that's it. Teleporting.]" The Admiral moved not to display his resonance.

"Teleportation? You have invented teleportation?"

"[Well not to ones ultimate desire. We can move a space craft short distances. It is not really a transporting system, just a jump. We have used it in battle with the Resistance. We moved a ship about 4 *longruns* out of danger.]."

"That would be about 6.3 miles to our measurements. Interesting. We should trade, data on our cloaking technology for your space jumping technique."

"[Okay. Give us some time to put together a more formal material.]."

"Yes. And please allow us some time to converse with other SMD seniors."

"[We meet.]."

"Is there anything else I can assist you with Primealpha." His paw rose and his pads divide.

"[Brave jump, good landing.]. The screen blips out.

"[Hmm, a generous gesture from the Primates. Messenger. Please contact the System Hub Generals and convey our encouragement for future ventures.]."

"[Done sir.]" On the Mediator.

"We are at 97 light speed factor." The pilot's voice sounded on the corner speakers up top.

"Keep us cruising Mr. Tartic. Our ETA in that case should be 2.7 days."

"Right sir. That's confirmed. Admiral, our speed seems to be increasing by a factor of 3.1 per second. It's virtually negligible but it will affect our ETA slightly." The Admiral ponders.

"What could be causing a 3.1 factor speed increase?"

"I'm not sure sir. It could be intermittent energy spikes from the reservoirs. I imagine there will be a few bursts every now and then. Maybe even at even intervals as we are noticing."

"Call the engineer and share your thoughts. You two please keep an eye on it."

"Yes sir."

The Church of Nuns

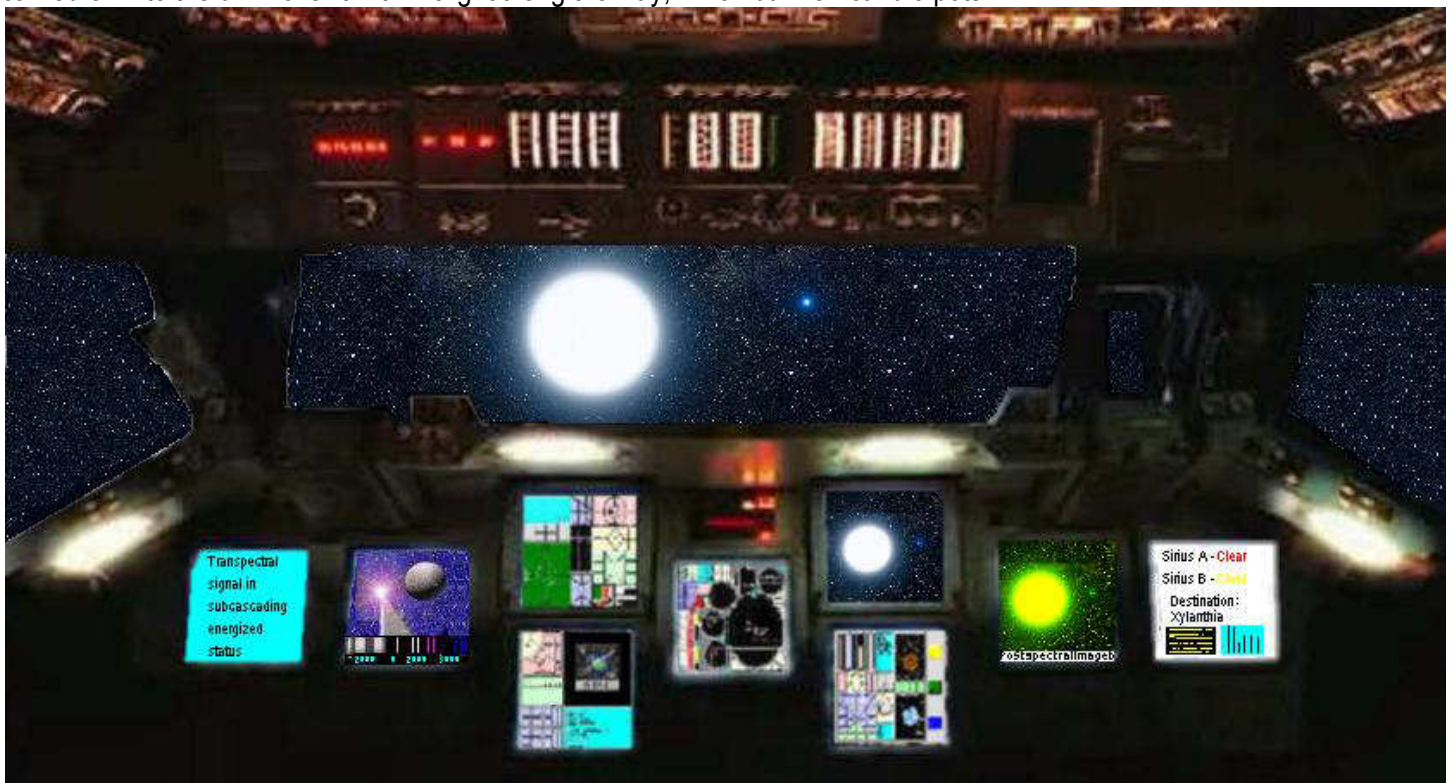
Erin was strangely calmed as he walked along the now stoney pathway. A certain comfort became him. Likely, he thought, because the individuals inside the structures ahead of him were likeminded. Aside and about were still critters and quadrupeds frolicking. There were a lot of petals scattered softly around the grasses, which now blended into a more greenish tint. The clouds were light but fluffy and the sky still a clarity. Erin's mind was clear. But the steeples of what looked like a church were not entirely traditional for they at their edges were curled up a bit as if to be an oriental design yet classically a church and steeple. The archway was an open way and he walks casually into the stone castle-like interior complete with vine growth and moss patches. It wasn't long before the singing of the upright women began echoing throughout the halls. The bells of chastity dinged and donged as a ceremony took place. Erin came to and stood quietly while in the center court the nuns graduated a young girl into purity.

"[May thy faith be vivid and thy song be strong.]. Says the Mother nun yet in an unknown tongue as her veil cloth gently lay over her head translucent and white in color.

"[To you mother I commend my loyalty that ye may commend thy own loyalty unto the Lord of Hosts.]"

"[Unto your womb I chastise that therefore one man entereth and ye begat a daughter to carry thy spirit into the next remission.]" And she bows her head and the hand of the mother cover her cranium to release the light within. The young girl stands and her eyes open widely. She moves off into the far hall to unknown destinations. The meeting scatters and small talk sounds about the crowd of women.

"[A man is in here.]" Says the mother to her handmaid. With nonchalant motions they migrate around. Erin becomes nervous and attempts to flee the hall casually yet behind him guard nuns with stern faces of stone seize him. His arm becomes bended behind his back and his other arm cuffed with the strong hands of the hefty nun of bread making. Erin is carried off into the dim halls lit with firelight along the way, which burn on candle pots.



Closing on Xylanthia

The Mediator wakes in. The Sirius star was still blazing next to the white dwarf in its personal space. The Giraffidae stands with hands clasped behind gazing toward the mother star. The admiral approaches cautiously yet no alarm was in him.

"Sir, where would you like to go?"

"Xylanthia, about 1 of your miles from the Planetary Council castle."

The Admiral paused. "Alright. Is there anything we can get for you, provisions, communications, the ships scanner logs show no communicators or equipment, not even a wrist device."

"No sir. I will be okay."

"Okay. That Admiral started to walk away then turns back toward the strange Giraffidae.

"Aren't you going to suit up?" The Giraffidae turns toward the Admiral with sincerity on his face.

"I have been permitted to divulge this high classification. This is only for your knowledge Admiral. By recommendation of the Council we say not to report this. But you will know."

"I understand sir. What is it?"

"Accompany me to the airlock when the ship has landed at my suggested coordinates."

"Alright." It was soon that the mediator had landed. The surface of Xylanthia was revealing some vaporous activity about in sporadic fog clouds hovering near the rocky surface. They stand near the airlock and Seghtee dismisses the deck officers and closes the secondary doors.

"So what now?" Seghtee asked curiously.

"The Giraffidae began breathing deeply a few long draws. His eyes narrow as if to focus sharply and he soon grunted for a few seconds. Seghtee stumbled back a little startled by the metallic clanging noises as if metal plates had closed upon one another. The Giraffidae's face and exposed skin was very red and flushed. His body heat high enough to be felt a few feet away by the Admiral.

"What are you doing? What is that noise? Why are you so red?"

"Please operate the airlock for me on my mark."

"Okay. The shutters close and the Giraffidae stands inside with arms crossed. He smiles slightly at the admiral shortly before the external airlock doors open. The Giraffidae does the lip zip motion and leaps out but fell not fastly at the ratio of fall for the Planet Xylanthia, yet landed slowly and softly onto the ground into a squatted stand with one hand upon the ground as if to have completed a gymnasts performance. He waves a dismissal and the Admiral closes the airlock. Turns in a little daze and ponderous was his mind. He stared a spell soon to return to the belly of the Mediator.

?

"Are you okay?!" Li asked. Lazarus was laid back in his chair eyes unopened and seemingly experiencing anxiety. He was sweating, as was Li. He makes subtle moans of disorientation. It took a moment for Lazarus to open his eyes and sit up. There were only a few sparks around the cockpit assumingly from overloaded electronics.

"Are we alive?" Laz asks. Li checks his pulse.

"Well I don't seem to be a ghost. Can ghosts touch themselves or does a ghost hand go through a ghost wrist?" He wondered curiously.

"I have no idea. You might want to check the *Scooby Doo* archives on that." Li taps his console and Lazarus slaps his wrist.

"Where the heck are we?"

"Something's wrong with the screen." Li said as he stared with wide eyes and perhaps a reversalized voice tone. For upon the screen was blackness with very faint points and smudges of dim light.

"What the heck is this place?!" Lazarus exclaimed.

"I don't know. I'm trying to figure out what these three objects are."



The Elderverse

"That looks like a planet and those looks like dwarfs, maybe red dwarfs or brown dwarfs but why is one of them is blue."

"Let's change seats. Let me use the sensors for a moment."

Lazarus mans the pilot's seat. "I'm slowing us down to mph speeds. This is uncharted space we have no idea what might be around nor does the computer I am assuming the star charts positioner is reading a few familiar objects and placement of some things around here but barely enough to scroll data across the screen, that was a joke."

"Please for the love of Pete don't tell me we are back in time again." A burping sound comes out of Lazarus's mouth as he dry heaved.

"Are you okay?"

"Yes."

"Lazarus. These aren't red dwarfs or brown dwarfs. They're black dwarfs!"

"No joke!"

"Nope. And those colored ones seem to be black dwarf in formation, or rather white dwarfs at the very end of their cooling period. I guess they will soon look like that dark one over there."

"Well, about 50% educated guess and 50% data. The gravitational field is consistent with indicated theorized masses of what we expect to be a black dwarf. The spectral analysis of those colored dwarfs is consistent with the compressed gasses and matter surrounding a white dwarf. Not to mention the dark one pretty much looks like a black dwarf. The dark one is moving in our direction, too far away to pose a threat right now."

"What matter?"

"Looks like neutralized matter, hydrogen, oxygen, carbon. unregistered other elements."

"We would have to be very far from our previously known location to see black dwarfs!"

"Worse than that Laz."

"What?"

"We would have to be very, very far. into the future."

"How far is very?" He asked like a wire.

"I don't know."

"How not, you're the astronomer and scientist?"

"The estimates are still in debate. But it is said that it would take longer than the current age of the universe for black dwarfs to form. There shouldn't be any of these yet."

Lazarus ponders. "Well maybe we're not at the beginning of the black dwarf period. We could be even farther than that. I'm sure these burnt out star stuffs would be around for eternity if possible."

"Good point. Either way we've got to figure out where, when, and how we are. I need to know what happened to try to get us back home."

"I have an intuition that it has something to do with the portal sitting on top of the roof."

"Yeah, I'd have to say obviously on that one, our high speed too."

"Wait Li. I know you're the science major, but I think the combination of our speed and that portal is what made us jump here somehow." Li ponders.

"If our speed were at a consistent acceleration ratio, and that portal opened up it might have turned the Star Voyager into a makeshift time machine!"

"So why, or how did that portal activate?"

"That's a good question. There were no power cells or sources of energy of any kind. I know because I scanned those devices and components while we were loading them in the Kuiper Belt."

"You're right. That third component is the power sustainment unit. It is still in the resource bay. The only thing on the roof is the dish and energizing components. So how did it activate?"

"Let me check those GFE field collapse level logs again." Lazarus was prompt to bring up the screen.

"The GFE field at last report was on its way to a complete collapse. We should have been star dust!" Lazarus exclaimed. Li raises his head with eyes wide. "The antenna."

"What about it?"

"Remember I noted there was an antenna on top of the portal."

"Yes."

"That's where the power came from."

"Wait. Didn't you say there was a magnet up there?"

"Yes, a very powerful one. It pulled in the antenna in just after they were broken up into subatomic particles."

"Whoa!"

"Yeah, the timing for that to happen is very small. The magnet would have to have pulled those particles in and ran them through the energizing components before the GFE field hit our hull. The portal activates and we enter into the future. The portal was its own power source, at least that piece of it."

"The 3.1 speed increase ratio. That has something to do with it I bet."

"I think so too. If so we might be able to recreate the accident and get ourselves back."

Laz's nav. duty mentality kicks in. "Should we not take some readings before we do?"

"Whoa I didn't mean now. I don't know yet what particles made the portal activate and what energizing components were involved. I need to perform a detailed study. You know when we start dealing with time travel how it is. If we want to get back safely that is... Shouldn't we be terrified or nervous or something about being here?" Li asked curiously.

"What makes you think I'm not? Kind of exciting isn't it?"

"Yes, it is"

"Right. So what's the plan Captain?"

"Well you got the fun part." Li says with a little smile.

"Hold our position. Use the galactic center as our halting reference. Or; our last known galactic center position according to the star charts programming. Maintain a continuous scan of the general vicinity. Watch for any incoming potentially impacting objects. Activate the high-speed incident alerter. We don't want any fast moving debris sneaking up on us. Start collecting data and study what you can at this distance. Make a report if you don't mind."

"You don't want to go over to those objects? Or take a look around?" Li peers out into space in the window. His eyes wide and glistening, lips parted a bit. No, hold here, we're getting out of here. No need to risk anything. I don't want to tempt fate." We we're lucky enough to have made it through the accident that got us here. The spectrometer can give us good data on the illuminated objects around. Try to get something on that cloudy stuff way out there. Check IR, X-Ray, Gamma the whole spectrum."

"Will do sir."

"I'm going outside. If you finish you can join me if you want. Not trying to *hog all the fun*." He replies with another little smile. Li suits up. The Star Voyager drifts gently through the aged cosmos.

Chapter 6

Trials of Destiny

"I'm sorry I can't understand." Says Erin. The humble sister had spoken to Erin who lay on the hay bed. She has already wiped the damp cloth across his forehead. She soaks it into the bucket nearby frothy with soapsuds.

"What's your name?" Erin asked and she answered not yet smiled sweetly and continues ringing the cloths and arranging here care kit wrapped in leather wraps.

"Erin." He repeated this time using the usual hand gesture; touches his chest then to put fourth his hand toward her to evoke her name."

"Reesa." She says softly. On her face she looked a little downward at her things with which she organized and cleaned on occasion her eyes would divert toward him as if to hide a secret. Erin was not fully unconfused.

"You look almost human." Reesa nods.

"But your ears are pointed.

"Are you Primate?" She shrugs.

"You're a very pretty nun. It is a great thing that you preserve yourself. We have a lot in common. I have lived all my life for that one special person. If I learn your language we can get to know each other. Reesa responds a longer paragraph and Erin did not understand her. Yet your eyebrows angled downward as she spoke and her face flushed and her body heated.

"Wow Reesa you look so lovely. You're blushing but there is no reason to be shy with me. I'm very open and down to earth. Just be you. Let us get closer at you.re pace." She looks at him again with her eyes and her smile had diminished only not a smile yet not a frown. Her flushed face made Erin return the blush. Reesa moves close still on her knees and lifts the shirt of Erin to wash him.

"What are you doing?" He asked she smiled and wiped his tummy with the warm damp cloth. Reesa says something lowly in her native language.

"[He's tensing.]" She had spoke. Erin knew not her words but a little cold feeling become him. His stomach wretched and ached yet in his confusion he ignored it.

"[Go into his waist band.]. Said a very low voice nearby. Erin wasn't sure he had even heard a voice and his confusion heightened. Reesa slowly begins to unbuckle his belt. Erin's hand promptly intercepted.

"Oh no Reesa you don't need to wash me. I can do that." Erin blushed and Reesa face reddened even moreso. Her expression was flat.

"You're so shy. I am too. It's okay. Let's know one another first. Reesa's head turns as he hugs her. At that time the lighting in the stone chamber brightens and nun maids along with the mother nun enters. They all had smiles upon their faces.

"[Good, stranger. You.re passing!]"

"Pardon. I did good?"

"[You go there.]" She points to a corridor.

"You want me to go in there?" The nuns nod affirmatively.

"Erin smiles and stands buckling his belt and blushing. Thank you. Forgive my indecency. He tips his head in a small bow and the nuns return the gesture. He walketh and pride entered him. At the end of the corridor was an exit. With happiness he returns to the trail, which continued, from that end of the nunnery. Erin trots off and continues his aimful journey.

Hard at Work

In the cockpit Lazarus performs his professions as he peeps into the spectrometer and other instruments. He was cold and his stomach felt black. He saw at least one reason at that time why Li desired not to explore the dark dim space in which they had entered.

"I have to play something." Lazarus thought to himself. He takes a break from his scanning and a new screen fame appears which listed the ships music data files. He plays a quite retro [tune](#) which he had recalled and suddenly to appear in

his mind. Li enters the cockpit and does not fall this time because he had moved some equipment over. The door closes and he uncaps.

"Lazarus. I confirmed what happened. The antenna on the dish setup fell outside the GE field and converted into particle. That large magnet which was intended to draw in and accelerate sub atomic particles pulled in the antenna's atomic constituents, just as we suspected. I just got through jerrying the NET sensor bleed offs. There just so happens to be the right conduit endings. I plugged them into the dish pieces inputs. It took some inventive thinking but it's done. Madonna?"

"Yeah I can't stand this horrible feeling and staring out into that blackness. I had to play something. Is something wrong? You look funny."

"Well I'm thrilled to announce that the Star Voyage is no longer a luxury battle stealth explorer cruiser. Now it is a luxury battle stealth explorer cruiser slash time machine." They gulp.

"It looks like we have some choices." Says Lazarus. "Yeah, like major decisions." Li follows.

"Let's do it."

"Let me take Nav. You pilot and get us up to speed. It wasn't as hard as I thought to calculate everything. I used my wrist device at the time."

"What's the plan?"

"Simple. We get up to speed and repeat the condition that got us here. We have all the logs that told me how much particles to bleed into the dish on top to activate that portal. No problem. We now have plenty of particles. Correction, this ship is now a warp ship and time machine combo. We can jump almost instantly to any location. It all depends on our speed. The faster we travel the farther through time we warp. The slower our speed the farther we can jump through space."

"So what are we going to do? I think you're right though. We better just try to get back." Li ponders.

"Yes we will. I am not even sure we can use this thing like that. It's like a one-way ticket. If we jump to our previous location it will be a different time. If we try to go to the right time we will remain hundreds perhaps thousands of light years away. With the right calculations and timing we can get back right where we left off."

"Are we going to test it first?"

"Yes. Cancel the speed order. Keep us at a slow coast. 300 mph."

"Done."

"I am activating the portal and the probe system. We have only three that will be enough."

"Enough for what? You're going to send a probe in first." Li tips his head.

"yes."

"Activating." Before them appeared the pinkish circle of light and wavy emanations.

"I'm getting readings. The diameter of the aperture is about 11,222.80 miles. I'm launching a probe. It will take maybe 20 minutes to get there. That portal is not too close."

"I see that. I thought it was small. It looks small. Judging by that it must be a few thousand miles away. How is that?"

"I'm not sure. Maybe some kind of spatial build up, I'm thinking, or collapse. or massing. or something."

"Like what?"

"Like perhaps it feeds on the fabric of space-time. It might need to **interflect** on a linear stretch of space to build up to a spatial mass, the portal aperture. If you scrunch space into a volume it can become a doorway. That's my rough guess." .That sounds similar to warped space or folded space."

"Yeah it does. Give it a few minutes until the probe gets there." They relax in their chairs to the ending of the tune, which Lazarus had played.

"The probe has entered. There is telemetry but it is degraded. I can't get anything, discernable. wait; the width of the aperture has decreased by 0.00007 percent. I'm launching probe number 2 and that should give us a pattern. It shouldn't be a problem though because the ship is small enough. The aperture will not collapse behind us."

"Well that's not good. Who cares right now? Let's just get back."

"That we will. The second probe is on the way. You know I'm thinking the reason the probe signal is degraded is because of the time differential between wherever it ended up and here, now. I could instruct the probe to transmit with a dimensionally progressing signal transformer. We can find out where it went."

"That would take a while. You have to install a transformer in the third probe. Do we have time?"

"Um maybe. But I am confident that the calculations are correct. I think we can get right back where we were, no problem."

"Okay, let's hurry I feel weird."

"The probe has entered. It collapsed by 0.00003 percent this time!.

"Odd. Let's send the last probe in. We have to figure this out."

"Wait that may not be necessary. The secondary probe is about 85% of the weight of the main probe because it has different equipment on it. That means that there is some kind of ratio of effect between the size of the portal aperture at the time of penetration and the mass of the object moving into it."

"So the portal gets smaller when something goes in depending on how big and heavy it is?"

"Yes."

"That means the portal will stay open. They'll have to divert traffic around that shipping lane were traveling in en route to Krysto."

"You're right. Maybe they can send some junk into it until it collapses. It might leave a small anomaly there though. Anyway. I'm closing this portal. It vanished. I thought it might collapse or something."

"I guess not. How did you do that?"

"I had to reverse the charges by sending anti particles in all three of the intake conduits into the dish setup. Meaning the next portal I open will stay open because there is nothing to close it on this end."

"I see."

"And there is nothing powerful enough to leave behind to do it remotely on a times setting or something. It doesn't matter. Again they can collapse it on the other end if they want."

"Yeah they might want to leave it open so they can come back and explore this future."

"True. Bring us to. light speed factor 77.3."

"It will take a while."

"We have all the time in the world." Said Li.

"Accelerating."

Departing Nod

He stands bewildered for before him a short distance away was the landing pad. Yet he had exited out of the other side of the nunnery. He thought that it must be a different one. He turns not his path and soon plants his feet thereupon. The pad was newer but with it's own share of cracks and rusted metals. Fortunately the booth on its perimeter drew him or perhaps his thirst or weariness. As Erin neared the communications capable booth to his surprise he saw a man inside who wore a garment only like a blanket draped over him and he was elderly. Bearded and footed only with sandals the man jitters and roots around the booth soon to be hailed by Erin who was strangely spell bounded by the old man.

"You speak Hebrew?" Erin said shocked for the man had called unto him saying שלום עליך ילד . (Hello my boy.)

"[Yes. And you are a boy who goes about and follows the pattern of the wind you see. Is it because you have no place to be or are you starting with you?]"

"[What do you mean?]"

"[Are you seeking something or has the message been made clear to you to change your ways.]"

"[Oh, no sir, I think you misinterpreted. I am looking for, maybe a wife or the right one. I started as a missionary then I took advantage to try and find her, if she exists.]"

"[Ahhh, I see, you want her now? You want to show her how that you can be the man she needs you to be. You have been around but now you have found her to be the only one for you.]"

"[Yes. That's it. You're right. That's how I feel. How do you know this?]"

"[You just told me.]"

"[Oh. Right. Why is it so hard? Why do the women reject a single man and only accept more men?]"

"[I am not old enough to give you the answer, for the answer lies beyond our years so they say. But where time is too distant space can come sooner. My sights are telling me, for you to go to one of two Eagle stars only 12 star lights away which spins until it's belly bulges with fervor.]"

"[12 star lights? Do you mean light years? What do you mean belly bulges with fervor?]"

"[I don't know my boy, for I am tired and stricken in years. Go to the Eagle star and make thyself a choice only but of two.]"

"[I need to use the communicator.]" Erin inputs his transmission configurations. And unto his bewilderment the whooshes and hums of the space bus soundest into his ears and the sweet sounds of the parting hatchway clangs into audibles.

"It's Morthod, how do you." Erin had turned and the man fast walks away turning and smiling. Erin boards the space bus.

"Morthod how did you know to come and pick me up here now?"

"I never left orbit. I visited the Mermaid Lagoon. I can't tell you how fun and exciting it was. *Whew.*" Morthod expresses, his breath the sound of relief and complete contentment. For he had experienced pleasure into the satisfaction of his heart and saw no more need for anything else wise.

"Where to?" Morthod asked.

"Well I'm not sure. I need your help. I was given a riddle by a strange old man who told me where I can go to find my bride."

"Oh, still looking for a girl. Come on let's go back to the Mermaid Lagoon, you can find your bride there." He says with a grin, he could use a tooth brushing Erin noted.

"No. This was an experience that I can't explain. I have to know what the end of this is. I can't ignore the strange circumstances and things that are happening to me. It must mean something. Help me look on the star charts for two eagle stars. I have to go to one only but the one that bulges at its belly with fervor."

"What the heck does that mean?"

"I don't know yet. Just help me please."

"Okay. Sure thing, have a seat I'll get us a snack tray and hot drink."

"Thank the Lord."

"No, thank me because I am the one that loaded it."

"Yes but who told you to load it?"

"I did. Actually the station manager at Cluctor Stop insisted. He is the one that noticed the shortage. The girls there distracted me on that station. Heh. I'm joking."

"Yes but. Oh never mind."

"Okay, thank God, now let's find your star." Morthod said frustrated.

"Just sit back and relax." At that moment the ground beneath them began to blur and details could no longer be noted easily. Soon it became clouded over and after a time the landscape changed into a sphere and then shrunk away.

Up to Speed

"75.94, 76.1, 76.9, 77.3 right on the mark." Lazuras reported.

"Keep us cruising. Lock in the speed to GFE compensation gain, we need to keep it in the positive."

"By the 3.1?"

"No by 1.55." Li exhales a breath of brief relief and returns to his intensive focus.

"I figured out why the 3.1 speed increase is." He says with a lil lump in his throat.

"What. An engine overload or surge maybe?" Lazarus asked curiously.

"It's the same reason why the galaxies are moving apart faster and faster." Lazarus gasps.

"Basically the ship is like a galaxy. The faster we travel the more buildup of repulsion the same as with the galaxies speeding away---we are expanding."

"Well when does it start, the speed increase I mean."

"Well for an object the size of our ship, LS Factor 56.52. After that the percentage becomes 1.55 at LS Factor 77.3 and then at LS Factor 114.98, our last highest speed, it becomes 3.1 percent speed increase."

"Dadsmack! That could be a new way to travel even faster than these new engines and GFE combo."

"Yeah." A gentle quiver of the ship occurs.

"Okay, get ready Lazarus. I'm about to open the portal. With any blessing we'll be right back at our previous time and space at about 33 light-years in between Sol and A-00981. traveling reverse toward Sol that is; a quick u-turn and we'll be right back on track for Krysto in time for dinner with some interesting stories to tell." Laz breathes deep.

"The correct particles are scheduled for released into the portal apparatus and the correct flow rates are correctly calculated. I even had to compensate for quantum mechanical uncertainty and relativistic effects."

"That's just a little over my head but good work."

"There's a miniature sychrocyclotron in there I saw, made me nervous, I've never seen one that small, but I believe I got it all in order. Alright let's give this a go."

"Bleeding antiprotons, electrons, and positrons into the appropriate diverters in the appropriate intervals." A ball of cloth was gripped in Lazarus's left hand. It was Li's upper sleeve.

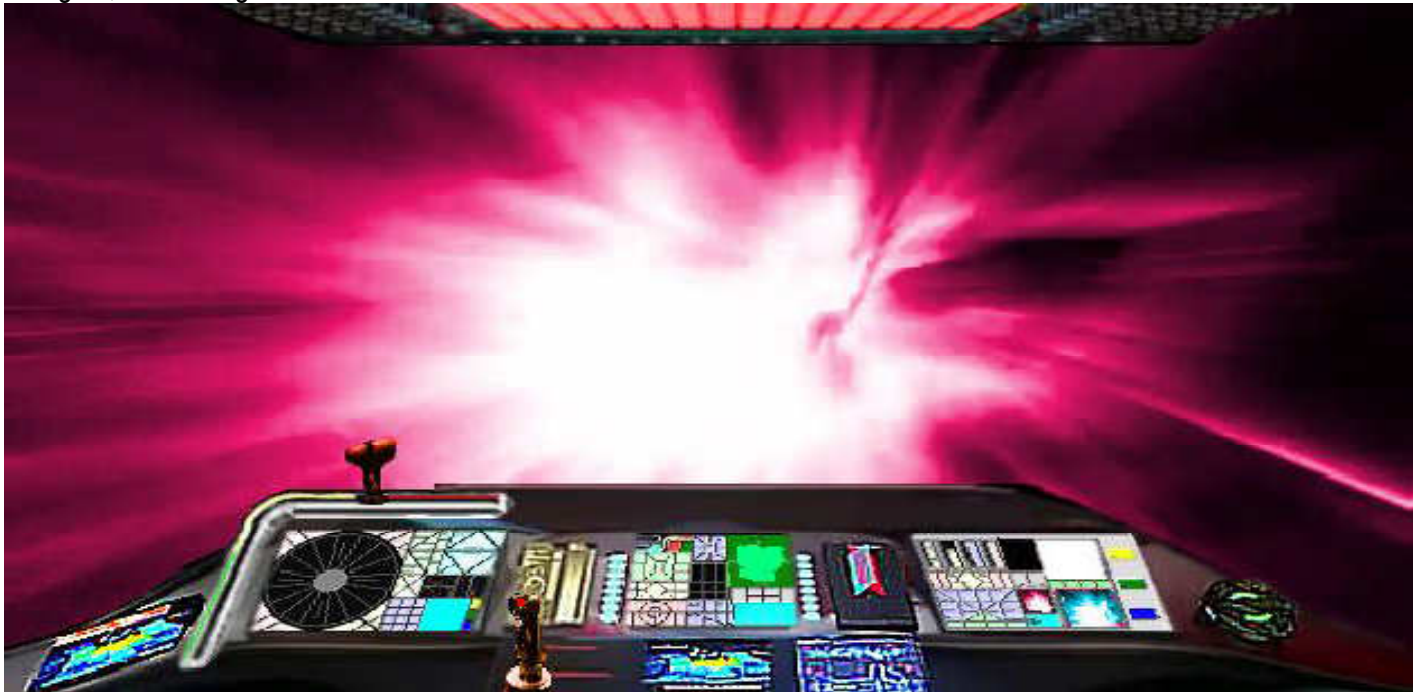
"Li, I've seen *Jurassic Park*, please don't crash us on Earth in the era of the terrible lizards!!"

"I don't think we.re going to Earth." Another quiver occurs.

"There we go, right on schedule."

"The portal is on." Said Lazarus who grabs the dashboard in a claw of deathly grip.

"Hang on, it's forming."



Portal Hypervelocitaal Entry

Lookout for Star City Xcursions!

Epilogue

Ship Profiles

New Vessels

The Star Whisk . Katlar Royal Transport

Owner: Empire of the Felidaes

Maximum Speed: LS factor 19.89

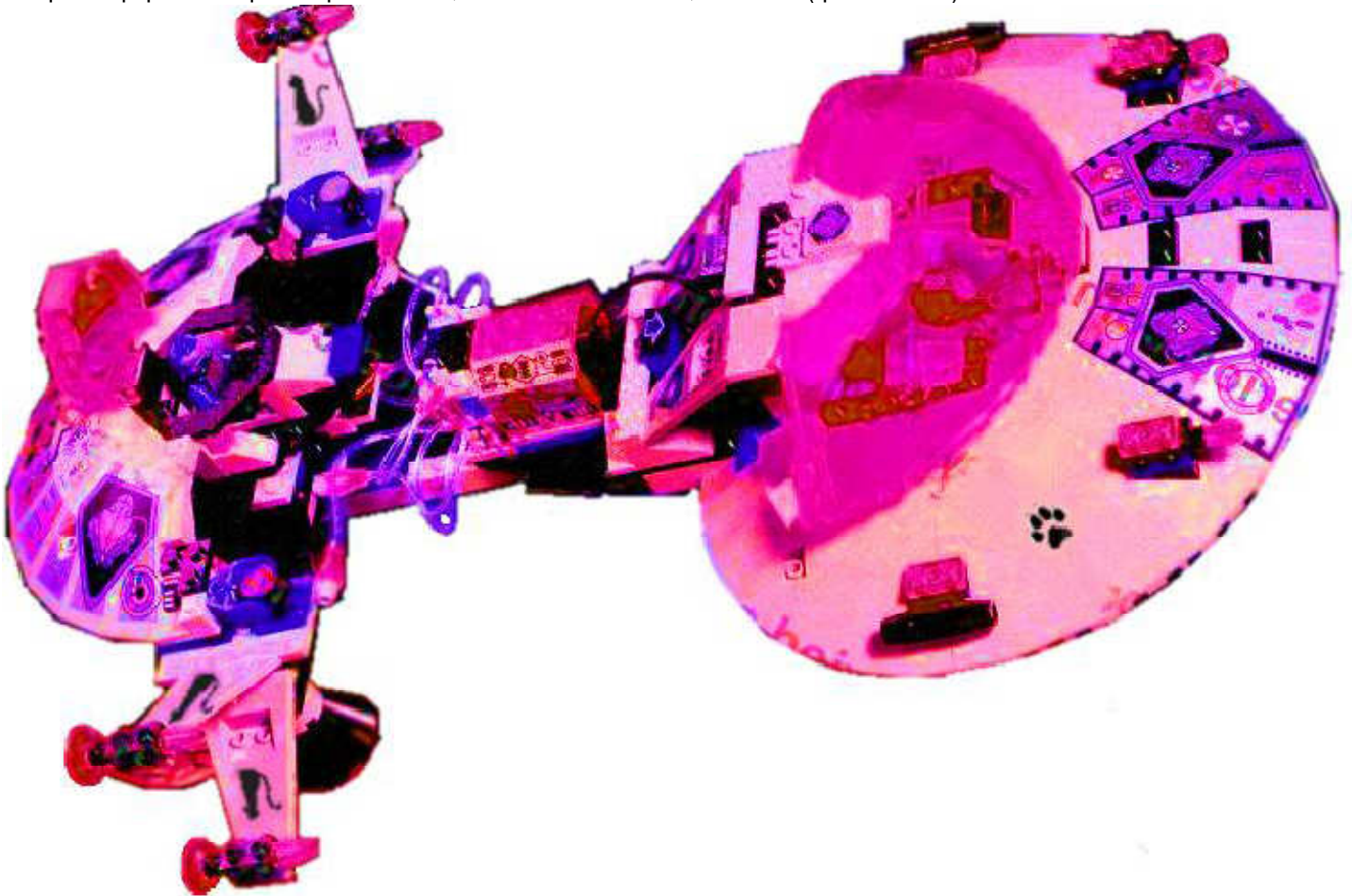
Maneuverability: 8.99

Sensor Equipment: 2 embedded detection plates

Shield Class: class 5 double +637000 regenerative

Engines: 4 LS engines, 2 SLS engines, Fusion thrusters, multiple maneuvering thrusters.

Weapon Equipment: 4 proton penetrators, 2 destructo cannons, 1 altered (quark buster)



Civilian Transport (space bus) - City Vehicle

Owner: Morthod

Maximum Speed: LS factor 14.89

Maneuverability: 6.6

Sensor Equipment: Data signal ear, interstellar obstacle reavealer

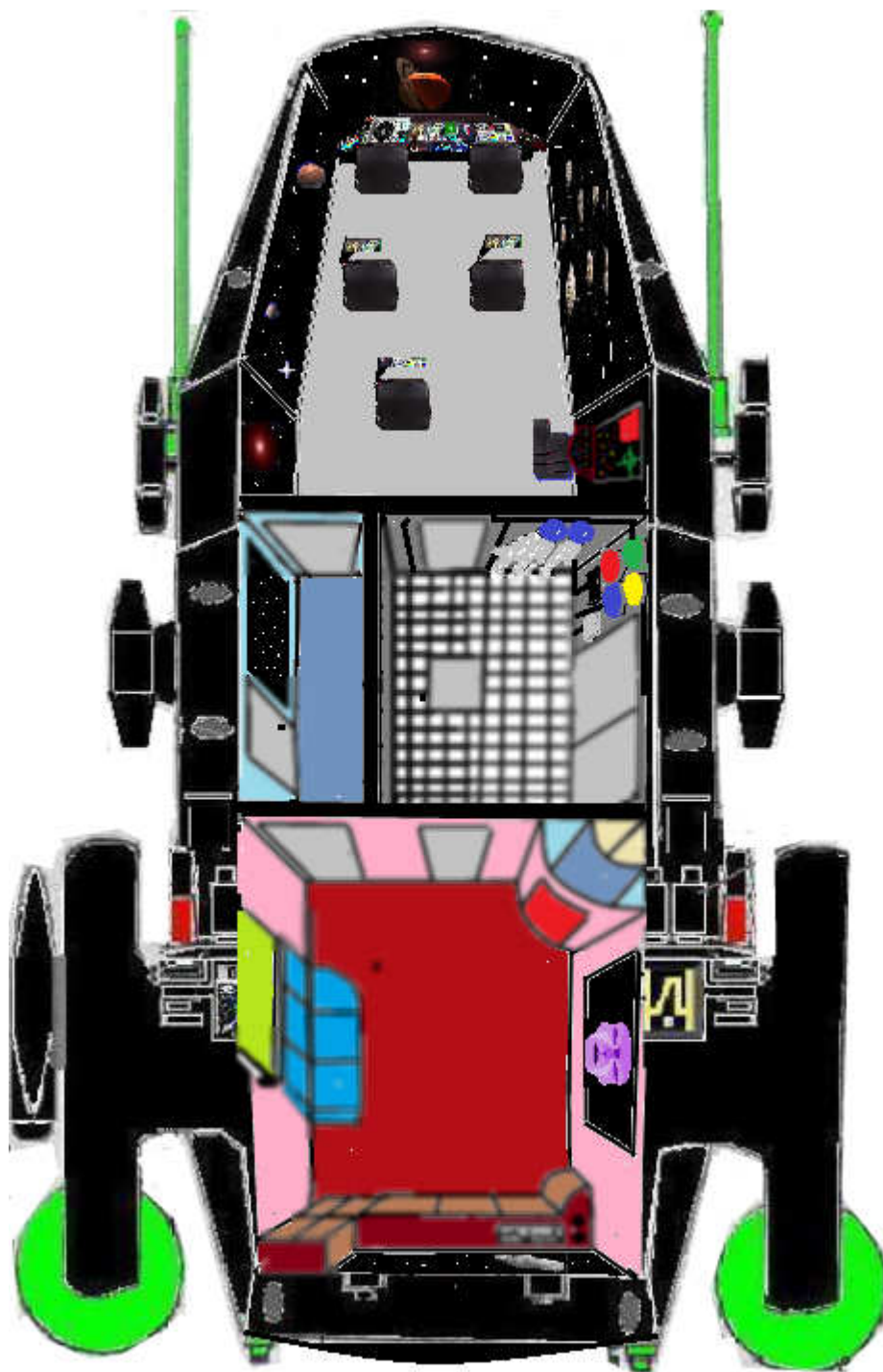
Shield Class: Standard particle, debris shield. Radiation deflector

Engines: 2 LS engines, 4 SLS engines, Fusion thrusters, multiple maneuvering thrusters.

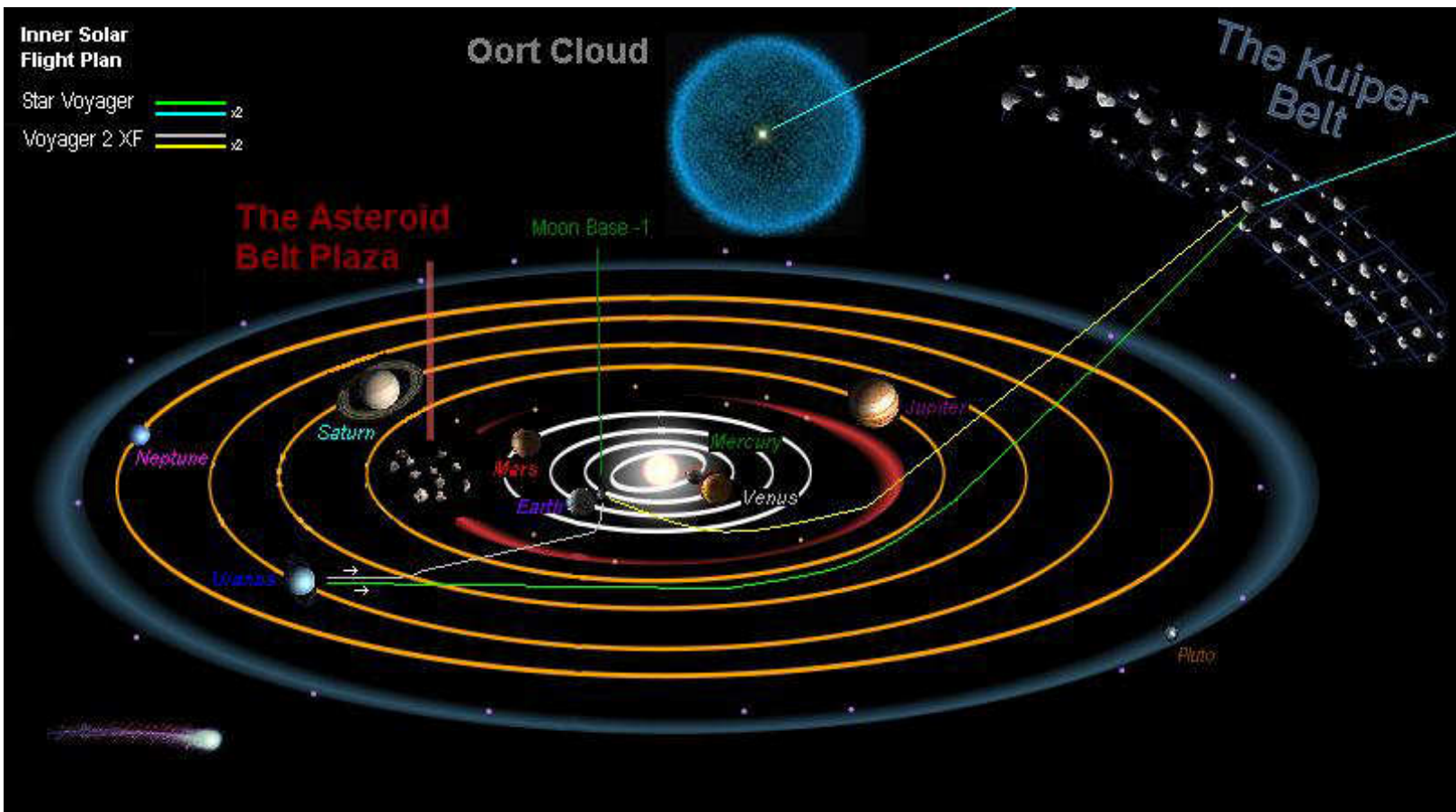
Weapon Equipment: n/a



Star Voyager Interior



Map of Suntown



Glossary

Aback - In the vicinity of a position behind.

Aby - Near about.

Acceleration Flats - A lack of exponential increase in speed in a velocity stretch due to engine type switching.

Antiacceleration Ratios - An exponentially **decelerative** velocity by a kinetic object

Antiness - Associated with **opposition** or oposition.

Alternate Spectrum Imager - A device for viewing a superseding spectrum.

Art of the Fighting Claw - A style of martial arts developed by Feladaes.

Balancedly - Of the essence of being balanced.

Capacit - The ability to contain a bulk of material or energy.

Chronomagnetic Variance - A temporal field deterrent to an established baseline of time polarization measurements.

Commons Channel - A radio conference transmission frequency.

Chamber Senior - The lead chamber administrator of the Feladae king's throne room.

Chamber Sounder - An alertist of happenings in the kings chamber.

Chromatic Masking - A technique for disguising light emanations and resonations from the position of an object by modification.

Decelerative - Of the essence of deceleration.

Discharge Mitts - A concavely shaped material used to deflect the impact of abrupt energy discharge.

Downdeck - At a location of a vessel away from the updeck.

Ear Catcher - A communication task of receiving transmission data for an individual assigned to the position.

Elders of Panthers - An experienced group of Feladae leaders.

Element Discs - Material of various elements fashioned into circular flats.

Engravement - A specifically fashioned gouge in a material.

Exoenvirometer - An instrument for finding measurements of the condition of an environment and converting into usable data.

Felaferry - A short-range craft for transporting personnel of Feladae traffic.

Gravitational Horizon - The relative beginning of the influence of the gravitational field of a heavy body.

Hand Pad - A handheld multipurpose data composition device.

Hueish - Propensity to hue.

Infomessage - An informative speech or communication with an upbeat commercial overtone.

Invisonator - A device for rendering solid opaque objects invisible.

Kanji Gesture - A hand configuration and accompanying movement used in meditation.

Kiddishly - Being of a joking or sarcastic manner,

Kitmas - Female Feladaes.

Labist - An associate of a laboratory.

Magnetoprint - A magnetic signature of specific geometric form to provide information codes.

Mass Finder - An instrument used on space craft for mapping massive objects within a given region of space.

Mass Map - A map providing a graphic display of the masses in a area.

Nobley - Of a noble nature.

Opposion - The state, or effect of opposing.

Padmaster - A job position of a craft launch platform.

Photomagnetic - A megnetodynamic field or mechanism which can deflect, **capacit** or attract photons.

Pitchness - Blackness

Prima Kitnna - Primary female Feladae of the royal chamber.

Primealpha - The leader of a Feladae sect.

Purmeows - An intermittetly monotonish sonace sounded by felines.

Quantized Space - A theoretical attribute of the fabric of space/time in the form of small regions of space units.

Retroject - To speculate in reference to a previous person, place, thing or event in time.

Royal Bed - The resting place of the Prime Alpha and accompanying Kitmas consisting of large pillows on a lowly elevated platform.

Senior Pouncer - A position on a Feladae space craft intended for specializing on tactics, defense and assault.

Slitted - To become as of a slit.

Sounder - An announcer of the royal chamber.

Strategic Transfer Point - A location chosen usually by military officers as an unexpected convey position of personnel, weapons, or equipment.

System-Hub Generals - A department center of members of various star systems of Star City for representation and decision-making.

Temperature Ratio Gradient - A inclined graph representation of a degree of relation of temperature change to some reference.

The Great Spirit - (no definition given)

The Kit - A juvenile Feladae person.

Tunes of Filas - The vocal singing of Kitmas traditionally sung in the royal chamber as a past-time intended for arousal and stimulation.

Variable Bleeder - A component in a particle transfer system along a nucleonic transfer conduit network intended to branch a particle stream.

Way of the Grooming Tongue - An instinctual custom Feladaes of which in modern time has formed the foundation of the Feladae way.

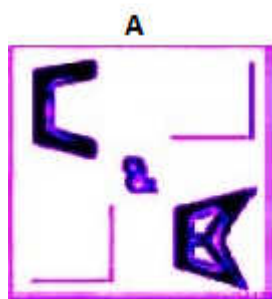
Weighty - Being of Heavyness. .

Whisker Master - The sensor specialist on a Feladae exploration space craft.

Wisdom Tom - The science officer on a Feladae space craft.



Realm of Heaven



Production