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Production

Star City

Continues

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Star City

Continues

Chapter 1

Earth is resting. The people thereon are of a renewed spirit as they go about their daily lives. Yet most of the populace remains as they were barring the intensely curious common folk who desire to venture out into the cosmos aboard tourists vessels. All is well in the undisturbed sanctuary of urban stellar. Throughout the space of Star City people of diverse class and genus trek to and fro coming to terms with new life and adventurous diversion offered of the illustrious alien council. Seen not abroad is the blackness of space but a colorful splendor of allayment and joy.

After the battle of Krysto the Confederate Resistance had not been seen or heard in recent weeks. Be they still a small collection of vicious manslayers they remain unnoticed. The SMD however yet retains a continuous vigil on the local and afar off territories in the event of a CRC strike. Civilians in their freelancing bouts of fancy explore the nooks and crannies of the diverse regions unto delight of their hearts and edification of their minds. Fun and diversion reigns supreme in the local space called Suntown where the ambitious pair of space travelers Seiwan Li and Lazarus lodge and rackets.

A Customary Festival

The oldlands of the Middle East harbors many antique delights of history and epic development. There in the outcountry of Israel a common Jewish celebration takes form as the spirits of sanctity surrounds an ages old tradition of praise and worship. The work of the day was done, the chores of the farm were caught up, and the people of the settlement were fed and cleansed. Gradually the modestly dressed townsmen and women gather around the keepment. The dark colored cotton fabric adorned the prim crowd of adoration. Wood was being piled upon the fire heap appropriately and candles were arranged in specific alignment. The men moved the heavy wood tables of stocky oak into position for the festival food servings. The girls were arrayed in long dresses of mild embroider about the seams. It wasn't long before the drums and tambourines began to sound as the classic melody of the recorder fills the air. Almost automatically the bodies of the temperate towners began to move and flux as if motioned by a transacting spirit.

Smiles and cheer sounded of the cricketed airwaves of twilight and jolly dance burst forth. The priests were prancing and quavering about while debating aloud the happenings around them and beyond. Round about the blazing bonfire were unspoiled maidens of the preserved Jewish village, who dances and spins their knitted dresses. The yard was encircled of old style constructions of barns and quaint shop stands maintained by the experienced and classic architecture of the lead builders. **Ahaviah**, daughter of **Gibar** the milkman stood shyly with her friends and hooded head of her bonnet. The rapid motions of dance halted in the suddenness of a spiritual interaction as the hand of the handsome tiller Erin extended fourth before the pristine maiden. She, filled of bashful energy, held her head low and Erin's action was uncommon. Erin had taken her hand and offered a dance and the demurity of the onlookers was felt.

The energy of diffidence built up until it could no longer be contained and the middle elder released his vigor with loud words of flabbergast. "She has taken the hand of the man!" He shouted. The crowd gasped and quieted and the music slowed. Dressed in long sleeves and suspenders atop his waist wear, brown hair banged affront, the noble farm man gracefully guided the gentle innocence of the unmarried lassie. Her skittishness shatters and the soul of celebration enters unto the dancing pair and cheers rang out of the praiseful villagers. Suddenly a wind of agitation breezes inward upon the festival. The yells of the wicked halt the music and the shattering glass startles the people. With clubs and axes the dastardly vandals break ornaments and tip the tables of the party in an attempt to kill the fires of righteous fun. The women of the Jewish village scream and squeal seeking the cover of their husbands and brothers as the nonviolent priests and church heads remain helpless. These men of evil who once again ruin the naturality of the festival demolish the beautiful decorations and hard work of the Hebrew people.

Out of dark came the blazing blue, green, and black suited SMD soldiers giving a deserving body slam of the unscrupulous wreckers against the barn walls sounding a satisfying thud on the wood like that of a professional wrestling mat. The click of the cuff brings about sighing relief unto the blameless as the backhanded ravagers yip and wail. As they are loaded into the military style transit wagon the commanding infantrymen **Lieutenant Ortega** comforts the peaceful

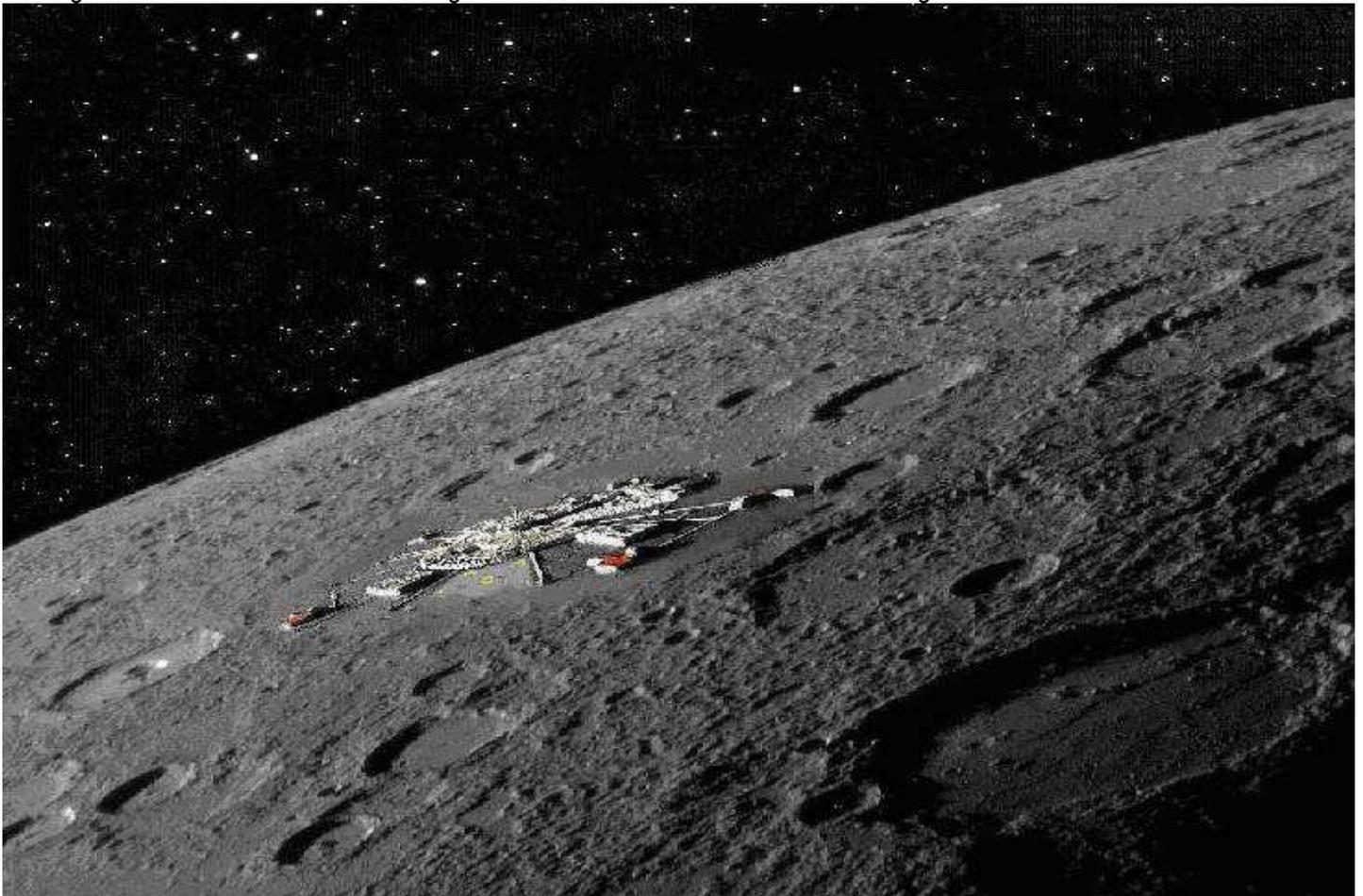
people. "Please, continue with your festival." He says and the battle vehicles roll out. Astounded and rejoicing the townspeople of the Jewish village resume their evening of joyful merrymaking.

Departing the Skies over Israel

Zooming in close a few miles afar the magnificent Star Voyager rises high toward the second heaven. Captain Li, having completed his quite instructional excursion into Arabia, departs of the setting atmosphere of refracting spectra. He was alone in the cockpit, the only one on board then. The navigational panel mount was angled and locked inside his contact range in **single user mode**.

Exiting the atmosphere his course would not see him toward the usual destination and the nose of the Star Voyager swings inward toward the blazing Sun. Beeping was of the buttony control cabin and the blinking of the power indicator sounded its low and attention-grabbing ping. Li knew the ship was drained. The competitions in the Netherlands were quite demanding on the ships energy reserves though Li had manned his vessel well attaining a position amongst the top contenders.

The ship was steady toward Mercury Power Station where he was certain to feed his hungry vessel. The dull grey planet was visible in short order given the short distance from Earth to Mercury. Li begins to land there. His grumbling tummy sounded astoundingly over the proximity blip providing yet another fuel level status as the Mercurian horizon begins to flush. The facility in which he approached looked more elaborate than intended. Circular and roughly textured its modern **ray conversion devices** generated enormous amounts of power for multiuse. The landing patio lay sideway about a building harbor and was not very populated other than a handful of unidentified cargo vessels. The Star Voyager torches down onto the pavement, Li exit the ship with his **Ray Shield Umbrella**, and traverse the dim colored pad. It wasn't easy to keep from thinking about the mammoth Sun hovering above. Li's instincts alone told him not to get too curious.



Mercury Reserves

A large indentation in the base edge marked the beginning of the interior of the structure. The umbrella was closed and sat at the corner side against the wall and Li enters the airlock. The interior of the station was lighted and spacious with grayish carpet yet little furniture other than a side mounted bench along the right wall. Doors were closed and led to unknown destinations. The area therein was clean, except for the dusty carpet of pebbly debris perhaps tracked in by previous visitors. After a helmet removal, Li began to perform a duty awkward to the transiting office personnel crossing the hall holding data pages. As he scans the debris with his wrist device he stops the woman and informs her that the dust was slightly radioactive and should be removed. The woman smiles and said, "Okay I'll inform the janitor." Only then did Li notice the broom and dust pan in the corner and steers toward the cleaning instruments. The lady tried to stop him, telling him that it was unnecessary and he proceeded to remove the door front debris. The janitor approaches and takes the broom and dust filled pan and departs with a *thank you*. The by standing office woman smiles also and looks at Li a moment and proceeds on after Li returns the gesture.

The woman suspected that Li may need something and waited with pages in hand and Li finally spoke up.

"Hello, my name is Seiwan. I need to get power for my ship here. Can you help me?"

The woman was happy and expressed her pleasure to assist. "Follow me." She replied.

Pursuing the scent of good perfume he maintained a vigil on the longhaired employee and passed into a nearly empty waiting room. The counter sat another worker working a computer and keypad entry and the worker in which he followed informed that person of his need to use the stations energy pool. The clerk taps a button and replied that someone would be available shortly. Li glanced over to the two individuals sitting at a waiting table dressed in brown robes covering the face but other than the nose and cheeks. They were silent and their heads low.

As an off duty SMD officer Li performed a private scan of the men having casually stepped closer appearing to look upon the magazine rack. The scan indicated no standard devices such as wrist computer and especially no weapons that Li's wrist comp could detect. Yet about the waist of one of the men a cylindrical object like of a pole or wand. Li saw they were not carrying any scanning gadgets. He grabbed a book titled *Romance Amid the Heavens* and held it by the spine while working his arm computer in silent mode. His pulse brought back the dimensions of the device and composition, which was metallic and housed a component of crystal.

The two men looked at Li simultaneously as if disturbed or offended and he moved away. He knew he had bothered them, returned the book to the shelf, and turned a few tens of degrees upon catching sound of the retracting doors at the other end of the waiting room. Li was late removing his glove piece and shook the hand of the man who introduced himself as **Dennis**. Dennis was prompt in leaving the waiting room and taking Li to a side bay, which ended up back out onto the patio. Li re-boards the Star Voyager and maneuvers the craft toward the fueling dock.

After his exit he rejoins the man who sought to know the configuration of the particle receptor port, which Li was only beginning to use. It took him a moment to locate the locked hatchway. Dennis analyzed his plug-in afterward and departed briefly to unroll the correct conduit out to the Star Voyager. Li noticed the small pile of techno junk lying by the power junction assembly and recognized them as shield emission components. Li was ambitious inside. He had an urge to take advantage of his stop here at Mercury.

"Do you know anything about **ionic shielding**?" He asked the helpful fuel service specialist.

"I install them." He replied.

"Maybe I have something that you might want?" Li said. The energy supply exhausted its allotment and The Star Voyager's power banks and quantum reaction gradient was restored.

"Please follow me inside my ship..." and they enter.

The hatchway was shut, the cabin filled with air, and Dennis was led into the control room. Astounded he complimented Li about his vessel. Flattered and feeling good about his ship being observed of his new friend he drew him back to the rear segment to present his offering. They enter the extravagant living space, Li offers a seat for Dennis, and he takes position at the rear bar counter. Li, with a salesman's grin, returns with his genuine Krystonian plasma rifle. A smirk from Dennis preceded the response.

"I already have one thanks." Li huffed a little only. Yet the previously blurry backdrop realigned Dennis's eyes onto the shimmering samurai sword posted at the starboard wall face. Li saw his focused gaze and turned to see the fine edged weapon of mastery.

A recollection appears in Li's mind over the site of the hung sword, old days of practice and training with his masters, his Seefu Xin Jing Wu Men and the diligent exercises he had undergone. Li fades back and he could not depart of his prized

possession. Dennis saw about his aura his desire for the shield enhancements. Additionally the wallet he had left opened on the port table displayed his black, green, and gray SMD service card that Dennis saw. Just then Li's phone vibrated and he viewed the caller display. The wall monitor activated shortly after and an automated message from Lazarus played. He was in the Asteroid Belt and requested his ETA. Li had been expected.

"I'll tell you what. I'll install the shield. When you find something in exchange for me I'll look forward to seeing it." Li accepted and was gratified. Dennis left the ship after recapping and Li assisted with the install. The device was reassembled and the best power supply outlet was located. With a suited handshake in the vacuum they part. The Star Voyager ascends of the supply junction and flees onward toward the plaza with a new shield system and debt to Dennis.

The Great Idea

Meanwhile at the Mars Barr Lazarus's wrist device rang as a live call came in and he was sitting at the normal table with *the gang* consisting at this time of Huston and Mariah. The activity that morning was such that he had begun quietly registering the collective opinions of the table group at once as they verbalized. Answering the call Celie appeared on the miniscreen of Laz's wrist device requesting pickup at a Kuipertown lodge. He assures *most probably* to his **clotening** girl pal of a successful rendezvous later and the call ended. He flipped the case closed and returned his attention to the cross talk. He was antsy while watching a Felidae playing chess with Husto. Lazarus's unspoken haste was in his inner desire to reveal the great idea he had thought of to tell Li upon his tardy arrival. Lazarus's quietness was noted presently during Husto and Mariah's **multisation** and the challenging game at hand. The Felidae were no slouches when it came to logic. Their home planet was a little ahead of Earth technology wise and intellectually.

The chessboard pieces were scattered but the game with the friendly Felidae champion was being suspended. His culinary skills were needed in the kitchen at the moment. In the busy mind of Lazarus he was readying inside for the missions he was sure would present themselves sometime soon.

In addition to routine SMD talk amongst them, the unsolved Matron Abduction, and capture of Agent Nemon; the activities of the alien children in the restaurant play corner were of notice. The Catwoman of Mastery was responsible for tuning the big screen TV, which the claw-handed and curl tailed catlings viewed. Childish kitten-chatter was amongst them in the entertainment area which was sectioned off, toys were scattered about.

Not much can compare to the dual emotions of that which would be generated by the presentation of grave danger and undying cosmic stimuli. Judging by the conversation at the table Lazarus discerned a big day upon the arrival of the Star Voyager even they seemed separate subjects. The glass was clattering; the restaurant was filling, and interspecies gabble was brewing. Fresh brewed coffee was delivered to the adjacent tables and Husto acquires his refill by getting the attention of the waiter. Mariah was soon in contact on her phone with military headquarters taking advantage of the excessive people talk, which diverted attention away from her. Lazarus placed his earpiece in just as Mariah signaled a conference with her look. She didn't mean "call conference" as such was not permitted in public if it were about classified information, yet a discussion audience of the present group.

Husto was going over a notepad of data while sipping his choice flavor. The steam of his cup whipped aside following the current of air jets returning the useful oxygen to the café. Li steps fourth from the parting airlock on the other side of the restaurant with helmet hugged to his waist. Two of the children were asked to return to the play area after having bumped into Li who smiled and went on to sit with Husto, Mariah, and Lazarus. As expected Lazarus questioned Li about his late arrival and Li used a familiar expression indicating that he would explain later.

The amount of talk was moving into the moderate decibel range and the TV was tuned higher for a news briefing on a Nobel Prize winner, which caught the eye of a curious customer. Li was also curious and turned to see the broadcast. It was a man by the name of Mohammad and his team of Volunteer Archeologists who loomed on the jumbo monitor above the bar counter and his smile told the listening Li of his success in making a significant find. It seems that whatever they had uncovered while digging around inside that Martian cave which Li just so happened to have attended only weeks ago was genuine. Seen next to the elated rwardees was the diligent Planetary Protection Officer waiting for his moment to inspect the dazzling artifacts of metallic splendor.

Mariah's call was over and she began discussing her designated mission just issued by the SMD to the *Forbidden Zone*. The ambient noise level was sufficient to allow a bit of masked cross talk between the still suited civilian militants. The wide-eyed look of Mariah indicated an either serious or thrilling mission. Mariah confirms it is both when she revealed her

destination. **Phenomena Specialist Berman** was to rendezvous with her at Cluctor Stop. In that infrequently trafficked region there had been reports of what was referred to as "The Anomaly in the Forbidden Zone." The SMD allocated it would be necessary for the low-lying team to pilot their craft near the home planet of the verboten Wolfman Species. This non-council member species would not be aware of the investigative team of space cadets of course. Much the same way Planet Earth was unaware of all this activity taking place around space until recently.

Congratulations were offered unto the beautiful agent Mariah and her dreamy eyed look encompassed her inner preparation for her duty. This was the mission of her fantasies. Mariah left promptly at that moment. Husto turns to Li with a mild teeth-bearing grin as if preparing to issue him orders. Yet Li somehow knew already in his mind what task he was going to receive in the moments ahead. But why was Husto grinning? He wondered. Sure enough the wrist comp of Li buzzed and Seghtee himself appeared with no words other than the usual emphasized rank greeting, "Captain." followed by the uploading of mission text to his arm gadget. Lazarus having suspended his thoughts regarding his great Idea leaned aside to glance at the message spreading across Li's miniscreen. So far it was only a recall to headquarters. "I've got to go." Said Li, and he, Lazarus, and Husto rose at the same rate of rise. Li recognized that he would be working with Husto. He knew then that they were going after Feeno. An alarming chill rose of his spine just as the tempo of an old Earth cartoon theme song sounds out from the big screen audio in the play area while the children began dancing shrewdly and the team left before the end.



(click screen)

The Briefing

At Moonbase-1, the pointy Explorer carrying its veteran owner Husto Theeson and the solacing Star Voyager enters range of the pelted lunar vista of holes and hills. There two sleek crafts descend upon the darkened face of the eons old satellite of Earth. Li could see the old hill off in the distance, which he jumped nearly a month and a half ago just as the blackness of the moons shadow swallows them up. Touched down inside the luminous ship bay, the hatchway of the

Voyager and clamshell of the Explorer spring open and the men of courage emerge into the greeting of Seghtee and a security company. It was interesting to pass the graduates in the *reception office* to their port, where he and Lazarus sat just over a month ago, whom had a look of skittishness about them while they waited for Admiral Seghtee to finalize approval. Entering the briefing chamber the cool sterile air filled his lungs and the scent of wood and books were present. The walls bore portraits of accomplished SMD leaders and even an angle view oil painting of Seghtee himself hung respectfully.

Li, Husto, and Lazarus was offered a seat promptly while still more militants including the well know **General Priset** emerged from the segmented corridors. Uniformed executives decorated with colorful pins and medals of valor quickened around the planning table. The lights dim, the presentation screen illuminated and Seghtee began his speech. "Hours ago our informants revealed the movement of suspect vessels between inner colonies thought to be carrying prisoners from the SMD and Matron Science Group. Subsequent halting and boarding of these craft by military police patrols revealed the suspicious vessels to be ruses. We believe the recent capture of Agent Neemon and kidnapping of Matron Science leaders have carried over to an attempt to move the prisoners outside of the territory. Our probability projections indicate a high likelihood that Resistance agents are involved. Our men are believed to be outside of Star City at current. A rescue operation is underway and we need more information. Seiwan Li..." His heart thuds unnoticeably. "You have been selected to work with Husto to acquire the information we need to convince the Planetary Council to support an SMD search mission for remaining Resistance bases outside of the territory. As of now protocol forbids any invasive motions toward any society or syndicate outside of Star City. However even The Council has acknowledged thus far the graveness in standing by waiting while the CRC attempts to harness greater and greater forces. Civilian specialists have been approved by **Council Leaders** to launch our seek fleet. General Priset..." Seghtee calls and seats himself as the general takes his stand.

The pointer screen flickers and photos of the ransacked Matron Laboratory scrolls. "Here we can see the remnants of astounding experiments and technological leftovers from something the Matron was trying to comprehend. It appears they were at the threshold of an understanding of a new form of transportation that of which we cannot not discern at this time. The Resistance personnel who vandalized the laboratory and kidnapped the operators Bal Ibro and Unim Niom left no discernible remnants intact in their proficient raid. Our suspicions are that the Resistance has been attempting to create a faster method of propulsion, which might allow them to equip their fleet with post-translightspeed ability. If this were true the CRC could outrun any vessel in our fleet and launch instantaneous raids on any settlement, outpost, or even the Planetary Council itself. Even our quick response procedures would fall short on timing. An assault on a primary SMD command hub or the council could destabilize the local systems not so much as in the form of successful attack perse, but terrorism. This fear tactic is more damaging than most are aware and our past has proven this.

Alternatively the Resistance, simply put, is far too dangerous and capable of devastating our way of peace, as they are responsible for killing many innocent people. They must be stopped. It has been established that they will stop at nothing to win over against our amicable establishment." Mild chatter tips its hand and Li ponders of his preparation already, as does Lazarus. Husto was more than thrilled to be a part of this mission and displays a serious competitiveness about him. He was eager to begin the mission. Li's hatchway alarm shakes his vibratory wrist computer. An access alert is displayed in text.

"We have here three SMD registered civilians who have been chosen to lead the search force as well as gather our initial planning data." General Priset continues, "Seiwan Li, Lazarus Miller, do you hereby volunteer for the mentioned mission hosted by the SMD and swear to carry out your goal according to plan?" They both affirm with, "Yes sir."

"Agent Husto Theeson, with an appointed rank of commander, will join Li and Lazarus as backup support and **in-field coordinator**." An upload notice displays preceding Li's monitor device quivering. "Your mission parameters and directives are being loaded onto your ships hard drive where you will be partially guided for access..." The beep of Lazarus's wrist device indicated that the silent mode was not set. The instructing general was not distracted however. "Do you have any questions?" The General asked. "Are we permitted to engage the Resistance?" Li questioned. "Yes." The general responded promptly. "However your primary objective will be reconnaissance initially. Your standard SMD **protection protocol** will be in effect unless warranted for additional allotment of force."

A message-bearing officer enters and few took notice. Admiral Seghtee communicates lowly with the informing officer and he leaves the briefing room. The general looks to Li's trusted navigator. "Mr. Miller, Your job will be the same and may change during in-flight activities. Is your ship piloting qualification available?"

"Yes sir." He replied promptly and with the look of an infantryman. To begin the mission right away would appease the young yet liability-developing Captains assistance. Li could tell by the adamancy that a time of preparation was warranted.

“Captain Li your appointed rank herein will be lieutenant commander in the event of a group **mandate concurrence.**” **General Maydeen** conveyed after his data page stacking. He had been sifting through information, which had been previously organized.

The hydraulic door retracts and an officer peeks in calling for Lazarus. He stands steadily and follows the official escort into the corridor. Priset leans in close and commits a personal instruction to the attentive Husto and Seiwan Li. His intention was to empower Li in particular with comprehension of spirit as well as logic that Li might feed from the experience of the lasting Priset, who has seen his share of military excursions. Li has a flashback of an old Earth war fought in the desert regions of what is known as the Middle East. He returns his focus to Priset as he pours knowledge into him believing his thought about the Middle East to be a stray cognition. “Go home Li. Prepare yourself. You know what to do.” At Priset’s last words the meeting breaks and the high-ranking officials leave the room, as do the appointed missionaries.

Li returns to the polished Star Voyager with respectful glances toward the proficient ship preparers fast-walking around his vessel with maintenance tools and such. His ringing wrist computer revealed the motional Lazarus as noticed by the flowing rivets of the corridors behind his head and he tells Li that he will remain at Moonbase to train with action simulators.

After a parting adieu with his comrade upon the small screen display Li enters his ship alone waving to the familified SMD officers. That coordinated feeling of positive direction courses through him and he mans his craft headed for Earth.

Preparation

The indentation of the old ball field was becoming more impressed as the hefty Star Voyager weighs into the powdery soil. Having leaped from the ladder rungs soon after he reaches the stop sign at the end of **Sham Kwai Street**, Li is greeted by a friendly neighbor as the houses flowed by him during his walk. Children were playing in the water sprinkler as they enjoyed the hot summers day. His debonair wave and smile of fun returns a grin from the retired woman of Chinese descent peering out of her doorway toward her children. Li made his way to his home.

A quarter of a mile down the busy sidewalk to the edge of the woods he enters onto the trail. The sweet chirps of fowl serenades the warm pollen filled air of streams of rays filtering through the clouds high-off and plots of sunlit patches glow across the forest floor. Squarely critters scamper vigorously while skittish deer looks on. Li’s mother was not in the yard and he entered the woodsy cabin. Mr. Li was expected to be at work and the house was quiet other than the tall pendulum clock click clocking as it swung catty-cornered. His bedroom had not been touched and his belongings remained in place. Li removed his uniform and dressed in his wide-legged practice pants black in color and traditional front fastened **Dragon Phoenix Shirt** also black with dark cuff at the end of the long sleeves. A spirit entered unto him upon dressing in his traditional training uniform. His mind synced with images of hard practice and exercise from old times. He recalls the days of diligent workouts, meditation of the ancient martial arts, and he exits the house.

Behind the Li home he passes by the trail leading to the roadside and takes the second path less visible and less traveled. He had not traversed the faded walkway in years and his destination was of Master **Xin Jing Wu Men** who lived alone deeper into the woods. The forest thickened and the breeze rushes as the spirits of warriors afar-ago coursed through him as a **paranomenal** antenna. The sounds of power as of the moaning hum of a wide pitched tuning fork emanates about the echoing inner woodland. The canopies sway in the unknown breeze and shrubs lean fourth as if to reach out their branches to Li with no air movement to account for the curious plant motions. Li is lead by the spirits and enters into his meditative trance soon to view the old dwelling place of Master Wu Men, a small wooden shack of soft lumber and colorful blossoms yarding about the quaint living-place. Ponds bearing the protruding bamboo stood still in the serenity of the marshland.

Li creeps fourth steadily working his way around the elaborate training devices feeling along them as he reminisces of the old times of focus and energy. Across the wooden bridge spanning the pond his belly bore the feeling of presence and he swing around to see his old master who, had appeared of the sudden and he heard not his approach. “Master...” He called. “Seiwan, you must follow me.”

“Yes Master, I do what you say.” And he did follow him.

At the rear of the house Li was brought the old bald spot on the ground where his meditation mat sat. Li could feel the energy springing fourth from the ground at the spot and he sat thereof with his master. His hands stretched fourth open and downward above the small bear area and the energy of chi encompasses his hand. The sound of the moaning hum filled the surroundings and his hand began to shake of the vibrating palm. He became filled of light and power and his hand

stretched up towards the heavens and the wind began to stir. The air shifted about as a sloshing pan of water and they began their movements of hand gestures. With zigzagging limbs they summoned the esoteric energies of the Earth as they performed the Kuji Kiri and nine cuts, a Japanese hand gesture form.

In the hours ahead the cycle of energy subsided and the two practitioners came to a balance. "Master, I have a dangerous mission ahead." Li said. Master Wu Men looks somewhat skyward and answers, "I felt as much."

"I need training."

"Fine by me, it's up to you my boy." They stand as if lifted by a cable and move off to use the practice yard of balance beams and dummy posts. Rope climbs and weapons practice was soon to ensue. The art of push hands would show Master Wu Men Li's level of the mastery of Kung Fu a Chinese art. Wu Men brings out the bamboo pole and tests his practice of the ancient snake fist style as he performs the sliding snake. He remembered his training well.

Night falls and the nocturnal creatures of the woodland emerge from their daytime dens. The indoor practice consisted of the punching bag and swinging iron hoop to hone his targeting skills. Soon after Wu Men would emerge from his kitchen having prepared his dish of rice, seaweed with meat morsels and fetron sauce and fish steaks which he had prepared fresh from his harvesting pool outside. "Tell me of this mission Seiwan." Li remains calm and serene as he sips his herbal tea hot of the kettle. "I am part of the SMD now and there has been a kidnapping of two scientists and an agent. They must be rescued or their coercion could prove immensely threatening to the settlements around the space colonies up there."

Wu Men ponders and the graveness of the situation becomes him in his belly. He foresees Li in combat in the near future and a trial ahead for his young student. Wu Men speaks not of his vision and seeks not to warn Li. It was his belief in noninterference, which incites this decision, the way of the Ninja. To tell Li of his revelation could destabilize the natural flow of time and space for Li on his mission.

"Remember your training and become not distracted of your mission be it of goodness and peace." Wu Men's hand stretches fourth quickly grabbing his forearm as Li began to ponder. "Seiwan...! Should you kill forget not the way of the yin and yang that you may only kill to survive that your enemy may be halted from his persecution of the innocent!" Li bows unto his Master of Wisdom. "Go now my son, Find your peace before you go out on this dangerous mission. You must foresee your success and be birthed of the light of your righteousness."

"Yes Master. I do what you say." Li departs the habitation of his Seefu and enters unto the nighttime timberland of predators and arachnids.

Awakening in his bedroom hours later the webs of giant tarantulas adorn his unsuited body and his skin bore the wounds of minor scratches and fang punctures. His prized dragon shirt had been found folded up and stuffed in his pants still clean and untorn. The soft hum of his mother soothed his soreness as she prepares her homemade biscuits and he arises from his venom induced deep sleep. Greeting her, groggy, next his half-mast eyes viewed the face of Mr. Li sitting at the armchair with reading glasses on his face as he read through the *Morning Recountal*. "A girl named Darlyn called for you." He said looking above the reading lenses at his woodsman son.

"Thanks." He responded. "If she calls again and I'm not here please tell her I'll come to see her sometime soon." Li grooms in the restroom and bathes a quick session.

Upon emerging washed and new he sits down and tells his parents of his upcoming military task. Mr. Li goes into a speech about honor and duty while his mother holds his hand in concern. Li assured them he would be fine that it was only a reconnaissance task. Yet in the back of his mind he knew it could become more involved in a heartbeat. He was excited nevertheless. The intermittent revving of the v6 engine repeats its transmission cycle as the car of Lazarus hops and jodels the humps of the dirt road. The expected, drag, of the side slide kicks up the powdery dust and the car shuts down. Lazarus was soon to wrap the door of the Li home suited in his ship costume and ready for action though balanced in his new ripened demeanor. Lazarus greets Mr. and Mrs. Li and brings a smile to Li's mother who adores the flush-faced comrade of her beloved son. Li excuses them and the duffle bag carrying Lazarus follows Li into his room.

Scattered across the made bed of Li, the fantastic technological gadgets given to Lazarus at Moonbase covers the beds rump. Elaborate spy equipment, dazzling scanning apparatuses, and complete disguise kits lay before them. Lazarus began his explanation of what the SMD engineers instructed him to convey to Li as he fills him in on the layout of the initial mission stages.

"How did you get back here...?" Li asked. "I got a flight from Husto of course." He said and continued his clarification of goal stats and gadget functions. Li was preparing his own "bag of tricks" which consisted of classic blade and wood weapons used by the Ninja. Mr. Li had decided to see the launch field for the first time and was granted the opportunity to

drive Seiwan and Lazarus to the field in Laz's car. A last wave to his mother and the three are off soon to arrive at the memorable stick ball range. Mr. Li looks on with interest at the once again dusty ship of windblown sprinkles. The two space enthusiasts bid adieu to Mr. Li and he motions the car toward the Miller home to leave it.

Atop the craft Lazarus finally questions as to the origins of the strange looking generator sitting between the quad pulse-laser mounts. "Let's just say I owe someone a favor." Li responded with a grimace. Lazarus remembers his great idea at that moment. "Did you ever think about putting a side door here?" He asked as they climb inside the parted hatchway. Li ponders a moment. He told Lazarus that it might be a bit troublesome as the walls contain dangerous power reservoirs and engine fuel conduits that would have to be moved or rerouted. Li believed that the integrity of the primary under-hull frame would be compromised if it were to be doctored. Lazarus shrugs and they continue on. Arising fourth of the windy grassland and the Star Voyager sets off on its big business.

A New Exploration

Mariah holds position at Neptune Ship Harbor in orbit of the big blue marvel. The Earth Ship Vigor and its brand new counterpart explorer, The E.S. Ambition, await clearance to initiate its maiden launch. The Ambition was fully manned, fueled, and powered for duty as its eager crew prepares for yet another spell-bounding journey into the unknown. The Ambition's course would take its daring ship hands near the Forbidden Zone before leaving Star City and into the deep. This course was chosen since the last deep space exploration was in the other direction out toward A-00981. Mariah's orders were to travel onboard the Ambition with her lustrous Raider hosted in its belly. Her vessels top speed of LS factor 10 would see her small fighting craft to the Forbidden Zone in nearly a month.

Admiral Seghtee was the one who organized her stay on the Ambition to be ferried to its closest pass of the non-council Tau Woltula system—home of the mysterious Wolfmen. As the Forbidden Zone has yet to be applied to the local systems, the Planetary Council has restricted military presence there as goes for any off-limits territory. The civilian deployment of craft in the system it is thought will reveal the nature of the strange readings happening in this prohibited region. Mariah's Contacts, Oroxum and Phenomena Specialist Gary Berman are scheduled to meet with her at Cluctor Stop, the small eatery near the Forbidden Zone. Oroxum, of his alias name, was a Suricata, or sometimes called, Elfman. The tiny little alien who teams with Mr. Berman would fly the SMD science craft though which is not registered as an official military vessel.

The sensor-harboring craft bristles with scanning and multiradiant detection grids. Its full complement of telescopes and on board laboratories makes for the most efficient phenomena auditing spacecraft available. Mariah's job was to fly as a defense escort. The Boatswain's whistle blows at the start of the first launch ceremony and the ship-hands are attentive as Captain Bragga gives his opening speech to his faithful crew, an award-winning sermon by Bragga and the Champaign bottle is shattered. Mariah had just touched down inside the spacious landing court and the Ambition sets off.

The Orders

"Captain..." Seghtee called with a strong tone. Li was already awake as his image faded into view on the forward viewer. Li switches to the console screen. Lazarus returns from the back as the ping of Husto's Explorer ship server syncs with Voyager's. "Open directory, α:/sailormoon/destination1{14}." Lazarus heard the direction and sits upon his navigation console and views the text. "Delta Pavonis." He told Li who immediately plots a course. "You better transmit your message to Celie before we leave range of the transfer buoy."

"She's going to be disappointed." Lazarus said. "We won't be back here for a good while likely." The NET sensor dish angles on its hinged axis and the amplified message emanates from the energized signal coils. Husto was watching the Star Voyager closely for its next move and had preknowledge of the mission directives. He exhaled as Li's ship motions in the expected direction indicating that Li was on track so far. The two ships move off at high speed and Husto reminds Li to keep his max velocity at LS factor 16. They would reach Delta P. inside a week.

Chapter 2

To the Forbidden Zone

With a cheery smile Mariah navigates the polished corridors aboard this lavish vessel of prospect. Being directed in passing by a helpful officer performing his customary **ship readiness inspection**, she proceeds to the food bay for a conversation and a meal. The decorous array of plant and ornamental adornments surrounding the mess hall perimeter of the *Ambition* was a bit more elaborate as seen on the *E.S. Vigor*. The decor was not to be Mariah's primary notation yet her grumbling tummy gave her motivation to try the delectable platter of various tidbits and edible morsels. After a respectful wait at the empty table she moved in for a tasty snack soon to be greeted by the veggie-chopping, pot-handling chef. The handsome and blushy deck officers eyed the peachy Mariah as she moved in for her meal.

A little of this and a little of that she had partook of the various array of meat and veggie products along the buffet stand and made herself a tailored feast fit for a fighter pilot. Mariah nibbled lightly to preserve her womanhood in front of the gawking rookie crewmen of unfettered arousal. She wished she could eat faster having succeeded a moderately rigorous SMD training drill prior to joining the Neptune maiden launch occasion.

With a bat and a smile she perplexes the boyish space scientists with her radiant countenance. In the minds of these accomplished physicists, whose understanding of the universe at large is complete, they find themselves unable to analyze the irresolvable process within them regarding the beauty of Mariah. It so happens, Mariah did not request a captain's rendezvous, as her **vessel volume** did not warrant the rank of captain in an official hierarchal capacity. Mariah was quiet and made little attempts to closten with the friendly comrades aboard. Her intention was to maintain a responsible kinship with her military affiliation.

Additionally Mariah was one of few women in her field with the **Equanimity Rank** of *graduate*. Mariah was well aware that this rule was moreso appreciated by the SMD as a precautionary measure and would not be disciplined if she were to overlook it in this instance and decide to date an officer. In reality Mariah really was more interested in her study of mission stats as well as the nourishing power of conservatism. In the back of her mind was a two percent entertainment, of forming a quick temporary relationship with a space cadet, yet her better judgment formulated the framework of multiple scenarios one of which was the event of pursuing a brief relationship and the other was not. She was more interested in that feeling of satisfaction resulting from the preservation of vivaciousness and vitality. She was well informed on the nature of spiritual transitions particularly the subject of the bonding of life forces during *risqué* encounters. Such a bond could prove too strong for a limited relationship.

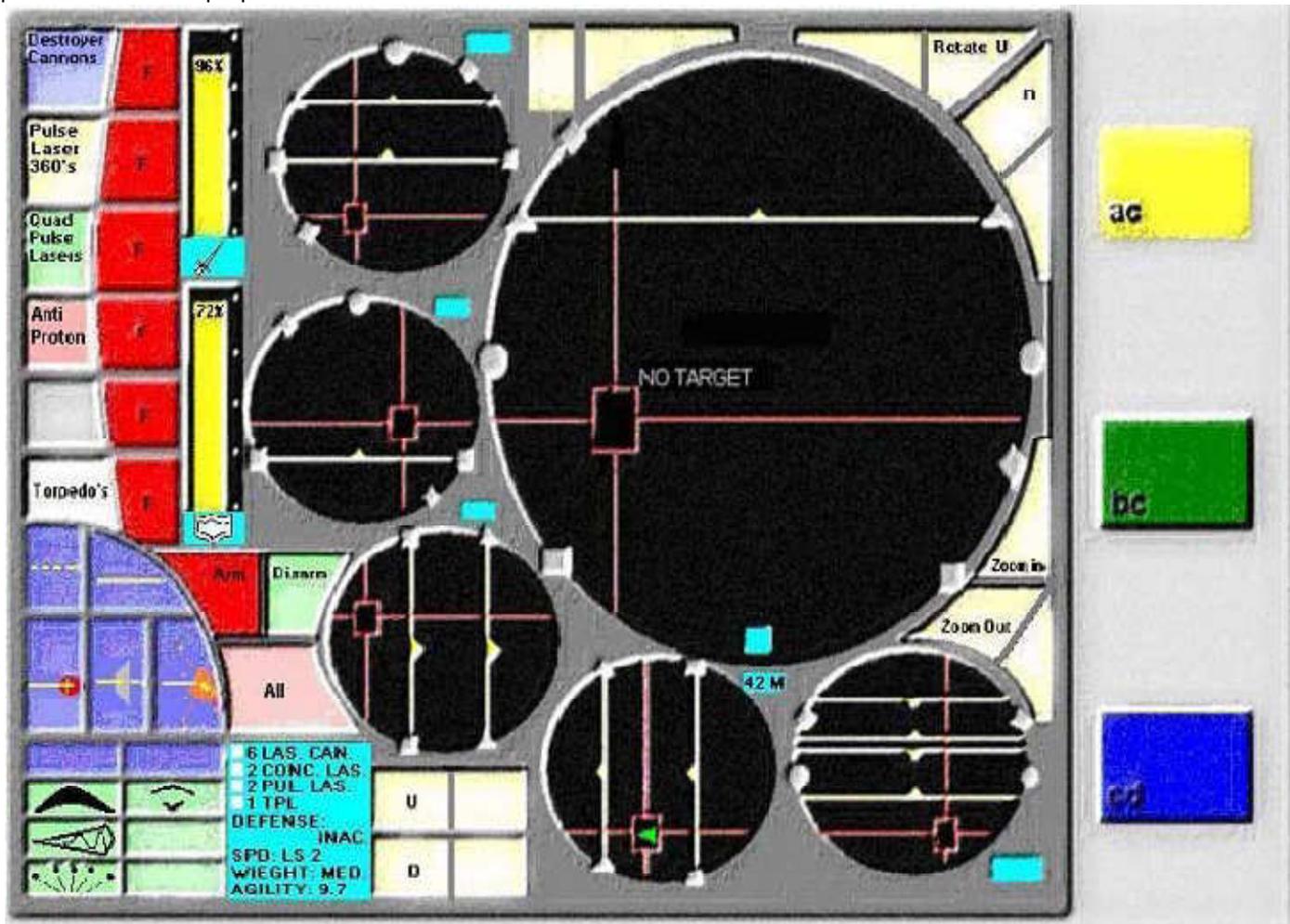
No one knew that Mariah was quite excited about reading upon the deeper details of her assignment. A few days and nights passed and Mariah repeated her pattern of quietude and minimal encounters. The subsequent stop at the Sirius system gave Mariah a chance to view the blazing blue giant and it's white dwarf elder from her quarters as she accesses the ships telescope to see the castle of the Planetary Council and the absolutely dazzling city of Lactronia, the most advanced alien city in Star City. She made it a note to return one day to visit when she is off duty. With the mutual transfer of passengers to visit the Sirius system and boarding citizens scheduled to depart, the virgin expedition of *The Ambition* continues on.

Mariah had not left her quarters much and spent some of her time practicing fisticuffs alone. She performed meditative breathing exercised often to fill her with the vitality of oxygen. The channeling of internal vital energies was achieved in addition. Ancient healing arts of the orient have been a fascination with her for some time. A hard practice complete and she wipes her face with clean linen and sit upon the ships computer console. Displayed on the screen was biographical information of *The Incredible Wolfmen*. Enormous strength, furry bodies and a snout like a fox. Her mind thinks back to a day on Earth before the Council Era as she looks on at the interactive media and still photos provided by the SMD of the suffering and wargripped home world of the Canines. The Gold-furred **Alpha Canidaes** has constrained the planet in a worldwide technological prison while promoting the ignorance of the **Silverback Canisians** of the Westland continent. Mariah was particularly interested in the Silverback Canisians reported ability to counteract the terrors of science with their uncanny naturalistic practices establishing an uneasy balance of power with the Goldfurs.

Entering Delta Pavonis

Li contacts Husto promptly, who was a few million miles behind as they traveled linear toward the big system, upon passing the *Oort Cloud of Delta P*. He replies with an instruction from Seghtee following a headquarters encryption confirmation code. "β:/sailormoon/task1{14}" Li informed. Lazarus minimized the star charts program and the base screen was displayed quickly to view the designated text manifest file. "Return to Zemorgian capitol." Lazarus said. They were already concerned having escaped a firefight last visit. "Can you get any more information?" Li asked Husto over communications. Husto nods waiting for Li to determine the safe maker. It comes to Li and he had a slight wave of insecurity which passed shortly thereafter about not seeing it immediately. Now he sees the safety net, still there was a residue of slight concern.

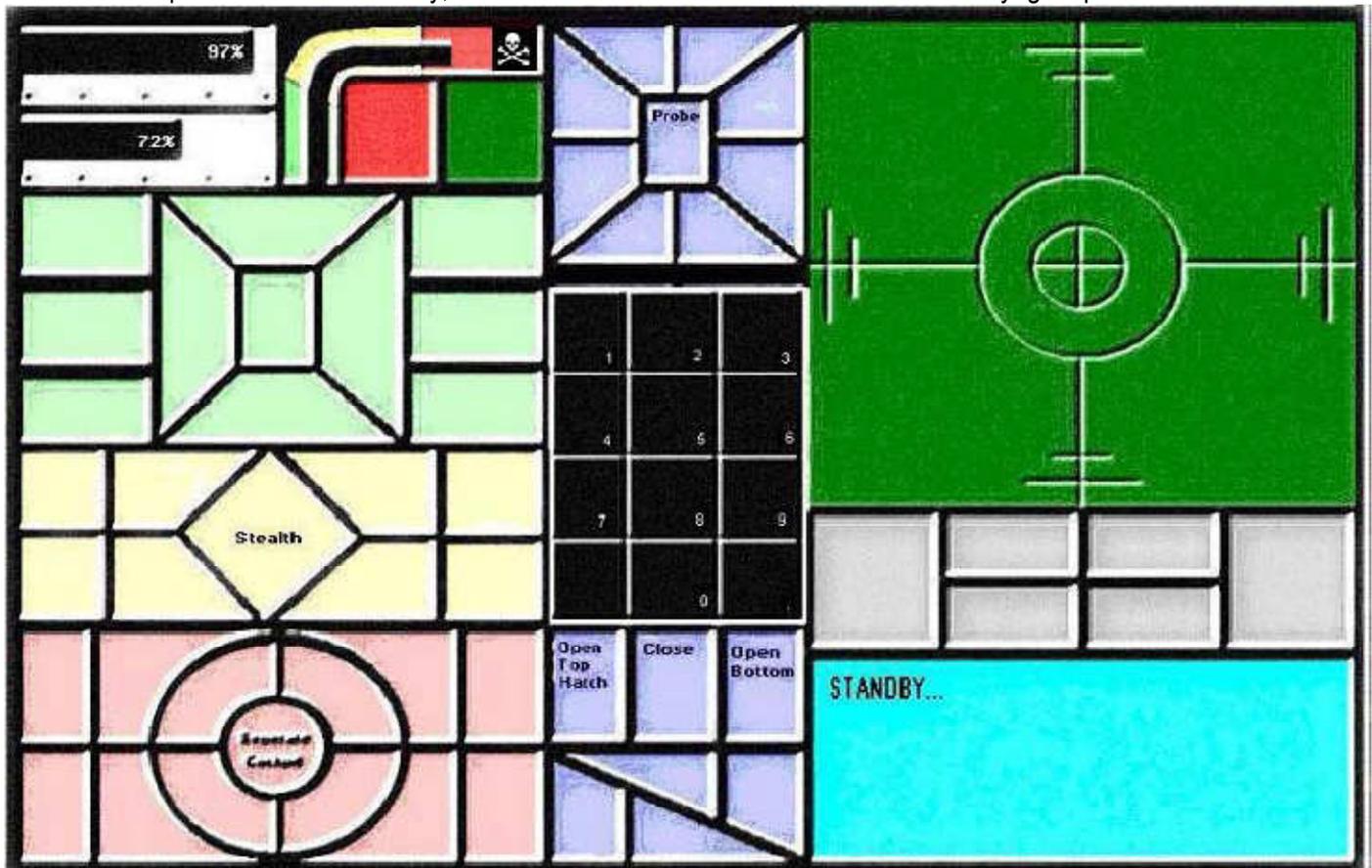
Li was an SMD citizen and though a private system the Zemorgian people have sworn an alliance with Star City territory and the Planetary Council. The residual concern in Li was by the fact that they were risking their lives to determine the true allied status of the Zemorgians. "Ah I see." Lazarus said who had read the text information out further. "The firefight last time was normal for the Zemorgian authorities as a response to a fleeing spacecraft which this information here says is Zemorgian policy. The Resistance was successful in convincing the Zemorgians that our vessel was a criminal transport. That's why we were chased by both." Laz reported. "That still leaves us to only assume that we won't be regarded as an enemy craft again." Li in that instance made himself question Husto further being certain not to transmit an exposing message via the signal relay. "Are we free to land at the capitol?" He asked. Husto affirmed. Li leans over to see the weapons display appearing by the impressively trained hand of Lazarus. "Let's maintain a close eye on Husto's weapons power banks. If he prepares for battle we need to be at his side."



[Lazarus's Weapons Screen](#)

“Understood, we show *white down the board*.” An inner sigh of relief from Li, Lazarus looks tough. “Looks like Husto will be breaking away sometime soon according to this.” Laz reported. He noted his slightly skimming course adjustment on the proximity viewer overlay. “I expected as much.” Li said. “There he goes.” Said Laz as the distance indicator rises high. “Is there any indication on his destination?” Li questioned. “None...” Lazarus responded. “Okay we’re going back to the capitol but it doesn’t make much sense.” Li said. “Wouldn’t they want us to be in disguise or under stealth?” Lazarus added. “My thought exactly. Husto indicates that the situation is stable however. I’m guessing once again the SMD explained our presence and reason for blowing up CRC craft last time. Yet, as you can see it still sounds a bit wirey.”

“I didn’t know we needed a reason to blow up CRC craft. Anyway, I’m ready for anything.” Lazarus assured. Li was silent a moment. “I think I’m going to take an extra precaution. Let’s activate stealth mode. Delta P. is a lenient system anyway. I don’t think the fact that my vessels energy emissions are masked will bother anyone. Li taps the center special tactics console between them. An increasing hum and the embedded discharge dampener powers up. “Let’s keep ready on the shields and weapons. I want to be ready, in case of an assault.” Li cautioned. The Star Voyager speeds ahead.



[The Special Tactics Panel](#)

Last Stop

The Ambition slowed to pass through the HR-3384 star system and Mariah was nearly ready to depart. Her temporary stay on board was over and she straightens her quarters as it was before her use. A stop for breakfast would satisfy her morning yearning for sustenance and the mess hall was less busy this time with the new system being traversed. Protocol instructed primary officers to remain posted during travel through clustered regions such as a new stellar system. Ensign Cantrell saw this as an opportunity to move in on Mariah as she sat sipping her hot chocolate and he took a seat to her table with data pages set aside. He introduced himself and Mariah returns the motion.

Attempting to appeal to her greater experience the winging young ensign nearly connects to the rounded Mariah yet fell short having not taken into account her unusual discipline, for a woman. His inability to keep steady was in his passion for the tan-skinned dark-haired beauty yet Mariah saw into his approach and was moderately impressed. Additionally she respected his confidence and courage in speaking to a trained professional in this short, date-acquiring manner at the

beginning of her duty. Still Mariah did not risk losing her focus this close to her imperative mission. In a sweet sounding voice she offered him the pleasure of her silky hand soon to depart the repopulating feeding bay. A last glance at the dazzled ensign and the corridors become her. The halls were full this morning and officers darted to and fro while Mariah navigates the humanoid obstacles. A man stops her in the corridor with a smile just before she was to enter the light craft bay and he attempts to use sweet talk.

Mariah had not faltered in her firmified mood being this close to the heart of her mission. There was no time for any more dates at the moment. She politely thanked the passing officer and enamored him with her alluring aura. Shortly the large robotic doors retract revealing here gleaming Raider. She loaded her belongings into the cargo hold and mans her craft. SMD automation messages waited in her communications databanks as indicated by the blinking green light topside of her panel display. The instructions were to proceed to the rendezvous point at Cluctor Café. The bay doors open and the daring Raider arcs away for its thirty-six hour trip to Cluctor stop.

On Location

The large terrestrial planet looked the same as it had last time except for the roaring hurricane over the vast eastern seaface and Li without hesitation dives the ship toward the lengthy terminator for his capitol landing. Li had slept lightly during the five-hour trip from Delta P.'s Oort Cloud to the inner system, Lazarus the same. Still the two lionhearted travelers were wide awake for their eminent martial excursion. Li was preparing to suit up wanting to get ahead of schedule while Lazarus maintained artificial gravity above the highly gravitic planet such as Zemorg. He knew soon after landing he was about to be ordered out onto the Zemorgian streets of bustling activity. The question was what were his orders thereon?

Descending the clouds of this high pull world the Star Voyager's interior grounding plates embedded in the floor was preset to lessen the planets three G's worth. As they slowed from and inclined decent nearing the populated regions below the old style construction of city buildings expanded beneath them and they land quite near to Feeno's last drop-off point near the Emperor's Palace. So far there were no warning shots of enemy craft in pursuit of the familiar black vessel. "Perhaps the SMD cleared things up recently." Li thought. The circular landing patio receives the Star Voyager and the hovering field beneath catches the medium-heavy craft from its thruster power down. With a light thud the vessel slaps down upon the concrete pad. Li leaps to the middle cabin to suit up while Lazarus awaits the next order. He knew he would be staying in the ship. Glancing upon the base screen he views the array of directories, which the SMD computer techs preloaded onto the Beta console. It had been nearly half an hour and still no word from anyone about how to proceed.

Li was starting to wonder what the holdup was. Finally he took action on his own. Li instructed Lazarus to go ahead and open the next text display. "I don't understand this." Lazarus said. "Let me take a look." Li intervened. "Get onto the streets and start asking questions openly about the whereabouts of Federal Citizen Feeno Nemon. If anyone asks announce yourself as Private Investigator Black. Use the P.I. badge and wallet in the special gadgets bag we provided, it says." Li looks away pondering of the meaning of these orders and Lazarus retrieves the phony wallet from the bag. "Here's the I.D." He says and hands it to Li. Li glances upon it finding his photo, designation titles, and number therein and comes to a mild understanding. "I think I know what they want me to do." Li attaches his helmet to his waist mount and opens the hatch. The increased pressure of the dense atmosphere of Zemorg rushes inward of the exposed cabin and Li gives himself a moment to adjust. He takes a guess on whether or not to bring his nine-millimeter projectile pistol in his thigh case and he does. The streets were amusing as the carnival-like activities continue its entertaining motions.

The people were enjoying the summer's day on Zemorg both native and foreign. The exotic fowl was chirping, the blossoming canopies were dancing in the warm breeze, and fat bumble bees delivered pollen about the grassy plains inland. Li had no trouble ridding him of the loathing feeling he had while approaching this region yet maintained a cautionary alertness about him. He couldn't help but to smile and did well appearing as if to be enjoying the hearty day. He could see down the long degravitated pathway the palace entrance where Feeno had escaped and he chose to enter the local eatery nearby to begin his investigation.

Sitting upon the bar counter and ordering a side of dry chips he casually scans the café looking for his first interviewee. He spots there in the corner of the dimly lit restaurant, an off-duty officer whom he gradually approaches still having to bypass the transiting customers and tourists. The man, a Zemorgian, relaxed and sipping his drink of alien ale, was reading over his filled data page. Li cups his translation mask over his mouth. "Excuse me." Li greeted with the deep sound of a hefty Zemorgian computerized tone. The man looks up promptly to analyze his unknown visitor. "I am Investigator Black of

the Star City Private Surveying Division. May I join you for a brief questionnaire?" The man nods and stands leaving the table. "I guess not." Li said under his breath. He tries a different approach with the bar tender, another Zemorgian male and flashes Feeno's photo to him. "Excuse me sir I am investigator Black. Have you seen this person within the last month? This is important to the Star City Private Surveying Section." The bartender smiles and takes a look at the photo. As he views it Li notices another photo in the stack and begins to sweat a little. "No sir I have not seen this person here in the last month. "How about this one sir...?" The picture was the disguised version of Feeno. Li didn't take into account the SMD apparently wants both photos to be questioned. "This looks like a diplomat." He responded judging by the clothing. "Yes sir." Li sweat again not knowing what to tell him about the man in the photo, his mind bouncing between responses approaching the *deadline of reply*. "He was last seen out on the streets here in the plaza leaving the Emperor's Palace. "Ah yes now I remember he responded—his voice of a human English-speaking male which emanated of his own mask translator. "There was an altercation and a firefight. He was apprehended wasn't he?" Li paused only a second to consider. It appears the official report was not in Feeno's favor and he was judged as a criminal. This was not good and likely the kind of info the SMD was looking for. "His guilt has yet to be determined in court." Li responded on Feeno's behalf and ended the interview with a "thank you."

Li exits the eatery and back onto the streets. He glanced around to see if he could spot the man who left earlier. There was no sight of him as he looked of the busy walkway and distant road hill. The smiling and fun loving citizens roamed about continuing to enjoy their day out. Li was feeling the thrill of his duty having successfully retrieved some valuable information. What he was struggling to understand was what the Zemorgians would do with a citizen of Star City? He was starting to ponder whether or not the Zemorgians were also working with the SMD or is the Resistance dissuading them.

He moved down the street closer to the resplendent hall of luxury. As he walked fourth he parted the thickening traffic and watched the hovering general transports as they were manned and departed. His keen vision spots the off duty officer he had spoken to a moment ago in the bar, ahead down the street and he pursued. Li was antsy to enter the palace hall knowing the potential danger involved yet his duty was to ascertain the truth. Back in the ship Lazarus was monitoring closely Li's encrypted audio transmission and documenting the information in the event Li could not return. The instructions of the text display did not promote Lazarus the freedom to respond to Li unless emergency dictates.

The idea was not to risk a mission blowout, as there were present plenty of official and nonofficial monitoring stations. Nevertheless, it was certainly not a crime to emit communications transmissions, as most persons on the streets and inside business establishments owned RF audio messaging devices. Li had spoken lowly with passing personnel and visitors while watching the suspicious officer from his side eye. The walls of the hall were brownish and the carpet was a matching maroon with light decorations of plant pots and water fountains hung about. The air smelled clean and unsoiled as that off a church room. Upon turning a corner Li's reactions draw his hand almost involuntarily to his photo stack and looks on heavily at the photo of the wrathful Felidae Cyril, which had been provided to him.

He double takes having spotted the Resistance cat criminal. A pitting heat forms between them as they make eye contact. Li moves in for a snapshot with his mini camera, a ring band and phony charm wrapped about his index finger, and the suspect Felidae turns and fast-walks away down the seemingly endless hall with sunlight at the end where another exit were. "Excuse me; my name is Professor White with the Delta Pavonis Tourist Surveying Institution. I have just a few questions for you." The short Zemorgian inquirer attempts to hold the hasty Li for his questionnaire and jabbars with his translation mask incessantly. "Excuse me but I have to go." Li said and attempts to move away respectfully. The short man tugs him lightly. The thrifty cat moves away quickly taking advantage of the distraction. "If I could just have a few moments to complete the survey you can attain a free stay at the Luxurious **Darmozon Hotel!**"

"I'm sorry but I can't take the survey now thank you." Li parts from the ambitious yet pushy questioner and pursues the fleeing feline on his steady swift-trot. Both were attempting to move quickly without running yet the wirey cat outperformed the panting Li in his pace. The people traffic was thick and Li was detained briefly having to dodge a cluster of in-moving delegates squabbling politics and dictating viewpoints. Finally after the near exhausting fast-walk he reaches the halls end. Li had no time to catch his breath as he stared out onto the horizon, for there outside a few tens of meters away the cat was seen boarding upon, on the rocky distance, a transport craft soon to rapidly ascending overhead. "Lazarus, get the ship powered and pick me up quick I've spotted Cyril! He's fleeing in a Zemorgian shuttle, gray in color."

"I'm on it." He replied. Li runs out in the open waiting for the hovering Star Voyager and was soon to leap onto the bottom hatch rungs and climbs inside the belly of his ship. "Stay on them." Li said as he mans the beta panel. Li attains a weapons focus on the fleeing target, which hastily accelerates its ascent. "Li, take the flight controls." Lazarus yelled as they

begin to cross the outer atmosphere. He felt most comfortable at his nav. console in which he has all but mastered. The two pursuers swap seats quickly maintaining a firm grip on the chair backs, prompted by the shaky ship, as they continue their chase. "Try to get a message to Seghtee and get Husto on the line." Li said. "I wonder where the heck he is anyway." A jolt occurs just as they cleared the atmosphere and switch to higher engine power. The big blue planet Zemorg of massive continents and oceans drifts back. Another shake as the limited arms shuttle fires a rear concussion blast. The Star Voyagers multipartitioned shielding is virtually unscathed. "Should I fire back?" Lazarus asked. "No, let's wait until we get Seghtee on communications."

"Captain..." Seghtee called over the audio, his voice still stern like the last time. "Keep on that vessel. Stay with it until directed otherwise. Captain Theeson will join you shortly."

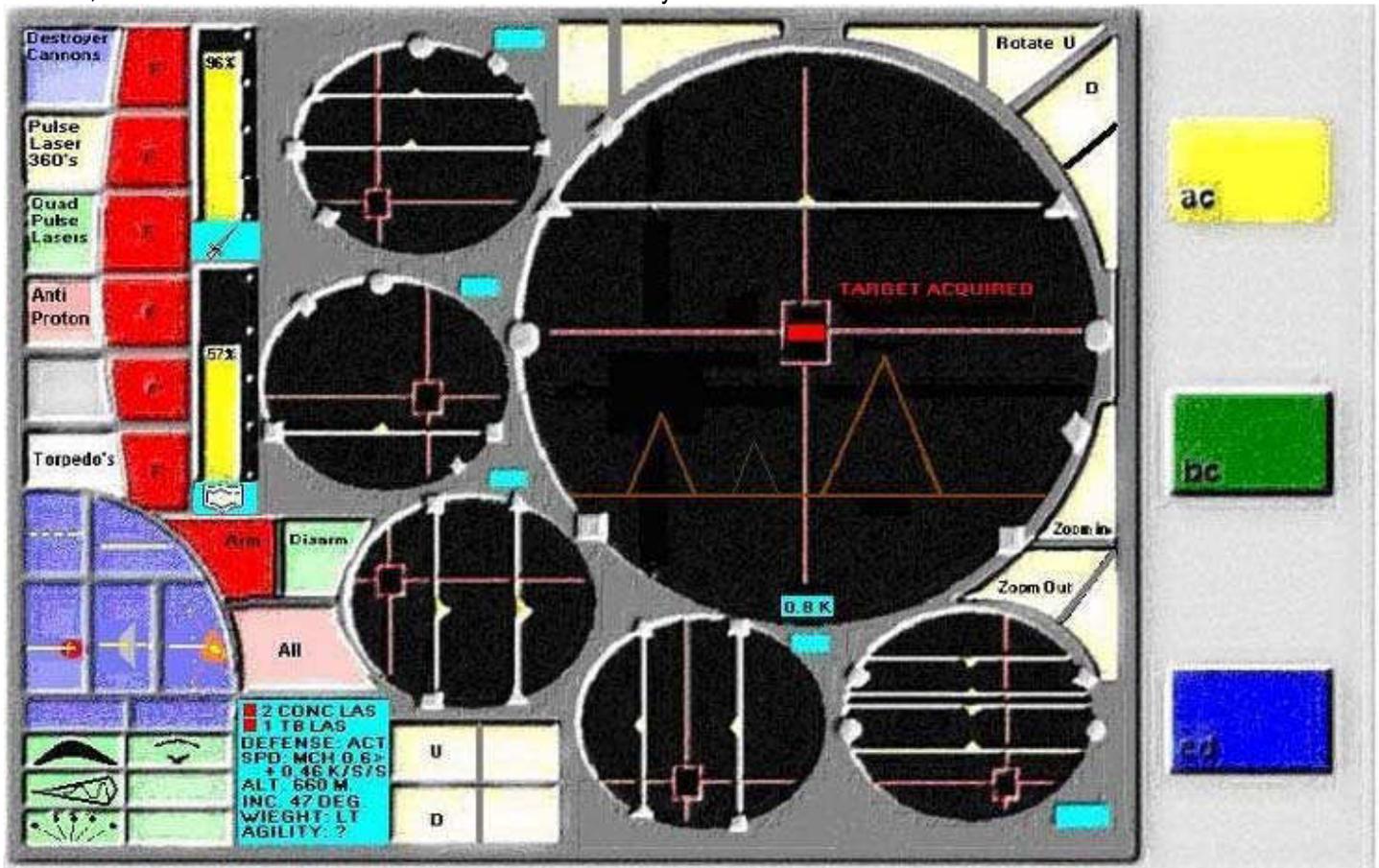
"Sir it's Cyril the second Resistance leader. Can we take him down now?" Li asked. "Not yet. It looks like we arrived at Zemorg just in time. The Resistance is attempting to convert the Zemorgian military in their favor. So far they have made no alliances with them but we are watching closely. Stay with the ship and follow it continuously."

"Yes sir."

"Li another ship just appeared behind us!"

"Keep us protected."

"It's Husto." The audio outputs another voice. "Li keep on that ship." Husto instructed. "We have to find out where it goes. If that is Cyril we can nab him before he can escape Star City territory. Seghtee wants us to document any and all vessels, stations, and settlements associated with Resistance activity."



[Li's Weapons Display](#)

"Understood..." Li assured. "It looks like he's on a direct course for HR-6426, a triple system over twenty light years from here— two orange dwarfs and a red." Lazarus reported. "I've got his engine specs, maximum speed LS factor 9. This will be a cake walk." Husto boasted. Li wanted to board the vessel immediately and considered proceeding without orders. "Shouldn't we disable the craft?" Said Li. "No. We have to follow them first." Trust me I've done this before." Husto assured. "Speed lock programmed." Li said. Just then a series of well-aimed pulse laser shots erupted of the step-up chambers of the Explorer. The concussion gun barrels break away and disintegrate upon drifting outside the GFE field. "I thought you said

not to engage them." Li wondered. "It's a long way to HR-6426. At this rate if they keep firing back at us, they will drain our forward shields by the time we arrive."

"Right..." Li acknowledged. The two **gaming vessels** maintain a speed match as the **prey ship** begins to max out its acceleration ratio. Li locks in his pursuit vector and the three on duty pilots settle in for their four-day trip to HR-6426. **Mariah's Arrival** The cabin of Mariah's fighter, though a two seater at max, necessitated her use of the interior sleep mode. This mechanical adjustment allows the pilots seat to lay back and transform into an immediate bed. In addition a clever feature was a small gravity plate under the main panel by the pilot's feet, which can be activated for long term travel. This allows the pilot to stretch while standing essentially perpendicular of the controls.

When she awoke her auto navigation system had placed her right where she had calculated. The gray station was visible of its intense flood lighting and 360 strobes were blinking incessantly. Mariah lifted her chair and angled the ship so as to approach the building and its landing flat, which sat not upon an asteroid, but perhaps by some standards a **planetoid**. Though a slow orbiting station of sturdy construction it gradually drifted while following the near linear curvature of the gravity field of 10 Sigma at such a great distance. Mariah promptly made use of the stations grooming and bathing facility like that of a truck stop, while awaiting her appointment with Mr. Berman and Oroxum, the two science vessel operators.

Essentially a beefy Lendall Stop, Cluctor café had a similar feel: lone and cosmically distant. She did not see the science vessel however as she glanced about the patio, which was empty other than an old stray cargo craft awaiting use. She landed on the patio and did not leave her vessel instead waited a few minutes to see if the intriguing science craft would land anytime soon. After a moment or two she attempted a signal contact and Mr. Berman answered and told her that they were already inside in café. She caps off, secures her oxygen ration, and departs her ship. Stilted like Lendall the underside bore equipment and debris as well much of it resembling military parts and hull configuration segments.

The large platform bore the wide landing plates and was too an elongated building nearly three times the length of Lendall. She made her way up the inclination and succeeds an airlock session and waiting inside was the little Suricata kicking his feet, which touched not the ground. The relatively oversized Mr. Berman of Human descent sat watching Mariah closely as she was now an on-duty fighter escort. To port was the not so busy waiting counter and slow moving cook preparing, for the solemn pilots sitting thereupon a meal. Strangely Mariah had noticed and not noticed sitting in the corner two brown-robed men waiting for something perhaps a tasty dish. Their face was partially shrouded by the covering cloak and their hands interlaced upon the table as if waiting for something to occur, maybe another individual. The two anticipated scientist remain in suspense about the competency of their new protection. Mariah introduced herself and vice-versa. Oroxum and Mr. Berman wanted to get started immediately and Mariah was hungry.

Mr. Berman stopped in his trek to the airlock and turned to Mariah and offered her a drink or meal and she did order. The two scientists pondered and looked over data upon their text gadget while Mariah eats and Mr. Berman contacted an SMD message buoy to inform someone that Mariah has arrived and the expedition into the Forbidden Zone initiate momentarily. Mariah finished her breakfast and the mission was on. Stepping down the incline Mariah had yet to see the science ship. Mr. Berman led her afar on the patio toward the terrain and vacuum horizon.

Mariah kept looking back toward the lighted, level, landing-court wondering why she was being led off of the patio. Astoundment became her to see the instrumenty flying laboratory fade into view of the sudden only a step off of the floating miniharbor. "Hmp, invisoshield..." She said to herself. She then recalled a mention of such ability from her past academy class. "Follow and stay close." Mr. Berman said. "I'll keep an open comm. link." She responded to the peculiar man. She had to backtrack to her ship and kept cool having already appeared uncoordinated. She felt like Mr. Berman tricked her a little.

The two crafts ascend and assume a vector toward the obscure territory. The system was small and the single star in which harbored the Wolfman planet was blazing brilliantly off in the distance. The egg-shaped science vessel and its squared off side mounted engines took a course not toward the Wolf Planet yet toward an unexplored area of space where the strange discharges were emanating. It didn't take long to arrive at the remote part of the system and there was no object found to be blaring the signals yet there was detected onboard the fantastic scanning craft a massless collection of omicron energy. Mariah was unable to detect these readings and the science vessel was equipped with the necessary alien sensor, which can resonate to extraspectral frequencies.

Far beyond the gamma field this strange energy remained hovering in space showing up on only two detectors, one was the elaborate alien engineered sensor and the other was the eyeball. This was essentially demonstrating the perplexing **Omicron Ray Inconsistency**. A soft wispy glow of the focused region of Omicron energy seemed to Mariah like more than

just a phenomenon. She felt something—perhaps a third detector. She couldn't help but to glance a little at the Wolfman planet through her telescope and take a few snap shots. She captured clear images of the Earthlike world and it was beautiful in her eye. While the scientists were feverishly performing experiment, to create a discernable pattern to what they were seeing Mariah felt in her a connection to this place and saw in her mind, visions of wondrous places of light and power as if it were being sounded from a trumpet upon her ears. She could not explain it nor did she desire to, yet what she was experiencing was complete in its detail and she felt comfortable as to be at home amongst friends and loved ones.

The warming encompassment of the energy felt more like a presence of life than a natural phenomenon. She saw before her vessel a figure appearing in a soft glowing cloud of luminosity. Discerned before her a torso of light and arms of gold as it hold an instrument of music. An aroma filled her nostrils as a sweet smelling savor. She understood somehow and asked not how this was possible yet experienced the moment fully without question or confirmation. She thought an angel from heaven was touching her. The Angel sang a song of peace and gladness playing a tune of holiness as it supped with her. In its left had a candlepot tethered to a golden chain and the fumes of glory went up from the pot unto the Lord and he did minister to the Angel.

Mariah was spellbound and filled with light and power on high and praise went up from her countenance and was received unto a portal, which closeth thereupon. The angel went fourth unto the distant wolf planet as the appearance of a small marble of sapphire oceans protruding the deepness of space. The energy faded and the emptiness was revealed once again. There was no word from the science vessel for several minutes and soon the engines of the scanning craft flared as the ship zoomed off at high speed and Mariah followed. The scientists discomfort with being unable to get any solid reading from the phenomena other than a frozen omicron wave point spike which vanished when the anomaly disappeared was pronounced. Mariah, wide-eyed and with faithfulness upon her face spoke not of her experience and took note that the scientists had not seen the same events nor had not taken notice of the occurrence.

The onboard surveillance of the science vessel revealed the two data-bent professors to have been petrified during the events until the happening subsided then to resume their diligent efforts by jiggle the readings so a foreseeable pattern could be rendered. They were confused about their own behavior on the monitor as they reviewed the recorded video and saw it not as an issue, yet continued struggling to interpret something to a live SMD committee upon their communications view screen. Mariah's report was the same and her interior lighting was questioned. She could not account for the brilliance, which appeared, inside her craft as revealed by her own surveillance. It was dismissed as a distracted pilot and regulations were quoted to Mariah about proper ship cabin protocols. The SMD ordered a small scanning probe to orbit in the system of the Wolfmen.

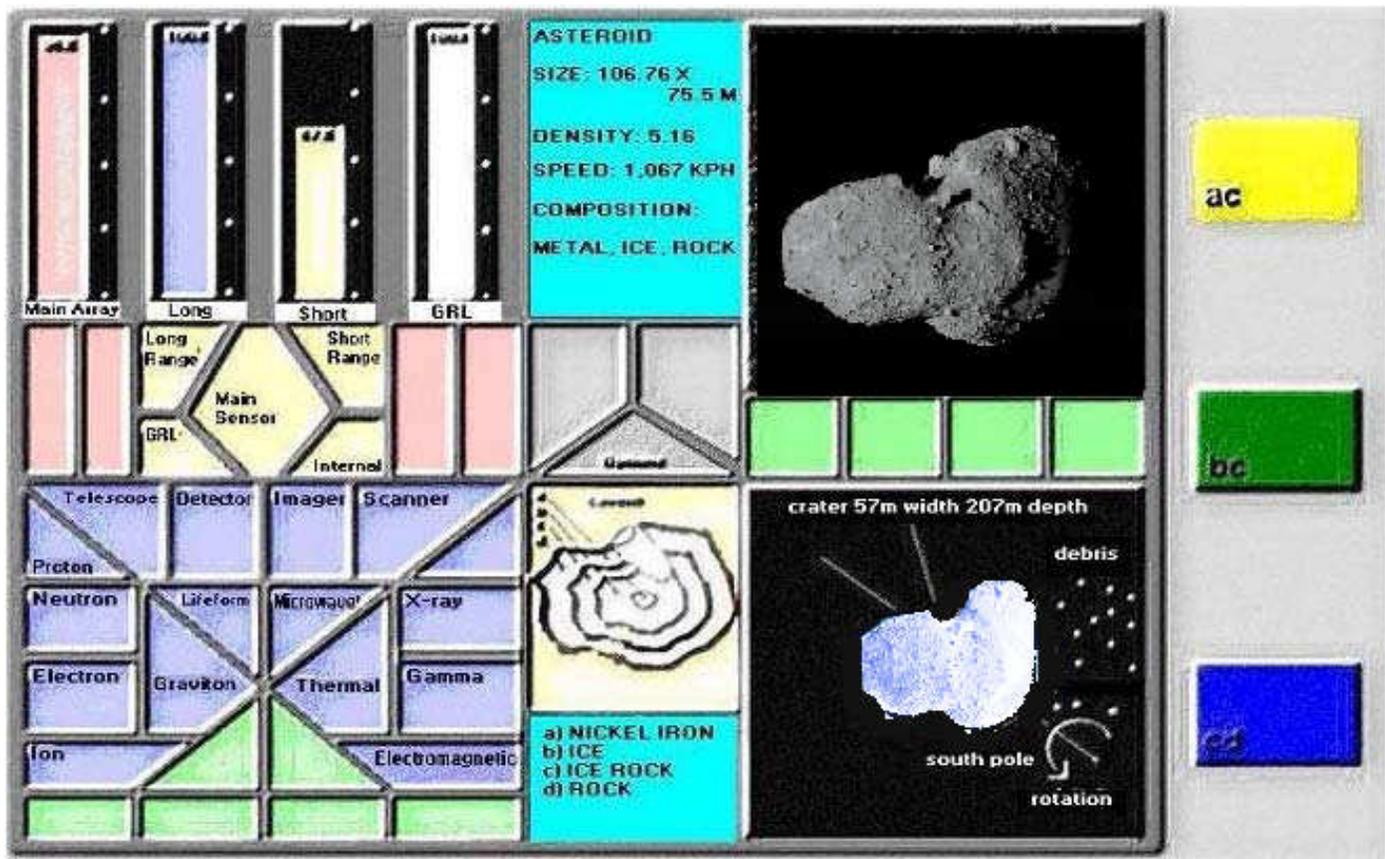
Pursuit Break

In the days ahead the steady chase of the rouge shuttle led the pursuers to the triple system of HR-6426. The shuttle arced away upon slowing to maneuvering speeds toward a small, disconnected belt of asteroids much like a section of the Kuiper belt of Sol though about one twentieth the size. The largest of the rocks in that belt is where the Explorer and the Star Voyager had followed and watched its approach. "Is there any word from Seghtee?" Li asked hoping for even a sliver of a text. "None..."

"...Contact Husto." With a few taps on the panel the experienced commander appears. "I don't like the looks of this." He said. "I'm gonna hang back and watch the perimeter. You go in after that craft and I'll be standing by for cover."

"Do I engage a hostile threat?"

"I'm taking command here and giving you permission. Yes, engage the enemy if attacked." The shuttle entered the field, as did the chasing Voyager. Both craft slowed to maneuver through the rocky region and the shuttle proved to be more maneuverable than the Voyager's computer anticipated. Lazarus's stats display of the shuttle read instead of a 7 Previously thought an 8.7 now that the full range of maneuvering thrusters were firing as the evading shuttle dipped and dodged various-sized boulders at dangerous speeds. This allowed the Voyager's computer to determine more accurately the maneuvering rating of the shuttle. At any moment Li was expecting a swarm of Avengers to appear of the sudden and begin their rain of cannon fire. Lazarus was ready with the weapons panel and Li's fingers were trained on the main maneuvering stick. The ominous craters nearby could harbor any number of attack craft and Li maintained a comm. link with Husto who was also at-the-ready. "We'd better prepare an automated message for the nearest buoy. I have a feeling this is about to get nasty." Said Li. Lazarus operates the communications panel. "Are you getting any readings from that big one?" Li asked



[Lazarus Views the Asteroid](#)

Husto referring to the asteroid. “No. I checked for big guns and so far nothing. Use your NET sensor to take a deep frequency scan. That should get us a nearly full schematic of that asteroid.”

“Give us a few more moments while our detection grid energizes.” The rectangular dish atop the Voyager pivots and glows a hot blue of potential discharge. The shuttle continued heading for the large asteroid and Lazarus’s telemetry is finally revealed. With the beeping and pinging of the sensor program the Beta panel finally reveals the nature of the beast. “We’ve got a large cavern!” Lazarus reported. Li leans over to glance. “It looks artificial to me.”

“Agreed...” Husto said who was feeding from Voyagers telemetry relay. The Star Voyager begins to take a pelting as the rapid spikes of turbo lasers erupt of nowhere. Lazarus was quick to the weapons panel and almost all of the vector portals were covered. “What is it Laz!” Li said who needed the valued information. The ship rumbles having taken on repeated pulse blasts. “XF class fighters!”

“XF...?”

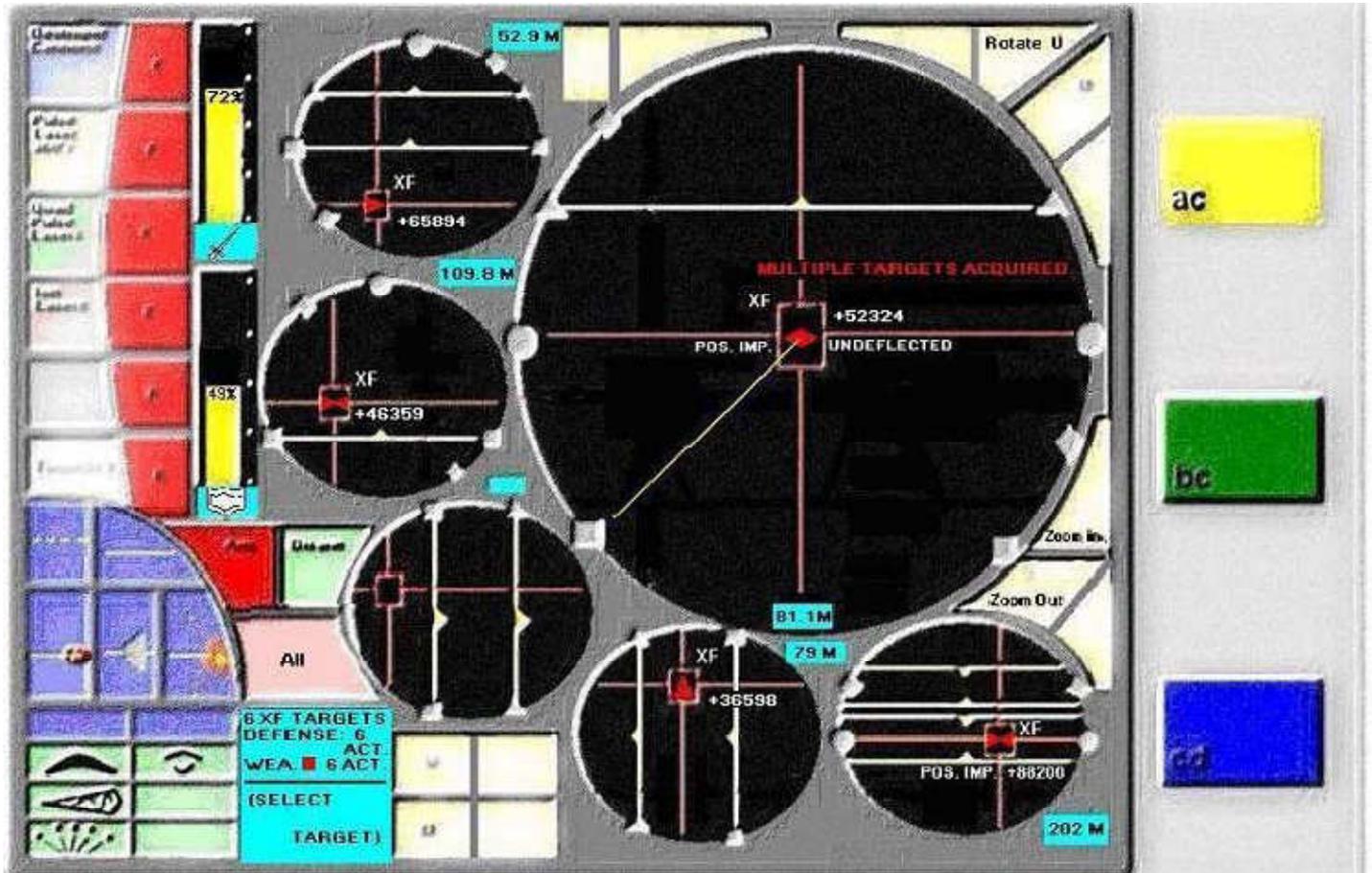
“Seven of them, get us out of here!” Li breaks his pursuit of the shuttle and zooms off to evade the aggressive nimble fighters. Li switched to view the vessels on the quick scope. “Oh no.” Li said. “What is it.” Lazarus asked. The ship vibrates heavily and the streaming glow of energy pulses streak past the peripherals. “It’s Chris and his posse!”

“How in the heck...?” Lazarus exclaimed. “The little crook turned rouge—and I think I know why now.” Lazarus looks to Li. “The rings of Saturn!”

“Precisely...”

“Don’t tell me Chris is a part of the CRC now Lazarus concluded. “It looks that way, and Cyril is getting away. Husto cuts in. Who is Chris!?” He asked. “My rival, he ambushed me weeks ago outside the Mars Barr.”

“Hold on I’m on my way.” Husto assured. Just then the sharp XF fighter appeared portside and Li made visual contact with the contending vessel of Chris Williams. Aboard Chris’s fighter he gazes in surprise of running into his hated enemy Li in his boastful cruiser. “My how the tables have turned...” Chris said to lowly himself. “Guys attack that black vessel. **Hugo, Hoy** follow the decoy and pretend to protect it!” Chris ordered. “We’re on it.” Hoy responded excitedly with a swift arching maneuver. Chris veers and comes around for a direct assault and the Star Voyager absorbs the mammoth colored sparks from heavy fire. Lazarus reported multiple shield partition failures and Li maintains an evading rollover to hide them. “Give



[The Combat Screen](#)

them the antiproton too by the way.” Said Li. Lazarus devastates the lower shielded attack vessels with the intensely negative beam of baryons yet their repeated passes and acrobatic maneuvering defies the swift hand of Lazarus who attempts to use computer **auto fire assistance**. “Li I know you’re a little busy right now but something just blew up on the other side of that asteroid.”

“We’ll check it out later.” He responded narrowly missing an oncoming fighter on a death dive. Out of the blackness comes the pounding Explorer to curve the shield drain of the distressed Star Voyager as its array of laser cannons divert the light class fighters with wide rays of red elongated bolts smearing into the shields of the XF fighters. Husto’s maneuvering and force of fire followed by the repeated flare plumes of destroyer cannon hits from the Star Voyager, ends the rapid space battle and the XF fighters flee. “Husto follow me, we saw an explosion earlier it could be the shuttle.”

“Acknowledged...” Upon siding the large asteroid the positively identified debris of the escape shuttle is found. Before a conclusion could be formulated a larger faster vessel emerges from deep inside the crater cavern and bombards both vessels with Charge blaster fire. “That has to contain Cyril.” Husto said. “Pursuit course...”

“I’m getting Seghtee on the line.” The screen flickers. “Captain...” The Admiral called sternly yet generally. “Good work. You got us the information we needed from Zemorg. It looks like Zemorgian army is cooperating with us still. What is your status?”

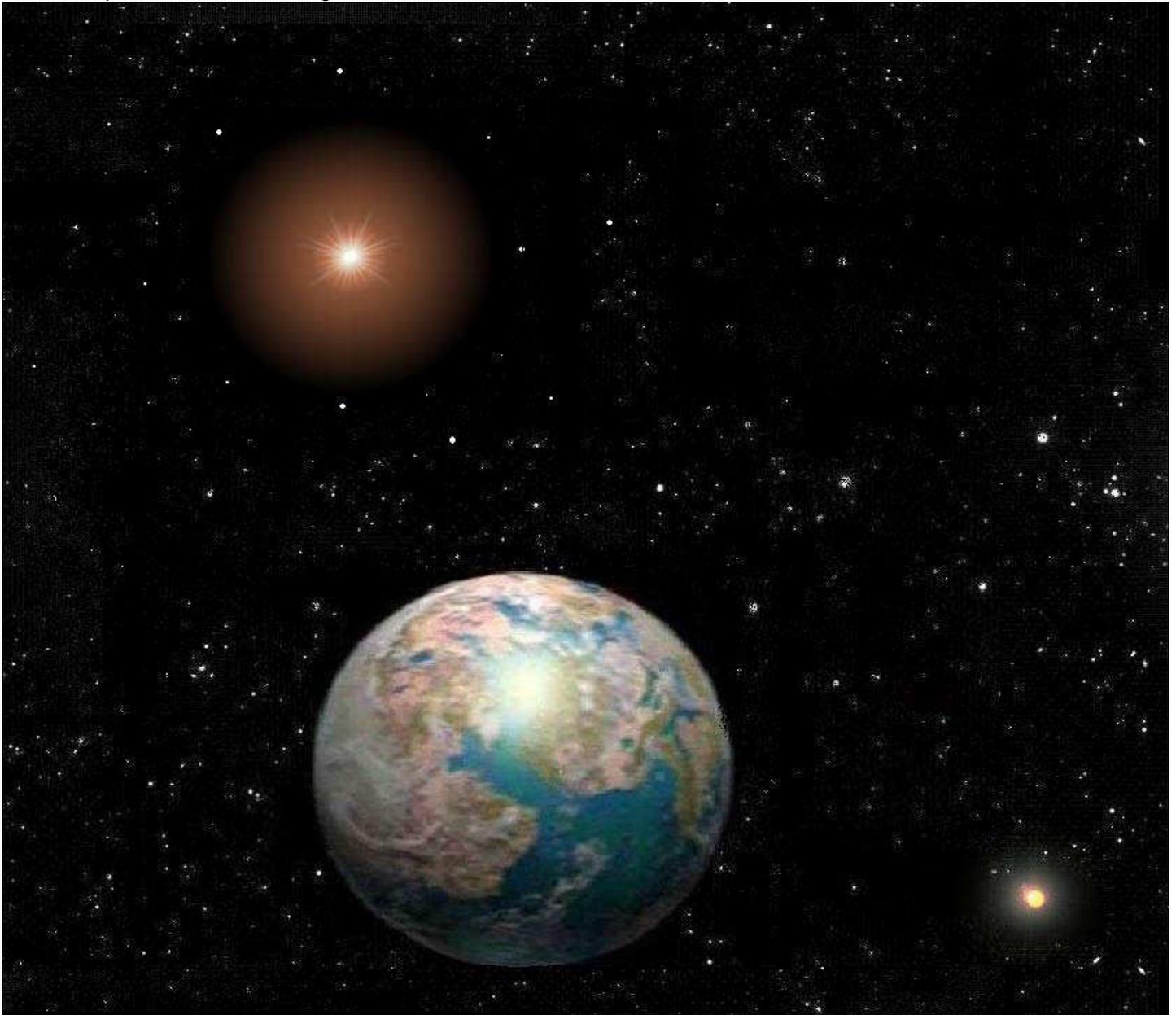
“We chased Cyril’s escape craft to HR-6426 and ran into an unrelated incident. A man named Christopher Williams guilty of kidnapping and attempted manslaughter had some kind of hideout here in this system. They are connected with the CRC. They were apparently responsible for defending Cyril’s shuttle. The original shuttle was apparently self-destructed and we are now pursuing a new unidentified craft likely containing Cyril. They have accelerated out of this system.”

“Excellent. Keep on the vessel. Husto, Stay with the Star Voyager. I’ll contact you again. I’m about to leave signal range of our transmission link buoy, Seghtee out.

Chapter 3

36 Opiuchi: Home of the Felidaes

Everyone looked like a cat. Li felt quite like a *fish out of water*. He was comfortable having left the Star Voyager atop **Mount Apo**. The manner in which Lazarus expressed his comfort with the mountaintop star port was to judge so by his accepting statement about the encompassing greenery. Many morning-glory-like vines were sprouting blossoms as they snake through the adjacent flora-covered fences round' about of the face of polished marble stone which supporting the inlet. Trickling waterways allowed the leafy stream to flow across its engagement network even to deliver flowers to the downstream posy pool. The conclusion the two visitors agreed upon, additional to their mission at hand, was to pursue the high-speed **auxiliary cruiser**, which escaped from HR-6426 three days ago. Even so, the curious outline of the *spaceport of enchantments* was never before seen. Appearing almost as an idyllic supplement of Earth the flat-cap top, peak resembled a Monadnock type mountain. Being enamored by the outlandishness of **Katlar** it was the profound succession to their home planet, which most delighted them.



Katlar

Li had been on foot for several tens of minutes yet it didn't seem that long. Intriguingly he was performing well maintaining his focus amongst so many gawking Felidaes and their noises were high pitched. Unearthly quadrupeds made

funny noises too. As destiny would have it Li saw something he has been waiting to see along the street line. Some of the Felidae had the equivalent of pet monkeys attached to leashes. Evenso, the reason Captain Li believed he had a chance to find the renegade Cyril was because they had landed near the escaped ship, which was confirmed, empty up on Mount Apo. Back at the ship Lazarus keeps an eye on it from across the patio nonetheless and cat people were moving about in exotic array, their tails wrapped in an extending sock about halfway down.

A pattern Lazarus noticed is what he believed to be promiscuity and the perpetrators had their **tailsleeve** cut short. In his searching Li made a slight mistake. Having followed a nearly identical Felidae he alarmed the unwitting commuter and had to apologize for turning him by his shoulder. The wide-eyed veteran, who luckily for Li did not have a panic reaction, held past service time in the army, which was fresh in his memory yet locked away in the safekeeping of retrospect. There had not been any wars in a few centuries here yet the business-minding long-timer's disciplined training gave him composure. Li was embarrassed. More stares were upon the foreign Human roaming their streets and he moved off gracefully.

Li had spent until evening looking for his evader and the second sun was shallowly coming into view to prolong the twilight. Cyril was lost. It was surprising how quickly the storm clouds moved in and Li could not return to his vessel. There were police and crisis personnel directing all civilians indoors and many of them entered sever weather bunkers. The raindrops plummeted and soon the area was soaked of water and the streets ran like rapids. The clouds were ominous in its darkness and the cats were chattering. Li soon found himself seated amongst many Felidae in the medium sized shelter. The lightening roared across the sky as sheets of fire branched its uncertain path of static. Li wasn't sure what was happening yet felt safe there with the shaken people of Katlar. The main door swung open to let more fleeing Felidae in and the rain blew inward of heavy winds as the stream trickled between the doorframes.

The man holding the entranceway opening was as soaked as the incomers and yelling in the high-pitched sonance as a few more hurried runners reach the shelter. Behind them Li saw to his fright a massive cyclone ravaging the landscape and he was fearful—he had been as a child. With the sound of monstrous suction in the air this was the first real scare Li had so far on his trek across the stars. All this time little did he know that it would be here on the home of the Felidae where he would find his terrorizer. The sun would shine again with a smaller more distant orb of fire as the planet slowly revolved more into view of the second sun. The clouds parted and the light streamed in. The rain had stopped abruptly and the cyclic windstorm had evaporated. To Li's intrigue few of the homes were damaged due to the superior Felidae construction of living dwellings.

Tornado resistant housing lined the streets as well as business plazas. Now that the excitement was over the building in which Li sat looked like someone's house judging by the furniture. The attention finally turns to Li. Using his translation mask he steadily answered their simple questions such as where he was from and whom did he know on Katlar. Li went with the vacationers bid. He was comfortable with this seeing as how his mission was officially over having lost his target. Cyril was no doubt miles away by now, perhaps no longer on the planet. Li finally showed the photo of Cyril to the people there as one last, ditch effort to get a new lead. He said that this was who he was looking for and a few remained silent while others behaved normally. It appears either he was sitting amongst CRC potentials or Cyril's infamy was more pronounced than expected.

Lazarus successes a call signal to Li's low battery wrist computer and he assures his safety and stable situation at current. Lazarus alluded to the monstrous tornado appearing on the ships Doppler scanner of the NET sensor. Additionally, a rear cabin view from the window screen revealed the churning funnel of fright. Lazarus's concerns were calmed at the sound of Li's voice amongst friendly Felidae, that they were not hurt.

A scratch and a fizz and the sound system tuned in. "Husto calling Li. Come in Li." Captain Theeson who was just entering the star system had fallen a bit behind due to the higher velocity of the auxiliary cruiser and pursuing Star Voyager. "Husto, this is Lazarus. Li is on foot. He lost Cyril on Katlar."

"Acknowledged, cancel pursuit, it was a ruse. Tell Li to get back to the ship. Seghtee issued a high alert. He is sending ships and people to the allied base in A-00981. He wants the Star Voyager out there as soon as possible."

"Received, what are our orders?"

"SMD personnel will fill you in upon arrival. I'll be heading back to Sun Town. Be careful out there. See you later. Husto Out."

"Lazarus to Li; come in Li."

"Go ahead."

“Come back to the ship as soon as you can. Seghtee just ordered us to A-00981 there is some sort of emergency. He wants the ship in place out there as soon as we can make it.”

“Understood, I’ll catch a transport back to the Apo, standby for my arrival, Li out.” Li assumed a taxi to the lushly mountain cap and mans his vessel. The Star Voyager rises from the port of Apo with wind on its tail.

D-00337, New Enemy Headquarters

Cyril snickers—a lowly titter barely heard by Beltran just as he leaves to oversee the launch site of a new vessel with special abilities. “Our decoy worked.” Cyril Said. Beltran stops and turns a few degrees. “I just got the report in over the phased signal. We led an SMD undercover cruiser all the way to Katlar.” Beltran didn’t break a smile but was laughing inside for sure. The door slams behind him as he enters the suit room to prepare to go outside. The small stilted office building they were in was an overseer’s station. The new landing pad over by the ridge across the workyard harbored a number in recently constructed vessels. In addition to the exotic circular craft there were a few tens of smaller Resistance tailored fighter vessels to be used in conjunction with the Avengers in the event of an assault. They were the new **Piranha Fighters**. Pointed like an arrowhead they were sure to deliver cheap, fast, fight to the front line. In the sky the red dwarf sun was coming into view just as he steps out onto the gritty surface, which crunched, beneath his feet.

The underground base-prime was complete and manned. Beltran had attached the original upper construction by way of tunnels and would use it as an observation post. The base beneath the soil was completely hidden and shielded from rays and detection. The workers out in the job site had not complained in recent weeks having had their grumbling bellies filled of eats and they reside comfortable in their new topside bunkers upon the surface of the swiftly rotating planetoid. Beltran traverses the rough terrain of the jobsite pointing orders as he passes and the grumbly workers curse amongst themselves between their helmet audio to acquire the satisfaction from making fun of Beltran and his scrutinable appearance.

Stepping upon the stairway he ascends to the top of the large rectangular platform in which set collections of Avengers, new attack fighters, and the strange superior vessel, which was nearly complete. Beltran glances hastily as he passes of this advanced craft once atop. Soon to be used against the SMD the ship waits poised for its pilot. Beltran enters an airlock leading to a large hanger where the ship was built and now where abducted Matron work involuntarily. Beltran promptly removes his headwear upon entering the main bay and approaches the surgeon who was working with the Matron to keep them active. They had numbed their brains in specific lobes and stimulated other parts to control them as if they were machines. The many hours spent mapping their brain activity and determining which parts were responsible for their science, which parts were better judgment, and the always interfering conscience.

The new coercion method worked to their advantage according to design yet the surgeon reported a slight defect in the procedure. Every now and again a stray cerebral branch flares not apart of the **neuromap** assumed to be a result of the brains wayward tendencies. The surgeons had dismissed the occurrence and used various other drugs to experiment with neuroactive therapies. Beltran was pleased with the progress and watched deviously as the manipulated scientists worked skillfully to design eerie components for the new **supercraft** whose parts lay scatted about the hangar bay, some glowing others connected to enormous power supplies needing to be maintained watchfully. The surgeon exposes his epidermis on his upper arm and Beltran gives him his periodic dose of desired stimulant.

An emergency alert blares and lights rotate. Beltran nudges aside the junkie surgeon and takes control of the console, which he uses to get a live feed to Cyril’s office. Hastily inquiring the issue of emergency Cyril adamantly conveys the news just received back at the observation post by more than one of their outfield **infotechs**. The report recounted details of curious ship movements at A-00981 reminiscent of the initial stages of a skirmish formation. With no further information necessary Beltran begins his precognited strategy tailored to this type of emergency according to CRC protocols, which he had invented weeks ago. He contacts the ship platform chief overseer and orders him to prepare all freighters for equipment and personnel use. Secondly he contacts the barracks and commands the Avenger pilots who have already become alerted by the audible and visual alarm system to prepare for a standard escort mission. Beltran sees that the freights powering up on the platform are loaded with instant construction equipment similar to that used in their erection of their current D-00337 base and is appeased.

Ordering all workers on the immediate jobsite to the landing platform they scurry into their predetermined combat readiness positions. The jobsite was cleared and the vessels were manned and ready. “Beltran to Cyril...”

“Go ahead.”

"I'm launching now headed for the "C" band. It looks like the enemy is preparing a search-attack mission—they're coming after us. Here is my plan. I'm moving a lot of scrap material and having skeleton bases erected in various locations about the "C" band. That will buy us additional time and concealment of our primary base."

"Acknowledged, also inform our men at C-00101 of our plan. The dummy bases will assist in the defense of our old headquarters there. After that is done I want to initiate preparation to begin constructing in the "E" band." Cyril said thinking ahead. If D-00337 gets discovered we'll need another fallback location."

"Agreed, make the necessary arrangements while were gone, Beltran out." The swift instructions of Beltran were accurate and resulted in the subsequent launch of Avengers, loaded freighters, and the new Piranha fighter escort.

Deep Space Event

Li was finally genuinely worried—another rarity in behavior. The time when he is this apprehensive about something usually seems to be less so than the Jupiter Incident. The upcoming Lazarus watched the fidgety Li as they approached the deep region of space there between Katlar and the primary destination. His long hours sat at the console told a tale of his concern. It was already days into the long trip to Krysto. The two shippers had expected an uneventful passage of time as they prepare for the emergency situation less than a week away. Yet before them appearing on the long distance phase detector lay not only a stationary object of multi-materials including metals but a decision to stop or continue onward.

There were no communication signals being detected from whatever it was drifting in space ahead yet Li with just a tad bit of frustration recalibrated the sensor dish more than once and still could not yet determine to cause of the hindrance to clearing up the strange energy reading which became more apparent the closer they come to the **U.O.** In Li's mind arriving on time for the emergency near Krysto was most important to him, which was the source of his anxiety. Xila was in that area and a host of military buddies were waiting on him. The whole thing had Li uptight. He almost settled on, "Forget it," but the adamant look upon the face of Lazarus changed his mind and he began the slow deceleration sequence. He knew he had to stop. They slowed for perhaps fifteen minutes solid. Having come to a gradual halt, relatively speaking of course, surprise became him indeed when the forward floodlight was switched on in the pitchy emptiness of space and the glare briefly blinded them. The near mirror-like shiny frame of the saucer-shaped spacecraft parted the mouth of Li yet no words



Encountering the Saucer

spewed forth. “Are we going to investigate?” Lazarus asked. Li didn’t mention then that he recognized this ship and that he might know who is on it. Lazarus was fascinated and over enticed by this new vessel design resembling much like that of Earth’s older vision of an imaginary space craft from science fiction literature. This one appeared very real which was confirmed from Lazarus’s **tangibility scan**.

The object was ruled out from being a hologram or laser image due the helpful discharge browser. The only other option was a hallucination, which was losing credibility because both he and Li were viewing the object. Lazarus left the cockpit and suited up. A difficult choice here was for Li to stop Lazarus from going, though he was looking forward to it. Li had to think hard and fast to find the right words to convince Lazarus to remain in the ship. He managed to convince his exuberant friend that this was not about experience or seniority, yet the safety of his navigator. Lazarus couldn’t buy that argument and gave him a *funny look*, him being the daredevil and all. Li then attempted to use SMD protocol. *In the event of a spacewalk necessity by two passengers a captain and navigator the more experienced person shall make the egress and one man must remain posted at the helm for support.* Lazarus attempted to argue the point that only a few moments ago he dreaded stopping at all and that it would sacrifice our punctuality.

Li moved on to the danger of the situation and accessed the sensor screen again. He sweated somewhat having not figured out the nature of the problem with the NET sensor from fully imaging the emission of the vessel. As such he simply displayed what was displayable. The ultraviolet energy spikes appeared now with more intensity as before the ship came to a halt before the exotic craft. The wave of the emanation was indecipherable according to known wave dynamics. No particles detectable yet the process seemed similar to detecting specifically an electrons wave point at a given position around the atom. This description was still more of an analogy in essence. Nevertheless, Li persuaded his comrade that there could be a radiation danger for example and the most qualified individual must be on the scene. Li was the senior quantum physicist there and Lazarus accepted though a bit grumbley.

It wasn’t long before Li was out and about in his SES. The magnetic tether head was the only hold he had to use to attach himself to the drifting craft. Li took the leap of faith and his slow drift toward the other ship, shimmering less so in the dimmed spotlight of the Star Voyager, drifted closer. In his hand his **magteth** and finally contact was made jarring his body a bit. Li’s heart dropped when the magnet didn’t stick to the shiny metal and he flailed his arms wildly to find a hold. To Li’s blessing the ramp, which he was familiar with parted and he grabbed onto it just in time before floating away from the two crafts. Why the ramp opened Li knew not. Li entered through the **trapping field**, which jogged his memory from last time when he was on a vessel like this in the Alpha Centauri system. The air was held inside by way of the field. He fell to the ground once past the ramp frame.

The console he recognized looking similar to the one seen over a month ago on the other ship. This was clearly the same class or maybe the same ship. His sight before him seemed to fluctuate as if he had become intoxicated and the bodies of four beings, two alien and two human appeared sprawled upon the deck plate. The two dark bug eyed aliens were positively identified as Mentors and he recognized the other two men—the bald man with the beard and straight-haired counterpart. He removed his helmet and checked upon their lifeless bodies finding no puncture wounds, or burn marks. They appeared to be okay. The only action of note was their slow panting as they inhaled, held a breath, exhaled, and repeated the cycle. It was almost as if they had been left too long in a steam room and trying to extract more oxygen from the air. Li checks the **envirofinder** on his SES and the air was completely normal—an oxygen nitrogen mixture.

There were no toxins or dangerous fumes of any kind, which accounted for the strange inanimation and abnormal breathing. Li confirmed this was the same vessel Li traveled briefly in from Alpha Centauri. “Lazarus to Li, what’s happening?”

“Everything is okay. I’m fine now. I am still investigating. I’ll have a report when I return. Please standby.” Li couldn’t decipher the panel and his makeshift button sequences were unsuccessful in opening any log files. He refused to tap any more yet just on his last tap he managed to part the sidewall. Revealing a strange purple crystal mounted on tripod stilts he moves in to take a look. The glimmering violet rock was nearly half of a foot in width and radiant only at the aura as that of a stars corona. Yet the energy detectable by Li’s devices was just beyond the ultraviolet spectra. Li stared at the crystal and it tickled his brain. The sensation felt good and he could scarcely look away from the object. He felt as if the objects were feeding him in his head and body.

His anxiety about being late for the rendezvous had subsided in the balance of the glory of the crystal. Li felt a little knee-weak and pulled away from the object. The man on the floor with the beard was now looking at him while lying on his back. With a slightly parted mouth as to promote a larger airway and wide eyes and he did not speak. Li felt him trying to

communicate something and glared confusingly. Li didn't know why but he looked at the crystal again and back to the man. The man, with a drop of sweat, glowed ever so dimly around his face, he recalled the alien mentor doing so last time, here not nearly as vivid. Yet as he stared upon his face he saw actions of motion, a hand grabbing a gemstone. Shortly after the semivivid image he felt as if a mean dog was chasing him.

Li knew not why but his adrenaline was rushing and his body moved as if by an external power. Li grabbed the royal ruby from its prop and placed his helmet upon his head. He secured the object to his thigh case and exits the craft as if escaping an eminent explosion. Taking a final look at the heavy breasted mentors Li departs the presence of his favorite aliens, which he admired so much, and reenters the Star Voyager. During transit Li asked if Lazarus was in the cockpit and he affirmed. He didn't want to depressurize with him in it. Clinging to the top of the ship Li opens the hatch. Upon crawling into the middle compartment the hatch closed and Li forced the rear cabin door open depressurizing the area. He exhaled in relief that Lazarus was not in there and stashed the object.

Quickly closing the door he removes his helmet and Lazarus, wide-eyed and mask wearing, enters the repressurized compartment. "Li don't go in the rear the **depressurization alert** just sounded," He yelled. "Thanks. Relax now."

"Well, what happened?" Li looked him directly but gently and saw his emotions as orbs of adhesive consistency hovering around him and he guided them with retentive focus. Lazarus didn't realize he was being calmed and Li replied with a little smile, "I helped the pilots. It looked like they were suffering of oxygen deprivation so I offered my assistance." Lazarus looked downward still with eyes of coins and an innocent face. Before he could question the entrancing Li he was asked of his assistance in the cockpit to get underway for A-00981. Upon entering the control room the fascinating craft was gone—it was no longer in the widow. "So what did they look like?"

"Human."

"Really, what kind of ship was that?"

"I didn't ask. They were short of breath...we have to move. Let's get back on course now. I have a feeling things are about to get pretty hairy out there. We don't want to miss the fun. Lazarus automatically plots the course with wayward hands and overlaid images in his mind of the events which just transpired moments ago—his face still of innocence.

The Strike

Li was reminiscent at the site of the ivory Krysto as viewed by the ships telescope yet the massing fleet of Ice Wings and on duty civilian craft accelerating toward the outer bands tapped his adrenaline reserves. Lazarus was preparing for battle recognizing immediately what this meant—they were going after The Resistance. "Captain..." The Admiral called having flashed onto the screen. "Rendezvous with the convoy, were headed into enemy territory."

"Acknowledged sir, sorry I'm late. Lazarus and I are prepared to go directly into battle on your mark."

"No. I'll be commanding the Star Voyager. Two back up pilots and a team of infiltration specialist will join me. Dock inside the **minicarrier**. There's just enough room for the Star Voyager, Seghtee out." They look to each other and resume their course for the semiarmada. Li assumes formation and drifts over to the largest vessel the minicarrier. Landing inside from the rear Li and Lazarus exit into the flying garage and assumed a position on the deck of grates. The rooms were merged and the ship looked like the inside of a submarine sea craft. Li kept clear of the power conduits, some of them arcing of static.

Through the 'clamp and seal' doors Li entered amongst an elite gamma force team locking and loading for their covert mission ahead. Seghtee enters from the cockpit and greets Li and his navigator. "Captain, these two men have been drilled to operate the secondary panels in the middle room of the Star Voyager. This will make you're ship a more competitive battle craft. I'm having an additional chair erected and secured in the right corner, behind navigation, for me. The elite team will remain in the rear quarter until we can discern a **drop-off opening**." Li was silent briefly and responded. "Understood sir..." The Admiral was adamant in his demeanor. "Is there a ranking structure for this scenario?" Li questioned. "You're still the Captain. You are in control any ship performance related issues. You will assume the position of acting helmsman with a command rank. Lazarus will remain at his post and continue to perform his duties as Lieutenant in the event a command situation happens." Lazarus was okay with his position and eager to start. "The men in the back will be at your command as ensigns. Use them in any way you see fit for the safety and integrity of our craft. I will control our actions and vectors."

"Understood sir..." Li said. "You have fifteen minutes to prepare yourselves, let's load up." Seghtee announced.

Li filled his SES with classic weapons additional to his modern. Li arms his discharge guns for both he and Lazarus and Lazarus is permitted his side-mounted projectile pistol. With the addition of special supplies introduced by the Admiral the ship and its new crew were ready to go. The Star Voyager backed out of the **Freighter Minor** and assumed formation. The mood like that of the first day of school entered and Seghtee's presence, both honorable and awkward, yet, not so much so as to be a distraction, weighed in.¹ Li and Lazarus both felt proud to have the SMD personnel on board, nevertheless. Lazarus makes regular reports on ship status and velocity ranges while Li prepares the computer for battle. They had both coordinated in keeping an eye on the formation amongst other things. There were times of enthuse and times of silence. During the quiet hours and after Seghtee's surprise playing of some kind of combat media over Li's music sound system, he relieved the tense crewmen temporarily and people moved about freely on board. Regarding the tunes Li found it a bit odd, yet seemed to be effective having assumed a mood of diligence and a taste for freedom-fighting by the [drummy space sounds](#).

The stars to port and starboard were drifting along as they neared their first "**defense point**." The former Resistance base at B-00053 was the first raid target, which was expected to be empty, yet no stone would be left unturned, as the Admiral would say. It was then Li saw the image appear before him softly illuminate his console area and in the midst was the light the face of Xila whom he missed dearly and had not had the chance to contact. Seghtee looks up toward Li's area and sees the illumination yet does not acknowledge it as anything notable even though it wasn't coming from a discernable source. Seghtee's mind convinced him that there must be a source and he resumes his tedious preparations tinkering with his newly mounted operations console behind Lazarus before his lightly padded tempchair. The battle-ready martial-assembly continues onward of B-00053.

Refugees

Feeno awakens for another day of bust ass amongst his small group of unidentifiable prisoners some of them SMD. Others were alien and he was not allotted a translation mask so he could not speak to them. The humans were mute likely by the hands of the resistance—perhaps a trachea operation. He knew not that he was underground and far from the safety of the renowned Star City. Being captured Feeno had yet achieved quite a time of task keeping about the craggy job sit outside. His days of hard labor working in the other system of C-00101 system bore the fruit of stilted, rock, side-structures which Feeno took credit for much of the labor. If this were part of the Citizen's Labor Volunteer Program he would have amassed a small wealth by now. The same could be said for the tired and sleepy refugees held captive here at D-00337. Fed only enough to function, their bodies and stimulated with drugs at work time they lay restfully hoping for freedom.

The ignorant and demanding dunces of iniquity are allowed an escalated rank between the outcast Resistance volunteers and the captured prisoners. So far, the interrogations offered by Beltran and his aids brought about little beatings. The extreme demand in labor necessity is to thank for the blessing next to the higher power. Feeno was not powerless to make an attempt to free himself from beneath the soil of the crusty planetoid nor could he withstand the vacuum and temperature extremes outside. The door retracted and the blinding main chamber light pours in—a new prisoner deposited. He was an alien of the Delphinidae genus. He was having respiratory trouble as his workday was quite strenuous and he was in need of additional breathing gasses not present in the stale cell air.

Fish men are indeed very strong yet fragile in many ways. This kind of labor is not appropriate for their buoyancy residing nature. Laying on his back his chests rises and falls with arms aspread and the other chest mounted. His longish purple tongue laid aside his cheek salivating into a tiny puddle. The Resistance took advantage of the Oassians technologically simple nature and abducts them. This Oassian appears, judging by his dress, to be a traveled civilian perhaps taken from somewhere about inner Star City. Regarding the Oassians home planet, it was unlikely the Resistance would be able to even approach the HR- 8832 star system without a heavy SMD response. This supported the theory that the distressed Oassian before his eyes was a tourist. Feeno was enraged nonetheless as he look upon this suffering and dehydrated man of the sea. The door opens again this time to see food placed upon the floor and Feeno chased the sinister guard back out of anger. He then distributes the food to the needy prisoners and feeds the gargling Fishman.

An Ominous Target

The members of the convoy sat poised for combat as they approached the small planet where Li had previously rescued Feeno a month ago or so. The little surfaceside base dug in a ways into the cliff face, was dark, and silent—no energy, lights, or emissions present. Seghtee ordered everyone to stay back. The amount of explosives, which could be contained in the abandoned base of the nemesis, could be enormous. “There are no bioelectric signals, no automated mechanism detectable Admiral.” Lazarus reported. His initiative was premature. Seghtee corrected him to wait before initiating any emissive scans. The importance of orders was stressed with good reason. The deserted hideout remained an ill-boding endangerment and momentary silence was upon the control deck of the Star Voyager. Finally the Admiral spoke up ordering a handful of personnel to approach the base on foot. It was time to deposit the team. Li almost requested to go with the assault party yet held his tongue foreseeing another opportunity later. He knew inside, this base was empty and the Admiral’s suspicion was valid. The arms loaded soldiers were suited and Li moved in close along the jagged surface. The two backup pilots in the middle cabin entered the cockpit to wait for repressurization. The elite force entered the middle and, though only a fraction of the full team, would unload from the bottom hatch. The ground crunched beneath their feet and the lead commander of the gamma force-*b* waved his men ahead. In the black starry sky above hovered the swarm of KMD Icewings and attack fighters afar sided with a few middle positioned minifrieghts. They were using the **army ant formation**.

On the ground hurrying up toward the enclosure, the lead point man took note of the event marks left behind where Feeno made his daring evasion before still indented in the plaster-of-cast volcanic soil. The upcoming ground holes were confirmed to be the previous work of the Star Voyager’s weapons equipment. Ducking and moving the team closed in on the entrance head of the CRC shelter near the cliff face. One man of valor inched his way closer while his team stood by behind the pitted meteorites of old. Arriving at the entrance archway he grips his powerful SMD emission rifle waiting for motion or attack. His multispectral goggles laid before his eyes the emptiness of the adversary’s inlet. No enemy targets were detected on any frequency. The commander waved the other soldiers inward and instructed the remaining to keep watch.

The men searched the empty facility and found it to be devoid of life other than them. Additionally it was relayed to the outside watchers by way of helmet communication to also be vacant of any weapons or technology. Behind the perimeter, two specialists approached the scene, between them a bulky scanning device. The soldiers were given the signal to retreat and they returned to the low flying Star Voyager. The detection squad also withdrew and upon securing themselves inside their designated craft activated the deep level scanner. Nothing was detected in the base walls, rock face behind the shelter, or underground to a maximum depth. The information was relayed to the flagship Voyager and Lazarus reported to the Admiral. “Nothing sir...”

“Okay Captain, take us back to the convoy.” Li complies and the ship arcs away to rejoin the main group. “Charge the antiproton laser. Set to maximum intensity. Destroy the outpost.” Lazarus targets the facility and the dreaded stream of antinucleons flares the marked region into atomic energy. The laser had emitted from the angling ball at the end of the anti proton barrel a few degrees down toward the target region as it was designed. The old base was not completely destroyed by the first hit and the Admiral orders it finished into nothingness. Lazarus accedes and obliterates the remaining sections in flaming trails of blazing atomic liberation. Dropping from the bowels of a few Krystonian gun carriers, a short series of **detection mines** as the convoy impels onward.

The Last Straw

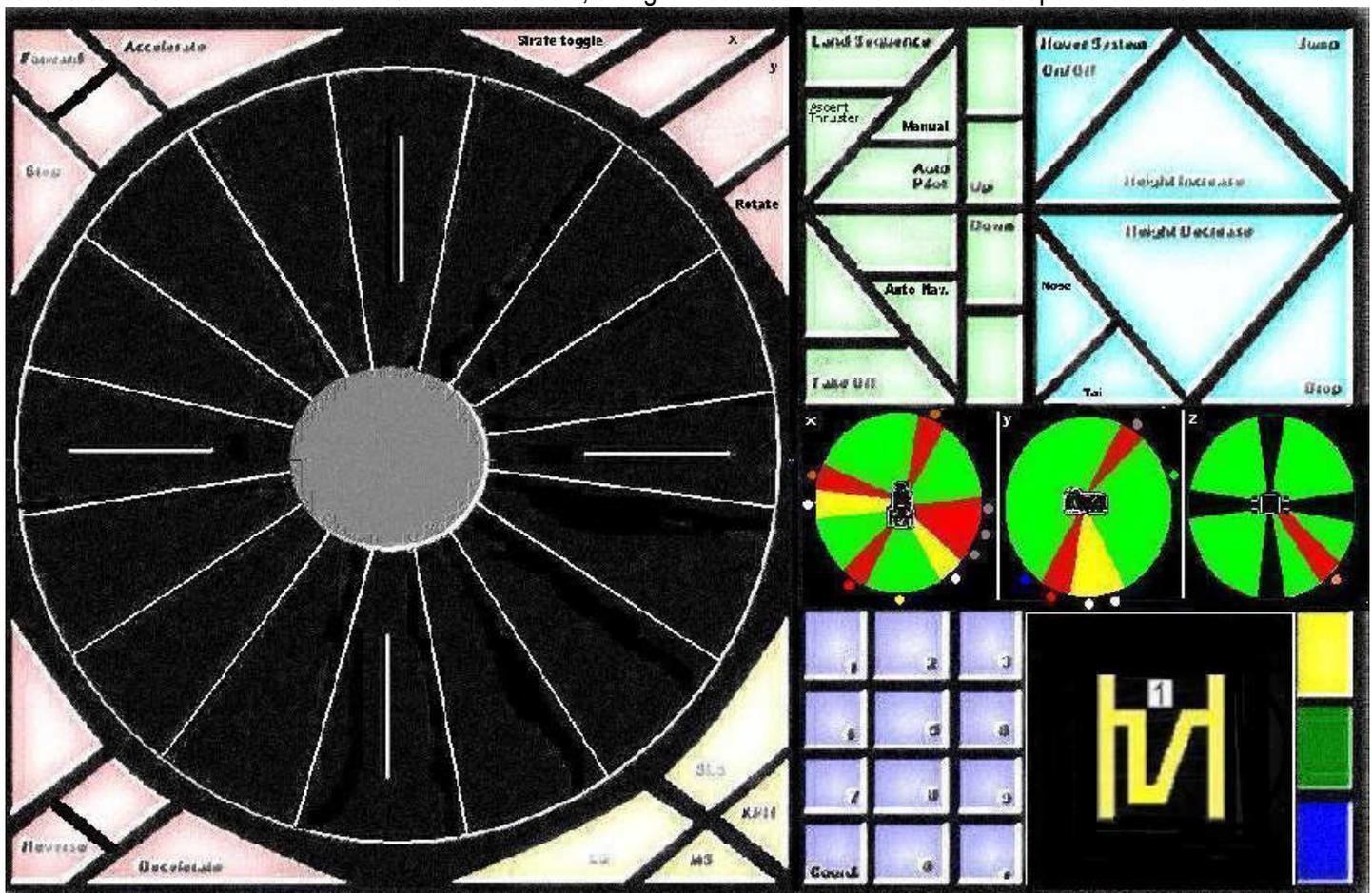
Feeno had seen enough. The injurious, mistreating, and murderous overwork of the innocent citizens became intolerable. He had to do something. For every hurt frailty delved into the work-yard drew him closer to a potentially fatal retaliatory effort. Yet in his heart he found honor in the event of perishing for the cause of freedom for the innocent. But, it wasn’t easy. Feeno had a distinguished career and was the receptor of numerous awards. His friends and loved ones which this deep down lonely SMD agent treasured were sitting peaceful and joyous at the Mars Barr enjoying the cosmic day. This feeling alone was enough to motivate the fed-up Feeno. The programming of training in about his intellect executed and his mind began to analyze.

There were no power sources but the single, glowing, lantern of special exothermically reactive material, not much different than childish fun stickers perhaps. Nonetheless, the ambient light in the dungeon was barely enough to see and the

doorway is blinding upon its parting. Yet there remained another mechanism, which Feeno could access and perhaps use to his advantage—the mechanism of psychology. So far the only guard being sent to the alleged inescapable chamber beneath the hostile planet's surface was disgruntled incepts. Feeno was in good shape so far having not made any directed aggressive actions toward the cognitively unstable watchdog. He recalls his instructor's sermon back at the private SMD agent development school. He saw the image of the guard's last appearance; how he grinned sinisterly at the site of the distressed Fishman as he scrutinized his flopping figure to the point of overconfidence. On his face the reddish fire of wickedness following his demonic snicker. There may be a brief moment of time to somehow rush the individual when he repeats his **psychocycle**.

The door opens again and Feeno's plan was not complete. He was ordered to stand and follow the guard who, just as Feeno predicted, was staring at his prisoners with perverted pleasure. At that moment as he pass the armed guard and into the airlock he is made to wear a temporary space suit foul and filthy no less, yet his first premonition forms in his mind as he squeezes into the suit; the after-glow of the face of Seiwan Li. He recalled then the conversation and banter he had in the control room of the Star Voyager on their way to Delta P. He didn't know how but something spoke to his belly and told him of an imminent event shift. The Convoy had traveled for nearly forty-eight hours and was soon to cross the .C. band. Li threw a message over to Jered having recently discovered his backseat radar dataists position behind the skilled KMD pilot in the adjacent Icewing a few rows over. He had picked up the cross talk during Lazarus primary channel sync ordered by the Admiral.

Li used the little beta panel backup screen on his pilot's panel in the lower right corner, which provides a simpler substitute for the functions of the actual beta console, though not so detailed. He was able to open a channel to



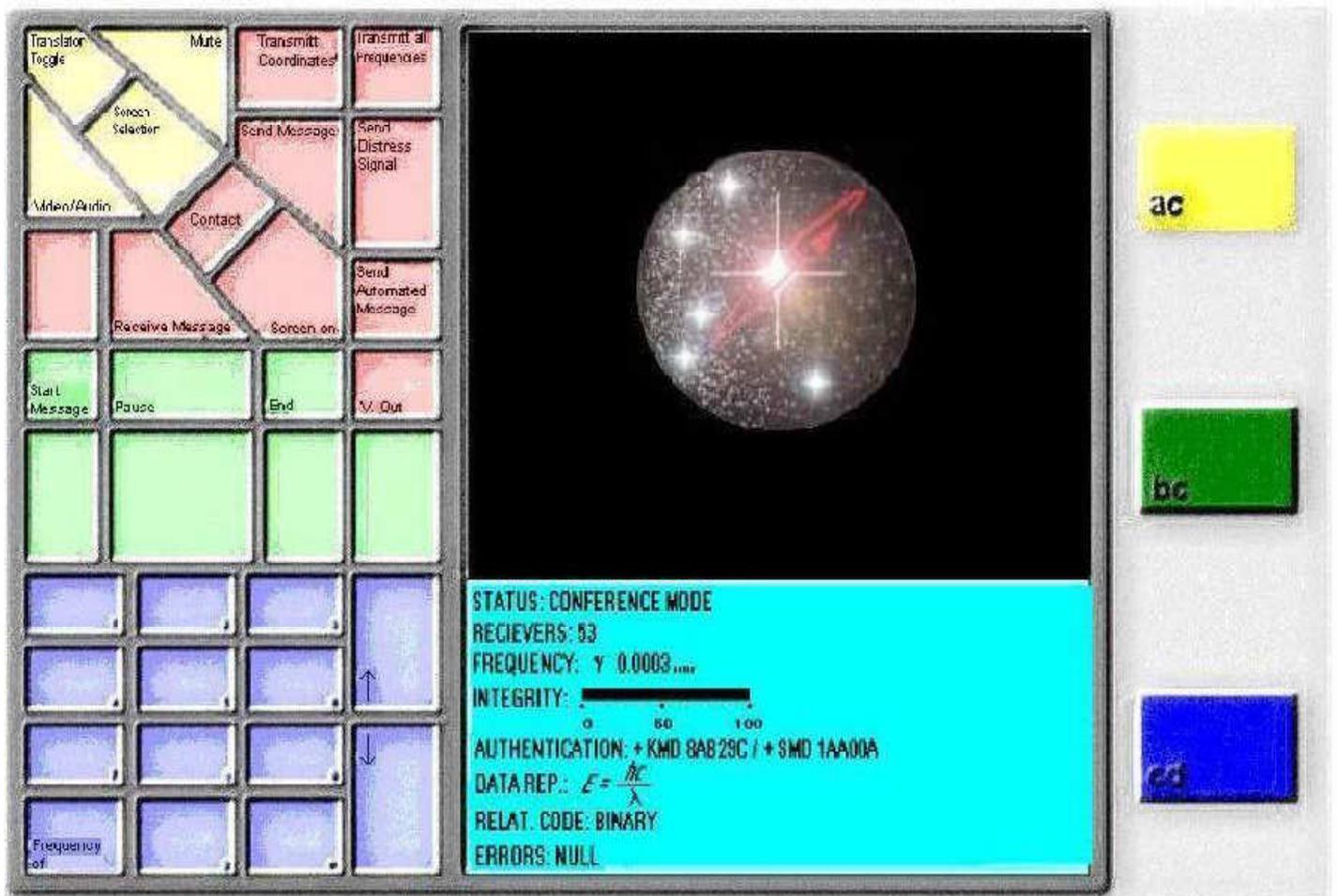
The Pilot's Panel

Jered and did so without the Admiral's orders. He wasn't worried about any objections from Seghtee. In his thinking it was as good of a time as any to test the limits of the SMD Admiral's commandeering overtake to see how far he would take his command. He was okay with the communication and Li had brief low tone conversation with Jered and inquired as to Xila's whereabouts hoping instead not to come to the knowledge of her presence in this attack fleet. She was not present and Li

exhaled. Lazarus casually glances at Seghtee to try and perceive his emotional status about Li contacting another vessel in the convoy for dialog not directly relevant to the mission at hand. He was still okay with it.

The voyage was long and uneventful during these trips between star systems but the people in the convoy remained on guard. Still a slight look of notice on Seghtee's face was present as he tapped and focused his gaze onto his own glittering button console. Lazarus slowly scanned to the other side of the bridge taking notice of the cables connecting to Li's alpha panel. Li had noticed also. They were not present when the computer techs connected the Admiral's panel, which took place during the team preparation back at the beginning of the convoy launch. "Does this mean the Admiral could override Li's master console?" Laz wondered. In theory the Admiral's computer may be perceived by the Star Voyagers **A.I. circuitry** as a new master interface, another alpha panel. Li trusted the Admiral who so far has not lost his edge. A sudden discomfort came over Li and he requested to be excused from the cockpit temporarily, was approved, and was requested to send in the port side backup pilot from the middle to replace his position during his absence. The chattering substitute personnel quieted when the ship captain entered their area and Li acknowledged them, instructed the back up to report to the control room, and he complied respectfully.

Li enters the rear compartment full of the SMD Gamma Team with guns in hand though appropriately angled. Li was nervous about the crystal he had stashed. He looked toward the compartment where he hid it behind the wall inside the thruster assembly bulkhead. It had not been opened. Li relieves himself in the mini latrine, acknowledged the elite specialists afterward, and returns to the front. "Captain, how is our team?" The Admiral asked looking for an update as the control room doors retract. "They're in good standing sir." The secondary crewman returns to his post in the middle cabin. "Everyone be ready." The Admiral instructed. "We're about to enter the "C" zone. Let's get a fleet-wide head count." Lazarus was punctual in initiating the appraisal from his communications console. The feeling was shared across the fleet. Somehow everyone knew there would be an assault in this band.



[The Communications Screen](#)

Most of the fleet was on active scanning mode while the Admiral instructs Li to maintain stealth and fall back from the front line. Li decays their relative speed and begins to take up the rear as the battle ready group approaches the next star system. An emergency alert spreads across the company as the unveiling of three primary CRC command post were detected in three different locations in the C-00101 system. The back-hinded Star Voyager waits for the Admiral's orders. Li, who upon hearing of the three, virtual bases displays his first expression of discontinuity, it wasn't clear why the resistance would suddenly reveal the location of their enemy fortresses. No doubt it was part of a fiendish plan, which was about to erupt into battle. The question was which would be the first to attack. The cabin was silent. Itchy trigger fingers of over a hundred men and women wait for his next instruction.

The comm. Traffic silence finally broke of the adamant voice of the Admiral "Full speed ahead into C-00101, attack nearest base target, spread out." The vessels accelerate traveling at high speed whereas back home they would be breaking no-wake zone regulations. It was within the half hour that they arrived in the vicinity to a swarm of CRC battle craft including the new piranha fighter contingent which arc at the site of the now shattering SMD convoy. Back-following Avengers release their turbulent discharges of luminescent orbs pouring from their barrels and the scattering SMD/KMD alliance force is pelted.

There amongst the planetary system the Battle of C-00101 begins with a chaotic veering of clusters of luminous vessels and directed ship fire. Thrusters were flaring fighters were spinning and ships were sank in this initial space combat dogfight. The little helmet and glove piece awareness light, which had been hanging from the start shined in its timely cue. In the event of a hull breach the clamping lifesavers can be found also hung across the control room wall. The Star Voyager was not completely apart of the battle. They had gotten off a few destroyer cannon blasts to start the day off but the Admiral had ordered Li to skew off to a covert position. Their combat readiness status however remained uncompromised. The immediate region viewing the not so distant C-00101 star and nearby giants brought no shortage of ambush locals chase ducks for long pursuits and they were used. The immediate region was trafficked by rapidly maneuvering space superiority fighters. Li's initiative, which was played upon by the Admiral, was to loop around to a terrestrial moons underbelly promptly assumed a covert tactical standpoint.

The Super Ship

The pad was clear and the dense looking donut shaped craft lifted from the CRC main complex at D-00337. Beltran, Cyril, Feeno, the Matron scientist and two goofy guards accompanied. Feeno's straps were too tight and the Matron had a tired determination about them. They seemed as if they had their fill of an overdrawn meal. As he gazed at the brilliant duo he sensed a plan and in him swelled consensus. Beltran was locating on his controls a predestinated location to test the ships ability. Cyril had a plan of his own his hip-side vaporizer a continuous threat. There was space enough for a front mounted view screen, which was toward the missing hub of the vessel, two facing chairs forward, and three more along the wall. Feeno had yet to decipher the significance behind the ships design. Along the port and starboard floor line were two large metal boxes apparently containing component assemblies. The boxed were suspended above the ground connected to a hydraulic puller entering the forward wall through a hole.

As Feeno studied it calmly and a little fascinated he had deduced that maybe the long pullers meet in the center of the ship. In real the ring-like craft had no middle. The speed indicator on the panel wasn't very fast only a shocking 0.5c. far too slow for interstellar travel. Success, Feeno had determined the Matron's plan! He could sense something by the way they explained information to Beltran and Cyril about craft functionality. The mathematics was mind blowing and the Matron was ahead of Cyril and Beltran as Feeno deciphered. Whatever this vessel was it seemed in theory the fate of Star City fell upon Matron hands' now.

The two doors at the sidewalls, to the left and right, appeared to lead through the circular interior maybe around the ship and back through the other door. The Matron was holding their composure well, yet grieved at not staying ahead of Cyril repeated questioning. Bal had managed to keep them from understanding the function of the out of view components and the nature of the physics, which the ship utilized. Unim was unsuccessful in preventing Beltran from memorizing how to travel to different locations upon initiating a four-dimensional vector. Bal saw in his mind a threatening ship, the one Beltran and Cyril owned, and he worried. "Cyril I want **The Intervener** here with us." Beltran said. "I'm sending the encoded transmission to activate the automated pilot, it should be joining us within the hour."

“We should have done that in the beginning.” He said. “Get it here fast. I don’t want anyone to intercept the Intervener.” “I will do.”

The Spinning Tables

The conflict was aggressive and both competitors were incurring casualties. The Star Voyager had run into trouble even though it was no longer near the main battlegrounds. Stray vessels were pursuing the flagship and the crew onboard diverted their primary target search to lose the diligent Avenger Piranha duo. Nearly every weapons reservoir was discharged to stop its predatorial pursuers. Left over from the obliterated but fierce Piranha was the debris of bulkheads of arc-welded framework. Torpedoes were exchanged between the Star Voyager and the Avenger and Lazarus saved the day with his timely *incoming* reports.

Li’s trust also played a part in getting the ship out of the line of the second doomsday torpedo the first having detonated closely, jarring the ship into a dizzy stray. Seghtee remained silent during the fast paced action which Li and Lazarus had most of the control over. The Avenger pilot, though exhausting the shields and power charge cycles of the Star Voyager, was meeting his limits essentially taking on the concentration and brainwork of four gunmen at their posts. The Avenger was destroyed after a close-neck duel. The site of glowing red hot debris and the violent bolts of energy sparking from breeched atomic particle bins in the wreckage caused quiet come over the bridge and the pinging was slowed as well.

Seghtee was focused on the forward screen out into the cosmos holding his chin while Li initiate damage repairs. “Navigation, have the computer recall the incoming trajectory of those two ships. I have a hunch about their origins.” The Admiral requested. Lazarus complies and appearing on the forward viewer a computer generated schematic of the sensor time index imager. Seghtee refers to the star charts program which showed lines representing the crafts previous paths and taps the rotation button a couple of times enough to get a three dimensional feel for their previous entrance. “Captain, redirect our course for the following coordinates.” The Admiral said after ascertaining something important. Li acknowledges and finds Seghtee’s suggested course to be the original approach vector of the enemy duo defeated moments ago.

The strike force that had been dropped off from the Star Voyager a while ago was on its way around the small planet advancing on the main complex. The use of small hovering craft aided their progress over the rough ground, which zipped by at high rate. The other two dummy bases, noticed earlier, fractured the band of KMD and modified SMD spacecraft into separate target groups, which was the plan of the enemy. On the ground of the other base targets the other two contingents met with heavy gunfire where the CRC had mounted inside the empty base heads rapid-fire target lasers and machine guns. Made especially for the arcing vessels in space, large, high yield gamma cannons. Though invisible to the naked eye the intense radiation beams could be seen erupting from the cannon wells in an eye-piercing white blaze of super heated metals inside the cannon.

Jered, sitting behind his combat pilot, had switched his task from radar dataist and navigation to tactical and weapons control. His rapid weapons processing maintained a steady threat to dive-bombing fighter storms. The Icewings proved to be a worthy opponent but more were being lost by the Avengers multipronged assault strategies. At that time the SMD pilots controlling the Krystonian gun carriers we’re noted as quoting their desire for the standard SMD type-2 military fighters in addition to the civilian ship limitation they were under. The KMD engineers back on Krysto were not happy about the comparison. The Battleship Mediator remained in its orbit of Krysto and every moment of absence from the far off skirmish in the C-00101 system frustrated the combat-eager crew. The KMD however had already launched another wave of ships days ago headed for the system and backup was scheduled to arrive hourly.

It was too late to find out the strategy of the CRC for this battle. They had already lost too many vessels due to the pounding gamma cannon and high-powered defense shield combo. Discovering the emptiness of the two manless structures, one aface of the moon of a gas giant the other anchored to the surface of a nearby yet wayward meteorite, the vessels retreated back to the main battle at the war torn planet around the burning red star C-00101. The team of ground combat specialist let off earlier, with intentions of traversing the circumference of the rugged planetoid, maintains their journey to the primary target. The floating flight aboard the bike-sized hovering machines was interrupted upon nearing the guarded former headquarters of the Resistance. An on-foot stroll through the dark, shadowy crags became necessary.

The team commander prepared his team with on-the-spot instructions as they made their way through the maze of cliffs and boulders, Hiding anywhere amongst the shadows could be inconspicuous ambush nests harboring Resistance soldiers waiting for a surprise attack. The purpose of the Hovercraft malfunction had yet to be determined and such an analysis

would have to wait. Their adrenaline was rushing, their rifles were gripped tight, and the Gamma Team pressed on for the enemy base in which they closed the gap of proximity. Surprisingly there were few enemy soldiers found hiding in the darkness of the terrain. Most were unaware of the advancing Gamma Team and were promptly imprisoned in their spots of discovery. Having approached the edge of the flatland the climbing gear had to be utilized to reach the top of the minimesa. Peeking over the cliff the first of the team peered onward to survey the final battlefield. The artificially created landslide area amid the steep edged cliff tops had become a glittering surface of weapons fire now that the elite SMD force had arrived. The surface was gritty and the boulders were less numerous as the proficient team of specialist's transverse the surface to try and seize the main complex. A "no sound" policy was implemented so far not being violated by the light-footed group even in the vacuum vibrations can still be heard.

Peering over a small rock face they could see a ways down into a small lunar basin the blazing guns of the base as it wiped out the flying tigers above. Debris sprinkled down upon the surface sometimes in large chunks of fuming ship hulls with materials spewing from previously enclosed housings now undergoing chemical change. They knew they had to take that gun emplacement out quickly. The gamma leader twirled his finger ordering a flank maneuver in order to close on the gun booth viewed from his zooming helmet-integrated binoculars. A couple of snipers remained dug-in there off in the distance while the advancing remnants attained a closer position for the long distance shootout. Upon receiving the signal from the now distant, clash-primed greater-soldiers, the handy projectile rifle penetrates the energy shield and headshots were counted. The CRC, in their hasty pressure to fend off the heavy KMD onslaught, failed to defend the use of standard bullet fire, which was not deflected. The modified ammo contained special oxygen pellets necessary for vacuum use. The main gun ceased its reign on the skyward region of engagement having lost the control of its capped-off gunners. The soldiers moved in on the facility for a vicious indoor ground fight.

Proceeding Off-course

The Star Voyager was now hours away approaching the "D" band on the Admiral's hunch. They were unknowingly headed for D-00337. Once they got near they would no doubt start detecting things. If found this final Resistance threat could well be nearing its conclusion. Lazarus hones in on the strange slow moving vessel traveling perpendicular to the Voyagers path and in the other direction. Li takes note and requests a pursuit. Seghtee concurs. "Have we been detected?". Seghtee asked. This meant to check the sensor logs to see if the scans of the enemy ship had been deflected back at them to any degree. *Essentially functioning as a controllable lightning rod, the defect in the stealth mechanism promotes the amplitude that the collectively harnessed incident emissions could potentially divert the energies of the scanning craft back at it instead of in a stream in any other direction, away, though an exponentially small chance at best.*

The occupants of the strange vessel were not confirmed to have detected of the hidden Star Voyager. The black, tank, invisoship hovers close to the strange looking prey vessel. "Strange configuration..." The Admiral quoted. "Admiral..." Li called. He spins in his chair and faces the Admiral. "This could be the super ship rumored to have been constructed with the Matron's assistance!" Li exclaimed. "I agree. Can we disable them?" He returns facing his panel. "I'm not sure." Lazarus intervened. "I can't get a clean fix on wherever their engine thrust is coming from. The stealth program won't let me scan anything right now. I'm not quite sure how it is moving." He finished. "That's alright." The Admiral said. "I'm working on a plan to board it right now." ...As he taps diligently on his viewer. "Sir wait, the ship is moving off at high speed." Lazarus reported. "Pursue. Have they detected us?"

"I don't think so sir. They are only traveling at 1c and their vector doesn't match any classic evasion course."

"I'd say that is a no. Maintain stealth. Let's see where they go."

The crew follows the ring-shaped spacecraft for over half an hour. It's sudden landing upon a far off sashaying pair of minor planets gives the Admiral reason to land The Star Voyager nearby, concealed behind the crag ridges of this small rock body alone with its like companion there in the deepness of space. "Captain here is the plan." The Admiral began. "I'm sending you and Lazarus on an excursion mission. It's up to you to stop the pilot inside. The backup crew and I will command Voyager. Can you accept the mission?" Li pondered a spell soon to nod with confidence in the Admiral. Li and Lazarus suit up, load their charged energy pistols, and exit onto the little planet. Li was impressed where the Admiral had told him how to land, over a large crack only four feet deep. This was a very secure sitting. If they were to come running back they could immediately jump into the crag space and enter below as they have exited now.

The size of this mini world of craters and stones was more than Mars yet only a trace of an atmosphere hazed the plains no higher than a skyscraper with blackness and stars above. The gravity was just over half that felt on Earth and linier winds could be felt as they stamped down upon the surface of pebbles and stone. Li watched as the vessel began moving again. It hovered toward a small cliffside and entered a carved hatchway. "Li to the Admiral, there is a garage here. The vessel just entered."

"Grab on. We'll take you closer." He responded. Li and Lazarus dangled from the opened bottom hatch as the ship moved a kilometer or so nearer to the secret hanger. Leaping from the rungs of the bottom hatch, the two rookie infiltrators approached the camouflaged structure and peered into the long bay watching as the super ship entered a second enclosure inside. Large inlet doors contract and Li contacts the Admiral. "Sir, we need to find a way into this hangar." They hiked a spell around the rocky enclosure coming about a corner side out of view and walking down the wide cave neck. "We've got large steel doors blocking our way in." Li reported. "Come around from there. We can see another entrance on the side rock face. "Understood..." They scamper around to find the small doorway leading to the interior. "Li stand back." The Admiral said. "We can use the pulse laser on low intensity to torch-cut an opening." The two men-at-arms stand aside while the door flares blindingly and they close their helmet visors. Soon an oval shaped plate plops to the ground scattering pebbles and powder and they enter.

The area therein was essentially a small warehouse containing different arrays of tools and engineering parts. Li sneakily navigates the dark place relying on the night vision in his helmet. A sudden motion as he neared the wall draws his gun and a teeth-bearing growl. No hostile targets were visible and the movement turned out to be the reaction of an auto door. Li waves his comrade in behind him and the door closes behind them. The short hall ahead led to another entrance hatch this time bearing the transparency of a small square glass window. Li peered in spotting the Matron, Feeno, and the dastardly Beltran working the main [console](#). Cyril was locking his rifle in the wall cabinet with Beltran's to prevent them from being ceased by anyone but them. Secondly he pocketed the keys. Feeno was tied to the fluid pipes against the wall and the lightweight Matron men were cuffed to a rail.

Beltran handed Cyril the appropriate serum and he injected the Matron who became acutely delirious. Li contacted the Admiral and informed that he had a visual on Feeno and the Matron. "Standby..." He said. Formulating a plan with Lazarus and they blow the doors with their high-powered pulse blasters seizing the room. The air pressure lessened slightly having filled the empty cavity of the back entrance hall, though not enough to incapacitate the unsuited parties. There remained a good eighty-five percent pressurization measure. Cyril had not a chance to apprehend his gun from the locker and the hands of Li and Lazarus incapacitated the accompanying soldiers via energy discharge blasts. "Freeze..." Li said stringently. "Don't move." With one hand Li disconnects his helmet placing it on his thigh mount, as does Lazarus. "We finally caught you." He said to the glaring saber-toothed Cyril.

In the eyes of Li, Cyril saw something, almost as if Li were in pain. He watched as his leg quivered and Li shifted his position. Something was bothering him perhaps a chaffing suit piece. Cyril watched closely waiting for a distracting event, as did Beltran. Suddenly, Li unlatches his suit clamps and the torso of the suit splits open sideways. He grabs the piping above performing a one arm pull-up still training his pistol. Performing an impressive chin-up, a sample of his Ninja practice, he slides from his vacuum armor. "What are you doing?" Lazarus asked. Li still with his pistol in hand on the two Resistance criminals removes his urine bag to dispose of the filled relief container. "I was overflowing." He whispered. "I had to go." Cyril believing in his agility had made a move to grab the pistols on the floor formerly belonging to the incapacitated backup guards and the vaporizing discharge of Li's intense accuracy melts the sought after weapons. But Beltran quick on the panel takes advantage of Cyril's distraction and initiates a hangar-wide EMP pulse disabling the electric components of their rifles. Cyril halts in his stance knowing their guns no longer functioned with hands in air and a murderous glare and Beltran charges them. Cyril lunges for his weapons locker soon to find his hand pierced by the blade of a shuriken thrown by Li. Lazarus takes a stance against Beltran who prepares for a fight. "They won't work anyway." Beltran said still staring into the fearless eyes of Lazarus. The EMP had penetrated the locker and all guns in the room were disabled. The super ship, which sat visible nearby remained unpowered yet shielded from the electrodynamic disruption field of EMP.

Additionally the magnetically shielded console remained active. Beltran and Cyril's precautions almost bought them the moment in this surprise raid by Li and Lazarus. Cyril charged Li power kicking him backward and Lazarus boxes with Beltran. The unsuited Li begins a full combat duel with the agile catman. His hand claws curled and pointed and sharply threatening, slithers fourth of their fleshy slittish enclosures. Li's eyes widen and he scans his memory for relevant training. In a flash he recalls his teacher's training curriculum, unarmed against the Ninja Bear claw and tiger claw. The rapid fisticuff

challenge wasn't easy given Cyril's vicious feline emotions during combat. Incurring deep scraps, Li maneuvers and shifts fighting styles improvising a makeshift way of adjusting to Cyril's lashing and swatting. Cyril didn't appear to be using any particular martial arts yet mimicked a pattern closely relating the tiger style. Nevertheless, Li was taking a beating and Lazarus grappled fiercely with Beltran relying on his old college wrestling training pins. Li managed to hurt Cyril's fingers using the Buddhist palm on the outer curled end of his claws in a well-timed vibrating impact. It seems cat claws are weak and sensitive from the back Li noticed. Still Li had received a punishing number of blows and cuts from the skilled Felidae.

The bloody fight was over once the Admiral and accompanying backup officer entered. Cyril and Beltran were captured. Li then released Feeno and the Matron. "Captain, are you okay?" Li affirms even in the face of cut lip, torn uniform and bloody grooves across his chest, bloodlines running down his abdomen. "We'll take them to The Star Voyager. You get inside the super ship and analyze its functions." The Admiral ordered "Where is the best place to hold them?" The Admiral inquired. Li was worrisome having remembered the crystal again. "The middle compartment, you can lock the back and control room doors from the cockpit." The Admiral orders the two men to search the standard SES's hung from the wall which belonged to Beltran and Cyril but were already in the hangar. They were not personal and the confirmed no hidden weapons therein. They forced the two captives to put them on and the Admiral and his escort sees them out.

Li didn't re-suit having spent so many hours inside and drags his SES into the super ship just in case. They began studying the controls and were concerned at the lack of instructions and function menus. They could not be sure how to work it just yet. Lazarus finally gave in and removed his musty suit noticing Li's comfort in having it off for a change. They man the brain-tickling console of the super ship.

Chapter 4

Out of Time

The Admiral held a keen eye on the two most wanted prisoners as they approach the hovering Star Voyager. The sharp vigilance of Feeno spotted the inward bound diamond-shaped Spaceship Intervener as it coasts above. Beltran's well-programmed A.I. brings about the unexpected opening of warning weapons fire down upon the group shattering the ground nearby. The men dive for cover, Cyril and Beltran escape on foot out onto the rocky plains, and their sleek destroyer class fighter intercepts them. Seghtee and the back up crew made a hasty run into the Star Voyager and takes off along the surface of the planet at high hovering speed.

The snickering and immensely elated Beltran and Cyril pursue the slightly inferior Star Voyager and a surface chase ensues. Inside the hangar the door on the super ship retracts and Li gets the vessel hovering again. Lazarus had checked the doors leading to the remaining ships interior and finds the same setup in his walk around the donut, rows of the box and hydraulic pulley mechanisms encircling the vessel at specific intervals like a starfish. Neither of the two truly understood the engineering behind the vessel yet the startling rumble of the cavern told a tale of an outdoor battle. Lazarus played with his panel successfully imaging a proximity display and told Li that there was another ship in the vicinity according to the emission detection readings before him.

The entrance opens again and Li yells to Laz to run outside to time the bay doors and he does. He had to program the computer to open the doors after a few seconds long enough for him to jump back into the super ship and the bay is opened. All of the fresh oxygen in the bay got wasted. Li maneuvered the craft using the handle before him much like his own ship and steers down the elongated exit bay and onto the planetary surface. Li finally located the thruster control interface and brought the vessel into space. Assuming the nifty ship, which was getting more and more workable by the minute, was designed for combat, Li attempted to follow the signal of the new vessel, which had appeared on Laz's panel. Li then came into the knowledge that the Star Voyager was taking a beating.

Upon moving in close, Li confirmed his esteemed Voyager under fire from the advanced space-superiority cruiser craft of Beltran. They begin looking frantically for a weapons control and found none. Li knew they needed help. Lazarus was able to display the stats of the vessel, its outgunning physique alarmed them, and they feared for the lives of the men on board his ship. The chase ensues as Seghtee attempts to flee from the blazing hefty sortie of raw firepower. The controls were getting more usable except for a few curious switches and the slide stick assembly. The throttle and track at Li's left was gripped of his sweaty hand and he thrusts it forward for speed to catch up with the arcing battleships. The super ship re-angles facing an unscheduled vector and zooms away at 0.25 times the speed of light. Li could not control the ship and it seemed to operate under its own whims.

Suddenly something strange began to occur. The view screen in front displayed the rotating star field as the vessel began to spin. The boxes on the hydraulic pulleys began to hum and the electric buzz of magnetic resonance sounded of the cabin. Their hearts beat fast. The pulley system to the left and right began to retract slowly inward. Lazarus leaped from his chair opening the side doors again to confirm the other devices performing the same actions. The vessel shook somewhat and Lazarus fell back into his chair. His console showed the directed course toward the center of Star City. Lazarus was confused not knowing how to report the readings to Li. There were two velocity indicators one reading 0.25c and the other increasing exponentially passing 0.6c and still rising.

Faster and faster did the craft rotate and Li became concerned. "I don't think this is a super ship Laz." He yelled trying to voice over the buzzing, humming, and vibrating. The craft spun blazing fast and the second velocity now read 0.98c. "I'm going to stop this!" He yelled. He pulled the throttle again back this time and the vessel did not slow. Instead the box and pulleys retracted swiftly inward and they were pressed into their chairs as the fabric of space-time crumpled in on the crafts center. The vessel disappeared from sight in the visible universe.

Whisked Away

Awakening on the floor Li shook his slumbering comrade until he came-to. They manned their consoles promptly and the view screen displayed a starry background viewing a blazing yellow dwarf star. The box and pulleys were returned to their original extended position. They had been unconscious during the slowdown spin and they knew not their position in space.

“Any ideas...?” Li requested of Lazarus. I see one star and a nearby planet he said. Is it the hangar planet?” He asked. “I don’t think so. This one is bigger.” Laz responded. “Do you detect the Star Voyager or the enemy vessel?”

“No nothing, one planet, one moon and a yellow dwarf star with the exact profile as Earth’s Sun.”

“Let’s see the planet.” Li rotated the craft and faced the fleeing planet as it zooms through the curved space in orbit of the medium star afar. “The planet looks like Earth basically. The continents are nearly identical, but why are the land masses so dim and barren. There should be vegetation everywhere.” Lazarus reasoned. “We need to land this thing.” Li said taking note of the component heating indicators above his head. “I think Seghtee was right. This appears to be a super-fast spacecraft. No doubt the resistance built or acquired it to try to invade Star City. I’m not sure I believe my eyes when looking at this planet. We need to confirm where we are.”

“Well we’re nowhere near our original position. I still can’t locate the stellar positioner yet, if there even is one on-board”

“I recognize that constellation.” Li said pointing into the forward screen. “At least we seem to still be in our own corner of the galaxy.” Lazarus nods while peering upon the distant stars. “Wait Li, I’ve been looking into this scope deal setup over here. I think it’s a high gain scanner of some sort. I can see blips that look like the readings I would get on the Star Voyager if I were scanning for electro-chemical pulses of land dwelling life forms.”

“Is it like an EKG reading?” Li asked.

“Yes, they are weak readings but it is only coming from one place on the surface only a few tens of kilometers wide. There are also readings in this scope that resemble images of greenery, it’s more dense in that small region located in what on Earth would be the Middle East like near Jerusalem.”

“I’m taking us down on that planet. Maybe we can get some readings and soil samples from that region harboring the life forms and vegetation.”

Li steers toward the terminator of the strange world and descends from the skytop while the descent thrusters takeover for the twenty-minute touchdown sequence. The terrain of this world was a dusty dry desert with, only now visible, small spontaneous patches of green shrubbery stretched across hundreds of miles. There was normal vegetation about the rest of its face but none as eye-catching as the lush spot in the middle of the dryland. They touched down finally in the northern hemisphere atop the minimesa of the flat-topped mountain overlooking the vegetated area they sought to explore. A nice landing by Li and they were down securely.

Li reanalyzed the atmosphere and confirmed an oxygen nitrogen ratio before getting out. He grabbed his buck knife and a few other surveying instruments and he and Lazarus exit the craft. Gusty winds roll over the exotic landscape and tumbleweeds follows the wind. Dust and warm air rushed fourth swaying the little drab shrubbery. A visual scan reveals nothing of value on this dead planet and Li walked around to peer off of the cliffside. He called Lazarus promptly having located the spot very out of place. “Why do you suppose this oasis is here?” Lazarus questioned upon getting an eyeful of the lushness centered amidst dusty drabness of the desert. Even without the benefit of binocular assistance the blooming distant flora and fauna dazzled the eyes of the on-looking travelers. Li returned to grab his binoculars and confirmed to his astoundment the plot of flourishing fruits and flowers. Also the trotting of quadrupeds with furs of sheen gave view to the watchers and Lazarus used the binoculars next.



The Strange Oasis

Lazarus concluded his zoomed scan and looks to Li whose hair waved in the breezing wind. "I haven't got a clue." He spoke. "Here take this." He said and handed him a small chemistry assembly. "Take some soil samples while I work out the controls of this vessel, please."

"Understood..." Lazarus kneeled while Li entered the ship and begins playing with the controls this time taking care not to initiate another unexpected event. Scratching at the sand under him Laz collects minerals and soil into the holding container and prepares to utilize the eyedropper tool to get an indication of the primary contents reactive to the chemical in the dropper. Lazarus looked up again off the cliff at the strange oasis and he was startled. A beaming brilliance radiated through the openings in the distant canopies, which swayed aside as the large luminous object traverses under the forest tops. Lazarus screamed for Li who runs quickly outside the ship and confirms the sighting. Lazarus looks to Li again and he responds, "I have no clue."

"We'd better get down there, right."

"Yes." Lazarus attempts to re-enter the ship. "No, wait." Li said. "I think we should go on foot. Whatever is out there in that forest, I'd feel safer leaving our only mode of transportation safe up here." Lazarus agrees and looks on at the lights streaming through the tree shafts of yellow, white, and violet frequencies. About the opulent forest was a halo like that of an unfractured rainbow as if to be an encompassing glow. "It looks a good five or six kilometers out give or take." Lazarus estimated. "Agreed, let's at least use the hover to get us down off of this cliff top." Li and Lazarus re-enters the ship and drifts from atop the mesa to the Surface below. Li grabs some items from his duffle bag inside some previously attached to his SES and they set out. Across the desert and onward toward the extrinsic forest the dry sandy soil bore the deadened sprouts of shrubbery and weeds desperately yearning for the nourishing raindrops which do not fall.

The Entity

In the late evening the two walkers reached the edge of the woodland. Peering toward the interior they saw a landscape like none other. They had entered the region though not yet penetrating the bulk of the forest. The little critters around were not threatening and made innocent sounds. The ratio of blossoming plants increased as they went further inward. The air smelled of sweet pollen and the warming sun above allowed the rapid blooming of strange but wonderful looking posies. The fruits that budded in the forest did feed Li and Lazarus of its nourishing nectar.

The long hiking had winded them a bit and they rest upon a large rock protruding the ground. Li peered off of the rock seeing into the small green basin and sparkling clear pond of clean water below and they looked over the indescribable grasslands of lavish blossoms of the outlandish zone of enchanting vegetation. Li grabbed his binoculars and spoke to Lazarus telling him that he can see people down in the basin. Lazarus looks afterward replying, "What is this place?"

"The land of the naked people it looks like." Said Li noting the unclothed humanoids playing happily down by the deep blue pond, still of movement, yet somehow not stagnant or swampy.

In the singing of the elated couple of bare people they let fourth praise and their heads were of as a flame of fire and on their bellies were it as a flame also which burneth as a furnace from within. About them it looked as if they were behind uneven glass about their torso and heads. The rippling effect coming off of them immediately reminded Li of the hall of emeralds which he encountered months ago in the Sirius system and the strange humanoids they viewed seemed of great power. Li related the feeling to the chi energy elaborated upon in oriental science. Indeed he could feel a lot of chi coming from this entire area. There was environmental turbulence like what Li had experienced during his meditative practice a while ago on his way to see his Seefu. With the roaring of the wind and dimming of the sun the entity they saw earlier from the distant cliff returned of the sudden and passed above them.

When it neared they waved their arms out toward it and their heads became of as the light of the floating creature of three powers. The thoughts of both Li and Lazarus were equally perplexing. As they gaze upon the counterclockwise circling things they began to see definitions about them. The *object of sharpness* was blue-bright and wisdom transmitted thereof and fourth did it go unto the earth and the living beings of the forest. And Lazarus looked upon the *object of light* and it was as the Sun and its shine brought forth the light of the sharp one and they did go round about one another. And the third object looked like *that of a patriot* who stands in righteousness with limbs and legs whose mid body was not seen behind a veiling brilliance coming from its center near its belly. His hip-sided right hand firm against its waist and left arm holding a sword of faith, its legs spread beyond shoulders length all protruding the masking light. And there were colors of

warmth which seemed to drift fourth of the circling wonders as a smoke of wisps and the two humanoids did take it in and their faces were sweetened.

Li and Lazarus drifted back unable to take the full luster of the being, their eyes had been opened and they spoke not. The entity, which had visited the bare humanoids upon this oasis in the midst of the northern hemisphere of the planet hereon moved away with tremendous glory. The onlookers saw these things and they retreated from the forest. They would return to the vessel to rest inside. A campfire was made and burned into the night. It was the middle of the night out on the plains of dryness. The great forest was of an adjacent distance to them as they slumber in the circular vessel. Li was hot again and in the midst of REM sleep. He was hot in his dreams also. He was being held like a baby by something scary in appearance like that of a skeleton clothed in a heavy dark coat. Li could feel the spasms of his muscles trying to move his body yet he did not budge even a millimeter in any direction. The figure holding him was still also and stared wickedly onto his face and he could feel a presence transcendent of the dream.

Li awoke to the beauty of the sunrise in the distant horizon and the sky glowed of pinks and violets. Lazarus was asleep in the corner of the craft and Li exit to peer out toward the large vegetated area. The big luminous entity was moving through the forest again as could be seen by the beams of radiant energy protruding the canopies shafts. Li re-entered the ship and woke Lazarus telling him that they had to go back. Lazarus was sore from walking many miles and in his grogginess he complained telling Li that they didn't even know where they were and why should they explore or scan anymore lest they find a way back to somewhere familiar. Laz alluded to the Star Voyager and it's trouble with Beltran's ship and proposed to find them again and help them in the battle. Li believed it was more important to find out what that entity in the forest oasis was and Lazarus was momentarily convinced. They moved the Supership closer to the woodland so the walk would be shorter. The walk was a less tiresome 1.5 kilometers and they entered the lush land again.

After a delightful navigation of the broadleaved and soft-pedaled flora they arrived to a nearer position to the area down in the basin where the two humanoids were. The glow of the halo of the forests was not over the perimeter as it was one before and was now encompassing more localized life such as the fleshy vegetation and even the two humanoids themselves. No other bipedal creatures were seen so far. Yet upon glancing closer at the intriguing pair we find clearer distinguishments between them. The bigger one was interacting with large quadrupeds, which seemed to perform entrancing dances in the forest. The other being seemed to posses some kind of energy on her head as appearing as a rain of sparkles in emanation of her head and they flowed sometimes in the air currents. The exotic animals of the general area talked amongst themselves in a harmony of outlandish melody. The bigger not so much beasts but large animals and intimidating, performed submission motions in regard to the bigger humanoid as if to obey him. Both figures were wary to approach and Li's verbal signals were never answered of them or Lazarus's.

The two visitors Li and Lazarus did not understand and they became as mutes of a village who speaks without being heard of his people or to know them as to be present. The fruit of the forests, which the humanoids did eat upon, fed them and nourished their bodies and their spirits were nourished too. Li and Lazarus became as of the spirit of the land therein and their behavior was not typical as it had been and they were often quiet amongst one another, yet they looked about the region, like as a geologist, and pleasure was attained by the site of the life, which they sat amongst. But the fruit tree in the middle of the grassland, which sat alone, did rain down glitter of light like as is the stars of the sky and the fruit thereon was pleasing in the eye and colors surrounded the fruit as would a ghostly aura and the two humanoids were never seen to use of the fruit from the tree in the center of rolling green grass blades. It was discerned the coloration of the fruit on the tree was that is could be a poisonous bush and Li moved to circle the perimeter of the land to the tree at the middle and Li and Lazarus did eat of the fruit in the day's aftertime and they were nourished and did not faint of a poison.

But in the warmth of the day, a wind swept through the land and Li and Lazarus waited for the strange entity to return. As they watch the smaller humanoid that did sing and did shine in the strength of the power on her head was approached by a crawling lizard, which sat up of its hind feet and ministered to the humanoid. Li had compared this animal according to its size as like the Suricata alien only of an amphibious genus, long, hairless, and slender. And as the animal maneuvered its body as like that of a puppet and puppet master it spoke to the healthful humanoid as if to be its mentor. Both Li and Lazarus began to recall what they were witnessing and they were in despair. A rage began to form in Lazarus as he watched the deceptive snake back talk the dreamy girl entranced by its words. He could not control his temper and sought to stop the event seeing what the serpent was doing to the harmless woman.

Lazarus had instinctually leapt from his crouch toward the serpent that he might slay it and the thunderous [static hiss](#) came fourth and sparked like that unto embers which glowed white-hot and rained down above him and did sear the ground

in which he traversed. Before Lazarus appeared a sword, which had about its handle and blade, a flame as like of a torch and the noise was too loud for their ears as a [zap](#) followed by the sharp sound of the bottom of many waterfalls brief and as if enhanced by an amplifier. They ran away in fright. The girl ran from the presence of the serpent in excitement toward the tree in the middle of the grassy knoll and ate from the tree. From the distance the big man came and following him were the large and small animals of the forests and they sat upon the ground and rested at his feet. The small and meek humanoid offered the fruit that she had eaten, which they previously believed to be not good to eat, and he ate as well. The rippling and wavy miragelike phenomena surrounding their aura no longer fluxuate and their appearance became clear as if to remove a translucent glass. They were visible now and their eyes became wide like the owl and they looked ahead as if to see toward the end of a tunnel and the whites of their eyes became a little reddened.

Li and Lazarus ran much of the way back to the Supership and they could see the streams of beams in the reverse of their hasty race as the blazing entity, which had returned, was behind them still above the troubled humanoids. The colors of the entity had turned to an angered hue. They manned the craft piloting away at high speed. Their fear had not gone and was increased as the ground, which flowed below beneath them because of their speed, sprouted thorns and jagged shrubbery as it covered the land as fast as they fled from this obscure garden. From orbit the entity could be seen and the ascent thrusters, which were resting had expelled the necessary energy to propel them into space. They were still uncertain where they were though the epic events occurring hours ago were reminiscent of Earth history nearly seven thousand years ago in the Middle East. Li and Lazarus were uncertain what they just witnessed.

In further hours the energizing experience began to level in their minds and they discussed what happened amongst them. They determined at that point that it was no Supership with tactical intention but in fact a time machine whom knowledge of was now restricted to a handful of people. The throttle of the time device had propelled them according to Li's accidental overexerted thrust, several thousands of years into the past and relocated their position according to the recently deciphered instruments on the board. It seems that Beltran intended to go back in time, perhaps not so far, and alter history no doubt in the Resistance favor. Li used his science knowledge and learned how the temporal back travel works but only by panel control so far. He had not comprehended what was happening during a time excursion.

His hunch was that, the way in which one thrust the throttle determines the length in time of incident suggesting finesse is necessary to control the time distances. Of course, as was discussed, for this to rightfully be called a time machine it would have to have a forward temporal transit function as well. Li left the control room and looked again into the ring tunnel at the strange "gear boxes" and connected pulley system. He returned and accelerated the vessel on a linear vector, his hands working freely as if he had become an expert on the machine. Catching his eye of the sudden just as the speed reached 0.25c he taps the button marked "null cycle" and pushed the throttle again slowly forward then back down. The vessel zoomed fourth this time there was a strong tug on their bodies where the linier GFE device seemed to be slightly offset. The star field in the screen did not spin this time.

A Great Decision

Awakening slumped in the chair his brain reinitialized and his eyes darted to the timepiece on the board of the instrument panel—a set of numbers now appearing as a clock judging by its position. The numerals on the time dial were not set for Earth hours and they still could not determine the period again. Lazarus was apprehensive yet also began to perform routine button sequences on his side of the console. Li rotated the vessel and the same yellow dwarf star, which was now recognized, as the Sun was behind them yet having fallen back a few **A.U.'s** Li's hunch started back up again and he returned to the barren planet this time not so barren. The greenery had spread fourth from the location down on the surface where the small garden sat. "I think we just went forward in time." Li said breaking the esoteric silence. "I think I can get us back to our own time and place now."

"The question is, do you want to do more time traveling or go home?" Such a question had never been proposed to the intrigued and flustered Lazarus. His anxiety calmed at the thought of returning to his own time. Sure enough the thrill of space travel, which was outdated there at the helm of this magnificent time/space vehicle, was bypassed. "Where to...?" He asked and smiles cracked. They ceased the smiling immediately. "I think we should get back to the battle in 2027 wouldn't you agree?" Lazarus inquired. "That would be the right thing to do." Said Li. "Then let's go home. We have to get The Star Voyager back." Li initiates what he thinks will return the ship to the previous coordinates and time by recalling the flight logs

from the first excursion. The ships account detailed linier, cyclic speed, and the trajectory. Li restores those variables minus the spin cycle and the ship transports once again.

A full face-off with the Star Voyager backed by a pack of cannon poised Icewings indicated the Intervener was losing its edge. Lazarus comes to and accepts the signal, with no video, of the haling posse. He remained working to display the speaker, Admiral Seghtee, and Li was informed of the arrival of the KMD fighters to the Star Voyager's mayday by the voice on the speakers. Li piloted to the nearest rocky body which turned out to be the same planet supporting the secret hangar. The Star Voyager broke its pursuit of the Intervener with a little damage while the Ice Wings continued the fight. Li had something major on his mind, aside from his ships condition. Seghtee had sat down on the planet's surface to wait for Li to join him. The time ship was maneuvered close and the two travelers suit up. The thought of what was looming in Li's mind was still weighing as he transferred across the barren ground to the hovering Star Voyager and entered into the bottom hatch and Lazarus did follow. Seghtee promptly asked for a report on the Supership after repressurization and Li replied that he stand by as they enter the bridge.

Li speaks little and commandeers his pilot's chair and maneuvers the Star Voyager away from the general area. The other KMD vessels were hanging around not to far off battling it out with the Intervener. Seghtee watched Li carefully sensing that he was acting on his own accord. "Hold position here Captain. We need to wait for the Krystonian engineers to arrive to get a full analysis of the Supership." Li was quiet and spun the ship around slowly having attained an altitude in the black sky. Shortly following, a couple of the golf-ball sized torpedoes screamed from their top mounted canisters. The time machine transformed into a diffusely smoldering scrap pile and burned the cratered soil beneath. "Captain, why did you destroy the Supership? We needed a full study!" Li spins around in his chair and faces the Admiral adamantly. "Sir, trust me, it was necessary. I assure you I am acting in the best interest of everyone." Lazarus concurred with a look.

The Admiral was a bit teed and irately ignored Li's maneuver while typing on his console. Li could see on his face his soreness and though proud of his action felt a little tension. He knew the Admiral wanted to look over the vessel. Li already knew what the Admiral was about to say next. "Captain I need a full report of your excursion in the Supership promptly." Understood...." He responded. Li gave a subtle signal to Lazarus and he intuited the meaning, which was to reveal not the truth about the obliterated vessel. "Everything's damaged." Lazarus reported having overviewed the systems status report. A small hull rupture occurred on the middle cabin where Beltran's repeated destroyer cannon fire wore down the dorsal shield partitions and burned away some of the outer hull lining.

To Li's relief someone had astutely patched the hole with the wall mounted adhesive slabs of breech covers. The duel with The Intervener took its toll on the outgunned Voyager and Seghtee's steam-blowing reply to how the fight went was conveyed. Li was a little disappointed also that his great vessel was beaten and rescued in a fight with a superior enemy craft. An additive to the low blow was that he was not here to contend with the nemesis in battle himself in his own bruise-sided ship. "Get us out of here Captain. There's still a few enemy craft back at the main combat zone." The Admiral said now that the KMD outpost establishment engineers and security vehicles have touched down on the little planet. There was still some tension in the air. "At least you didn't blow up the hangar." The Admiral responded with a hint of humor. "We might still be able to get the information we need." A slight one-sided smile cracked on his militant face. "Yes sir." Li responded respectfully.

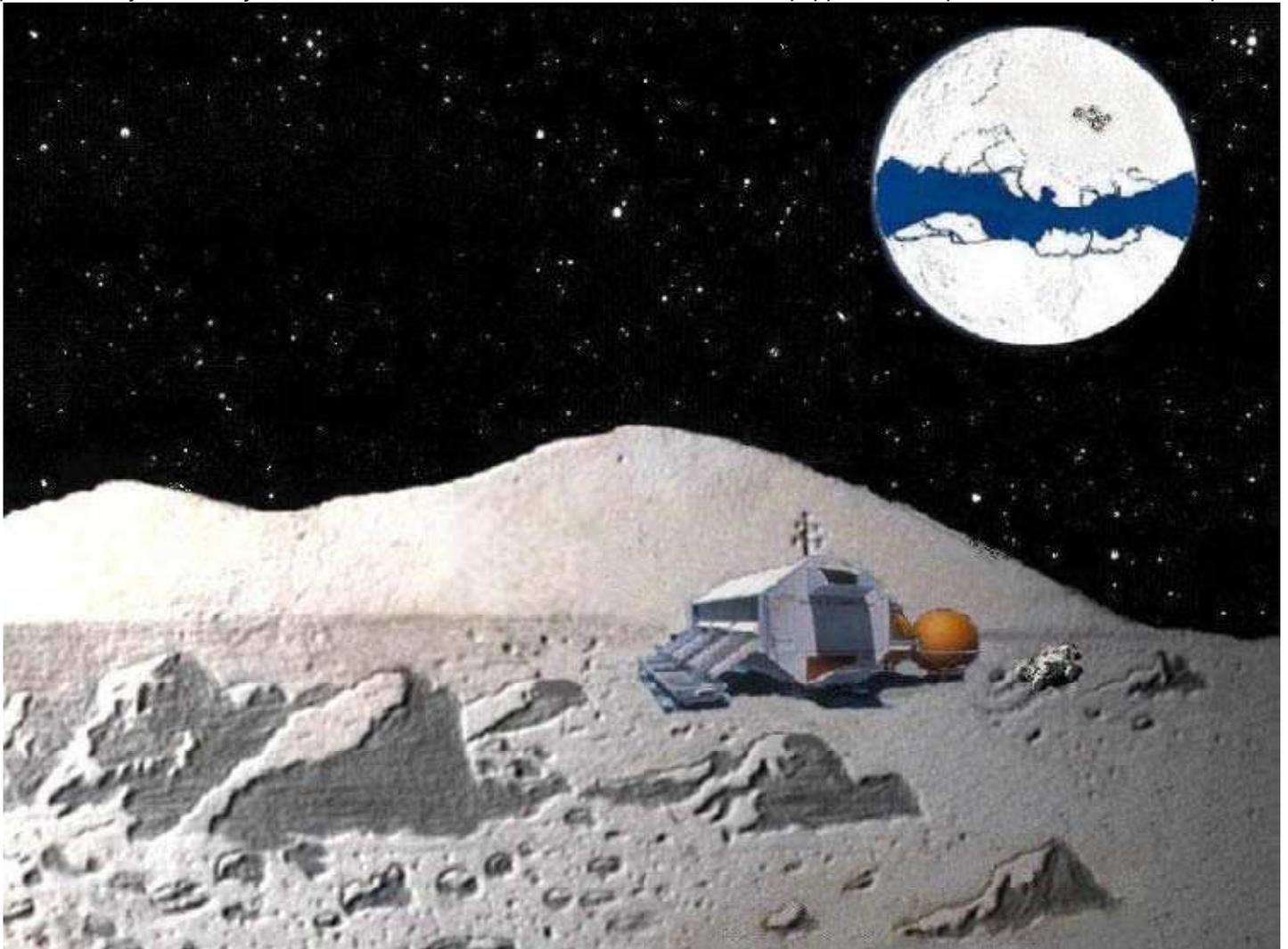
The Star Voyager in its slightly battered state accelerates back toward the inner bands of outer space. The battle was still hot upon the Star Voyager's arrival back at C-00101. It was clear that the Resistance had more ships than originally thought. Lazarus and Li had managed to repair most of the electronic system damages and they were immediately integrated into the whirling, twirling, thruster torching, space ships spinning and arcing about. Li was maneuvering superbly and was keeping chase of the nifty and agile Piranha fighters much to their surprise. Lazarus was keeping up with the rapid action of the last of the Avengers while Admiral Seghtee rotated shield partition power. Soon the Battle of C-00101 was finished and the hightailing remains of Resistance craft speeds away under stealth.

The SMD and KMD teams cheered having incurred above medium fleet loss yet spirits still ran high. The KMD second wave moved in for cleanup, security, and debris analysis of the destructed base remnants and craft crash sites down on the small planet and even as far out as the gas giant system which boasted a thrilling mise-en-scene of onslaught. The whole system practically became a battle region as the dog-fighting prey and predator vessels ended up in the deep regions of the systems. High-speed pursuits, even to the point of post light speed velocities, were numerous as well as attack speed duels and Seghtee ordered a combing of the system to find any leftover officers still locked in battle. There could be people who have ejected and may be stranded in precarious places. Later after hours of travel the flagship Voyager had, according to

protocol, left the battle early. Not that it was a bad idea; the ship was in need of repairs. Li felt the peace begin to cool down the heat of the clash as they neared A-00981 and the Star Voyager's directed course for Krysto gave him relief. A successful battle fought and won and now a course directly for his lover. He would soon be seeing his not so old flame.

A Touching Reunion

The Admiral was now standing over the shoulder of Lazarus while he very carefully attempted to illustrate what happened without telling blunt lies to the chief of the SMD of Sol, while Li chatters with someone over communications. Li spoke lowly sometimes dipping into a whisper as he coordinated with his nearby friend on the communicator. Li excused his interruption and informed the Admiral and his trusty navigator that they would be landing on Krysto's moon, **Niim** to receive another passenger who has requested transport back to the ivory home world of Krysto. Li did not feel compelled to report Xila's purpose for being on the moon, which officially was for a temporary special mineral mining task. In reality it was Admiral Kile who ordered Xila to the moon even as she had expressed her eagerness to go into battle with the Resistance. The remote location, amongst the neighborhood of the small grainy heaps, was out of the way enough for Kile's taste. Xemeral had not told anyone his reason for stationing her there as to maintain battle moral. He had done so as a precautionary measure just in case the Resistance turned out to be more equipped than reported and the skirmish spread.



Xila on Niim

He had not made this foresight apparent.

Li had Seghtee's blessing and the Star Voyager was soon to touch down upon the surface of pulverized pyroclastic compounds. Li gets out of the ship suited and excited to see his baby and wraps at the side door of the ministration sitting snugly upon the face of the plains of Niim. His visor was opened exposing his noble eyes and the external camera captured

his countenance. Xila retracts the hatchway remotely giving him inside access to the lighted and glowing button interfaces of the interior. Xila was sitting at her office desk and her Rolodex was turned. Having emerged from the little airlock he uncapped and greets her with longing warmth and removed his SES. Back in the ship, Lazarus lean in his chair with hands clasped on his head and the Admiral was still typing on his panel. The spotlight had finally shifted to Seghtee and essentially, yet not officially, the firm-paced Admiral prepares for his return from combat mode. He began by stating relevancies regarding the recent events, which remained fresh on his mind and did seek to dismount from.

Being on Krysto's moon, in the civilian vessel, while waiting for Li to return was considered *unscheduled maneuvers*. Lazarus was hearing him slowly relax and found himself noting his own observation of Seghtee's breathing. He saw at that moment a flash image of Seiwan, which faded there forth. Lazarus returned his attention to the matter at hand, which again was to see to Seghtee's comfort at least as a guest. He began to modify his own breathing pattern and slouch a little with the intent to serve as an example of what behavior should be acceptable during this timeout. Essentially Lazarus's duty was over unless ordered by the Admiral or prompted of a vocationally relevant event. An incoming long-range message sounded the audio notification and an SMD officer working with the KMD cleanup crew provided a status report. "The Resistance is fully retreated and had lost over half of their fleet.

The abandoned base at C-00101 and dummy bases nearby had been analyzed and destroyed. Information regarding the secret hangar just inside the inner "D" band was designated as the final resistance hideout and the console was retrieved. The base and all its junk contained therein were also confiscated." The jabbering officer detailed on the automated transmission. He assured a more thorough written report scheduled for submission at a later time and would likely not be read by the Admiral until his return into Suntown. The Admiral accessed the Star Voyager's communication promptly after hearing the priority message and returned a spontaneous response. Lazarus overheard the message and new he was circumstantially privy to this classified info. This was a result of just being in the Admiral's presence under his command. Another message sounds on the comm. system and the forward screen activates.

Agent Feeno Nemon appears thereon and he was pleased to be piloting his red and blue XF fighter again. He was in the area near Krysto having undergone a debriefing and recovery therapy then subsequently released. His fighter, which had been brought to him by the SMD likely onboard The Mediator, received Voyager's transponder signal, which Feeno was preattuned to. "Lazarus, Admiral, Greetings. I'm okay now thanks for the rescue."

"It was our treat." The Admiral said. Lazarus tips his head. "I'll be seeing you guys later back in Suntown."

"Understood..." Lazarus responded. "Agent Neemon..." The Admiral called. "Do you have my suit with you?"

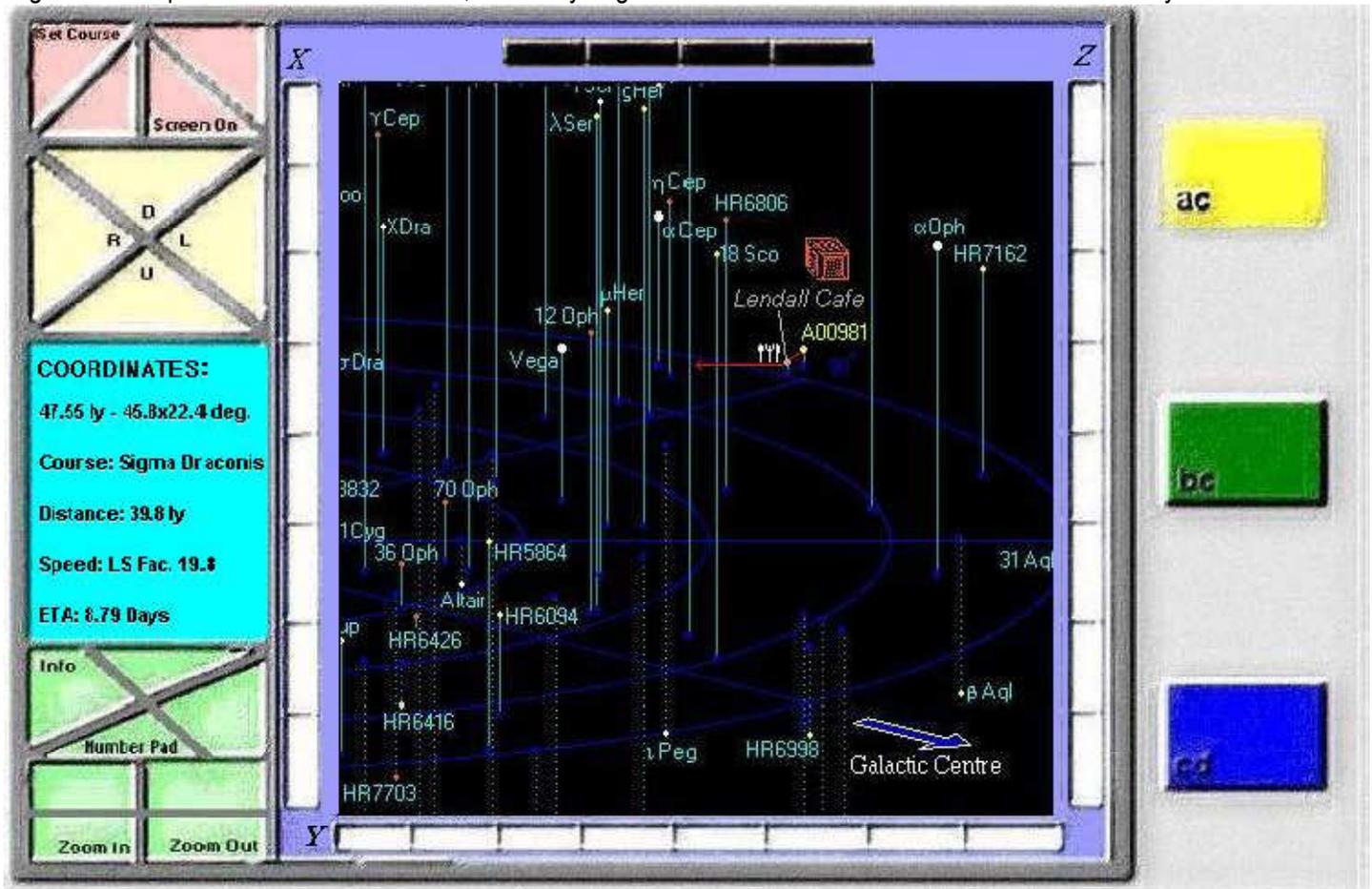
"I got it right here behind me." He acknowledged. "Good. Report to our location and pick me up. We'll be traveling back onboard M1" (Mediator.) The cannon-sporting battle ship was on the surface of Krysto at Ice Base-1. "I'm on my way. Feeno out." Lazarus looks back with a consenting face and he had a partial grin of victor. Another message sounds in and Lazarus answers on audio format only. "Laz, sorry for the wait I'll be right with you and Xila, she's coming back with us." Since the Admiral was getting another ride off of Niim Lazarus responded, "Take your time." The proximity alert phased in on the corner-mounted tweeters and The Blure could be seen directly ahead as it touches down. The top flips open and Feeno steps out carrying the Admiral's suit on his shoulder—the light gravity of Niim making ease in lifting the armored spacewear. The top hatch opens on the Star Voyager and Li climbs in having run into Feeno outside—the fragile suited arm Xila was in hand. The group touches base.

Feeno, somehow sensing Li's disappointment in himself about the failed rescue a month or so ago, comforted Li. The Admiral even was flushed and warmed by the reunion in which puns and laughter succeeded. Li mentioned to the Admiral at that time that he had something to give him and he follows into the middle cabin while Li opens a side cabinet and hands him a key to the Star Voyager and uses an electronic print pad to scan his fingerprint. He told the Admiral that he wanted him to keep this key safe and looked him closely in the face as he gave his hatch unlocker to him in trust. The Admiral instinctively makes the necessary adjustment to his aura and Li feels his concordance. Feeno entered from the front and Li signaled a final departure motion and words of security as he slipped back onto the bridge. The Admiral and Feeno exit and depart for Krysto onboard the Blure and Xila, having already cleared her leave of absence with her father, signals Icebase-1 again for her final departure acknowledgement—Jered gives her the go ahead.

The Star Voyager ascends of the dusty satellite and courses back for Star City. Xila and Li made themselves comfortable in the rear cabin while Lazarus piloted the ship expertly. The start of new exploration was sure to come in their trip back home and Sigma Draconis was first on the list. Li figured it was convenient given the not so major detour. The Star Voyager did dock at Lendall stop attaining the three weeks worth of food and supplies and the restaurant was lightly

populated. The concluded battle saw fewer soldiers and a hand full of sporadic lone travelers eating in and Li could scarcely resist taking a few minutes to grab a sizzling plate of breakfast. Xila remained inside the ship while the boys attained the goods and concluded quickly to *get on the road*. Having been directed to the rear of the café Li and Lazarus grabs the cardboard boxes full of goodies and personal care products. There were a few store men on break, cooks resting on the supply boxes, and they were having a conversation about specific topics unrelated to Li's business there and he minded his task at hand. Wheeling the provisions out to the landed ship on the surface of the flying mountain Li makes use of the outside cargo compartment as well as the middle cabin for storage.

In the sky the starry heaven beckons a deep-space voyage. .Not today.. Li thought. The stuff was dropped inside and placed in stacks in the corners of the center cabin and Li stood atop the ship taking a look at his panorama of stars and galaxies. The Sun sat distant and he missed home a bit. His eyes scanned slightly to the right and upward to the reddish pinpoint Sigma Draconis and he sinks inside closing the top hatch. .Set a course for Sigma Draconis.. Li instructed. .No Vega.. Lazars questioned. .I don.t think so, I,m ready to get home.. He assured.it was because of his lovely Xila.



[Star Charts Screen Shot](#)

An Adjourned Project

Li stands and leaves Xila to tend the control room while he check on something in the back, the strange crystal that appeared in his mind suddenly before the distractions of the day. He passed Lazarus in the middle cabin quieted by his analysis at the computer and Li was pleased to see his usually high-spirited friend calmed by the placid pace of study. The bulkhead had still not been opened and no one so far had questioned Li of why he had locked it. Li was anticipated to study the element with his microscope and chemistry kit. Having pulled away the black cover the incandescent sight of violet sparkle took capture of his widened eyes. Li removed it and placed it under the spectral imager, a volumous cabinet with **scanning filaments** and **detector heads**. Contained within the crystal were all the signs of classic geological molecular

growth by way of ionic bonding yet within the curious elemental combinations were strange contaminants, which speckled the image and seemed to regulate molecular vibratory resonance as Li had discerned.

The strange impurities within the crystal were also releasing apparently by conjunction to the purplish ruby transcendent emissions beyond the conventional scale. The entire object was a curious wonder in it of itself and was light in weight, shiny as an emerald, and cut as is a diamond with the same strength. Li noted this when he attempted to chip away a piece with little success. Unable to gather much more information he puts the object in his drawer for study later and debated on whether or not to discuss about it with Lazarus or Xila. Something tugged at him as he began to walk away back to the bridge. He turns and looks at the drawer he just closed. Li made the decision then and there, reopened the drawer, and took the emerald to the middle cabin. Holding the emerald behind his back while he touched base with Lazarus who was still analyzing information gathered during the battle of C-00101, Li sees his leaning posture as he decided to take a break from his intensive observation of data and in-battle snapshots taken by the Star Voyager.

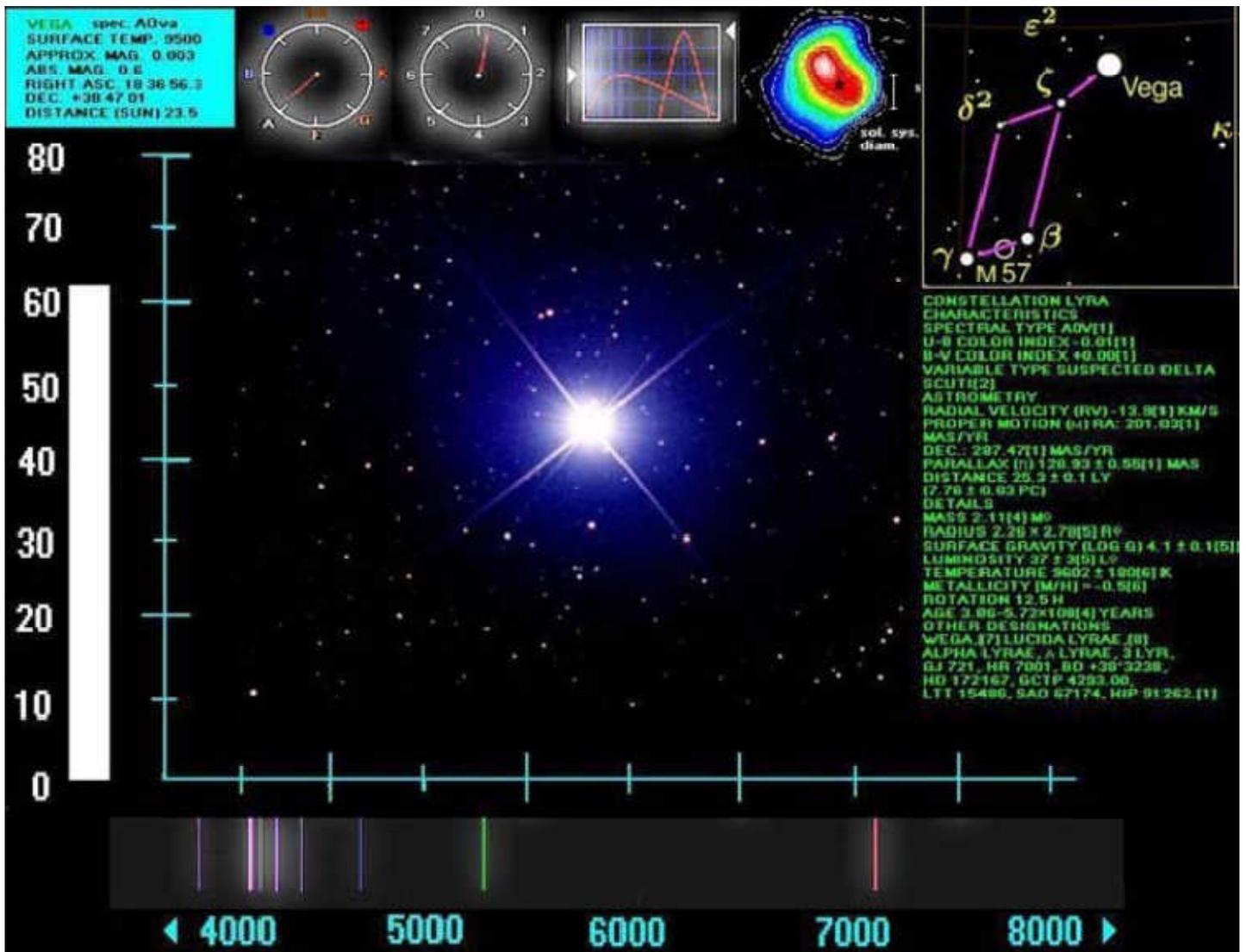
Colorful and crisp the fight scenes impressed Li as they scrolled in the running slideshow upon the monitor in which Lazarus used transferring into his recollection. Lazarus, with hands clasped behind his head slouching a bit in his chair, inquired of his next destination and Li told him Sigma Draconis. "Ah, an orange star this time." He replied having brought up the current course and position on the star charts. "Why don't you analyze this?" He said and sat thereupon the desk the dazzling diamond. He merged with his trance and became pacified by its aura and his forehead was full of the dialog of focus. Lazarus with gaze remaining on the emerald inquired as to its origin and he was no longer his new space hardened self now bearing an enduring light of enthusiasm. His surprise came when he looked onto the crystal and was tickled upon his head. "It came from the alien spacecraft we intercepted on the way into battle." Li finally informs.

Lazarus makes a diagram of the crystal immediately assuming swift attachment to it. The main door retracts. "Seiwan, I'm not sure what this alarm means can you come and look?" Xila said. Li had overlooked it having proceeding to open the bulkhead a while ago to retrieve the crystal. Xila saw the big diamond and complimented its image. She was not as a typical woman might be regarding jewels. She acknowledged the beauty and form as an objective note of observation. Li slides by her and cancels the alert. Xila began to take an interests looking over it close to Lazarus. It seemed then as if they shared a common consensus between one another by way of the purple rock. Xila felt jittery inside, her body tingled like to be surrounded in a warm and gentle static. She felt then, as was her mental note, as if she could see suddenly outside the vessel and far off into space as it traversed the deep.

With sudden motivation even in the face of Li's original objections they divert their course from Sigma Draconis toward the ominous and massive system of Vega. They smiled brightly as if to be continuously marveled and they each felt charged as their cerebellums surged of heat and activity. They moved quickly and strongly as were they bursting with energy, and general things amused them. Lazarus turned his music on and the sounds grabbed them. Xila continues to speak graceful poetry as if to be a damsel quoting her perspective from a castletop. Li was on a role speaking peculiar riddles and paradoxal constants of the universe and it seemed to a fascinated observer as if he were inventing new cosmic equations and astounding theory.

Suddenly Li would dart over to the rear cabin grabbing his notepad and jotting down his thoughts of cosmic baroque. They continued this outgoing and socially uninhibited behavior for hours and fatigue was not on the horizon. The entranced music lover Lazarus colored the bridge with thumping bass and crispy tweeters sonanced the perspective and Xila danced in exotic ballets of unknown worlds she had before seen. Li study Vega, the star system he has decided to bypass twice, and seems to have forgotten his desire to cut short the journey home. Now, as if a course was never plotted and to fly freely without bound, Li's eyes remained covered by the binocular eyepiece of the astounding telescope atop the console of Laz's panel. The three watched on playing and passing the crystal, chanting in curious tongues, drifting into the inner sanctum of the mind, and did speak to one another.

Round and round the emerald went between the friends of time. Ideas were unleashed and dreams demand evenly tempering space. They knew not the difference between the thoughts and the available manual controls. The ship flew on the windows were down and vacuitous volumes revealed. The sights were grand and energy stands while visions emerged on high. For light years they traveled and hours conveyed visible to the naked eye. The windows revealed a system wide field where luminous dust speckled the sky. Inward they went and days were spent with events that paralleled science. The luxury cruiser saw planets untold and shifting the tides of gas. The stars were bright and the light was blue-white breaching the dusty gates as ionic winds blast. The ship traveled a wayward course and the helm was steering itself. The system inside seemed as abstract art with swirls and streaks across the dark canvas of space.



[The Telescope View](#)

A Lucky Pass

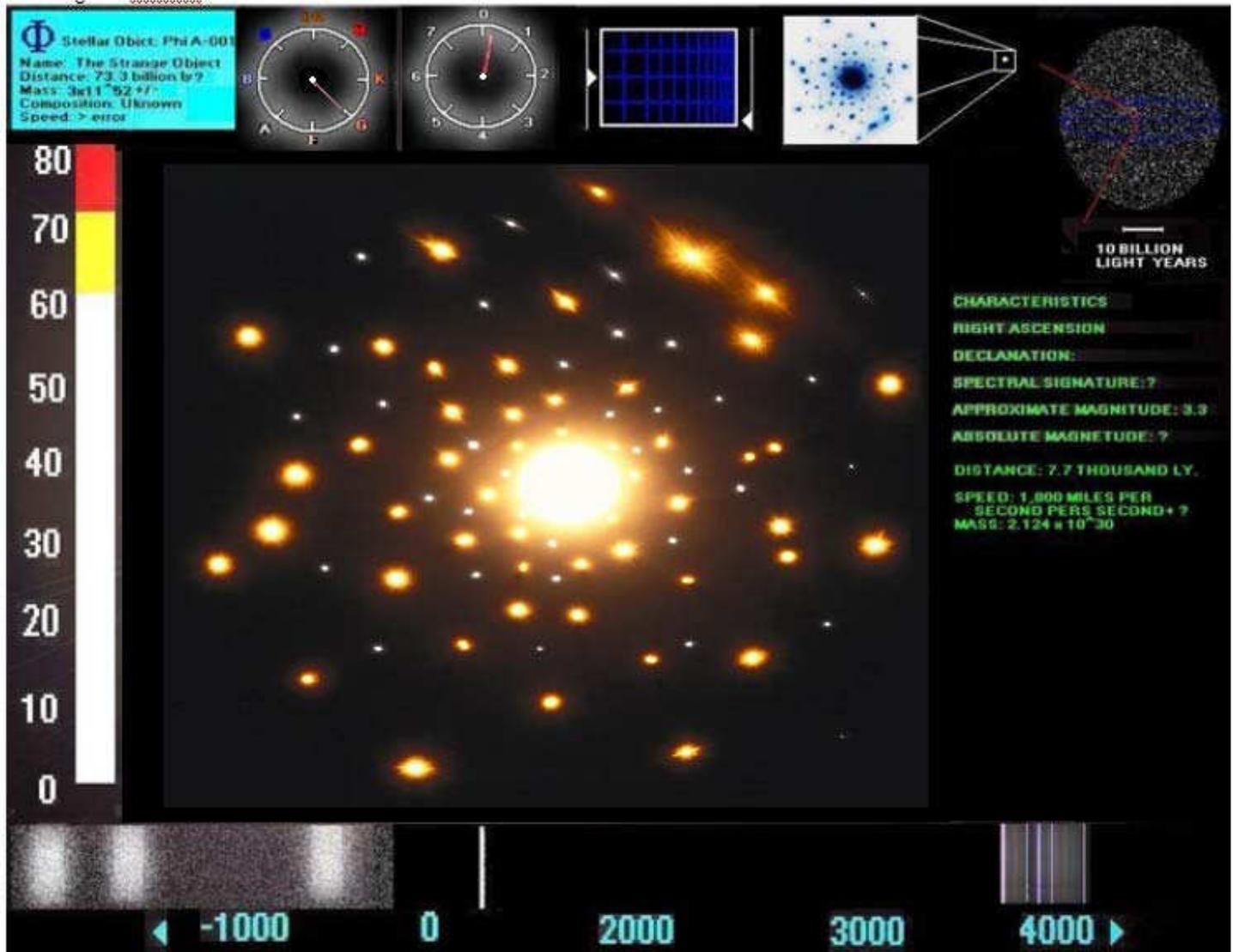
The battleship Mediator maintains its high-speed course for Suntown and becomes diverted by the suggestion originating from the bridge officer nestled in his clamshell cockpit. His report indicated a stranded ship adrift. Seghtee issues the order to investigate as protocol mandates. Slowing to relative speeds they were surprised to find the skewing Star Voyager angling dangerously toward the gassy dust ring of Vega. Though a little under a parsec away the medium speed of the Star Voyager would eventually see the craft ship onto a potential collision course with any stray object in the debris of Vega. Seghtee had ordered a general signaling with no answer. The pilot of the Mediator was already taking position along a parallel vector. Seghtee suited himself as did a spare deck officer **Tony Kearney** for a space walk.

Departing into space from the big gin ship they cautiously drift over to the Voyager and the experiences tickled the stomach of even the experienced Seghtee what with Vega and the massive clouds of gas and dust many times the volume the solar system hanging in the distance. Seghtee unlocked the hatch and bypassed the thumb reader, which was inactive since the ship was in space. The hatch did not open because the computer had detected an individual in the middle cabin and the LCD display read "standby..." Seghtee and Mr. Kearney waited for tens of minutes and he radioed back to the battleship to continue hauling the Star Voyager.

Finally after nearly a half hour the hatch opened causing an automatic locking of the front and rear doors inside. The individual who was in the center, had to have moved elsewhere. The Admiral and **Deckofficer Kearny** entered and pressurized the cabin soon to uncap. The cockpit was the first room to investigate revealing an entranced Li leaned in his

chair with hands hung down and eyes toward the ceiling. Seghtee orders Kearney to check the other parts of the ship and he exits the bridge. Lazarus and Xila harboring cluster of rocks afar. As the ship near Suntown Li deactivate the stealth system, which had been running ever since HR 5586. The security of the solar system is responsible for the, “letting of the hair down” so to speak, referring to the deactivation of the stealth—that and it was unlawful to travel around populated civilian regions under stealth given the danger. Li had within his feeling the instinctual desire to return to Earth as he had done so previously after major trips. Yet, he can notice within himself a gradual comfort forming inside which deterred the strong emotion surrounding his motivation to go back home. He felt he could postpone it at least for a while.

In a sense space was becoming his home and he was adapting well. Li reaches for the center special functions panel and proceeds to activate the **buoy sync** to let any nearby friends know he is in the area. Having done so, he takes advantage of the open screen display and checks the roster. Feeno’s fighter was not in at least the inner solar system. Husto was in the Saturnian vicinity and Mariah was traveling on a departure course for outer Sol. Interestingly he finds the Blue Bird, the advanced two-man spacecraft owned by Unim Niom, the kidnapped Matron Scientist, crossing the Uranian orbit.



[The Strange Object](#)

It took an hour to reach the familiar site of A.B. Plaza due to the time limit restrictions. Lazarus enters the front and takes his seat, Li scooted over to the pilot’s chair with no words and they felt refreshed being home again. Xila followed behind excited as she entered to the site of Ceres looming ahead amongst the other flying boulders. Li pointed out the increased number of ships and public trans. As he took note of the proximity display, which he brought up in the little secondary nav. screen in the lower right corner of his pilot’s panel, an unknown vessel could be seen by its reflective surface as it shined

the suns rays toward the Star Voyager at a distance. The unfilled ship was heading in the opposite direction. More and more civilians from Earth were getting their wings it seemed. Li proceeded to assume a low altitude of Ceres flying fast over the craggy terrain until the horizon were found entwined in his bed and the strange crystal sat upon the back counter. His eyes were snared by the complexity of form and color and he began his examination of the object. His determination about Xila and Lazarus was, as they were detected by his vital sign display upon his suit mounted wrist device, as stable and deep in REM sleep.

Seghtee attempts to waken Li and was getting small incomplete responses. Mr. Kearney sounds on the helmet speaker and Seghtee held it close to his face. Kearney reported the positive condition of the back passengers. Kearney requested to return to the Mediator and the Admiral requested the status of the Voyagers navigator and passenger. Kearney gives another positive indication. Seghtee's gentle shaking of Li still had not brought him out of his dreamy state. Satisfied with the reiterated report of the eager Deck officer, Seghtee grants permission to the low-ranking battleship crewman who returned himself back to the mediator. At the end of the hissing air blower cycle Seghtee Leaves Li a moment and checks on Lazarus and Xila who were awakening and they glanced at Seghtee as if he were apart of their imagination. Seghtee felt the future feeling of Li's upset stomach taking note of the compromising position of the woman of Li's affection with the suave navigator. Seghtee left the rear cabin immediately.

Li was coming too and scrambling to get his bearings and vessel realigned back on its original course. He activates the **intracomm**. "Lazarus. I fell asleep. What happened? Where are you and Xila?" There was a moment of silence. Admiral Seghtee entered the cockpit. Li thought it is Lazarus who normally is swift to come to the front wherever his name is called, was startled into a twitch nearly reaching for his console-mounted pistol. Baffled he inquired as to his presence here and Seghtee informed him of his passing nearby in the Mediator and subsequent course change to investigate the Star Voyager, which was moving on a dangerous vector. Li thought a moment recalling giving Seghtee the keys yet not considering him having to use them in an emergency such as this already.

Li felt strange having apparently fallen asleep at the helm while Lazarus and Xila were in the back. Scruffy haired and moist of sweat Lazarus enters the front with the same perplexed look about his face. Li didn't Like Seghtee getting the impression that something unbecoming was occurring such as drug or alcohol use and he assured the Admiral that the situation was now under control. The Admiral suggested a full nights rest before continuing his bridge duties and Li concurs still *out of it*. Seghtee enters the middle room and Li follows to the rear to find Xila showering and he locks the lounge door. With a salute Li goes back to the bridge. Seghtee is locked in the middle and the depressurized cabin exports the Admiral who floats back over to the Mediator. Seghtee appears shortly thereafter on the forward screen, in which Li had folded down the exposed window, and knew not who exactly opened it and why. He quickly checked the interior radio scanner logs to find only a few stray gamma streams had beamed into the cockpit—the light burn on his forearm perhaps a clue of the occurrence. After a few assuring words and a departure address from the Captain of the Star Voyager the Mediator skews its course away and the Star Voyager resumes its old path for Sigma Draconis.

Chapter 5

The Home Stretch

Vega had fled a stern a fantastic site to see off the back view. The sequence of compartment rotation between the riders became easy and they were boding well accepting the ship as home. The Captain, though well traveled, remains impacted by the significant ratio of red stars to otherwise as they near Sigma Draconis. Li couldn't help but to acknowledge Lazarus's diverging behavior, yet as his self-respecting protocols advised, he remain focused on the task at hand which was to determine the reason why Sigma Draconis A, had a virtually stationary companion. It was an intriguing site in that from an inner perspective the hovering Sigma B appeared motionless. Xila and Lazarus enter the cockpit together and take their seats and they became comfortable. Xila was using the new foldout chair in which the Admiral had held previously.

Li drew everyones attention to the barely lit object in such a high altitude orbit from Sigma A. "Lendall Stop." Lazarus said. He related the terminally slow nearly tidal locked orbit of the far off café and found it to be similar to Sigma Draconis B. The trajectory and speed of the star multiplied by its distance equaled a speed deficient orbit indeed. "Another object may be playing on its momentum." Said Xila having signed into the star charts dialog interface. Li thought on the matter and put fourth the theory that Sigma's low mass and low abundance of heavy materials could account for the even lower mass object in its floating orbit. Essentially the variable volumes of gas between the two light stellar remnants and distance could allow for balanced proximities. Xila and Lazarus were silent as once again Li established the answers. She believed there might need to be the influence of another body to keep the low-luminosity object still.

Out of all the candidates Chi Draconis an adjacent star or possibly Vega and its dust cloud might have enough mass to perhaps play a part, Xila reasoned. Li was interested in that idea. Vega was still very far away from Sigma. Yet, the pull of Vega and its dust cloud might extend the gravity well just enough to hold something. But the object was more in the direction of Chi Draconis and closer than Vega though less massive. Sure enough, they find a companion star in the Chi system, which increased the scope of gravity making perhaps a more likely hopeful for this strange hovering companion of Sigma. The debate was over when Xila leaped from her chair into Li's lap and pushed the throttle steering the course for Li toward a nice low mass planet in close to Sigma A.



Sigma Draconis from Low Pressure Planet

Xila sat thereon upon the knees of Li as he peeked around her to navigate and the orange red star drifted everclosely. Xila had used the telescope to find the glimmering moon in its tight lonely orbit of stellar vista. Now she was nudging Li to allow her to assume the controls and he harkened to her voice. He was not afraid of her maneuvers and showed true trust to his cherished effeminate companion. The little pebble became a colorous splendor as she declined the approach above the waving surface of ocean. They gazed upon the methane-argon partial atmosphere punctured by vacuum. As the cloud clusters orbit the planet they refract the orange reddish rays of Sigma Draconis A through the wispy balls of encircling quantized puffs. Seiwan leaves Lazarus and Xila alone in the cockpit. He instructs Xila to maneuver low while he collects a sample of the ocean from the bottom hatch. It took a few moments to suit up and locate a good container and he decided to dump the fruit grain bars and use the plastic lid-sporting sealer. The murky yet enchanting ocean sloshed about the bottom hatch slightly dipped into the colored sea of contrast.

A serene feeling swooped through him like an arc and upon closing the hatch he opened the top. He had placed the container on the counter top and stood on the ladder getting a first hand view of the orbiting cloud chunks. Bubbles of unattached gases flew quickly by overhead on a sea of space. There seemed in the wisps streaking spirits of good intention though he only imagined so. Xila zoomed off at slow speeds along the waters and Li remained in the hatchway with full trust in his girlfriend. She had seen to his safety checking his position before accelerating. The speed was slow, the wind was howling, and Li was blissful. When the altitude began to climb the roar of the rushing air quieted and Li kept the hatch open still feeling daring. He sunk in a little and watched as Xila plowed into the cloud puffs at high speed. The experience was startling and they flashed as bright as a camera light followed by the sound of a sash and fire did radiate. Li entered the cockpit again and was still entertained by the fun ride he just partook.

On top of his excitement a hidden emotion buried under the ecstacy was similar in feel to what he felt earlier of Lazarus—the digressing manner in which his image shew. It sank into the back of his thoughts and he reassumed the controls relieving Xila and setting a direction away of Sigma Draconis. The little planet about of its orange-red star becomes as a pea soon to vanish into the deep. Ahead the course lays locked on the even redder triple system ahead. The trip to HR 5568 was longer and of a more extreme deterrent of the straight path between A-00981 and Sol. The days revolved and the nights were bright as scary stories were told by light. The three friends bonded like family and outside the quietude of blackness spoke of places far off, other worlds and other galaxies remain on call, as their ship seemed to hang in space as if strung like a decorative ornament. Xila navigated today, she talks to Li closely and safety topics were addressed among feelings of solidarity.

The three red stars ahead drew them yet Li, inside, was glancing about the starboard periphery at the big fat yellow star home. With an angle and acceleration they could be back at the center territory of Star City but they cannot ignore the remote signal indicator alarming the ears and pinging the eyes with intermittent rays. The little led light drew their attention to the repeating transmission being received and becoming *louder* as they neared HR 5568. Casually the course was steered toward the inner system of HR 5568 A where it appeared either ship or a structure was signaling for help. The system was quiet. There were some small gassy planets in dual orbits about two of the paired stars, which was of special note. The revelation of the gravity finder and telescope was to credit for the observation. To observe the complexity of a new system is to observe all detectable orbits and its satellites.

Additionally scanning for all perceptible bodies small and large provides vectors for a safe course. Li and Xila worked well together and for a moment he considered what it would be like to travel with her as his navigator. Li beat the speed recommendation to gain proximity to whatever craft was sending out the distress mayday. The red sun grew quickly and the many minutes spent by Li at the **spacefinder** revealed the available speeds accurately. Lazarus returned from the back and took the backup panel for the first time immediately amused by the notion as his grin revealed. Li look back at him and he was dressed in his uniform whereas normally he would expect casual wear. The brown dwarf companion was average around 900 K and the closing coordinates of the Star Voyager.

There were, to their intrigue, terrestrial satellites in medium orbit of the almost Jupiter-sized B companion. Just as the Star Voyager came into range Li's mood switched to crisis mode, which was detectable by some internal alert within his two friends. They watched as the sunlit surface of the fortunately uninhabited planet, which met the insurmountable odds of being directly in the path of a massive gamma ray burst. The ship's instruments fumbled the readings and static disturbances were seen throughout the ship. Electromagnetic fields had penetrated the Star Voyager even at its distant position closing parallel.

The surface of the cratered planetoid resembling that of Mercury was incinerated to a cinder. Immediately the voices of the journey weary travelers chattered rapidly as they worked out a known path of precedence. Even in the face of the massive gamma burst they just encountered they maintained a vigilance for the distressed craft in which they closed in on. Li searched the vicinity for perhaps twenty minutes finding no such vessel yet viewing the traumatic fadeout of the indefinable intensity of the gamma burst. The signal returned after the burst had vanished and they resumed their unspoken rescue mission. Li had thought to explore the torched planet—a scientist's delight. So far no one has observed the damage created by such an energy release perhaps from a far off superstellar collision. Li was sure to return. Lazarus finally pinpointed the emissions coming from the other planet in the “**waterzone**” around the red dwarf A star.

Li fleets along bypassing asteroid clusters and gas pockets at high speed. It was a comfort knowing the facts regarding certain small sizes of debris when traversing a star system. Collisions at high speed with small objects are essentially interpreted as greater density colliding with smaller mass resulting in little to no interaction by the tiny incoming specks. A slight defect in the ship's hull was traceable by electrostatic interference patterns discovered by way of molecular consistency detectors. A standard mass object such as a pebble in space can, under high acceleration ratios of the larger impacting object, correspond to an interaction equal in the vicinity of the energy levels of subatomic particles. With variable speeds the mass of the collisioned objects such as the pebble correlates as a less dense object.

Li had hit a few things while chasing the distress signal. He was previously aware of the “don't push it” rule, which has guided his thoughts since its understanding during his childhood—his forest excursions yielding the edifying challenges of nature. He would never tempt thrill by inviting danger. Li never aspired to hit any other objects and slowed down a little. As the Star Voyager neared the small watery planet about its red dwarf the pinging signal clarified exponentially. The source was a vessel hovering low just above the expansive ocean and they merged with an alert situation indicated by crispy alarms. Xila giggled inside about his abrupt actionspringing tendency she has been amused by before as the ship dives toward the shimmering ruby sea. With a more consistent atmosphere than the little planet at Sigma Draconis this world gleamed with its own shade of radiance. Li cut the descent engines early preparing to use the **waterrider** mechanism. Now they needed to determine which direction the vessel was in. The signal had ceased and the Star Voyager came to a quiet halt above a protruding hill amongst thousands—before them endless ruby ocean abroad.



The Abut Planet of HR 5568

A New Friend

Lazarus had switched seats with Xila abruptly and began trying to reestablish detection of the signal. Xila having quickly assumed the backup seat delivered the success with her direct link to the stranded vessel. She did not deliver an audio sound or visual display. Xila was annoyed somewhat having Lazarus get up and stand over her while she was attempting to interpret the readings into important data for the pilot to use for creating a vector. Lazarus was able to complete the task once he took his seat again yet used the initial interpretation originally reported by Xila. Li accelerated off of the hill toward the derelict ship. A little smoke billowed from the grounded vessel above the sloshing sea and it was not much bigger than Husto's Explorer ship. This one was a little wider with a boxy fuselage and small wing mounts.

Upon reaching view of the red and blue cruiser the signal repeated as it had before. Li suited up and prepared to go outside. He instructed Lazarus to remain inside the Star Voyager at the cockpit and he said, "Oh no, not this time," referring to the last instance where a broke down ship was encountered. Lazarus convinced Li that Xila could handle an emergency takeoff if necessary and both Li and Lazarus exit the ship of the top hatch. Li adjusted the shading of his helmet visor because the red was too much for his eyes and the prevention of optical fatigue was his goal. Li climbed in front of the window of the vessel and the side door of this new craft was opened to reveal another suited individual who waved them inside and they did enter the tiny airlock. It was a squeeze up against the masked crewman of the cruiser they stood in now as the air pressurized and they finally stepped into the main cabin of the ship. They all removed their helmets to find familiarity with one another.

The centered eyes of a tall tan skinned man of dark hair and distinguished apparel looks into him. He was from Suntown and was prompt to tell his lifesaving guests of their solid fuel depletion and hover-system failure. Li immediately made plans to give the last spare ascent fuel blocks to them and prepared to take a look at their hover mechanism components and he left again through the minilock. Lazarus began establishing a rapport with the captain and it was Jacy Abeytu, former crewman aboard the E.S. Vigor, wearing a green vest with no undershirt and gray pants upon his waist. The setup of this ship was large enough to stand up in, as was the Star Voyager yet there were only two rooms the cockpit and the rear section where he then stood. Lazarus looks along the ceiling and corners at the interior columns of bulkheads and discharge conduits. The vessel rear was quite empty with only a few folded bed mounts sectional seats in the rear port corner and a round table thereabout.

There was a lot of space, which was not utilized by any leisure lounges or guest couch. There were many panels and enclosed cabinets however made of hard metal coverings of whose contents remains a mystery. The control cabin door retracts and Celie Ackland appeared to Lazarus's surprise. "Celie...?" Lazarus called in surprise. "What are you doing here I thought you were on the Kuipertown rock?"

"I was waiting for you to pick me up there." Lazarus was suddenly weary having just recalled why he was a no show. He made a brief mention of his recent SMD mission and involvement in the C-00101 conflict, which should be, according to his estimate, airing on intersystem news broadcasts. Celie had already heard. Her new Native Indian boyfriend Jacy approaches and she hug his rippled torso. Lazarus was not jealous yet internally amused. He really didn't have much of an affiliation with Celie other than a brief intimacy weeks ago.

Jacy stood tall and firm and about his face a hardness of manner and honor of spirit. One could sense the enlightened and protective solidity of his sturdy demeanor. He looked not too much onto the face of Lazarus and he needed not to. Instead as he approached light-footedly, his dense frame made little noise upon the clanging deck plates and his gaze was off centered toward another part of the ship yet Lazarus felt he was being observed. It was as if to be looked upon by not the eyes but another sense. Lazarus detected his acceptance and was inaudibly invited to sit down and converse with Celie and Captain Abeytu. Still clinging to the rugged naturalists Celie explains with delight her meeting of Jacy at Kuipertown and they became mates soon after—their romantic excursion under the reddened sun interrupted by the sudden ship malfunction. An alert sounded and Jacy stepped away to the hanging space suit rack and covered his body with the armored jumpsuit. He quietly exits the craft.

Outside Li had been trying to unhitch the ascent thruster compartment, which was what set Jacy's alarm off, and he assisted Li with elbow grease and his key to open the hatch. Essentially the fuel block was slightly too large and Jacy and Li had to come back inside with the blocks to cut them down to size to fit Jacy's ship specs. A numinous cabinet was finally opened which divided Lazarus's attention. Now he listens to Celie's cheerful chattering while checking Jacy's enclosures. A serrated cutting tool was removed but Lazarus didn't acknowledge it well as he was dreamily distracted by the strange

green glow emanating ambiently from inside the cabinet. Both Lazarus and Celie had to tolerate the grinding hacksaw as they tried to talk about recent events and the noise was bothersome. Neither of them complained due to their acknowledgement of the necessity to resize the thruster bricks. The sawing was complete and the two captains depart the ship again to climb along the side hull to fit the piece into place. Li slipped and fell into the water. Motionless for a moment a wave of anxiety became him as he sank rapidly. Jacy took position on his knees waiting to decide how to rescue him. A few tens of meters down strange fishes of this exotic little planet nibbled upon him and he tried to scamper back toward the hovering ship. His weighty suit continued to sink him and he finally remembered a section from his SES manual, activating the **emergency floatation balloon** on the armpit of the SES.

The strong arm of Jacy reached into the water and lifted the slightly startled Li back onto the wing blade after bobbing above the surface. A short checkup by Jacy and he was deemed unhurt and no suit punctures—not that he expected any but as a precautionary measure he took note of Li's condition. Li deflates his balloons and they resume their refitting task. Li remembered his earlier observation of the planetoid that was fried by the intense gamma burst earlier and told of the event to Jacy who seemed interested yet with little expression upon his hardened face. Li had told this as a warning not certain what dangers could remain in the aftermath of the event. Inside the parked Star Sailor Lazarus touched bases with Celie and she desired to remain inside to wait for her Jacy to return. It seems that Celie's request for a romantic runaway local with her strapping Indian boyfriend turned into an accidental breakdown. Nevertheless she made no complaints and was still pleased while she waits snugly upon the sectional seat in the corner. Her reference to the awesome sunny sky of red she expressed to be sufficiently fanciful. That was the reason they had decided to fly outside of Suntown to the nearby star system of HR 5568 as Lazarus discerned.

"Jacy sure is a plain person." Lazarus notes according to the lack of furniture and décor. "I think it's because of his work. He's really brilliant on the inside once you get to know him." She said with a grimace. Lazarus stood as if he could not help himself and moved toward the cabinet. Celie was quiet and watched him as he neared. Opening slowly the industrial strength shutter the radiance glows his face a light green. Removing the cylindrical yet hypodermically pointed rod Lazarus beholds the shining wonder. "Is this a glow stick?" He asked. She was silent and remained watching him. He did not question her quietude and returned his gaze upon the rod and it made him smile of marvel. He brought it back over to Celie with eyes fixed on the object finally looking toward her. "Okay, Jacy and I found it here on this planet." She revealed. "We had to pick it up when we saw it glowing just as we came to a stop when our engine died."

"It looks like a crystal actually." Lazarus said no longer believing it to be an entertainment item.

Celie silently indicated for him to replace it recalling Jacy's similar fascination. Outside, patience and concentration promoted a job well done as Jacy and Li lean onto the hull. A little talk about the environment occurs while Li scans the horizon. They discuss also more about the completed task and how to avoid another accident. Lazarus emerged then from the ship resuited to join his laboring comrades. Indeed the view was breathtaking with the other two binaries kindling noticeably in the distance. In the Star Voyager Xila watches closely at the three men working their magic on the engines and hover devices and she takes the initiative to answer Captain Li's beeping communications alert. The message was an automated threat directed at Captain Li. Xila sent out an identification request and a **visual code link** was returned.

About the audio phased the voice of a man whom Xila did recognize. His request for Captain Li was not granted yet a visual link was maintained. The stranger recalled the scarred beauty of Xila whom he met at the Mars Barr a long time ago. Xila became alerted and perturbed by the brazen message saying that the fight is not over yet with Li and that he was "finished", referring to Li. Xila warned the man not to interfere with her associate Li and she intended to report him to the SMD. The message ends and Xila saved it into the computer file system. She debated intensely as her instincts told her to activate the stealth device and she finally decided to proceed.

The outside repairmen were nearly finished fitting the fuel chunk into Jacy's vessel and the vibratory hum of the stealth generator on the Star Voyager had caught their attention. Interestingly, the low-pressure atmosphere sounded a deep buzz of the ships stealth mechanism heard by the three men. Jacy paid little attention to the sound believing it to be a routine ship function yet Li took it more seriously and was avidly wondering why Xila decided to activate the stealth system. He was partially apprehensive due to the crossing thought of her unnecessary use of his ships systems. "Maybe she wants us to hurry." Lazarus said. Li did not answer and finished his duties for Jacy.

Xila taps her finger on the console trying to decide how to inform Li of this new threat and her recent battle experience began to surface. Her instincts tugged at her saying that an enemy was near and danger lurks. She needed Li to return in order to alleviate her anxiety by informing him. The top hatch alert finally sounded and shortly thereafter emerged the newly

unsuited captain and navigator. Li with a loud voice ordered a takeoff and Xila relocated from the navpanel to the backseat. She decided suddenly not to inform Li yet and would begin an intense watch from her spare post searching for enemy vessels. Li did not deactivate the stealth thinking nothing much of Xila decision to turn it on and he did not question her yet. A last communication link to the downed vessel provided Li with his desired assurance that they would be getting underway on their own course soon. Jacy replied affirmatively and Li, feeling negligent, inquired as to the name of his vessel which he forgot to ask. Jacy Replied, **"The Star Sailer."**

"A nice model..." Li complimented. "Perhaps we will see you two again another time in another place."

"Agreed." Jacy Confirmed. The screen blanks. The Star Voyager had gained a good altitude and it was becoming time to break away from the gravity of the small red-shaded planet. Another proximity alert sounded. Lazarus performed a double take at his panel readings not expecting to see what he did and promptly reported several vessels maintaining an intercepting trajectory toward the Star Voyager and he did call for a battle alert. The alarms blared and the weapons armed. Xila confirmed before Lazarus the identity of the approaching enemy craft to be Christopher Williams and his posse. They were in deep space by now and the red star was falling away. Li, who showed little surprise at running into Chris, paid little mind to the situation and canceled the battle alert. Instead he executed a high acceleration ratio toward Suntown. Lazarus prepared the weapons systems and Xila stood by for additional targeting assistance.

The pot shots taken by the speedy fighters pelted the shields of the Star Voyager and vibrations resulted. Li continued his acceleration sequence and Lazarus questioned whether or not he was going to stay and fight. Li declined calmly and said he had another plan in mind, which he continued to carry out. The tagging XF fighters tailed the Star Voyager for a few million miles or so before falling behind of the tremendous velocity ranges achieved shortly thereafter by the cruising Voyager. Both Xila and Lazarus had the thought cross their minds that Li might want to relieve his frustrations with Christopher and his continued assaults and hatred by remaining nearby to engage the battle group. Li was then noted as taking his satisfaction from outrunning the aggressively pursuing vessels. He knew Chris would become enraged and that was all the relief Li required. The laser shots began to thin out after a gradual crossing into translightspeed.

A conversation erupted about Christopher and Li spoke as if to remain unconcerned. Li turns and relaxes facing Xila who was explaining her earlier threat message received over communications. Li took note of it and resumed his response series, according to Xila and Lazarus's inquiries. The front cabin became quiet of beeps and indicators as they continued to accelerate into high speeds. The talk of the three friends continued unstilling the air and bringing fourth normal dialog such as what their specific intentions would be upon returning to Suntown. Xila was eager to check into her preferred hotel at Cerestown as she told with fervor.

Lazarus almost mentioned to Li to stop at Kuipertown to pick up Celie then checked himself having suddenly forgotten just meeting her at the stern falling HR 5568 system. Li was feeling well and proceeded to turn on some soothing meditation music as they flew. Xila liked Li's choice of songs. The first was titled **"Diverging Dreams"** and it played over the lucent sound system of the Star Voyager. Suddenly another blaring attack alarm sounded disturbing the serenity. It was Chris Williams's posse beginning to catch up with the Star Voyager's acceleration ratio and they were chasing the crew. Li didn't pay it any attention nor did he respond to their gain. He canceled the alerts and resumed his music-playing program. Xila and Lazarus wondered for a moment why he would ignore this approaching attack convoy and the answer soon came about as they began to fall behind again. The balmy tunes transitioned into still more relaxing melodies. The next track was titled, **"Cryptic Journey"** and began its play.

Xila folded the backup console into the sidewall and slouched in her chair taking comfort in the padded recliner, which she now lay back in. Lazarus excused himself to the rear and Li turn his chair to lie back also. At this time Xila and Li went into the subconscious talk mode and began speaking about interesting and charming topics as their minds went idle. No discussions regarding ship functions or stellar analysis took place for a good while and satiation became them. The track switched again now playing the tantalizing tunes of **"Enduring Season."** Xila was dozing a little and Li continued to soothe her with words of foresight and stories of life. He began to recall his younger days and spoke of his many wondrous nights under his favorite tree back home. With crickets chirping and stars twinkling Li painted a picture in the mind of his lover and they *met on the same image point*.

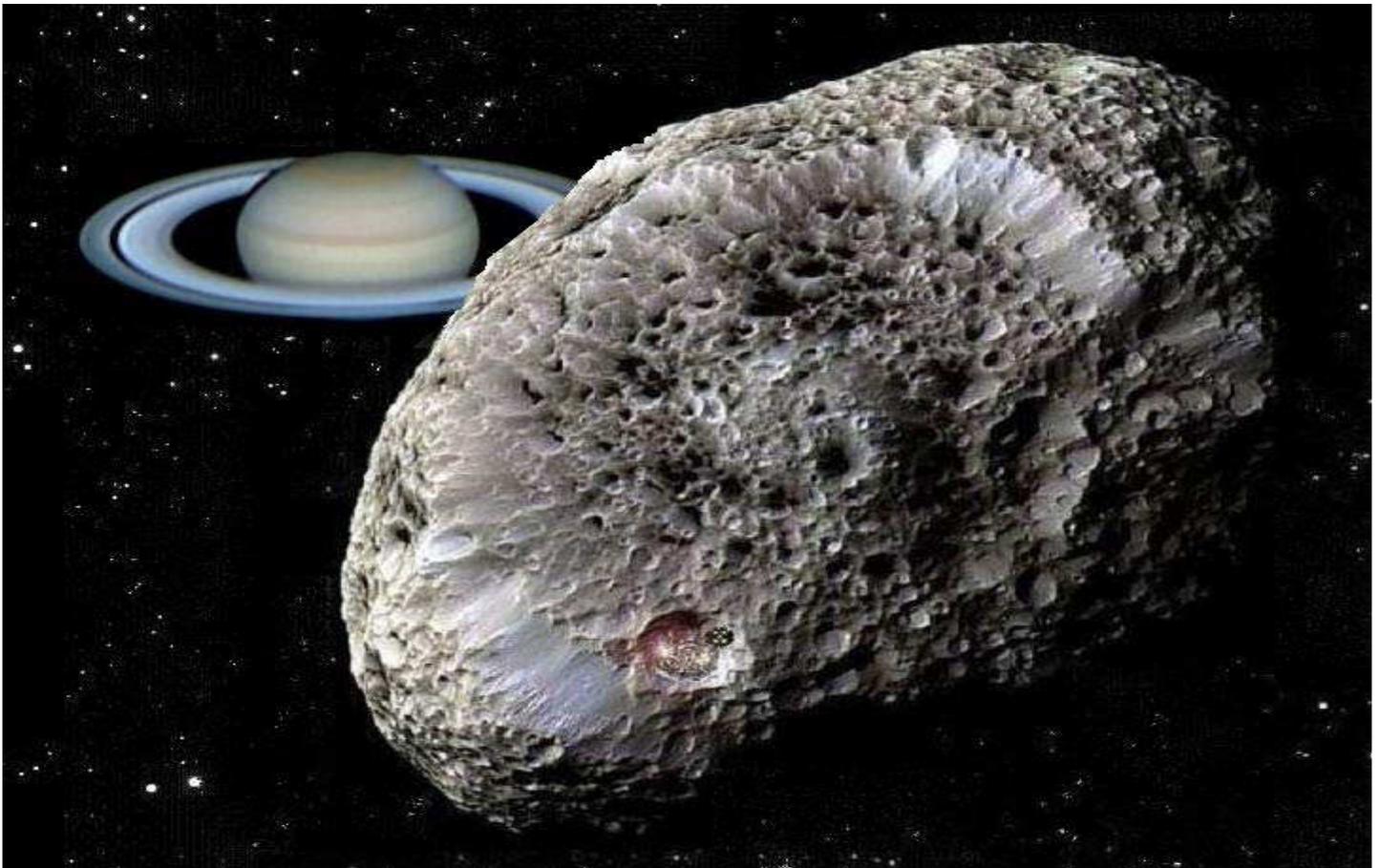
Xila could see the pond down in the foggy basin and the fireflies twirling though Li forgot to mention them, yet Xila could see clearly the objects of this sweet place Li used to visit and now reminisced upon. Xila floated gracefully through the starry heavens guided by the warmth and words of her friend and sugar daddy. Her hardened battle wounded heart filled with life again and her inner hurts began to heal. She had seen much conflict and hardship in her life and was a one of a kind

woman. She needed the calmness and acceptance of Li to provide a safe haven for her troubled thoughts inside. She rolled over on the recliner into a semi fetal position attaining more comfort as the music sailed into "[Forrest Creek](#)." Li could hear the precious breath of slumber and he let her drift into sleep while he relax and dozes himself there in the cockpit. Lazarus fell asleep in the back while Li got up a few times during the night in response to minor alerts. He took advantage of the awakenings to over-check the ship and running systems. He grabbed a blanket from the rear to cover Xila who was sleeping too comfortably to move yet he still considered it.

There was a series of moments after returning from the rear of the ship when he had sat upon the bridge again to get comfortable and stargazed for a session seeing in the black space images of his mind yet painted on the dark background. The motion of the ship began to play tricks on him strangely felt. Covering Li now was his old leopard blanket used throughout his childhood and was kept until now. Xila's presence pacified him as he gaze about the dash and bridge. Li slept in the cockpit with Xila all night and when she awoke Li was in the back cooking breakfast upon the ministove and the groggy navigator enters the control room to finish his sleep in his side seat while Li wills to create a feast. She came to in the waves of [Blazing Reality](#), the final mediation tracklisting of Li's selection. Li had originally looped the audio index play and those same songs were still running.

Xila had dreams, which appeared to be psychoactively related to the pondering warbles. The three ate in the back at the long counter and it was a routine reprisal. They would spend the day ahead with hours of deep space flight and little stellar activity as they traversed throughout the middle of nowhere. Yet on occasion one would look upon the closening Sun fore. There was a time of loud talking and grief when Li finally realized that he had forgotten to return to the torched planet after the parting of Celie and Jacy. A unique thermodynamic study opportunity was missed and the now destructed surface lay barren and unexplored. The sheer intensity of this particular burst, which occurred in the hours astern, was not accounted by Li, Lazarus, or Xila, who would have had an interest in the results.

A Daring Spectacle



Hyperion Civic Colony

Days later the serenity of Suntuon endured and a local festivity were being held at Saturn. Husto was present amongst thousands of spectators as they watched the specialized **Space Angels**, modified stunt craft designed for exhibition, perform their thrilling feats as they looped and arced about the Saturnian system. The pilots consisted of new Transition Academy graduates of the top free pilot's class. The rookie stunt flyers were zealous in their application of skilled low error-margin flight measures. Moons were dodged rings were raced and the crowd cheered looking on via media broadcasting and on occasion by way of window upon falling near the path of these agile trick ships.

Maneuvering daringly close the pilots proceed to release plasmatic gases, which they ignited from their torching engine nozzles producing a stunning aerial streak of fire overlaying the skies above the ringed giant. Husto was not in his vessel and sat thereupon the round table before the big screen viewer while the long-winded announcers colored the show with detail over the audio system there at Saturn's strange looking moonlet **Hyperion**.

The hiss of the airlock soon revealed the open way of the lounge entrance and there within its frames stood a shy man new to the area. He entered with face full of light and demurity. He had removed his helmet a 'lil' early and Husto felt it important to try and lure him to his table. In his heart he had thought to protect the man who didn't quite seem to have his space legs yet. Husto stands and introduces himself to the man. His hair brown and bangs curled outward. His wide eyes and partial grin shined fourth as he scans the parlor with a radarish head. He returns the introduction and his name was Erin Trotter of Israel on Earth. The waitress brings cold tea to the table and Erin had not an order as of yet. Husto partook of the hot, fresh, buttered popcorn heap and continued to glance upon the screen just as the Space Angels positioned themselves for an unprecedented race around a prescribed Saturn track.

Keeping courtesy he also makes light conversation with Erin who was still a bit gleamy-eyed as he observed the activity about the rest stop. Husto inquired about how he made it all the way out to Saturn and Erin confirmed that he had not his own vessel. His trip was granted having been an academy graduate yet felt as if a sprit from within drew him about the solar system. He had indicated his travel that it was made by attaining random transports from various ship owners. From the medium light disc shaped frame of the cannon mounted attack vessel flown by a secretive and mysterious dark haired woman, to the spacious and tourist filled shuttle cruiser, Erin made his way about Sol safely and efficiently. Erin reported additionally having been granted permission to come aboard the soldier filled Krystonian troop shuttle departing Moon of Earth, a previous and initial stop in which he had encountered. The moon is often the first travel pass for nonshipowners and wayward tourists and has been dubbed, *The Springboard to the Stars*.

Erin was very entertained by the events taking place and Husto's addition to the roaring yells of race fans energized the air. The pretty girls having noted the glimmer of innocence upon the youthful face of Erin made known their attraction to him. They seemed magnetized by his enduring coy. His face was reddened at the warming attention given to him by the radiant belle nudging him as she passed near. He nearly lost his focus at the consistent pressure of the resilient flesh of her thigh against his shoulder while he sat. Erin was a hard worker and rarely left his hometown yet somehow he finds himself sitting on the far-off retrograde moon of Hyperion. The potatoshaped moonlet orbited opposite of the other satellites of Saturn at a distance of about one million miles.

With hints of sky blue coloration on its surface, perhaps of reflective ices, the sponglike satellite portrayed the scary surface of craters and dark volcanic compounds seen out upon the mini horizon via the parted window screen, which await exploration and analysis. Husto felt odd about the moon's surface, which made his teeth feel tingly and rubbery resembling a section of a coral reef, yet was able to ignore the funny feeling seeing as how a neck and neck course was being completed. Still enticed by the ladies of fruity fragrance Erin watches Husto in admiration as he applauds in his fun. Those girls were still on Erin's mind as they moved about the lounge. Both the excited energy of the crowd as well as the females of affection formed into one quantized thought in the mind of Erin. He finds reunion in his recollection of the preserved efficiency found in that mysterious dark haired fighter pilot still fresh in his mind—her enduring responsibility and weapon-mounted raiding craft. The show goes on.

A Timely Checkup

Lazarus and Xila noticed the shift in Li's behavior as they penetrated the Solar System. There was something which there well known friend had in mind yet he did not say anything about it so far only to pilot apparently toward its location. Xila being so close to Li now could tell when he was planning a surprise and she awaited its revelation. Conversations filled around in the moments ahead and continued while Lazarus gets a vector on the nigh drawing waylay. His hunch was set on

Pluto. As the nearest habited object on their course his instrument panel locked onto the slow moving planet pair. Li landed on the planet Pluto and urged the two shipmates to come with him. The three rested comrades depart the well-traveled engine mounted capsule onto the round pad of Pluto Stop. Traversing the same walkway via the wide-bottomed wheeled carts Li drives his friends toward the sky scraping monument and observatory.

Atop the tower much the shape of the Eiffel construction of France can be seen the boxy enclosure containing the stellar lookout where Li had visited over a month ago. Now he returns not with sadness but elation as he prepares to show his friends The Strange Object. They were very thrilled as the ice and surface flowed by at the manageable speed of the **quickcart**. A few other civilians were passing, playing out on the terrain, and riding other transport buggies. Stepping from the cart they approach the base of the tower. Soon into the archway they came and pass into the hall of recreation and they didn't understand why they should be so swift in getting upstairs to see this strange object Li jabbered about over the helmet comm. during the buggy ride and even now. In the elevator the uncapped group of space cadets met **Mrs. Cory**, the lead instructor of the children's class, hair of medium length, small and plain. Li was attracted to her somewhat and she was pretty. Xila did not take note of Li's feeling having shifted temporarily toward the cuteness of Mrs. Cory, due to her curiosity of seeing Li's object.

At the top of the elevator shaft they exit and traverse the hall of billboards, charted diagrams and data. Li reached for the door handle leading to the observation room and he was slow and gentle as not to disturb the quiet, studying scientists inside. To Li's surprise the level of fratism could be felt and measured by the back and forth movement of the staff on hand. Men and woman in the white lab coats darted to and fro carrying data printouts and equipment tools. Surrounding the jumbo looking glass were the three eldest scientists on duty one of which a Matron as his red symbol indicated which was stitched above the pocket of his coat. The new coming space cadets stood aside not wanting to impede the motions of the quickened personnel and Li upon finding with patience a moment to pull the telescope operators aside requested permission to view the object and they were granted affirmatively.

Li took a look again and removed himself after only a few seconds of viewing and began to act similar to the scientists. Moving aside Xila had her peep followed by the giddy Lazarus. They were indeed astounded and curious as to what the object was yet were still a little unclear about why all the commotion. Li didn't really mention it only stood wide-eyed and quieted. The object did not look the same as did before. Last time an intriguing collection of violet cloudy formations now a golden cluster of heavenly bodies so it seemed. Li spoke personally with the other scientist while Lazarus and Xila took turns viewing the object. Li retrieved the **Right Ascension** and **Declination** coordinates of the object and saved them in his wrist device and the Star Voyager's data files via radio routing. Li and the scientists continued to chat and speculate on the issue as Lazarus and Xila had already turned the telescope toward another cosmic body and were enjoying their stay at Pluto's observatory. Li had plans to observe the object on his own using his ships computer and celestial viewer.

Still millions of light years away the strange object appeared almost five times bigger and had changed colors still streaming of postspectral light. The excitement calms and Li concludes his thoughts to the by standing professors. They had been debating the misunderstood speed to distance anomaly as compared to previous observations. Though the distance of the object appears to decrease significantly the estimated time of travel does not equal out correctly. Additionally there seem to be two interpretable distances one of which has been agreed upon by more than one observer documented as about 73.3 billion light years and another indicating the new apparent distance to be within a few thousand light years! This created an uneasy feeling amongst the group. Li signals to the fun loving duo and was not very jealous of Lazarus and Xila getting along so well. The situation was not of a relationship nature rather the moment.

Li fell in more closely with the astronomers and the slot was open for Xila and Lazarus to fill at the telescope HUD while Li discussed the stellar phenomena. After Li gathered the information he needed the group of three proceeded to the café where they dined for the first time there at Pluto Stop and chatted with schoolteachers and adored the little students in their uniforms. Li reminisced of his childhood school days as he retrieved his tray in the lunch line with the smart and energetic students. He gave a glance over toward the Mrs. Cory having overheard her teaching curriculum at the far end of the café where a special activity was playing out for the kids as they used the long lunch tables. She glanced back and Li was touched by the little sparkle in her eye. They depart the talkative pupils and return outside of the heightly overlook above the busy patio into the vacuum. Lazarus entertained the idea of driving the cart out onto the terrain but it didn't appear to be made for such an excursion.

The recreation shed back in the town square contained more appropriate off-road vehicles but they did not retrieve it. Xila hinted at her eagerness to check into her favorite hotel and Li wanted to get back to his home vicinity. They ascend of Pluto having enjoyed their time out.

A Stunning View

Li requested of Lazarus that he take control of the bridge while he prepares to tie the NET sensor with his optical telescope to look at TSO. He had a hunch about the spectral line data and the square shaped dish sensor on the roof of the ship could sense frequencies slightly higher than normal. Spending several tens of minutes tapping at the side panel in the middle cabin Li adjusts the spectral imager to the appropriate azimuth. Xila was in the back showering and would, as Li predicted, spend perhaps half an hour or more preparing for her Suntown visit. He knew Xila was militant in her routines yet from a psychological standpoint the concept of a vacation would serve as an excuse for the individual in question to slack off, Li thought. This explained why she took her time. Xila always took advantage of her leave-of-absences and enjoyed herself thoroughly. Li noted and saves the stray thoughts in his mind and peeped again at The Strange Object. The data was confirmed similar so far to the telescopes at Pluto observatory.

Yet, the information fields were much less populated with texts and numerals, as normally there is a preponderance of data filling the boxes. Now we see uncertain data and multiple question marks. Li leans back in his chair with knuckles to his chin and the scope light still in his face. He was in deep thought about TSO and the cockpit door retracts birthing a zealous Lazarus requesting a switch out. Li relives his eager friend of bridge duty. This was the first time no one was manning the front. Li was ok with it seeing as how he was only a few feet away.

Pondering in deep thought he strived to understand The Strange Object. Lazarus heads toward the rear and Li tells him to wait a moment because Xila was back there dressing. At that moment she emerges in her Krystonian uniform and sits her duffle bag down in the corner of the room. She was fresh and ready for her leave. She requested to be taken to Ceres in A.B. Plaza when convenient. Li returns to the bridge and alters the course for inner Suntown. He had intended to go there anyway and the Star Voyager veers toward the structure sprouted the commons plaza encompassing Ceres Hotel destination of Xila. The Star Voyager floated into the enlarged hangar after slowing to general pedestrian speeds.

The high rise balconies and tree islands remained decorous and the reserved port bay, which they assumed locked behind them to sever them from the vacuum. Lazarus's previous signal to the automated docking manager had promptly allocated a space for the Star Voyager. Xila suited anyway as safety would decree with helmet at her side and hugs and kisses Li. She told them both that she would see them later and perhaps contact them for transportation and Li assured his lovely girlfriend he was likely to be available. Xila climbs out and dashes away on her own and Li sits a moment to talk to Lazarus before departing the bay. He wanted to figure out their next destination and Lazarus chose to remain with the ship, as did Li.

Apparently there were more graduates walking around the hotel court possibly from a large class, which recently concluded. The increased number of crowd calming laser ads and TV broadcasts painted onto the black sky around the plaza above the equipment hosting asteroids were eye-catching. News, shows, and publicity displayed in squares and circles of light for all to see. Li established a link with one of the broadcasters by input of the number code near the base of the emitter device so he could listen on the ships speakers. He was taking note of some race results from the system of Saturn and somehow, somehow, knew Husto was there.

Chapter 6

The Outside Vessel

At the outskirts of Star City a giant gleaming vessel of enchanting wonder penetrates the borders. Station manager **Ablendan** ran the medium sized yet major observation station in its distant orbit around the massive gas giant of 47 Ursae Majoris. Consisting of some of the toughest space adventurers this lonely station remains a place of isolation. Few fanatics of the cosmos other than the current crew volunteered for this lonely job at this far off system forty-five light years from Suntown. The system was abundant with giant planets and the second orbital body hosted the lookout. Today's events were routine as usual and Radar Dataist **Tom Russ** was idle before his post.

Mr. Ablendan was disappointed with the crew's slack behavior and ordered some of his slothful staff to perform what the grumbleby bevy saw as just busy work. They didn't like it so much as the station was so far out it was unlikely to see any alarming events. Ablendan thought differently. His station managing was demanding despite the lack of stellar activity. Additional to his own outlook the SMD maintained an open ear to **Outpost 47** and has previously assured its appointed administrator of the importance of this particular post. With their advanced degrees and extensive fascination with cosmology the consol operators had to bear the repugnance of a full deck mopping. The interior of the station was dimly lit. The area didn't require much illumination as most of what needed to be seen was already lit, namely consoles and panels. Text displays were light colored with dark backgrounds. And the buttons glowed in a full spectrum of colors.

The deck was of hard metal and the grated walls were clanky and steel. It wasn't easy to walk about the main control room inconspicuously due to the clattering abrasions sounding with every footstep. Station Manager Ablendan leaves the main deck and the sighing relief of the crewman sounded about. The mop man leaned the cleaning tools against the wall and they resumed their chatting and board games. Mr. Russ and Proximity Watcher **McNeil** battle in the military command game *Stratego*, which was previously covered by his cleaning rag. A few pieces had fallen over and they were prompt to replace them. Russ was nearing McNeil's well-hidden flag piece of which was only lightly surrounded by the unmovable bomb piece. Success! Russ tapped the top of the flag and the game was one. They cleared the board and began repositioning the pieces for yet another. This time McNeil would hide his flag in the most confusing arrangement. He was only able to place about half of his army before his panel alert sounded a noise, which had never been heard outside of testing. It was a nearing vessel alarm.

McNeil rolls over in his wheeled chair to the console and in his sight was a very large blip from a massive craft passing near the system toward central Star City. With little time wasted he hits the big red general alert button. Alarms blare and lights flicker as the crew springs into action. The rattling deck plate sounds its metallic clap with every step as Ablendan stomps toward the lookout. He enters with a face of admittance to the monotony of the station and was eager to see what the issue was. He requested a report from the signaling employee and McNeil responds with his display of the speeding vessel. He transfers the image to the big screen and in view came the blinking sensor sweep of the large craft traveling at very high velocity. The estimated speed of the outside vessel was nearly twice the max of the fleetly Mediator's top speed. Ablendan was silent for a moment while he watches the craft dart by the 47 Ursae Majoris system. He made his decision finally and sounded a standard military awareness by way of automated signal. In a couple of hours the encrypted message would reach a military base via the signal boosting buoy network.

Out and About

The **combatory** Mediator remained position a few light years adrift of Suntown while the misbehaving officer Kearney who began to display strange character changes shortly after his last ship absence. Admiral Seghtee holds his chin while watching the jittery officer as he chatters nonsensicals to himself and others. He was thinking back to when it started and placed it upon departing the last known position of the Star Voyager. His brain racking had conjured up the brief moment when he was separated from all ship personnel including himself. He started to wonder about Captain Li as he struggled to determine the cause of his actions. "Did he get some kind of drug from The Star Voyager?" He wondered.

The ships nurse returned from her post where she was preparing a sedation injection and uses it to calm the outrageous officer. Although his behavior was not aggressive or physically threatening his boisterous flamboyancy was disrupting personnel concentration. At the moment the Mediator was undergoing final repairs before heading back to Moonbase-1. There were only a few tens of minutes remaining, just under a half an hour, until the mighty battleship would resume its

home course. The pilot upfront who was in the dugout style pilots post requested permission to be pulled out by the top cabin officer behind and above the flyers chair. He grabs his shoulders and lifts him out. At which time he retreats to the belly of the ship for his break as well as to witness the captivating shiphand. Seghtee still observing and listening to his antictive banter calmly searches his pockets.

The Admiral orders a present deckhand to inspect Tony's locker for contraband substance or otherwise. Upon opening the metal shutter he becomes fixed on the purple crystal sitting in a nest of fabric. The Admiral in his search found nothing of note in the cluttered pockets of Tony's clothing and searches his personal space suit next still finding nothing. The unwitting deckhand removes the crystal. With an ensorcelled smile he stares gleamingly into its purple glowing core. The Admiral turns to find him walking about slowly holding it with both hands. He glances for a moment in his mind making comparison to the deckhand's actions to Tony's.

Without questioning he ordered the crewman to discard the object immediately. He began babbling about the crystal in which he held as if to be in favor of its preservation. Yet, Seghtee reacted as if to have had prior knowledge about it and he in reality did not, but something inside told him to get rid of it. He swiftly approaches the man snatching the royal ruby and places it in the **casting chamber**. With a low ejection setting the material is expelled at a slow speed because Seghtee planned to target it and blow it up. Seghtee excuses the officer manning the side mounted tactical console and activates the turbo laser gun. He scanned the general area for a few minutes yet no target was acquired. He looked up in bewilderment then back to his panel attempting to locate the item, which was just delivered outside the vessel. It was supposed to be right in the general vicinity no more than a few tens of meters away. Yet in all of his searching he was unsuccessful in finding the neuroactive element. Somehow the Admiral's hunch was accurate. Eventually he had to do what was most uncomfortable for him, which was to leave this incident unsolved. Uncertainties are always a military leader's dreaded nemesis. The mediator departs the empty zone at Arinori's orders and modifies its velocity toward the Solar System.

Back in Town...

The Star Voyager wakes into the intriguing system of Saturn and moons are visible as they reflect sunlight. They were small and glowy and looked like little pieces of candy that could be eaten as they spun around mother Saturn. Saturn itself looked like something you could take a bite out of as well. The race was over and Li was looking for friends. Lazarus was interested in the stray ion trails found in swirling arcs around Saturn and some of its satellites. He did not know because he wasn't present to see the dazzling fire trails streaking behind the stunt performing Space Angels. In the distance the Explorer was passing closely on an opposite trajectory yet brightly lit in the Sunlight of its white frame and fuselage.

A message sounds from the voice of Husto and he welcomes them regarding their return to the home territory. He gave Li a look, which meant something about their recent teamwork in chasing the rouge decoy a while ago. Li was quick to turn the ship around to follow Husto's fighter and almost had a collision with another vessel following too close behind. It scared Li that he almost hit the ship and the other vessel owner angled away likely in a rage. Officially vessels, unless on a speed matching course, should not follow so closely to unknown vessels while enormous spaces exist. If they were to dispute the matter Li would win. Li aligns his course with Husto and they accelerate toward their next destination. The Mars Barr was found with a large crowd of Humans standing outside and it appeared to be a gathering.

Quickly they landed on the asteroid terrain because of the full patio and step out into the vacuum. When they near, the crowd began to look more like protesters judging by their hand and body gestures. Some of the people there had their helmets visors open and they were all Human. Li then noticed the man, Erin, following Husto who had stepped out from the explorer but the situation at hand postponed a meeting. Husto spoke closely to a protester and found out what the issue was. Someone from Earth had brought an illegal nongraduate into the café and an injury resulted. The angry Human mentioned the misunderstanding of an alien gesture of affection to be an assault. The human reacted of instinct and the slender, weak; alien was knocked down and hurt.

Also mentioned was having to tolerate a few too much of the provocative hiss from the mouth of an irate Felidae party. The Humans were asked to leave the restaurant. Husto and Li approached the aliens running the Mars Barr as they stood under the archway, a few Felidaes, a Badgerman, and they began to try to sort things out. It took a while to gather all the information and by the end they had found a solution. With a tense moment of silence the owner thought to himself finally becoming convinced. Husto explained the Humans behavior as best he could and was successful in convincing the owner not to call the SMD. The fact that the Human was not qualified to be around aliens or alone in space was proven as being

the problem. The disruptive Human was long gone and the ship owner who brought the assaulting person there was reported as an individual and not a racial profile. The Humans were allowed back inside and normal activities resumed. Inside the three uncap and Li took notice again of Husto's new bright-eyed friend.

Most of the large crowd of protesters outside went about their business and had not filled the café. They sat upon the usual table getting a few alien glances, which quickly turned to acceptance, and they continued their outlandish chatter. "Erin Trotter, meet Captain Li and his copilot Lazarus." Husto introduced. They shake hands as Erin makes a partial bow of humility. His bangs curled up front ways and his wide eyes accompanied his blameless smile. He looked upon the now vastly experienced Captain Li with admiration and respected them both abundantly. Down the stairs from the lookout came two individuals in brown robes who sat at the bar counter quietly. "Li, I've seen those guys before." Lazarus said. "I have too." They look to Husto who was quiet. "Do you recognize them?" Li asked. "Where did you see them at?"

"I saw them when I powered the Star Voyager earlier at Mercury days ago." Husto responded. "I saw them onboard the E.S. Vigor on our way back from Alpha Centauri." Li pondered a moment. "I think I'd better go and find out something about them. It would seem to be my duty." Li thought.

Husto seemed vaguely apprehensive as if to be tense about Li asking questions. Li sat upon the stool next to one of the men on the left side and introduced himself. The man turned part ways and responded normally with a hello but didn't give his name. Back at the table Lazarus and Husto watch on as Li engages in conversation. Strangely they seemed to be making good acquaintance. Laz could tell they were speaking privately with reservations about how they conveyed information. What he couldn't understand was how and why Li was able to make friends so fast. The look on Li's face as he left the bar counter was ponderous and analytical, as he appeared to be factoring new information into his memory. Lazarus wanted information about the men and Li looked at Husto who returned a mutual glance. "I'll tell you later." Li said.

The airlock gate retracted and the Catwoman of Mastery entered with her three killings in their minisuits. They proceed up the stairs to remove their SES's and the Catwoman entered the kitchen. Later the giddy kids assumed the entertainment area on the other side of the divider and turned on the television. The popular kid took control of the remote channel changer and chose what his siblings would watch. They were excited to access the **Terran's Jukebox** for more dazzling tales of old Earth media like what they saw a few days ago. Soon the sounds of play and kitten chatter warmed the stellar eatery. Li began a brief synopsis of his recent adventure at Husto's request. Husto already was informed about most of it and the purpose for his asking was to fill in the blanks. Li told his Tale of the Supership as well as the exciting yet big-ticketed battle at C-00101.

As Li was talking he was being eyeballed by a Badgerman duo sitting nearby and he had a premonition of Zemorg. This intuition told him that they might be information gathers much as he was upon visiting the big planet at Delta Pavonis when he posed as a special agent for the SMD. He kept his eye on them. The airlock hissed again and Li looked around to see a couple of pedestrians leaving the café. He noticed the robed men missing now either leaving as the two departing civilians or having gone back upstairs. Lazarus began to take up the story while Li was glancing and Husto listened openly. Erin was quiet having little to say and listened in sporadically while taking notice of the activity. Husto told Erin that he could walk around if he wanted to and to feel free to talk to people around the café. He said okay and followed his instructions.

Feeling timid he looked to see if he might find a friend and closed in on the cook's counter. He looked into the pupils of the Felidae owner wiping the counter after the robed men who left moisture thereon from their choice of ale. The tender asked what could he get for him and Erin declined. He didn't feel compelled to speak in length with him but drifted away from the counter and toward what suited him most. The diversion and banter of the children drew him into the play area and he looked about at the media devices positioned on their home shelves. After a few minutes of curious browsing the children began to watch and note his actions.

Erin suddenly felt shy only then noticing he was being observed. Dialog erupted between the children who were talking about him and a bit of laughter followed. Erin was beginning to blush and looked back out into the table section as if to only then notice he was in the play area. He wasn't sure how to move and the children approached and began to speak to him. He couldn't understand them but smiled and blushed heavily. The youngest child picked up his toy and handed it to Erin who became under its spell. He began to operate and play with the transforming robot and the children resumed their play with him. They were able to get him to sit down in Indian style on the floor and he was enjoying his activity with them. The other customers refrained from looking too much at Erin having fun time with the kids and they were amused at the sight of him in the play area. Li was watching a bit too and grinned. He asked Husto a few questions about Erin, where he was from and how he met him. Husto explained and mentioned Erin's affiliation with the Church of the Hebrews back on Earth.

The airlock door split and entering the café was Mariah who ordered a strong drink first and foremost. She came and sat down at the Human table and was somewhat tired from her full days shift. The dazzling Catwoman of Mastery returned with her beverage and requests orders from the others and Li ordered a big plate of pasta with vegetables and meat morsels, Lazarus a chicken sandwich. Husto requested a drink as well and the gorgeous waitress returned to the kitchen. What Husto was going to do next was still unknown. He showed interest in everything everyone said and Mariah's comfort was important to Lazarus—Li also whose mind was on something specific. There were no alerts so far and the "situation" was restful. The Café however was filling.

The colloquy of interspecies gibber was satiating and nourishing next to his chicken and vegetable medley of processed grains. Lazarus asked Li what was his plan having managed to sooth Mariah. In his thoughts he wondered how much of it was his charm and was the alcohol making it easier. Either way Lazarus knew he was one of few to make it this far with getting close to Mariah. "I guess this is as good a time as any to go next door." Li said referring to the adjacent buildings. Lazarus was open for that and he invites Mariah who, for the first time agrees to come along and into Li's vessel. Their response reaction was only milliseconds from actuating when Li's wrist communicator sounded. He taps the "accept message" button and the face of the Admiral appears. "Captain..." He called out. The image shrank to a small white dot as the device consumed its last joule of energy. Li's feeling swelled and ebbed in a second's time. He was having a response to the Admiral's call and subsequent battery power depletion. Lazarus then received the resent message and he views the signaling Admiral. "Lazarus. Li's computer lost power." He stated having viewed the recipient status infoprompt on his own system. I need Li to go to Dactyl Colony as soon as possible. I will send further instructions later." Lazarus acknowledged and the mini screen fades soon to restore the base window.

Lazarus conveys the message and with gentle pressure lifts Mariah. She was not very intoxicated but somehow he managed to convince her to accept his close assistance. After suiting and upon stepping outside the advertisement, about the limited stretch of empty space painted by the laser emitter, illuminated with the Projects Incorporated symbol. Pi, is a company whose efforts, which, before the era of the planetary council, sought to better the world, condition through the correct application of science. Here displaying yet another Matron-competing invention to contest with the vieish Science enterprise, the asteroidal surface is lit with astounding promotions of technological marvel. They proceed to enter the ship and lift off to find the meteor duo that Seghtee sent them to.

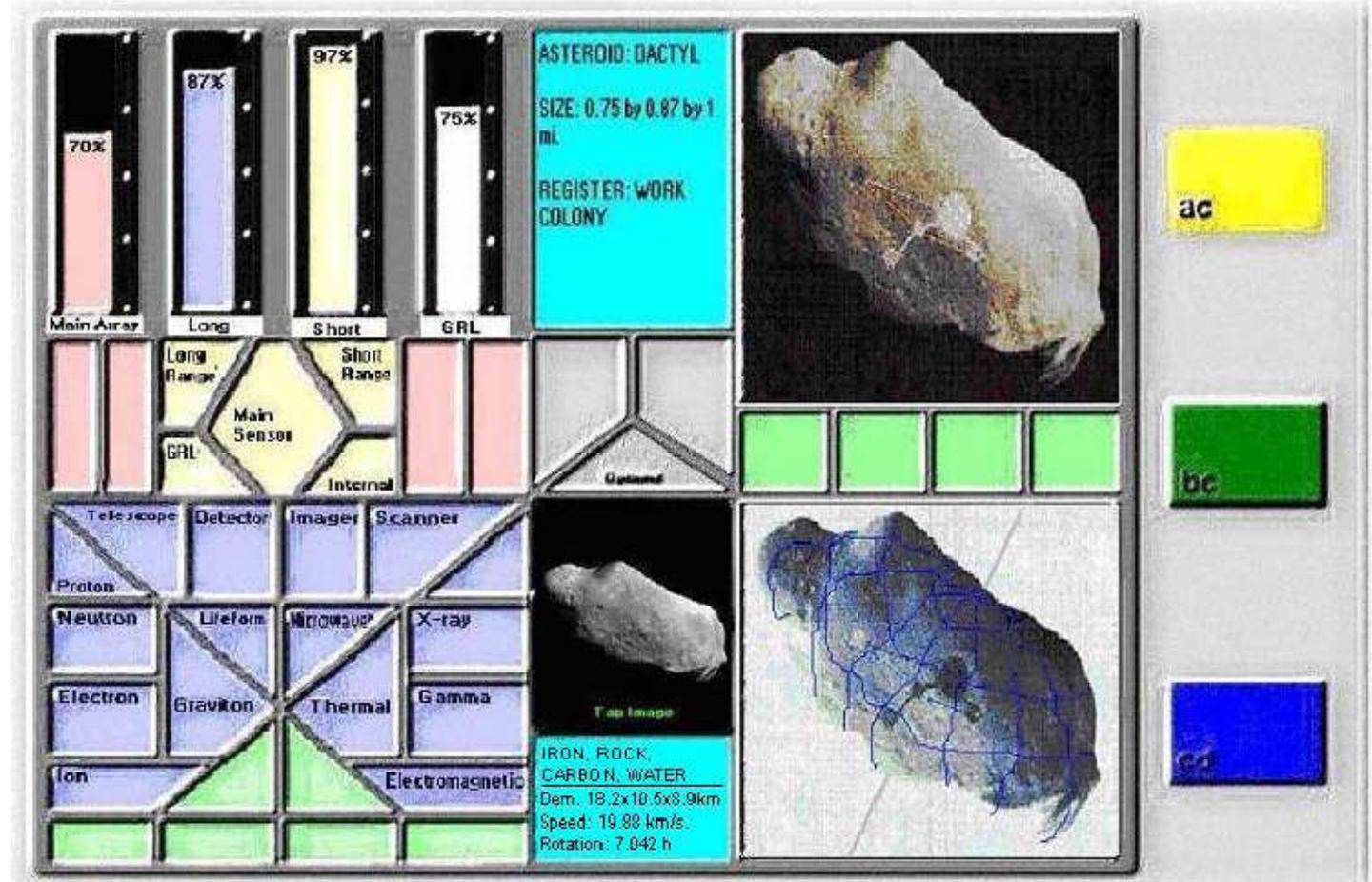
Lazarus was successfully walking the line between paying special attention to Mariah's sensitivity and checking his drive. In general there were yet lasting weariness stemming from recollections of Earth conflicts of old. Li on occasion remembered the beginning of the new era and how difficult the transition was for everyone. Earlier when he was sitting in the Mars Barr, just before they left on the Admiral's call for Dactyl, he was impacted by a coupled thought and emotion as a single incident body—an image about a time long ago and accompanying elaborative feeling. It was as if he felt like that again before all the fun of space exploration like residual feelings that came back again. It dissipated almost instantly when his mind refocused onto the lighted table of embroidered cloth supporting foods and game ornaments thereabout the stretch of the bar counter in the back of the Star Voyager. Mariah seemed at this time as she sat with Li in the back talking to be not so tired as before.

At current as they move through space in the Star Voyager Li's mind quantized those aligned set of thoughts and feelings as he waited for Lazarus's coordinate report. Receiving no word he left the cabin and returned to the bridge and Mariah followed. Lazarus reported the coordinates as soon as he heard the hydraulic door split. Mariah assumed the back up seat and was watching closely with elation it seemed at Li and Lazarus's movements as they operated the ship. Her, mechanically inclined, side showed upon her face as she became satiated of relaxation. She had a long week of gatherings and commendation symposiums and was quite a distinguished figure amongst the graduates and apple of some young ambitious academy boys' eyes, which became apparent during one of her speeches. Conversation between males regarding the physical stature of specific females agreed by the majority to be irresistibly attractive had been observed and documented during Mariah's speech.

Conclusions about the observation in question indicated strong feeling attachments. Statistical analysis reports have recorded a consistent tendency of the expressive individuals to raise their voice tones significantly as an involuntary outburst. The degree of volume also has been included in such report. In the instance of Mariah delivering her heartfelt speech of righteousness, the symposium event was spectacular! On the beta screen displayed the sensor view of the dactyl asteroid stats. When looking for an object in space one can get similar information from different panel screens. For example the star charts screen could also deliver the necessary information for the pilot to plot his course. Regarding the

arrival to the intended destination the captain of the vessel must know all the coordinates, distance, velocity, rotation, configuration, and composition of the object in order to establish a safe landing. Lazarus was doing it the old fashioned way for the first time. He was starting to see into Li's approach in getting used to operating the ship with a minimal of easy buttons. He used mathematics and calculators often checking his work. It was tough. The acrobatic mountain was flipping and rolling all kinds of ways as it bulleted through space. Li did not land right away because it took some time to get to know the movement of Dactyl as he watched from a slow approach.

The small colony on the surface was transmitting a static signal, which could, if accepted electronically, assist with an automatic landing. Of course Li entertained immediately the thrilling thought of landing without computer assistance. The fires of hazard were snuffed by the relaxed calm of better judgment. For him to make the decision, according to his convictions, he would land for the first time on such an erratically spinning body it would have to be a crisis situation. Li applied the received data pattern. It was yet a thrill letting the computer do the work as the thrusters and discharge ports fired and silenced accordingly. Soon the landing pad touched the ships underside and Li proceeded to activate the magnetic moorings to keep the ship from flying off the low gravity spinning body. Also Li slipped on his **mag-shoes** to traverse the distance to the gravitated town flat. Mariah was not going to go anywhere and Lazarus was staying with her. It was all as well with Li who had a feeling this was an important project. He departs on his own and heads on foot toward the patio's edge. He made it to the road that led into town and traversed the distance. The ground flat was light with buildings and



Dactyl Asteroid Basic Analysis

looked, as did a ghost town. No persons were in sight and a lone-lighted restaurant remains open. The sporadic plots of residences were not populated and up for ownership. Li was beginning to wonder whether there was *anyone* around. At the moment his wrist device sounded and it was Lazarus calling him. "Li, the Admiral called just now. Go to the Dactyl Eatery near you." The informative and seemingly busy navigator said, his breath long and deep. "Acknowledged..." He replied. Turning a few degrees he approaches the airlock and as he neared the windows viewed the interior. His original view restricted the eye way to the center table arrangement. Now at close range he can see the manless grill.

As the airlock pressurized he can see around via the windows surrounding the lock, which were placed that way for the purpose of viewing the newcomers to the café. There, in the corner a stern looking Seghtee waiting for him. No sooner than when he parted his helmet just past the neck level the common title sounded of the Admiral's voice. "Captain, please come and have a seat here. Li parks himself directly fore of Admiral Seghtee who tells him that he has something for him. "For your bravery, integrity, and loyalty to the SMD, for infield cooperation and mission success, I hereby award you the gold eagle. He hands him an attractive medal and he was joyous. "Thank you sir..." He was speechless and a connective feeling formed between them. Seghtee released a small amount of softness, which shortly thereafter firmed up as he began further business. "Captain I have another mission for you." Li looks up from his gleaming trophy masking his expression of disbelief. "Don't worry, this is a small one." Li also hid his relief now. "Understood sir..." He replied. "There is a new vessel on its way to Suntuown that we are calling **The Grand Telestica**. They are interstellar travelers from unknown regions far away. They are just passing through so they report. They have agreed to meet with us while they travel through our space. I have chosen you to represent us. When they get here you will dock with their ship and spend some time onboard to gather information and foremost to form diplomatic dialog. "Yes sir. I'll just intercept them and land the Star Voyager in their port." He said as he planned ahead. "No. You will not be aboard the Star Voyager. Captain, for further reward for your faithfulness to the safekeeping of Star City I have another vessel for you. It is an XF class craft located in a secure hangar near Moonbase-1. It is your vessel and may be used for alternate SMD purposes when necessary. I am also upgrading your fleet rank and you will incur additional responsibility. Welcome to the big-show Captain, congratulations." The Admiral shakes his hand. Seghtee's new mission gladdened Li. His short smile returned to his adamant standard.

"This is one strange ship Captain. We need as much information as we can get. It is very large with a hull made of diamond, gold, and silver compounds, no word yet on the make of the interior. Additional information; the ship uses an unclear form of propulsion. Try to get details on it when your there, and be careful Li. I chose you because I needed someone with an open mind and ability to make friends without bigotry. Good luck on your mission and contact me as soon as you get the chance."

"Yes sir, I will sir."

"Good, and remember good relations are your top priority above data gathering. You may sacrifice that part of your mission parameters where it interferes with positive interaction." There was a moment of silence, which shortly thereafter was broken by the sudden sizzle of meat patties on the grill. Li turned to find a single cook preparing the Admiral his order. "Go safely Li and may you be with **Yahweh**." Seghtee blessed. Li learned at that time the Admiral's religious faith and knew in his heart to keep it secret.

Turning toward the airlock he clamps his helmet on and secured the neckpiece soon stepping back out into the airless wonderland. Li enters his ship and with a smile and directs his navigator. "First mate set a course for the Moon."

"What's up?" He inquired noticing Li's good mood. "You're going to be flying the Star Voyager a little more often I think." "How come...?"

"The Admiral just gave me a new vessel."

"Is it on the moon?"

"Yes."

"Great, we're on our way." Said Lazarus and he maneuvered away from Dactyl surprisingly well. In his excitement Li didn't recognize that Lazarus made it away from Dactyl without computer assistance until a few moments after beginning high acceleration toward Earth.

Chapter 7

The Search for V2

The deepness of space conjured up feelings of longing wonder and to look into the abyss is reminding of the encompassing heaven above. What was beyond the seemingly endless cosmos? What could be seen even further, past the galaxies, past the clusters, even beyond the glorious strange object? As Li sat upon the nav. chair moving closer to his new personal craft he couldn't help but to feel as he did sitting upon the old spot on [the grassy hillside](#) alone in a dreamy gaze



Midnight Dream

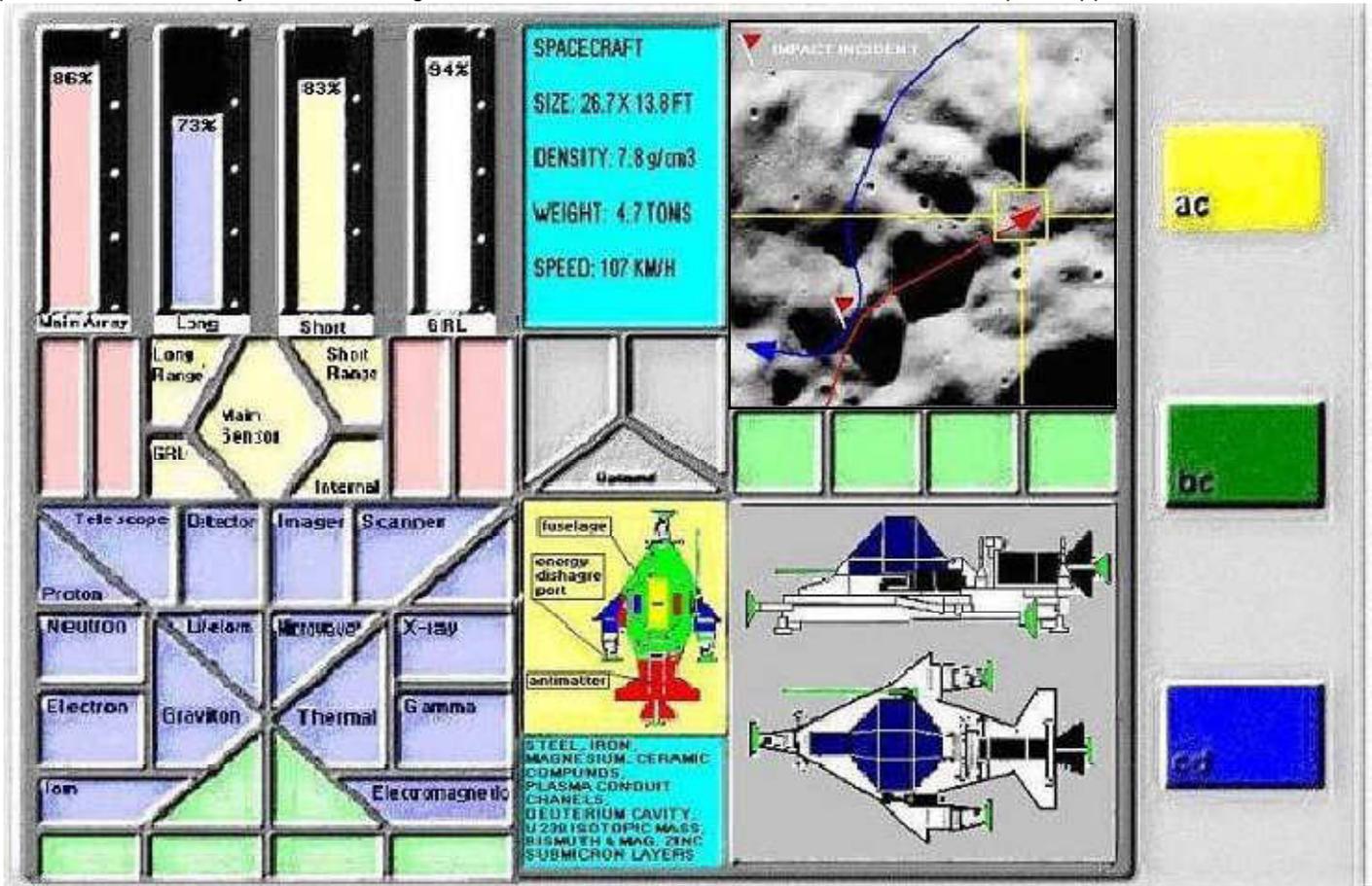
basking in the balmy warmth of the night breeze. With crickets chirping a vibratory song the frogs by the pond of encompassing cattails squawking an amphibian dialog a rift opens in time connecting him to himself sitting there alone of the face of the meadow. Something became of him as his thoughts ascended higher than space and deeper than time, he gazed by himself on the bridge, his copilot and guest having retreated to the rear of the vessel, into space still recalling his past. Ascending in mind he sees visions of another place full of light and life, spirits and bodies of luminous apparel. He saw powers and authorities and colors of prayers whirl about a realm of light. Li's concerns were silenced and his body felt light as to be lessened in weight and also there was the swelling of joyousness in him. The spirit of Yahweh came unto him and he was filled with power on high. Lazarus and Mariah entered the front as if drawn by a sound or a light and Li was in a happy mood with satiation about his countenance.

An alert sounds indicating an approach to the Terran System and Luna. Lazarus takes the helm steering the ship and angling the attitude for a fun hover about the lunar plains. The cratered horizon stretch before them and the ship was speeding accelerantly for the terminator. Flowing beneath them was the ivory wonderland of glassy pumice. Maneuvering

around the hills and dips the crew inside the Star Voyager awaits Seghtee's next call. "Perhaps he is still finishing his grill." Lazarus speculated. They all chuckle.

Li and Lazarus were sharing a recent memory at that moment of the last time they flew above the Moon's surface. They had not made it clear to one another what they were thinking. Yet having experienced the same set of events previously in space-time polarized them in the now.

The hovering ship hopped and bopped over sharp edges and smooth hilltops. Lazarus maintained a sharp eye on the horizon as he weaved the protruding boulders. Mariah was smiling now and enjoying the ride with Li who kept a partial vigil on the exothermic sensor readings, which allowed him to see somewhat ahead of Lazarus. Li had just glanced away from the face of the cheery Mariah to casually look upon the monochromatic screen display then suddenly to speak with loud abrupt clarity for Lazarus to veer. He did so barely scraping the side mounts of a curiously configured small stealthed craft. Li felt the jar upon striking the other vessel and instructed Lazarus to switch seats with him. Li slowed the Star Voyager to a halt and rotated the nose. Lazarus was watching the craft on the sensor screen, which he had quickly manifested upon the pixilated viewer. They were receiving a hail at this time and Unem Niom, recent kidnap, appeared. He was calm and



Impact

appeared to be recovered. He recognized Li and Lazarus vaguely and proceeded to state the procedures for vessel collisions. They maneuvered at slower more manageable speeds close in and descend to the ground of a hover. Li, Lazarus and Unem step outside of their craft to assess any damage. Unem's port wing tip was cracked and the Star Voyager had incurred a deep groove about the hull.

Over all the damages were not critical and the two vessels were judged fit for fly, yet. Li began to speak to Unem there standing upon the lunar surface about the recent conflict with the CRC. Unem seemed either reluctant to speak of it in great detail or had not the memory in his experiences. Li had a feeling that it might be better not to mention it. He and Lazarus and maybe Unem, though according the series of questions Li was asking, didn't seem to recall much about the Supership, which was destroyed weeks ago. Being the one who made the decision to obliterate the fantastic and quite dangerous piece of technology Li left it at that. Expressing his pleasure in meeting the famous scientist he proceeds to ask about the competitive *Pi* Company he had been hearing about. Unem was obliged to tell him a few details about it. Lazarus became

restless and returned to the ship with Mariah. There standing suited on the surface of the Moon Unem speaks to Li informatively. "Pi or Projects Incorporated, Projects for Peace began shortly before the new era as a group of positive outlookers determine to fix the most major and even less pronounced problems around the globe. It was the first significant coordination with the intention to repair, instead of deteriorate the status of safety, justice, and livelihood of the innocent, hardworking citizens. The company sought reward for individuals who created scenarios for improvement of positive direction while simultaneously the exposure of all individuals with confirmed specific intentions to hurt, distress, or kill innocent peacemakers. In actuality Pi and The Matron Group are not rivals yet we have already sought the merging of out two establishments." Unem paused for a moment looking at Li as if attempting to determine his trustworthiness. He seemed satisfied as he looked into his opened visor at his eyes and proceeded to tell him a big company plan. "The new merger will be Pimatron, a complete junction of science and industry for the improvement of prosperity for the good and peaceable."

Li was intrigued. He assured Unem that he would keep the secret though it was not so much as it were to be information intended to be covered over yet as to keep the prospects amongst positive thinkers. Li was thankful to be considered as such and made Mr. Niom comfortable about passing his project notions along. With a gloved handshake and a look of respect they separate and return to one another's vessels.

No sooner than Li could unsuit and assume his pilots console a message ping was being held in the data management system. Lazarus put it on and they tensed slightly awaiting the firmity of the Admiral to become them and on the image screen appeared not Seghtee but the familiar even firmer face of Jacy and his date mate Celie Ackland. They had just returned from their voyage from HR 5568. They were inviting them for repelling on Miranda, which was Celie's idea.

Rested from their week of romance the complimenting couple sought a brisk workout on the moon of steep cliffs and carved formations. Li agreed and suddenly his bargain was intercepted by another idea, which he had overlooked. He recalled his old friend Dennis that he owed a favor. He informed Jacy that he would join them after he finished his "errands" at hand. Celie put him at ease that they were going to be grounding on Miranda for the night and would wait for them to join their activity about the face of the Uranian satellite.

At the end of the call Li look to Lazarus who returns a consenting expression silently. Li then becomes aware of the onlooking Mariah patiently enjoying her restful breaktime being shofered by the high demand space trekking duo. She said she was simply enjoying herself and would be okay to be returned to her vessel at the Mars Barr if need be. Li said it was fine that she stayed as long as she wanted. He offered her the use of the ships facilities in the back and she did take him up on the suggestion.

The hover system powers, the dials twist, and the panels illuminate, once again they were off. This time Li programmed the autonav system to seek the safest path next time there is a blind fly over that kind of terrain. Just as Li, under a sudden wave of excitement, attempted to leap a heap of vulcanized pumice a strange message comes in, data only. Lazarus thought it was the Admiral finally but no audio or video stream was detected. The data filed a program onto Li's hard drive and he executed it after quarantining the file with antivirus software. The file turned out to be safe and upon its execution opened a text manifest. "It's a set of coordinates." Lazarus reported. "It looks like a secluded location on the dark side of the moon about fifty kilometers south of Moonbase." Li input the directions and accelerated toward the terminator.

The darkness of the moons hindside was almost as deep as space itself. Li navigated by thermal imaging almost entirely. It wasn't long before they came upon the coordinates issued by Admiral Seghtee, a curious steep hilltop amongst various others. Yet this one stood out more so in size and angle. "We have to get out." Lazarus said. "I wonder why seghtee has us out in such a secluded spot." Li began. "This should be good."

"Despite their viciousness those moon crabs we learned about at the academy won't be able to penetrate our suits like they were able to early astronauts decades ago but in great numbers they can be very inhibiting. I doubt an area this remote on the Moon is fenced in like the recreation yards on the dayside. Should be take a beam gun?" Lazarus thought. "Yes probably. I'm looking on the stimulation scanner and nothing moving. They would be jumping out of their dormancy by now with this intensity. A few optical flash scans and we should be clear if they are not around." They suit up having proceeded into the resource bay in the middle of the ship. "Lights on before we climb out, it's going to be pitch black." They exit the ship Mariah too and tredded along the dark surface maneuvering around boulders and heaps obscured for eons by darkness only now illuminated by bright arm lights.

They stuck close together as they approached the side of the stony heap. "Emit a frequency of exactly 0.00139 nanometers in a narrow pencil directly at this spot on the side of this hill." Lazarus directed as he read the data on his wrist device. "The ship is going to have to do that. The wrist device cannot produce frequencies that narrow. I can control the Star

Voyager's emission dish from mine though."The dish atop the ship angled facing them and a dim glow swelled in sight from the dishes center as the energizing components charged. In an instant a phony sidewall designed to look like rock and volcanic glass retracted and they entered. The door closed behind them and lights activated revealing a small bay large enough for a medium sized craft, before them sits the gray and white vessel which Li knew already its name. "Wow, my friends introducing the Voyager-2 XF." Li said with enthusiasm. It was a similar design as the standard personal XF fighters only slightly varied in configuration. "It looks like the Admiral was fairly generous weapon wise." Lazarus said noting the twin antiproton lasers and turbo laser gun in front. Additionally a side mounted pulse laser with multiple step-up chambers adorned the nifty craft. "Hey this place could be our special base of operations." Lazarus suggested eagerly.

Having approached the unpowered craft Li lay hands on it for the first time becoming nostalgic as Mariah and Lazarus look on. Lazarus angled his body to study the design structure of the cavern they had entered. "It looks like there is a top opening to this place." He reported. Li looks up to see the gaps where the ceiling splits. Lazarus taps his wrist device and a little clanging could be heard as sound waves vibrated into their feet from the ground and into their pressurized suit interior. The ceiling split and the top of the hill rose up on robotic arms revealing the starry space above. Li pulls out his keys and inserts into the keyhole. Turning the mutli-toothed key Li opens the top hatch of the fighter and mans the vessel. "Okay I'm going to turn her on and prepare for flight. What are you and Mariah going to do?"

"I'm going back to the Star Voyager." Mariah Said. "I'll go with you. Maybe another time we'll come back here and set this place up." Lazarus added.

Lazarus and Mariah left the artificial compartment to return to the landed Star Voyager. Li closed the opening, then pressurizes the cockpit of V2, and removed his helmet. There was a hook on the wall, which he used both for his helmet mount and detached glove pieces. The seat was specially designed to fit to the mold of the SES butt plate and it was a comfortable adaptation.

The controls were similar to the Star Voyager and the throttle handle and maneuvering stick was conveniently positioned. He let out an ecstatic "woot" and contacted the Star Voyager outside. "Do you think you can handle the ship for a while my friend?" He asked after his trusty navigator appeared on his angled console. "Sure thing, where to...?"

"Well I'm going to fly this baby out of here; I want to get the hang of flying V2. Let's meet at the Mars Barr."

"Understood..." Salutes Lazarus. The Voyager 2-XF rendezvous at a low hover in front of the Star Voyager and Li quickly transfers some belongings from V1 including his prized samurai sword to store it in the new ship. After he finishes moving food and equipment into his new vessel both Voyagers lift off illuminating the darkened lunar terrain with engines flaring. The mountaintop closed behind Li who checked the rear view display to be assured of its security.

Chapter 8

Enter The Grand Telestica

The slant at which the linear marking across the star map display revealed a high angle of penetration to the spherical Star City. Awaiting general Priset's arrival to the conference was at hand. The mood at this particular hearing differed from that of which is experienced in preparation for battle. Even before the conference at this time the Admiral made firm talk about the nature of the new mission at hand. While maintaining a vigil on other matters the meeting of a vessel traveling nonstop through the territory was of particular note. As soon as the door opened a little click could be heard as the tardy general pressed the point screen display actuated via remote control. Beautiful images of telescope trickle revealed clear real-time pictures of the ship of royalty. That was a particular point elaborated upon by the Admiral who was instructing Li to take into account that this might be a "king and queen" culture.

Li's many studies have prepared him for diplomatic missions such as this one. He asked the Admirals options often regarding how the walk the line between harmless curiosity and intrusion. Their primary instruction to Li however was to make the time spent aboard pleasurable before meddlesome. If to be of any notable mention the decor about the prompt planning table was informative in it's own right. A few paintings portrayed another vessel encountered nearly two decades ago—one of the first. Li gathered this kind of mission might be becoming more standard for the SMD. Priset's presentation revealed the documented research he has made on the mysterious vessel of illumination and crystalline minerals. "No weapons?" Li asked as the Admiral placed his small equipment kit open in front of him. Inside a camera, data pads, communications instruments and information storage units to use for his post mission report presentation.

A break in the Admiral's wind comes as his hot herbal medley of vitamin rich tea is brought in. Li's mind takes the time to ponder whether or not he should use the glistening deep range communications terminal in the corner. The general and the Admiral seemed to be discussing some other details at the moment, which detached Li from the flow of what is to be known. Somehow, Li sensed on top of their alternate analysis them to be preparing to provide the remaining goal parameters after their mutual discussion. Li's standing and table departure didn't seem to bother the general and Admiral and he carefully made his way to the communicator. Not only was available to him the ability to communicate with any vessel in the Suntown area instantaneously yet he proceeded to access the vehicle pinpoint program. The keyword search field responded promptly to the name of his vessel by automatically logging into the spacecraft detection network.

Modified in content by his viewing, the data revealed its velocity, trajectory, and relative location by screen display. Laughter and chatter erupted from the connected audio and it was reasonably **volumous**. The Admiral and the general didn't seem to take much note and were engrossed in some important topics of which Li had yet to know. It seemed as if he was going to miss it due to his interest in what was happening in his ship full of passengers. He could hear the anomalous voices in the background some recognizable.

A little feeling of anxiety came of him but the loyalty and cooperation of his long time friend Lazarus covered it over. The Star Voyager was on a course for the outer system somewhere in the Kuiper Belt. Lazarus mentioned his intention to meet Jacy and Celie there. Li's subtle requests for a passenger manifest gave Lazarus motivation to provide the information he was after yet didn't lose any precious breath. Li had asked at just the right time and avoided disrupting the flow of fun happening aboard.

Lazarus knew Li would be at least a little apprehensive and would want to know what is happening with his ship and he assured him that they were temporary passengers who intently requested safe passage aboard the Star Voyager to another star system. Since Lazarus would not be going out that far he agreed to bring them as far out as possible. "Where did you pick them up at?" Li asked. "The race strip next to the Mars Barr. I ran into some **Road Rocket** owners after dropping Mariah off. They compete at high speed across that asteroid there. Li thought for a moment. "Why do they need safe passage, do you know?" They claimed that they are going to partake in a race at Alpha Centauri." Lazarus remained quiet to wait for Li's decision. He would obey his wishes regarding the passengers but was hoping not to have to be the one to break the news that he couldn't transport them any further. "Keep an eye on them please and watch our essential systems." Lazarus was relieved. "Will do...."

"Try to do normal things."

"Gotcha..." The Admiral and the general seemed as if to be idle overhearing Li's conversation and Li returned after getting the answers to his question about The Star Voyager. He returned and sat before them easing into the slack behavior exhibited by both the Admiral and Priset. Yet, the swift swing of the door and firm callout of Li's full name brings him to full

attention, as the mission at hand did not call for lackluster attention. The little fast fighter sat primed and ready for launch inside the luminous hangar bay of Moonbase. Steam clouds sprayed a fog as the fueling crew recycled its radioactive coolant system. The top hatch was parted and Li approach; only one man inside supplying appropriate programming to the ships computer storage. Li stepped onto the side frame protrusion grabbing a roof hold. As soon as he came into view the man inside began explaining a few additions and ship functions necessary for Li to operate the specialized craft. With stealth capability, new propulsions features, and powerful weapons, Li takes immediate sybiance as he glanced upon the modified ship controls.

The engineer had moved from inside to outside still talking about specific functionalities. Li mentioned that he recognized already most of the operations displayed before him and he thought of the engineers' efficiency that designed the craft. "**Steven.**" Li had a hand in his view. Returning the handshake he gives his name to the consenting engineer. Li was pleased all around. With the closing of the hatch and vacation of the engineer the little ship floats on its hovering field rotating then toward the ship bay doors. Soon after, the Voyager-2 XF finally departs the fortified base and attains a suitable lunar orbit. The side-screen, next to Li's head, lit up as the automatic communicator programming executed. Seghtee appeared, to guide Li with a few more sets of instructions. By this time the moon had begun to fall away and open space was ahead.

The last of the Admiral's assistance was thinning out and Li was refraining from playing with the ships handling while he listened. The craft smelled new of electronics and upholstery. Li was still getting used to the difference in weight, which was noticeably felt. The diminishing blip-out accompanied a fading display on the **infoview** as the Admiral's image vanished. He didn't have much time to become nostalgic and saved it for later as to maintain concentration on his diplomatic mission. Looking upon the objective HUD he views the speeding target as it zooms its way through Star City. He was looking at a wide scope view of the general territory with a crosshair reticule. Nevertheless, his course would bring him out toward the outer solar system for the rendezvous.

On His Own

Assumed Captain Miller was certainly using his energy. The new acquaintance of the amateur race team aboard was observing in the cockpit while Lazarus pilots. The lead racer **Nathaniel**, initial contact to Lazarus, had successfully conveyed the message from the Star Sailor as he sat at the nav. panel. Celie and Jacy had already cleared their passage at the Kuipertown entry gate postlanding. In the middle compartment was a bit of a clutter with race maintenance equipment and the sleek Road Rockets themselves. As they accelerate toward The Kuiper Belt Lazarus leaves the cockpit having completed his course and trajectory input. His foot slides forward of low friction upon its sole nearly stumbling him. A little grease was spilled on the floor therein and Lazarus knew it needed to be cleaned up before Li returned, he thought. In the back it was louder and somewhat rambunctious racers awaiting the leader to return from the front. Nathaniel was the only one allowed in the front as has been agreed upon between he and Lazarus.

The trip to The Kuiper Belt would see a drop-off of the energetic competitors. Lazarus told them the ETA of their current destination while observing their activities there in the back. He glanced around to check the engine part bulkheads and they were locked. On his way back up he noticed yet another mess to clean up—a dry dust of pebbly debris perhaps tracked in by the rounded race crew.

Returning to the front Nathaniel informed Lazarus of his desire to increase speed for efficiency's sake. A sudden note of suspicion came over Laz and he shrugged it off. He wondered why they were trying to leave the solar system and during their meeting in the beginning was convinced by his open and charismatic personality that it was safe to bring them along. Lazarus had something in common with them already being a roadster himself. He had mentioned perhaps in the future if they meet again he might show off his hot rod back on Earth. Nathaniel agreed and expressed thrill in the idea. Lazarus excused himself wanting to get to the nav. Panel and Nathaniel slipped out of the chair. He checked to see if there were any police craft nearby and it was all empty space.

They were already past the orbit of Neptune and Lazarus increased their rate of travel. "Your race machine seems to be leaking back there." Lazarus informed. Nathaniel went into a series of explanations and the location "Mercury Reserves" came out. Seemingly he was trying to indicate to Lazarus that they had been there for perhaps maintenance or an energy power-up. Nathaniel's face was flushed about the time he concluded his rapid detailing of the origin of the substance coming the equipment, which they slung inside in a hurry. Lazarus interpreted their hasty behavior as racers excitement so he thought. Needless to say they were closing in on their destination for the array of private villas at Kuipertown. The

Voyager-2 XF nears its rendezvous for the illustrious Grand Telestica vessel, which has confirmed a decelerated velocity enough for Li to dock. So far the vessel has not entered range of his radar and he slows to a comfortable cruising speed to await the new ship. Appearing sporadically out of the black was countless boulders and monstrous mountains of material surrounded by gritty debris. The Kuiper Belt had faded into view and Li takes note of its complexity. The large Kuipertown asteroid could be seen as it orbits among other rocks yet at sparse distances.

V2 was sounding a number of alerts and displays, which Li was continuing to master. He had wanted to test the new stealth system incorporated with this ship but now it wasn't a good idea. The Telestica had to be able to detect the ambassador harboring craft in which it waits to intercept. Li also recalled vividly the intense drilling of instruction by the Admiral who assured him of the necessity to maintain a nonthreatening posture—namely shield, weapon, and stealth status. If the crew aboard the Telestica sensed a defensive mode about the Voyager-2 they might interpret it as mistrust or aggression.

Finally a sensor blip appeared upon the circular radar imager and Li tapped the target with his finger and the telescope and sensor system automatically trained their instruments onto the incoming craft. When Li looked into the telescope he saw not the Telestica but his own vessel The Star Voyager approaching Kuipertown. Rechecking his sensors he remained waiting for the target vessel to appear while watching Lazarus's velocity as he pilots his precious spaceship. A second blip appears on his panel and he became jittery. He knew his time for succession was at hand while he prepares for his ambassadors debut. The position of the second, vessel indicator was in a curious position behind the Star Voyager. Zooming in close with the telescope Li finds it to be not the Grand Telestica but an SMD police craft halting the speedy Star Voyager. With tensions and a huff of disappointment Li watches helplessly as his copilot and craft are stopped for some sort of legal issue. He needed to know what was happening and now felt his eagerness and preparation was disturbed by the unfortunate occurrence.

At that moment the third radar blip sounded its ping and Li looks onto the dazzling spectacle of a vessel, which was quite visible without radar. Yet again he looks back at his space ship being stopped by the SMD and he could do nothing not with this mission on the line. Li maneuvered to align with the steep angle of motion for the Telestica and sent out his opening hail. On his screen a handsome crew of aqua skinned and pointy-eared ship hands appear tapping buttons and smiling moderately. They welcomed Captain Li to dock with the Telestica right away—their silvery suits and long three-fingered hands an intriguing anatomy. The view from behind the ship was as eye-catching as the bow. With shimmering metals and a frame of diamond alloy material about the outline of the ship bay, which was soon to engulf his closing vessel, glittered with reflection.

The gate opens and the port swallows him up as he drifts inward of the monstrous ship of beauty. Inside the bay his creeping craft touches down on the floor of the entryway. Unsited workers gather around not affected by any vacuum assumingly because Li had passed through a force field. Li is welcomed warmly as he pulls himself out of his fighter and he had not taken any chances. He removed his helmet taking the precaution that the slight possibility of vacuum resistant aliens might exist so he was a little nervous. This required trust in the new unknown intentions of his project of study, the aliens of this ship.

Once removed the exotic chatter of greeting filled his ear and he had not suffocated. They had soft whispery voices and were wide-eyed with wonder as they look upon the new Human specimen. Led away by the hand he leaves the hatch open figuring they might want to look inside yet he took the precaution of locking out essential systems within. The corridors themselves were not easily described other than to point out the highly reflective adornments and bulkhead makeup. But as Li walked with the still in conversation aliens he noted that the decorations appeared to have important functions other than for aesthetics. There were other passing aliens all of the same species with shiny clothes and big collard overcoats of sorts. The ambient lighting fluctuated in color as they passed through the different "departments" along the seemingly endless hall. The group of short aliens surrounding Li still guiding him by the hand finally led him to a large banquet hall with crewman and tables.

Above, first noticed, was an impressive mass of a chandelier more beautiful than any he had ever seen on Earth with rays and sparkles emanating of the chingly assemblage of precious materials Li could scarcely acknowledge the rarity of such a massive ceiling mounted ornament. The wall linings were of precious stones and emeralds tugged the attention of the onlooker. Li gets the curious sensation that the jewels along the walls "had eyes in them." Li was guided to a padded couch before a table of delectable morsels and exotic fruits never before seen. At the far end of the ballroom as it were, appeared a leading speaker who in his alien language announced the coming of a special guest. Li, however, had no way to

decipher the speech yet something told him inside that he might be called to the sparkling stage. He was not prepared to give a speech and was somewhat confused. He could not communicate well with the aliens yet somehow they managed to talk to him. They spoke with pictures that Li could see and if done so could speak back in that fashion. Li asked if he would be called upon the stage and they affirmed.

One alien, a female, was sitting close to Li and told him that she was his companion for the duration of his stay. He knew not what she meant altogether but she did tell him that she would help him along the way. She was petite, of sky-blueish skin, and shapely in her figure. She had no hair, like the other aliens on board, but a face of sweet femininity. With big eyes of deepness they reflected his image back unto him as he gazed into them. Her arrowed ears of keen hearing were an attractive feature as well. Li tried to stand after having tried one of the tasty fruits on the table and the little female alien clinged to him as he moved. He didn't push her away instead escorted her along accepting her as his friend.

Li seemed to fit in well and managed to communicate more and more clearly with the other shipmates. He was asked to come onto the stage and did speak to the alien populace. They told him that he would be understood anyway as he spoke and he simply introduced himself to this new species. He announced his affiliations with the territory of Star City as a civilian and part-time asset to the SMD. He managed to summon the brainpower to make a heartfelt addition about peace, cooperation, and the sharing of knowledge amongst alien peoples. With outlandish cheers the aliens welcomed Li once more to their home ship and resumed the temporarily quieted festivity.

Next on the list this delightful "evening" aboard the *Telestica*, a special group of popular musicians playing *their classic tune* "[The New Era](#)." It was a song about coming into knowledge of alien life, the relief of confusion and surprise of the not so ominous space age heard the galaxy over perhaps. Judging by the hologram posters on the wall of the hall the alien band members who looked aquatic appeared to be interstellar travelers responsible for inspiring and directing films on many worlds including Earth, surprisingly their best way to prepare a culture for the new era. Li gathered this to be the case on Earth given the multitude of science fiction shows and movies many alien inspire.

The light show began and the stage illuminated populated by the veteran alien group manning their instruments, whose contributions to first contacts throughout the cosmos and abroad have brought enlightenment and relief to many archaic yet ripening civilizations including Earth. The spirits ran high and the excitement about new futures of peace and lasting diversion connected the audience in a harmony of elation. Li's troubles and anxiety vanished and he danced with his delightful alien female. His information-gathering mission seemed something of a moot point now and he put it off for the time being.

Chapter 9 Li the Ambassador

The Bust

Being thoroughly questioned, Lazarus speaks uprightly and truthfully to the armed SMD Lieutenant. The five violators remained silent while their equipment and race vehicles were being examined. Lazarus was busy trying to ascertain from the officer what the infraction of the five men was. **Lieutenant Jackson** and his accompanying unit remains posted in each compartment of the ship until that very question could be answered. "Lieutenant...!" The unit leader called. He leaves the cockpit in the middle of his talk with Lazarus. "Here it is." He says while kneeling and pointing to the road rocket. "I am detecting two opposing electric fields in close proximity to one another far exceeding the permitted amount for vehicles this small. It's likely an unauthorized version of a matter antimatter chamber in this road rocket." The officer reported. The side cover was removed and its fuel compartment opened and scanned by the Lieutenant. "Remove the substance; you'll need to use the polyceramic steel-wall interior container with high magnetic constriction capability." He instructed. "The Coulomb value is very intense equivalent to a value of about 3.4 grams."

"Yes sir. I just sampled a single particle of the substance and sent it through the mass spectrograph. It's a proton. If they are using antiprotons in the other chamber we'll need to increase our container's magnetic constriction to maximum. I don't want to risk trying to take a sample of anti matter with our small instruments. I'll have to deduce by our readings."

"Go ahead and get the readings, we'll go on that. We need to neutralize this danger as soon as possible." He begins scanning with a magnetic field intensity meter. "According to the readings on this meter I'd say it is definatley antiprotons for 3.4 grams to be producing this much negative charge." The officer stated. "I have an idea." Lieutenant Jackson began. "This road rocket has a detachable injector conduit. We can disconnect it from the discharge chamber and connect it directly to our mass spectrograph. If the charge to mass ratio of the particles we extract match that of a proton we'll know."

"I'm doing it now sir...conduit disconnected...attaching to vacuum adapter...to the mass spectrograph. Four particles are cycling in the mass spectrograph. I am isolating one of them. This particle has a mass of $1.6726231 \times 10^{-27}$ kg and a negative coulomb value...it's an antiproton."

"Go ahead and use the high constriction container. Take these men into custody" Jackson signals for another specialist to retrieve the special container brought onboard at the beginning of the surprise inspection. Lazarus was finally getting the answers he needed as Lieutenant Jackson received permission to provide a few details to the off duty counterpart SMD officer Lazarus Miller.

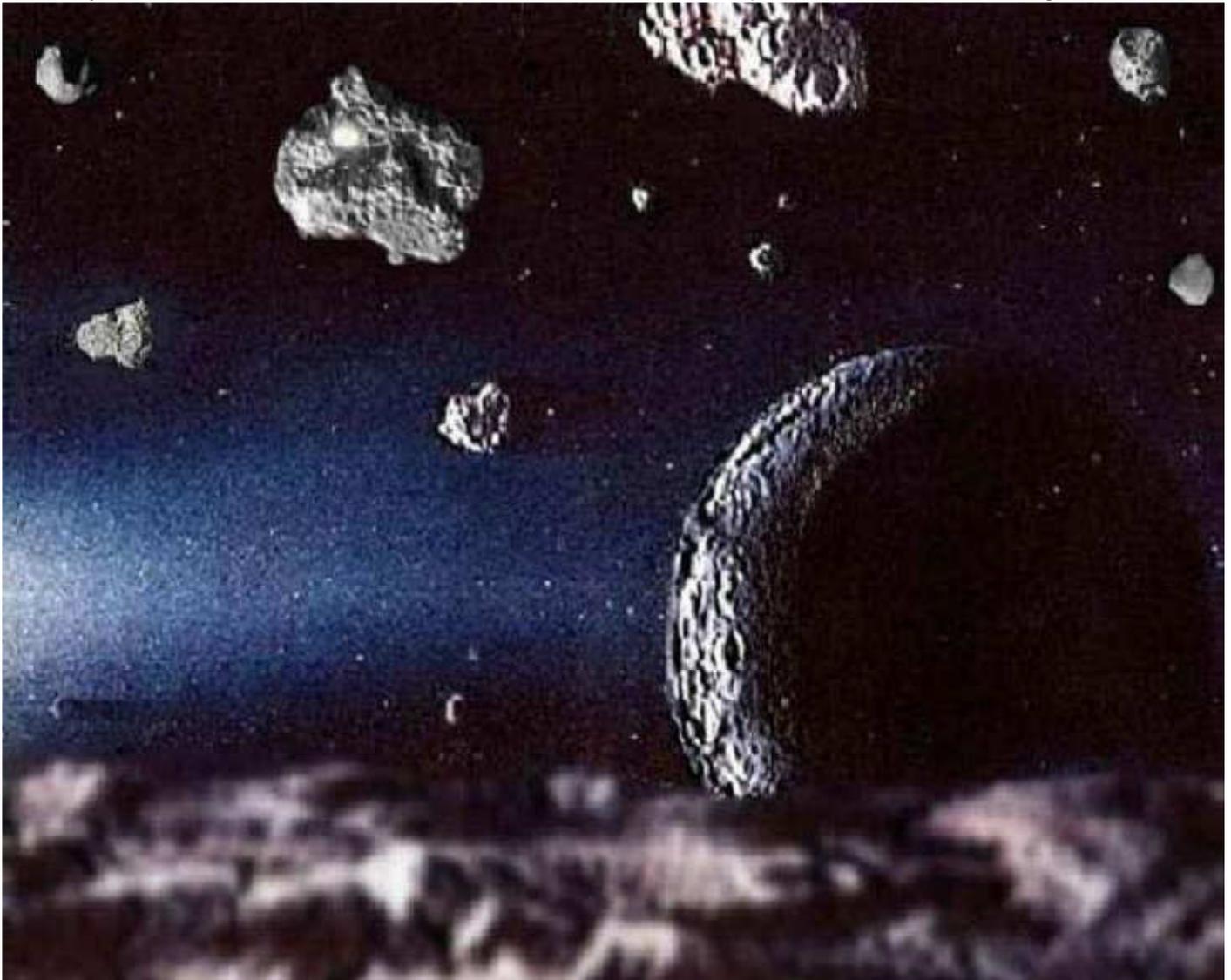
Lazarus didn't realize that Admiral Seghtee was paying special attention to the audio surveillance of this particular stop. Li and Lazarus as we know has so far been his distinctive project. Seghtee was indeed giving answers to some of Laz's questions and instructing the Lieutenant thereon. Lazarus answered with a perfect score, no misleading, no deception, and no Confederate Resistance Coordination inferred. Essentially the rowdy racers were in violation of fuel stability regulations. The material they were using for fuel was being processed in a miniature antiparticle collider. Basically they were using a matter/antimatter reaction to achieve their thrilling torque. The exponentially minute quantity of reactive incident was not enough to cause a disaster yet the fuel reserve itself was the danger. The craft they used was far too small and mobile to be allowed for use in small racing machines. The Lieutenants aids were allowed to reveal the yield aloud to complete the incident report with witnesses. There was enough to blow a chunk from the Kuipertown asteroid in its fuel storage.

Lazarus already knew what the Disciplinary Determination Division would decide. They would judge the situation by result more-so than regulation violation they would likely give these men an extensive quotation of protocols additional to their craft seizures, maybe deported back to Earth for a lockdown. If released and given permission to return to space they would have to go back to their old exothermic reaction drives, rockets, perhaps a real heartbreak for the squad of enthusiastic amateurs. But fun and thrill was last on their list as they were forcefully removed from the Star Voyager and Lazarus was officially reported as part of the investigation because of his factual responses. There was only one blemish on his first investigation participation record, the fact that he was speeding a bit. With the positive outcome of confiscating the dangerous overloaded road rockets he was excused of this miscourse not without a quotation of ship trafficking protocols. The SMD space patty wagon departs and the looming Kuipertown asteroid remains astern.

It was a humbling feeling, an empty ship, no captain, and now no crewmates. The Kuiper Belt ran its orbit some seven billion miles from Suntown. Lazarus was alone in space. His friends were only a thrust away however. Jacy and Celie were

likely checked into a hotel by now and were waiting for his arrival. The big rock grew, as did the smaller ones about its vicinity. The big round landing pad was lit well and Lazarus felt a thrill assuming orbit and initiating a negative landing gradient trajectory. The view from a ground of Kuipertown also promoted the vista of Quaoar. Lazarus stepped out of the Star Voyager locking the hatch behind him and rechecking, then steps down the ladder, looks into the sky with hands on his hips and takes a breath of fresh air—it being a breath of fresh recycled oxygen from his suit. It took a while to stroll over to the small admissions booth at the other edge of the large landing disc. There was no standard eatery on this pad due to the decision of the asteroid's owners. Even so the regulation of Star City requests the sharing of at least the landing platform itself in case of an emergency mayday from other citizens or perhaps official vessels. The automated booth manager requested either identification or host tenant entrance grant. Providing Jacy's name he was subsequently contacted via communications lines and Lazarus was approved.

The next step took him to a long elevator shaft on the side of the platform running all the way down into the big nook where the small village of extravagant homes lay. At the bottom the long elevator line towered above him and was a thrilling ride to have taken, before him, streets and business though not so populated. Only a few lights were on in a hand full of buildings. But the road in front of him had a trolley track on its side and Laz awaited its arrival. He wasn't sure how far down the street was Oort Cloud Avenue. The car arrived and Laz boarded it with one passenger. As the car began to move Lazarus asked the suited person where his street was. The girl lifted her helmet visor a bit more and told him that it was not too far only about twelve blocks or so. Lazarus asked her name and she responded, "Rashmi," an Indian girl. "Lazarus." He



Kuiper Belt Region

replied and gently shakes her gloved hand. The streetlamps flowed and the population began to grow as they neared the residential district. The trolley slowed upon Rashmi's yank of the stop cord and Lazarus said, "It was nice meeting you." She batted her eyes once at him because her mouth was covered. The car began to move again soon to cross a couple of pillars apparently a neighborhood boarder indicator.

There was more neon lighting around and a few small clubs sported customer attractants such as provocative figures as an attempt to lure the jaded citizens inside for a relaxing drink. Lazarus kept a close eye on the street signs as he past the small clusters of fun loving people enjoying their night out. The windows on the bars and shops were clear. The radiation this far out is less and the dug in nature of the village shield from intense rays. Inside dancing and conversing citizens delight in their freedom of life here in their small town at Kuiper. Lazarus jumped off the trolley without yanking the line and starts his trot down the street toward the fifth condo.

Assumingly belonging to Jacy the elaborately designed building was suited for a wealthy owner. Lazarus made his way up the stone stairs complete with rock statues along the edges displaying their carved masterpieces. There was even a fancy doorbell further clarifying the theory that an individual owns this residence with an eye for graphic furnishing. He was well greeted by the smiley and rested Celie who was quick to pull him in by the wrist, hasty to close the airlock. The carpet was spotless, walls where freshly painted and vases were sat about. Already could be seen the Native taste of Jacy's arrangement of plants which were quite abundant. Lazarus expressed his liking to the new place and quickly settled in. Jacy had not come down from upstairs yet and Lazarus was receiving a litany of reiterations from their lover's voyage.

One of the questions asked initially was of the whereabouts of Li and Lazarus told her that he was on a mission for the SMD. Jacy having come down from his hideout was of a semi smile yet he maintains his seriousness. This time it seems that he cannot help but to feel something about his guest's arrival and observance of his decorations. He hid these feelings from them. Celie knew what he felt already however, she had become very close to Jacy.

Lazarus was opening up a deck of cards while Celie moved into the kitchen perhaps to prepare refreshments. Jacy sat at the living room section on the sectional as Lazarus began to deal a hand. Short-wave oven panel buttons were beeping as Celie made efforts to apply heat to hopefully a food item. Celie shouted to them requesting an opinion about how many **pizza pouches** she should cook. Jacy said cook them all and Lazarus mentioned that Li is not certain he will be back anytime soon. He glanced at his wrist device to view the status indicator of Li's location registration and he was not in the vicinity.

A Quick Study

Li could scarcely contain his enthusiasm as the ships engineer prepared to give him a look at the Telestica's computer functionality. He had requested permission to have a gander at some of the workings of the vessel and was welcomed to an observation. The aliens of the Telestica were generous in soothing the desires of every individual and had no adverse paranoia about Li examining the engineering of the ship. They have removed the panel of a computer console allowing a view of the internal circuitry. Li could barely interpret what he was seeing and did require an explanation. The alien gave him the idea and Li then knew what it was he was looking at. The symmetrical arrangement of crystalline silica tubing made for quite a colorful piece in an artistic sense.

Aesthetics aside the blinking patterns and fluctuating spectrum of frequencies coming from the tubing mesh was responsible for data transfer. There were large blocks of what looked like glass that the guide said stored enormous amounts of data. Each level of the glass blocks could hold data as represented by a part of the visible spectra frequencies allowing for laser reading and writing to the cubes of transparent polymers. "Photonic circuitry..." Li stated. The alien nodded affirmatively. Nearly the entire ship was powered and operated by light instead of electricity. Li's little alien female tugged at him from nowhere trying to get his attention. She had been so close to him that she began to become a significant distraction.

One thing Li had not considered about his lovely little woman was that her brain was still bigger than his. She controlled Li without his notice and he did not realize the extent of her mind power. From first notice she appeared to be as any sweet girl would. She had the image of shallowness but was only a veil hiding her true mindset. Li had been aboard the ship for nearly twenty-four hours and slept little. He was becoming groggy in all the excitement and the interaction between himself and his girl was starting to make his mind revert to a more primitive state. He began to act more like he did in middle school during his early youth. The alien female, though unknown from the outside, was succeeding in meeting the challenge of

keeping Li from feeling hurtful emotions such as inadequacy and low self esteem as he continued to struggle to stay afloat of his female's deep oceans of awareness.

Li was getting more and more tongue-tied and made dunce noises on occasion but pressured his mind and body to stay on track. He was barely keeping up with the mind reading aliens. They had shown no hostility so far and seemed excessively accommodating in almost every way. Already knowing what he desired Li is put into the bed and tucked in by his alien girl. Li could not help but to think of his now last love Xila as he drifted into unconsciousness.

In Search of Adventure

Xila had managed to find herself a fun friend to enjoy her time with. She had this past few days quite an enjoyable time here in Suntown. From news interviews to movie auditions and even a few speeches about her work and previous involvement in famous battles she made her mark on the solar system. Now she finds herself at the assistance of one of the most experienced archeologist Mohammad in the frozen caves of Mars. Suited and spirited to assist her new friend Mohammad pounds away at the rock face in search of a heatedly sought after rumored find, *The Tomb of the Ancient Mentors*, Greys from hundreds of years ago.

Break time arrives and Mohammad's crew sets aside their digging equipment. Xila followed them into the erected pressure tent inside the large cavity in the midst of the cave network. The man sized temporary dwelling naturally consisted of its mini airlock and secured igloo cabin ensuring safety in the mildly pressured Martian atmosphere of carbon dioxide. The cave was dark other than the scattered flood light posts in which most were turned off to save battery power. Xila wanted more information about the legend of this particular dig and Mohammad was pleased to tell. They ate their lunch while listening to Mohammad's story. It was a tale of mysterious activities in ancient times by a very old and highly intelligent race that have long ago learned the ultimate secrets of the Universe. They had powers of great vividity of the mind and the will and their discolored skin told of their long history amongst technology and space travel.

A ghostly feeling becomes them as Mohammad tells the eerie story of these lasting aliens. Some say they are so advanced that they have become as a ghostly spirit whom need not travel about the cosmos yet only by the highways of angels. Mohammad's charisma tantalizes Xila and even his well-informed comrades who don't mind to hear the story again. It has been rumored that the sacred **Talisman of Nypt** and accompanying postancient relics from these aged aliens exist somewhere in the very cave in which they sat. A cool breeze brushed her face and there was not a wind to carry it.

Xila loved mysteries and quests, which were what, drew her to leave the Mars Barr with Mohammad after enjoying her lunch dish. She could see into the puzzle of the mentors, a race who has long ago left their home planet and have thrived in spacecraft for centuries all the while becoming the most experienced species known. The excitement awakened as Mohammad and his crew began to recap and Xila followed.

Back to work outside they resume chipping away at the rock face. Pound after pound the cavern walls gave way uncovering still more tunneling networks and resource rich deposits. But minerals and elements were not what Mohammad had in mind. He was after one of the greatest treasures. The Talisman of Nypt contained inside an elaborate scroll with text information regarding some sort of wondrous truth about the nature of the universe documented many tens of thousands of years ago. Some believe it may even contain maps to more astounding treasures left behind by the greys. They pressed on with hope on their heads.

Time to Go

Li knew he had to get off of the Telestica. It was almost becoming a serious matter trying to get away. He managed to recover by his nap and he found himself alone. His female was away and he took the opportunity to rebuild his thoughts. His haste to depart was not so much so as to flee from danger or harm yet the overwhelming intensity of alien mind. Into the corridors of glamour he knows he had a few errands to run before he could get back to the ship bay. He had made friends so quickly now he must break his ties for best results—first and foremost the little aqua alien girl he loves so much now. Her whereabouts are unknown. He asked around as he crossed some of the aliens he was acquainted with as he headed for that banquet ballroom. She was not there and the others didn't answer well. Now he did not know where she was. He skipped trying to locate her at this time and went ahead to disengage his bonds with the other shipmates and they all

understood. They asked him how he enjoyed his stay on the Telestica and Li responded with compliments. Li elaborated upon the décor, the computer system, and especially the hospitality as he gradually worked his way to the Voyager-2 XF.

Li's adamancy was unavoidable as he questioned his last friend, the guide who showed him the other parts of the ship and the male alien he has the strongest rapport between. He managed to get the information of his girlfriend's location and Li perhaps sensibly asked him to escort him in a polite manner of request. He found her in a lounge room with other male aliens. There was a little pain inside but he controlled his feelings well. He knew in his heart at the time he met her that it would be temporary and that the alluring atmosphere of the ship would also. Still, Li buckled a little there for a while and with inner balance managed stay afloat. He requested the position of the Telestica now that he had spent over a day aboard.

Li was somewhat disappointed that he could not see the bridge yet something told him that his report would be satisfactory for the SMD. The Telestica had not flown far with Li aboard due to its significant slowdown. A prompt yet respectable departure saw Li off into space once again in his new ship. Li could be back home in a matter of hours.

The Ongoing Quest

The view of the distant mountain in which Mohammad the geologist, his crew, and Xila was visible from a far off vista. The cone-shaped caldera towers high above the Martian terrain yet, inside, the hasty digging of this elite crew of geospherians continue their picking from within. Xila lent her hand at the time of rest when a member of the research team takes timeout. Mohammad and Amed were impressed by Xila's strength and stamina as a girl. The rock face at point began to crumble. Mohammad was inside the pressure tent yet viewing the outside via camera system. He dropped his drink and he and Amed recapped and dashed through the mini airlock as the gritty rock face began to crumble. Mohammad could tell that there was another cavity behind the collapsing tunnel head. It was an immediate breakthrough. Coffins, old and exotic by appearance, were revealed and they finished off the rest of the wall with sledgehammers.

They climbed though the newly formed opening into the cave chamber and gazed in awe. Amed began to signal the finding to the recreation station at Olympos Mons and Mohammad stopped him. He wanted to open them before announcing the finding. Xila, having overheard the frenzied dialog between the boss men grabbed the crowbar and began to pry open the carcass containers. They were astounded to find inside the first alien skeleton unknown in origin. The enlarged, egg-shaped skulls made the alien type easy to discern by observation. Xila recognized the alien species and reported her spoken analysis. They were skeletal remnants of three mentor aliens. The bodies of these remains were small and petite with hands clasped together across the stomach. Inside the middle coffin was found an alien map and some metallic debris much like the appearance of jewelry.

Xila's wrist computer began receiving an alert of which the origin was coming from the top of Olympus Mons via one of the radio towers. It was Seiwan Li's proximity ping. She thought that at this time she would attempt to send an automated message to Li for her pickup. Mohammad knew that it was a friend of hers and was already preparing responses in his mind



Surface of Mars and Mountain Top Range

when Xila would come to him and inform that she would be leaving the group. Mohammad asked her respectfully not to reveal this finding just yet. For if the map found in the coffin was authentic then it's interpretation might lead to additional treasures of the Mentors. Xila agreed because she understood that it could attract other competitors. She replied to the ping with a location indicator, standby message. The map was made from papyrus and very fragile as Mohammad discerned. He was very well versed in such a determination and had already experience clues to draw from. He has seen many forms of paper as he had spent a lot of time in and around Egypt of Earth. Xila had stopped digging and kept a vigil on her wrist device while the team continued to glance at the small amount of gold silver and jewels inside the coffins. He snapped a high-resolution photograph of the crumbly papyrus immediately making a second sturdier map.

A reply ping came in and it registered as originating from a ship of which the registration name was Voyager-2. The signal had traveled far as the data on Xila's wrist device indicated a high number of booster buoys in use to get the transmission to her. Xila thought that perhaps Li had changed the name of the ship. Evenso, she had not focused so much on that particular detail essentially "taking it with a grain of salt." The sun was beginning to set about the horizon of the surface of Mars. The team was still debating the meaning of the inscriptions marked on the coffins and some of the jewels. The others were instructed to keep digging to see if there are any more subchambers or soft spots nearby. Xila politely informed Mohammad that she would be leaving perhaps shortly when her contact comes to pick her up.

Alone in the Cosmos

Li had spent many hours in the cockpit of his fighter and he did sleep therein utilizing the standup gravity plate in front of his feet. The Voyager-2 XF was slightly larger than Feeno's craft and Li sprawled out on his bed, which folded out from the sidewalls. He was alone in space and eager to get back around familiar faces. His recent transmission to Xila had no doubt arrived by now informing her that he would soon be in the vicinity of Suntown. To pass the time he began to play more of his favorite music tracks. His request to transfer a copy of the alien music titled, "The New Era" was granted and he kept it stored in his wrist device as a compressed music file. Additionally he transfers the music to his ship's computer as well. Li arranged a song list while he leans back pondering of his recent adventures. His favorite track, "[The Universe Beyond](#)" sounded about his surrounding speaker system. He listened and dozed a little as he neared Suntown.

His rendezvous alert woke him of his semi slumber and it was Xila attempting to make contact from atop Olympus Mons. He was just passing the orbit of Neptune when the call came in. Li alters his course directly for Mars. It wasn't long before he began a landing sequence for the large Olympus Mons patio. The bustling streets harbored more civilians as compared to last time he was on Olympus Mons. Li deactivated his engine and touched down onto the landing disc to wait for Xila's signal. He was attempting to locate her but could not get a solid reading. Li did not know that she was still inside a cave system far away. Her signal had been transferred to the main broadcaster on top of the spaceport mountain. Finally after several dozen minutes or so her signal chimed in again loud and clear.

Li rose from the surface of Olympus Mons and took an unscheduled course, which take him down the side of the gargantuan mountain. Traveling on the downside of Olympus Mons one could not tell easily that they were even on a volcano by the naked eye. Appearing in front of his speeding craft two horizons, one of O.M., and the other the distant sea level plan. Li was closely monitoring on his terrain radar the numerous amounts of other vessels zooming and zipping about and he had a clear run ahead. Accelerating to high terrain speed the ground below streaked by of rusty red soil and dark brown rock. Li watched Xila's position and sees that it is now a moving target. He deciphered her to be riding in a terrain vehicle. Yet he could not help but to wonder whom she ended up with during her travels. Inside the bobbing **ground tamer** with big treaded wheels Xila and Amed ride together. He had agreed to take her back to the base of Olympus.

The other miners were left behind to continue searching for treasures. Amed was beginning to show an attractive interest to Xila and they started to talk closely. He didn't know that she was Li's girlfriend and did not hesitate to throw passes at her, even to go as far as to give her valuable trinkets which he picked up along the way at different times in his life throughout his career in the geology field. The little green Martian man bobbing and swinging side to side as the vehicle bounced and hopped over the rough terrain was an amusing gift from him. She accepted with a cute smile still keeping Li on her mind. She could feel inside of her that he was near. The terrain vehicle came to a halt sometime during its traverse as a dust devil appeared near them and pelted the ground transport. They both hid their fear yet she could tell Amed was a little nervous given the size and burying power of Martian weather. Indeed they became stuck for a few moments and the four-wheeled drive was utilized to dig them out.

The last windstorm began to dissipate and out of the cloudy funnel came the sleek gray and white Voyager-2. Li lowered his elevation to only a few meters and followed the vehicle for several minutes. They had not known who it was and they became suspicious. However, the reflective ping confirms the mystery fighter tailing them for so many minutes to be owned by Captain Li. "Stop here please." Xila said. Amed complied and Xila put on her helmet, as did he. There was now a little meeting in the midst of the frozen rusty dessert and Xila hugged Li though not so intimately felt as would be without a suit on. Li saluted Amed having his visor preopened essentially thanking him for taking care of her. He recognized Amed's eyes and recalls his interesting finding last time regarding the white frothy sludge he collected from the other Martian cave. Xila said her final goodbye to Amed and asked him if he would transfer to the others a departure statement as well and he affirmed.

Chapter 10

Party at Kuipertown

Yet awaiting a call from Li, his navigator, now subpilot, Lazarus sees no shortage of distraction as the condo began to fill up. Refined businessmen in their business attire were sitting around using their portable briefcase computers. There were aliens swimming at the pool behind Jacy's condo and Lazarus was facing another challenge. Swimmers coming from the indoor pool area were still dressed in their bathing suits. It made him recall his walk through the Planetary Council over a month ago in the **Chamber of Lust**. Lazarus was tempted again. But something else appeared in his thoughts spoken to him by that mystifying Giraffidae. There is a time to every purpose under heaven.

Destination: Earth

With another trip home, this time in style, Li is bound to turn heads when reaching his hometown to see his parents. Now Li has a new ship and a gorgeous girlfriend at his side. The blue/green world called Earth grows in the forward window. Xila was relaxing in the back while watching his control sequences. Li had spoken a little bit about the purpose of this new craft as to become more acquainted with it even for him.

Xila had a little panel near her similar to the nav. Console in the Star Voyager though somewhat smaller. Descending the skies about the world of the Terrans Li retains a suitable glide trajectory toward the orient—his twenty-five thousand mile per hour approach now reduced to a crawling mach one. Li touches down into a hover above the old ball field. He had not landed instead decided to risk it by floating the ship all the way home along the roadway. The small fighter was not much larger than a full sized van and would be less noticeable—hopefully. Still, he used his sensors and radars to have Xila keep track of law enforcement in the area. He couldn't help but to chuckle inside as he activated the stealth. He had to raise the ship again after reaching the old walking trail, which lay bare through the woods. This time he traveled over the thicketed heap, the shrubbery, and the sparkling creek.

Li's mother was out in the bamboo garden and he exits his vessel after touching down in a clearing amongst the many ornaments and bamboo artwork. Li's mother stops her work and rushed over to her son throwing her arms around him. She exclaimed her delight in seeing him again after all this time and Li introduces his lovely girlfriend Xila Kile. They enter the house where Li's father sat in front of the recliner reading his Midday Chronicle. "Li you just received a phone call from the Supermarket. They would like to speak with you about some hours." Li grabbed the phone while Xila introduced herself to Li's father. Li's old boss, Mr. Tan, answered because Li had called the direct line to his office. Mr. Tan asked if Li could come in to put in a few hours, as they were shorthanded today. Li thought for a moment and finally agreed.

After the phone call Xila mentioned that she wouldn't mind helping out at the market either. She felt a little uncomfortable staying at the Li home without Li being there. "You also received a call from your friend Darlyn." His mother stated. "Who is Darlyn?" Xila asked. Li explained who she was and how he met her, that he helps her during her pregnancy. Xila understood and desired to meet her. Li took Xila into his bedroom and changed into his uniform while Xila uses the shower. He gave Xila his other marketplace uniform because he had a second pair of kakies and maroon top shirt. Nearly a lightyear out the party rages on with angling direction. Lazarus had already partied himself out and seeks the Star Voyager for refuge. He synced with his friend of captainhood at that moment in thought, recalling his previous motion when Li felt the way Lazarus felt now.

The sensation was like being promoted which was indeed a truth. Aside from the philosophical perspectives, Li had already taken care of **substitute registries** for Lazarus early on. Surprise came to Lazarus having run into a mildly intoxicated Feeno getting his recovery activities underway there at Kuipertown. He stood outside in the glass room balcony overlooking the city lights and his evenings date was present with him. Lazarus spoke a little with him and they did not discuss much about the mission instead the current satisfaction being derived. The music was blaring, the people were chattering, and joyousness prevailed.

Yet one event of note the **tampering alarm** sounded on his wrist device not like the standard vessel distance finder notification but an enemy alert. This meant that a craft or crafts, which Li had programmed into the computer under the nemesis list, were in the general vicinity of Kuipertown. Lazarus knew who it was by intuition. But as Li, his faithful friend, had taught him always consider the alternative possibilities. So either a resistance vessel was in the area, another craft has opened fire, or none other than Christopher Williams, coming back from his deep space mission for the enemy, has located

the Star Voyager. Lazarus was debating whether or not to ignore it. He was having a lot of fun but weighing heavily on him was his duty. He had to respond. Lazarus left the house and walked down the long stone staircase toward the trolley pickup at the end of Oort Cloud Avenue. As he rolled along the little rail more people were coming in on the other inbound rail cart and he swore to himself he saw Husto Theeson rolling toward the raging party.

Lazarus was with anxiety. He knew he had been drinking too much and that he may not be up for too much complication. But, his hardened sense of duty strengthened him for the occasion. The trolley car finally reached the edge of town where he first arrived. Lazarus was armed with a semi automatic projectile pistol, which was about the size of a 357 Derringer clamped to his leg under his armor. Li keeps one too hidden somewhere as a precaution.

Up the long elevator he reaches the top of the sky-high patio. Lazarus had never thought he would have to use his gun until he came around a small cluster of vessels only to see a few suited persons surrounding Star Voyager. He ducks down quickly into the obscurity of another ship and spies on them. They were opening the side hatch used to carry light cargo as a shared hold mostly utilized early on after the *new space craze* to let civilians help out with delivering supplies to the young stations and colonies.

Now as Lazarus watches on he sees the panel opened by strangers. How the perpetrators managed to release the hatch lock is yet a mystery. His wrist computer begins beeping as Li was sending him an expensive long-range call at the moment. The distance delay seemed to take forever as he waited for Li's voice to sound in. Finally the sounds of bar code readers and browsing shoppers were heard behind Li's greeting. "Li there's someone tampering with the ship right now." A moment of silence took place as the great distance phased message completes its cycle. "Where are you?" Lazarus transmits again. "I'm outside on the patio in Kuipertown, I just came from Jacy's condo and I saw them and started watching. They are loading something into the cargo hold on the side." ...a little static and another delay. "Call the SMD right now. I'm on Earth working at the market for a few hours, Xila is with me." There was silence.

Suddenly at his busy register as the long distance signal phased in Li heard a series of thuds as patio material and gun blasts pelted Lazarus's suit making vibratory noises into the wrist device. The incoming laser shots were set on blast. The patio area between Laz and the vandals was lit with color as Lazarus maintained a crouched position behind some unknown vessel. Lazarus swings around the inactive ship and opens fire with his pistol. Li could hear modified bullet blasts adding to the noise there at his checkout belt. Laz's rapid projectile delivery nearly hits some of the criminals who scattered and began running toward the edge of the patio for their XF vessels.

Lazarus takes a snapshot of the persons running and shooting behind them. He darts over to the ship and begins to climb the top hatch. "What's going on?" Li asked. The message fades. "I drove them off. It looks like attempted sabotage!" Lazarus powers the ship while waiting for Li's return message. "Okay, Lazarus don't fly the ship wait until I get there and file a report to the SMD."

"Understood..."

"Li out..." Having the saved the Star Voyager from a potential disaster Lazarus watches as Christopher Williams rapidly departs the asteroid at Kuipertown whose owners will definitely take arms against troublemakers as their rights allocate. In the soon-after the SMD police craft and Kuipertown management arrived. He, that is the officer, and Lazarus begin inspecting the workmanship. The side panel had been torched open and shows signs of the work of arc welding. A few SMD craft were dispatched to try and chase the fleeing targets. They were no longer in sensor range. Either Chris took off immediately to leave the Solar System or he now has stealth capability.

Lazarus's bullet shrapnel was found, only a few caps, lying near the scene. In a little while Lazarus was found standing outside the ship waiting. The SMD Energy Weapon Incident Account Specialist was supporting the data pad while Lazarus fills it up with his witness's statements. So far there was nothing recovered from the cargo hold except a strange pebbly dust in the compartment. If there were any other devices or instruments used it may have been removed after the criminals fled from the small gun battle.

A Day at Work

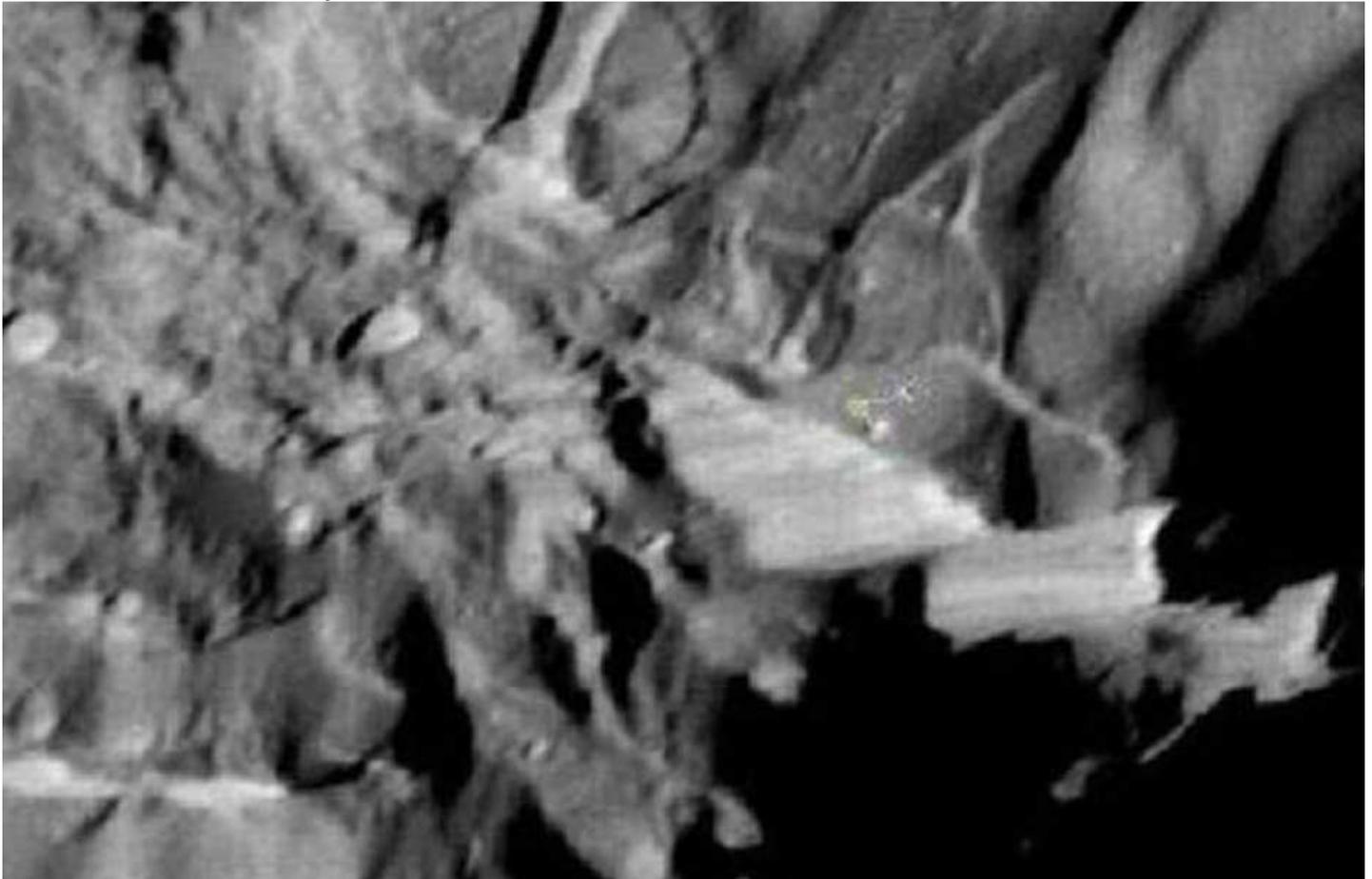
Li still had faith in Lazarus's ability and even now maintained control over his anxiety about his tampered vessel. Only a sliver of distress snaked through his belly. Xila was enjoying performing her simple store duties and smiled as she worked. She had lived a long hard life of valor and accomplishment and took well to the task of cashiering, cleaning, and maintaining store spirit. The young baggers were turning red and talking about the new attractive supervisor which was a temporary

rank given by the manager. Li was fast on the cash register and the line of customers was moving along well. Only second to the top, cashier **Andy Williams**, yet another American living in the orient of China, was hot on the trail of the well-performing Li. The boss **Mr. Ebert** was helping somewhat with processing the needy grocers.

Coming through the line was Darlyn whom he has not called yet. Li saw her in line and was lighted on his face to see her smiling. She was buying baby materials now and Li expressed his congratulations and happiness for her. He knew she would be delivering soon. The traffic had slowed and the baggers were idle. One was leaning against the conveyer belt and Mr. Ebert walked past him on the way upstairs to the office and asked him, "Are you holding that up?" The bagger went for the broom and dustpan at that point. Darlyn's grocery order was complete, bagged, and ready to roll out to her car. Li said he would take them out himself and Xila took over the register.

Darlyn was excited to introduce her new boyfriend to Li and when he got to the car the window was opened and Erin Trotter appeared in the frame. Li was immediately pleased to see them as a couple because he knew what kind of person Erin was having gotten to know him at the Mars Barr. Li was happy for her, wished them well, and they soon drove away onto the freeway. The night formed and the starry heaven above was unveiled. Xila spoke well to her new coworkers and Mr. Ebert told her that they could always use more supervisors and that she could return anytime if she needed extra credits.

For the hours worked by Xila she was given **electrocash** input into her carrying card. She used it immediately at the register to buy a few snacks for Li's refrigerator. He and Xila pulled off, after clocking out, in a taxicab to deliver them back to the neighborhood. **Ready for Thrill** They wouldn't wait longer. Their repelling excursion on the largest cliff in the solar system awaited them. Jacy was responsible in his packing and gathered the necessary equipment for the twelve-mile descent down the **Verona Rupes Bluff**.



Verona Rupes, Miranda

Lazarus was a little nervous flying the Star Voyager over toward the cliff top. He was still thinking about the shootout and what else Chris Williams might have done to the ship. So far there were no problems. They made the trip to The Uranian System upon receiving the go ahead by the station manager there. They were now on the schedule as new cliff scalars. Jacy was in awe about the ship layout and like a curious schoolboy poked around the ship somewhat. His pacing between compartments did not arouse alert in Lazarus nor did it bother anyone. Celie was at the nav. Panel assisting Lazarus at that time. They landed at the little recreation station there on Miranda at the cliffs edge, which also contained a repelling equipment station and real-estate properties.

There were many mountaineers inside once they entered it and for some reason it felt like a holiday time, Lazarus didn't know why. The decorations weren't exactly wreaths and lights made for a holiday yet there was also accompanying the holiday feeling like that of a ski lodge. They attained their equipment and spoke to a few persons inside smiling and enjoying a mild dinner in the repelling lounge.

After eating they exit onto the surface of Miranda carrying their climbing gear. An intriguing world of plain colors and many deep gouges about the region Miranda was indeed a hikers paradise. They soon approached the edge and could not see off it because it curved into the steep drop. But they knew that soon they would be able to see all the way down. The ropes were staked, the lines were lowered, and the suits were pressurized of fresh oxygen stores. The big rope spindles ensured at least thirteen miles of line and they lowering themselves. Celie, Jacy, and Lazarus prepare their unnerving descent. The cliff was just a little longer than it appeared from the aerial view of the face when they flew in for a landing earlier.

They begin their long and underestimated trip down the side of the bluff. Fun at first, after about a mile of descending the seemingly endless mountain Celie and Lazarus began to get antsy. They had expected to be at the ground sometime soon and according their readings they were barely past the cliff top, which was itself, now distant. The one-way trip to the bottom was taking a lot longer than expected. They were having a conversation as they walked themselves down and then the screaming appeared. They were not in pain of suffering in fact everything was normal, suit readings line integrity and so on. The screams occur usually right after a stray topic was concluded. They were thinking how much longer this would take to reach the bottom.

Lazarus laughed hysterically but briefly at Celie for yelling a few profanities about the great distance they sought to repel. It wasn't long after that Laz began to yell himself. He shouted a little also asking to himself, "How much longer is this blasted cliff!" Jacy finally cracked a smile, which was a noted rarity. He was himself amused by his distressed comrades. Jacy did not scream as his reputation intercepted his emotional outburst. Besides, being a skilled woodsman Jacy also already had experience with mountain climbing.

They stopped to rest again half way down about six miles. It had been over an hour since they began their descent. Laz answers his wrist beeping communicator. It was Li asking if they had already began their repelling and he expressed his underestimation of Verona Rupes as an emotion to Li. Li was worried because of Laz's facial expression and loud voice but he soon saw what was happening and he started to grin as Lazarus yelled about the too long excursion down Verona Rupes. They were asking how close was he so that they could abort the last five miles of the cliff. Li mentioned that he was on the way to Miranda at the moment and would meet them soon at the bottom. He knew it was a rule violation to abort a repelling descent.

Paying a Debt

"I thought we were going to Miranda." Said Xila. "We are but I have one more thing to take care of first at Mercury." Li's course skews from Earth toward the scarred planet abut of Sol. The sun grew in size and intensity as they fell toward it. Mercury was located even in the face of the intense glare via computer assistance. They had soon landed at Mercury Power Station and exit. Xila followed him along the landing pad to the funneled entrance of the inlet. They entered and Li looked to see that the dust, which was on the floor days ago in front of the airlock release, was gone. Li and Xila entered the lobby waiting room and the desk clerk greeted them saying hello and that someone would be with them shortly. Li thanked her and said he knew already where the party was he needed to see and she gave him permission to go to his workshop at the side of the station.

They left back out of the station and over to where Li got his new shield upgrade weeks ago. Dennis was working diligently hooking up an NET sensor to another customer vessel whose pilot was not around at the moment. Dennis was

glad to see Li again and they touched bases there on the patio in suits—Xila was listening. They had migrated over to the Star Voyager in conversation and they huddled on the rooftop. Li opened the top hatch of the ship and pulled out the authentic samurai sword. He handed it to Dennis with both palms supporting as if to present a valuable jewel. Much practice energy existed in the sword and Dennis felt it. Li takes a last look at the sheathed instrument of protection he has come to cherish. Dennis accepts gently and respectfully diverting his gaze not from the genuine warrior's weapon. He knew the importance unto Li and with light on his eyes he received his trade gracefully. Dennis informed Li that if he ever needed anything added to the Star Voyager to be sure to come back by Mercury. Li accepted and shook the hand of his new friend in a high place—or is it a hot place.

The Rendezvous

Sure enough and hours later they touched down at the bottom of the Miranda bluff. The sleek XF fighter was visible to the exhausted trio of mountaineers harboring a chuckling Li and grinning Xila. They had caught the tail end of their harrowing dive down the side of Verona Rupes. They spoke a while in their space suits standing around about the vessel. Lazarus was inside V2 playing with the controls of the second, little ship Li inherited. Xila and Celie were having woman talk on another helmet frequency.

The party breaks and Li ferried everyone back up riding on top of the Voyager-2 XF, laughing some of the way. At the top of the bluff everyone jumps off of the V2 craft. Li was approached and hurried to step out of his fighter by an irate man. He emerges and receives a stern talking to from the equipment lounge manager. Li was written up and verbally disciplined for carrying people on top of his craft like that. The man gave him a break but never wanted to see that again as he colorfully expressed. He leaves and returns to his inside job in the lodge having performed his duty as safety enforcer. Lazarus, Jacy, and Celie man Voyager-1 as Li and Xila assumed the controls of the V-2 fighter. With punctuality a priority message appear on the side monitor inside V-2. It was the Admiral. "Captain..." He called out. Li responds with a slightly weary, "Yes sir." He was as tired as his yawning comrades. He was ready nonetheless to handle another mission if requested. "We have an emergency science alert! I'm sending you this message to all SMD personnel military and civilian alike. This signal is heavily encoded so I'll transmit the details now." Li was getting text screen readouts and he could scarcely believe his eyes. The E.S. Ambition has encountered a strange phenomenon. It is an object that should not exist in the universe yet; the orbiting Ambition maintains a sensor lock on the dense dark object.

A black dwarf has been discovered and no one can say how it got here. Black dwarfs are not supposed to form for billions of years after the last of the white dwarf stage in a stars life cycle. Li confirmed that the information was being received on Voyager-1 and it was so. Lazarus expressed his wonder yet didn't know exactly what a black dwarf is. Li, though aware of the astronomical details of the heavy burned out cinder, was just as baffled. The SMD science staff and Seghtee informs that Mr. Berman, his copilot Oroxum, and the science crews are enroute to study the object further while the Ambition resumes its mission. "Additional reports: We have received rumors from credible sources that The Resistance has begun construction of a new Type II Piranha fighter." Yet just another event of note, Li would likely be seeing the new and improved enemy fighter in the soon after. The engine flares, light shines from its discharge ports, and the spacenauts depart orbit of the steel frozen tundra of Miranda with glee.

Stay Tuned...

Epilogue

Personal Profiles

Aala Gadsby

Genus: Human
Gender: Female
D.O.B. 03.27.1998
Birthplace: Germany, Earth

Aala's long time fascination with outer space has led the astute learner to pursue her carrier in transgeological exercises. She worked on the Moon during its early construction days in the food industry and made herself a quick name for efficient functions. Now seen at random the transiting meal maker has aspired to extend her duties to other realms.

Andy Williams

Genus: Human
Gender: Female
D.O.B. 06.01.2007
Birthplace: America, Earth

As a young man Andy worked most of his work years at the frequented food market in the small America town replica in the oldlands of China. Coworker of Seiwan Li he seeks to maintain his employee of the moth for as long as he can hold it yet remains challenged by the diligent efficiency of his experienced coworkers.

Ahaviah

Genus: Human
Gender: Female
D.O.B. 03.07.2007
Birthplace: Israel, Earth

Lovely and bashful yet sturdy in her self-conservation it is not uncommon to find love and compassion in the longing heart of Ahaviah. Seeking a husband and honorable to her parents she lives her life baking the succulent breads of necessity and spends her free time carried away in her reading.

Amed Rhim

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 08.15.2000
Birthplace: Sudan, Earth

As a passion Amed has embraced his satisfying quest for understanding about the Earth and its history. Mastering in archeology Amed moved up quickly in his university studies having attained academic awards for intriguing finds in his college outfield applications. Accepted to colead his selected team to the planet Mars he set out to uncover potentially groundbreaking discoveries on the red planet.

Arinori Seghtee

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 10.07.1986
Birthplace: Japan, Earth

Former affiliation with the Japanese Military the new martial arrangement instilled by the Planetary Council gave him a high classification for position amongst other candidates as Admiral of the Earth Branch Star City Military Defense. Winning over his competitors with his history of strong tactical decision-making along with safety and civilian-sparing combat resolutions he has attained his status as military leader of Earth.

Bal Ibro

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 05.05.1993
Birthplace: America, Earth

The incredibly brilliant physics professor and co-founder of the Matron Group Bal Ibro made his first succession by introducing his technological modifications to some of the most important space-age equipment known to science. Majoring in quantum mechanics in his early graduate years Bal achieved his role as scientist early on paving the way for his new-founded career in space. Today, working aboard the Matron Science station in synchronis orbit of the bustling alien city on the planet Lactronia, Bal continues to generate new inventions and ideas for the benefit of future generations.

Brendan Sontira

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 08.13.1979
Birthplace: America, Earth

An obscure traveler Brendan Sontira has been to many unknown regions in space and aspired to unlock all the secrets of the nature of the universe and the heavens beyond. Brendan's whereabouts are unknown.

Celie Ackland

Genus: Human
Gender: Female
D.O.B. 01.16.2001
Birthplace: France, America

A food service specialist Celie is well known for her fantastic feasts as she has often taken over for vacant chefs. Her lovely apparel has gained her a high demand role at professional and high-class establishments. Celie has worked in many Restaurants around Suntown and has sought to expand her boundaries to other star systems. Maintaining her role as a proficient waitress Celie is well educated and rumored to be affiliated either by direct membership or personal relations with the Matron Group.

Christopher Williams

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 01.26.1997
Birthplace: America, Earth

Top pilot in his class Christopher Williams made his thrilling debut at the Star Flight Show performing daring maneuvers for audience and scientific appraisal. Scoring high academically Christopher made an impressive imprint on his peers and admirers. Chris was one of the first XF class fighter experts and now owns a model of this sleek and stylish yet fancifully maneuverable standard personal space wing.

Cyril

Genus: Felidae

Gender: Male

D.O.B. 1997? (Earth western calendar)

Birthplace: Katlar (assumed)

Little is known about the CRC criminal yet his spontaneous appearances continue to alert friendly military attention. His confirmed affiliation with the Confederate Resistance has gained him enmity with Star City and he currently resides elsewhere external to the renowned territory. Cyril is thought to have been responsible for the recent Battle at Raxot, Krysto and is a feared hand-to-hand combat specialist of many different styles and forms.

Darlyn Saley

Genus: Human

Gender: Female

D.O.B. 04.11.2004

Birthplace: China, Earth

Hard working resident and citizen of Federal Consumership status Darlyn Saley makes an honest living. Residing alone in her upscale apartment she prepares to give birth to her first child. Employed as an Accountant Supervisor she maintains her post as leader of the federal tax revenue service and seeks greater opportunity. Having attended her community college for several semesters Darlyn moved on to a higher university and continues her education with diligence.

Devon Jackson

Genus: Human

Gender: Male

D.O.B. 07.24.1985

Birthplace: America, Earth

With a proud and distinguished career in the military Devon's drive for security and duty fulfillment earned him a place in the SMD early on. Recommended by his favored superiors and veteran of numerous Earth wars such as "Dessert Storm" and the Middle Eastern provocations appearing at the turn of the century Jackson is well suited for command in any hostile or routine situation, which may arise.

Eling Xing Shi

Genus: Human
Gender: Female
D.O.B. 09.04.2008
Birthplace: China, Earth

A young student of a Chinese university Eling works as an entertainment coordinator at her favorite dance club and enjoys her duties as music maker and occasionally doubles as D.J. at the equipment stand.

Ensign Cantrell

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 03.04.1998
Birthplace: Europe, Earth

As a freshman ship hand Melvin Cantrell was selected because of his high scores at the Starfleet Control School of Preparation. He was selected and now serves aboard the E.S. Ambition the newest space exploration vessel launched from Neptune Harbor. Adventure and discovery no doubt awaits this budding young officer.

Erin Trotter

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 07.07.1997
Birthplace: Israel, Earth

An archeology student Erin lived in the rural regions of his homeland and is active in his church of the Hebrews. He commonly attends the small-town festivals with his Jewish loved ones and is currently pursuing marriage.

Gibar

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 02.08.1976
Birthplace: Israel, Earth

Preferring the simple life of tradition and serenity Gibar the milkman plays a valuable role in his small community more-so than just the local dairy provider. His great size, strength, and large tool use experience delivers unto his people the much-needed manual assistance throughout his farmland dwelling. Gibar is a loving father, husband, and godfather to many ambitious youths.

Giovani Beltran

Genus: Human

Gender: Male

D.O.B. 09.27.1985

Birhplace: Italy, Earth

Italian Explorer ship commander Giovanni Beltran is the second of twins born into a space-faring lifestyle. Brother to the French raised Reloch Beltran he maintains his status as Captain's assistant with little ties or mention of his dark-sided brother whose whereabouts are diligently pursued. Beltran's experience and affiliation in the American air force earned him a place aboard the E.S. Vigor, the maiden Earth vessel launched in 2015. Having returned from his ten-year journey he pursues a leave of absence until he decides his next career move.

Jacy Abeytu

Genus: Human

Gender: Male

D.O.B. 03.07.1987

Birhplace: America, Earth

A mysterious and powerful man of enchantment Jacy Abeytu grew up in the Native Conservation of America where he lived according to his original root heritage. Battling against land loss and isolation Jacy maintained his Native tribe and kept living the life of the Native American spirit. Jacy has been rumored to have postnatural abilities and uncanny senses like that comparable to his animal allies. With the "brawn of a bear" Jacy out-mans his adversaries in combat with great might. With keen mental clarity he astounds others with vivid foresight using his "sight of the hawk" You'll scarcely catch Jacy as his Olympic-level sprint can dust any pursuer with his "pace of the Puma". Jacy has an amazing ability to hear the subtle sounds though some say it is rarely his ears that give him his fantastic, "hearing of the Wolf."

Jett Burton

Genus: Human

Gender: Male

D.O.B. 05.04.1990

Birhplace: America, Earth

One of the most knowledgeable space vessel engineers Jett has topped some of the wisest of machinists. Serving aboard the E.S. Vigor Jett no doubt has near endless stories to tell as he has traveled thousands of light-years outside the territory with his daring crewmates aboard the great Vigor. Jett's passion for deep space exploration gave rise to his promotion and is now a bridge operator aboard the E.S. Ambition currently on its way out of Star City for another daring trek through the unknown cosmos.

Jevon Zimmerman

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 03.08.1991
Birthplace: Canada, Earth

Working originally as an engineer's assistant aboard the Vigor Jevon also holds much engineers experience under his belt. Jevon now promoted to chief engineer serves aboard the Ambition. Jevon's additional skill as molecular analysis specialists plays a significant role in his career in space exploration.

Joshua Feynman

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 02.04.1981
Birthplace: America, Earth

An E.S. Vigor bridge officer Joshua Feynman's performance has been noted by Starfleet Control as one of the top successors of maiden stellar voyages. Joshua turned down his offer as commander aboard the Ambition choosing to remain the ship's chief pilot even in the face of his extensive knowledge in quantum science and subatomic mass digression. His next offer may be for captain.

Justin Talent

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 11.30.1994
Birthplace: America, Earth

Justin worked on Earth most of his life as a jobsite contractor and is responsible for many of his customers astounding configurations of design. In addition to elaborate constructions he also maintains a standard efficiency wherever the customer directs. Justin's extaticity was most apparent when he was chosen as a candidate and the unanimous acceptance for Justin to lead as construction and excavation director in the Alpha Centauri mining profession ensued.

Kemprin Kikts

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 12.01.1990
Birthplace: Raxot, Krysto

Brought to Krysto as an adolescent as part of a group of space early travelers, Kemprin remains comfortable about moving as far off as possible from the perceived threats of former enemy nations. Now at peace with his Earthling counterparts Kemprin is citizen of the new bustling society of order on the icy planet Krysto. Maintaining diligently his post as senior radar operator Kikts is responsible for directing incoming allied vessels to Krysto, reporting suspicious approaches, and landing of unscheduled craft. Kemprin's crush on the Krystonian Admiral's daughter Xila remains pronounced.

Lazarus Miller

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 10.20.2002
Birthplace: China, Earth

A boyish charmer Lazarus makes friends easily and rarely loses his cool. Growing up in the small-town American replica in china he makes a comfortable life of fun and thrill there in the out-country suburbs. Lazarus's heart is as big as his eyes. Meeting solitary and cryptic Li he made friends with the sobersided loner and today maintains a prosperous relation.

Michio Kaku

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 01.24.1947
Birthplace: America, Earth

As a popular physicist and theoretical science enthusiast Mr. Kaku maintained a distinguished career as an American theoretical physicist, specializing in string field theory, and futurist. He has been considered a popularizer of science. During the Vietnam War, Kaku completed his US Army basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia and his advanced infantry training at Fort Lewis, Washington. However, the Vietnam War ended before he would be deployed as an infantryman. Today Kaku through his continued study of the universe and additional applications of Eastern non-corporeal science has attained a state of enlightenment far beyond the norm and has been known to exhibit extracognitive abilities, which have yet to be understood.

Mohammad Bahim

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 05.05.1984
Birthplace: Iraq, Earth

Originally residing in Arabia, Mohammad moved up quickly in his physics and planetary geography studies soon to become his life passion additional to his religion of faith. Upon the revelation of the Planetary Council Mohammad took initiative to pass his required Transition Academy courses and assumed a presence in space promptly.

Mr. Ablendan

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 08.15.2000
Birthplace: The Netherlands, Earth

Many have referred to Ablendan as a far off person with a heart of adventure. As a child growing up in the far north coldlands of Europe fantasy writing has always been his passion.

Mr. Ebert

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 05.15.1975
Birthplace: America, Earth

Having moved up the ladder in the grocers industry Jim made his career providing good market food service. Choosing to live a grounded life Jim declines opportunities for space travel in the belief that he has everything he needs right here on Earth.

Mr. McNeil

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 11.09.1964
Birthplace: America, Earth

Dugan McNeil, actor, science fiction buff, and space outpost worker had made quite a distinguished carrier. Working currently at Outpost 47 he maintains his watch with his comrades for new and impacting cosmic events there stationed on the far off facility around 47 Ursae Majoris.

Mrs. Cory

Genus: Human
Gender: Female
D.O.B. 06.02.1984
Birthplace: America, Earth

As an elementary school teacher Mrs. J.P. Cory has maintained her status as star teacher for much of her career. With her encouragement and inclination to promote mathematics and the sciences Cory has steered many inspired children toward a prosperous future of study and exploration of our wondrous universe.

Nathaniel Mason

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 07.03.1998
Birthplace: America, Earth

Growing up in the woodlands of the eastern American valleys Nathan lived a life of auto mechanical engineering as his passion has driven unto him. Nathan's car service repair shop grosses a healthy income for himself. Nathan has not taken a wife until now and spends much of his time designing small and fast ground recreation equipment such as the popular sand rovers driven on Mars, the Moon, or just about any place one would expect a fun ride out on an alien plain.

Rashmi Jinnah

Genus: Human
Gender: Female
D.O.B. 06.02.1994
Birthplace: India, Earth

This East Indian beauty is known for her special way with spiritual relations and her words of wisdom are keenly honed. She wears traditional clothing of her home country where it is not replaced by a space suit. She travels much in public vehicles including long distance cruisers. She has not left Suntown and so far has explored only the planet Mars.

Reloch Beltran

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 06.06.1978
Birthplace: France, Earth

Originally part of the former American government structure Reloch made it into the United States system attaining a post senate status quickly. Reported as dissatisfied with the new, free way of space presence, Reloch, like many of his fellow attunements, rebelled against the non-ownage standard for coordinated Star City territories. Shortly before the era of the Planetary Council Beltran, who made clear intentions to push for space superiority status for the United States during that time to the point of insubordination and observed maniacal behavior, lead many of the government departments to opposition before the new alien peace model was revealed. Reloch sounded the alarm heard by members of other governments and led his own space advancement separate from postcouncil establishments. Beltran and many of his followers from around the world escaped into space and were chased to the exterior regions of uncharted megaverse.

Seiwan Li

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 02.04.2000
Birthplace: China, Earth

An eccentric person of separateness Seiwan Li became a master of Ninjitsu, Kung Fu and various other forms of martial arts. Growing up in the lower income region of China he made his life there in the quiescent plot of woodland in his cottage assisting his parents. Born of mixed descent Li rarely left his home, other than to practice with his personal instructor or to work as a part time cashier/bagger at the mini-mart in town, also maintaining his extensive studies in many sciences. Becoming acquainted with a young man from the adjacent upscale neighborhood by accident, his covert observation of the curious individual shooting his pellet gun in the woods resulted in a surprising meeting. The destined encounter would grow to a genuine comradery and has now transgressed into shipmanship.

Shirra Fitaihi

Genus: Human
Gender: Female
D.O.B. 03.01.1995
Birthplace: Arabia, Earth

Another Arab graduate Shirra is a girl of many talents. Working in the food industry, martial arts expert, and competent ship pilot Shirra has gained the respect and high regard from most social encounters.

Steven Krauss

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 07.29.1971
Birthplace: America, Earth

With an aptitude for science, cosmology, and quantum physics Steven maintained a steady motivation to expand his horizons and apply his knowledge toward practical use. Unknown to most is Steven's hidden life where he occasionally missing. Rumors about Steven's whereabouts during these absences range from enticing adventure, to mysterious encounters.

Sydney Wilder

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 07.03.1971
Birthplace: United Kingdom, Earth

Sydney Wilder has worked in the academic field for much of his career time and so has his parents who made education a part of his upbringing. Dean Wilder earned his own degrees in his past life living in the United Kingdom and subsequently accepted his teaching position in the Chinese American region. His long years of teaching and acknowledgement gave rise to the presentation of the offer to run the university of his choice. He remains at his present local of vocation.

Tim Russ

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 06.22.1956
Birthplace: Australia, Earth

Writer and Director for the popular science fiction hit "*Star Trek*", Tim enjoys his life of accomplishment and distinguished status. Russ's understanding of his work, fascination with science fiction, and aspiration to balance his lifeforce has gained him wisdom in his retirement.

Tony Kearney

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 10.29.2002
Birthplace: Australia, Earth

An astronomer at Melbourne Observatory in Australia Tony gained status having completed his astronomer's application courses. Transferring from his local university to on-the-job work Tony settles into his new life in the old Victoria colony. His life in the outback made him the easygoing down to Earth individual he remains today yet ironically he aspired to attain a life in space and was accepted into the Military's Space Cadet Recruitment Program. Tony's interests in astrophysics, and stellar cartography combined with his recent naval crash courses gained him a place aboard the SMD battleship Mediator. Today he serves his ship with pride and boldness as he treks about the stars as a junior star map-reader.

Unim Niom

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 04.12.1985
Birthplace: Utopia Planitia, Mars

A mysterious scientist of unnatural comprehension Unim outranks any registered science major known to his genus. As head of the Matron Science Laboratory (MSL) at Lactronia Unim continues to break through the boundaries of thought and invention. Creating much of the intriguing technologies catalogued at the dazzling station Unim has earned his place among the giants of physics and is well liked for his peculiar humor.

Xemeral Kile

Genus: Human
Gender: Male
D.O.B. 12.12.1967
Birthplace: Australia, Earth

The daring leader of the brave group of space travelers determined to leave the cosmically unattuned Earth, is Xemeral Kile. At the first opportunity to move abroad Kile pioneered the first extrasolar Human settlement. Taking advantage of the maiden launch of the E.S. Vigor from Earth, Xemeral and hundreds of followers paved the way for Humanities long distance space fairing experience.

Xila Kile

Genus: Human
Gender: Female
D.O.B. 11.03.1995
Birthplace: New Zealand, Earth

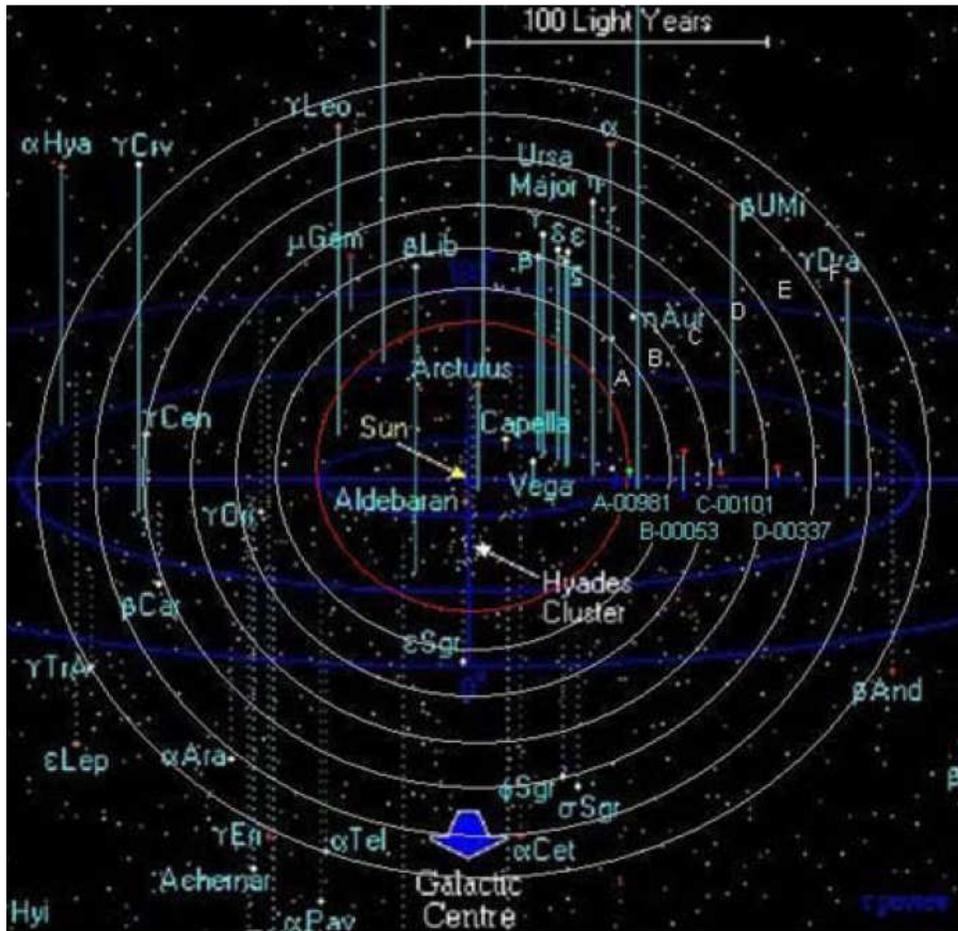
Daughter of Xemeral Kile this gung-ho beauty has assisted in one of the most difficult and daring movements of any Human group in history. Traveling with her father and a multitude of friends and family Xila carried the weight of the world together with her loved ones as they aspired to travel afar and possibly settle another world. At the time of her departure to the planet Krysto about 53 light years away the planet Earth was locked in a worldwide struggle for strategic superiority resulting in mass suffering and death of the innocent across the globe. With bravery, perseverance and advanced technology this group of faithful men and women departed Earth and Xila made history with them.

Yifei Chen Hua

Genus: Human
Gender: Female
D.O.B. 08.25.1987
Birthplace: China, Earth

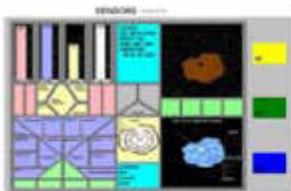
A mysterious woman of extrasensory preception abilities Yifei emits an aura of enchantment while maintaining her lovely apparel. Selected as Paralogical Expert aboard the E.S. Vigor, Yifei vowed to fulfill her duty in any capacity especially in the event of an abnormal encounter by any source. Also specializing in mechanical engineering and computer programming Yifei makes for a valuable member of the brave set of intrepid explores of the Vigor.

The Stellar Band Shells

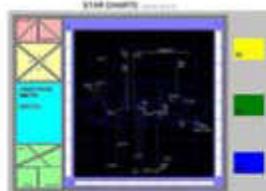


Star Voyager Beta Panel Program Access Codes

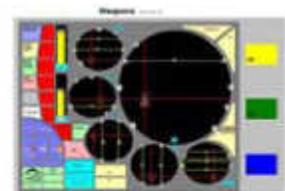
Sensors: ac, bc, ac, cd



Star Charts: cd, ac, bc



Weapons: ac, ac, bc, cd



Communications: ac, bc, bc, cd, cd, cd



New Vessels

Voyager-2 XF – civilian

Owner: Seiwan Li

Maximum Speed: LS factor 3.75

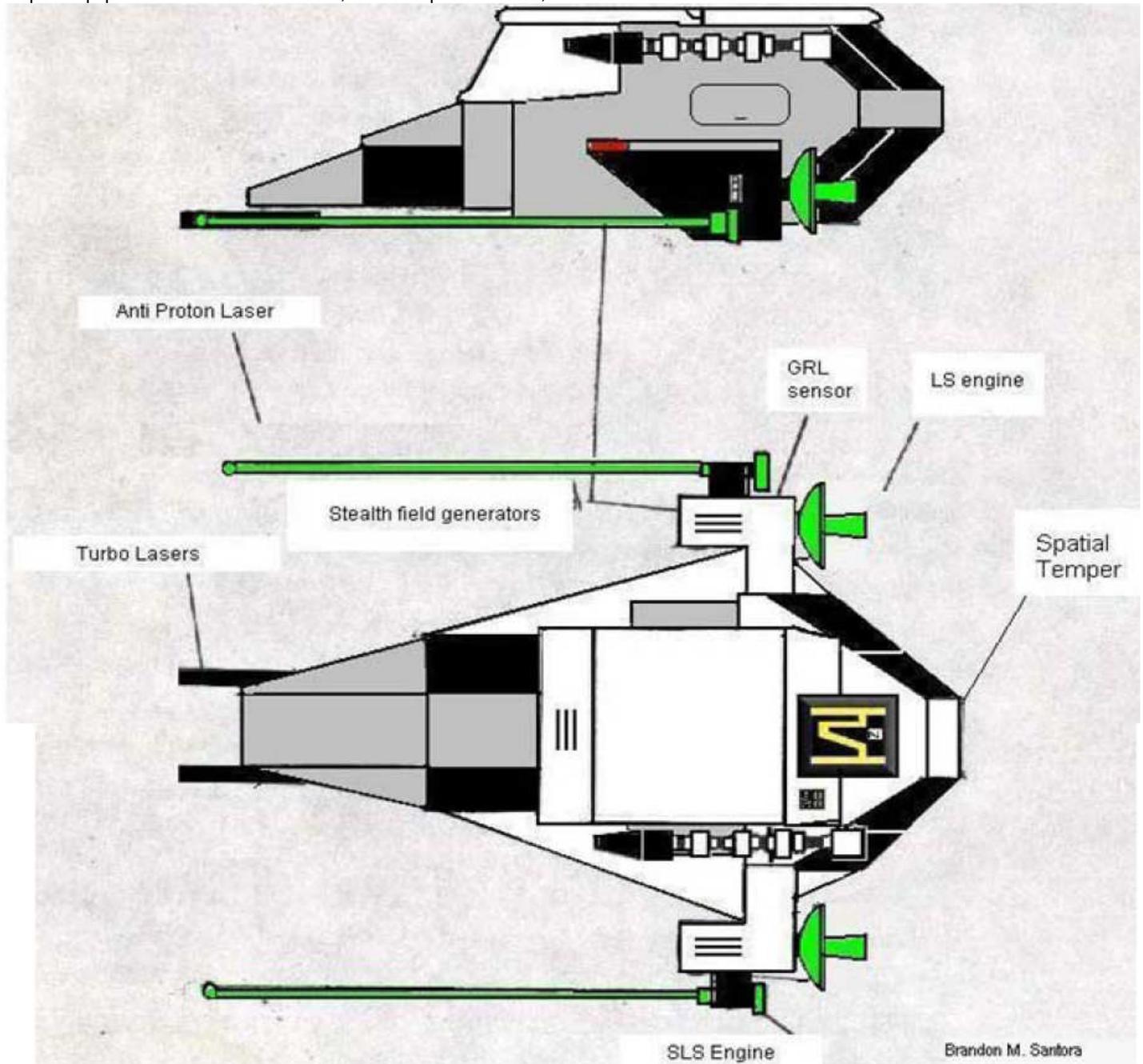
Maneuverability: 9.6

Sensor Equipment: 4 GRL's

Shield Class: class 3 quad +225400 regenerative

Engines: 2 SLS, 2 LS, 2 Fusion Thrusters, multiple attitude thrusters

Weapon Equipment: 1 Turbo laser mount, twin Anti-proton lasers, 1 Pulse laser



The Star Sailer – civilian

Owner: Jacy Abeytu

Maximum Speed: LS factor

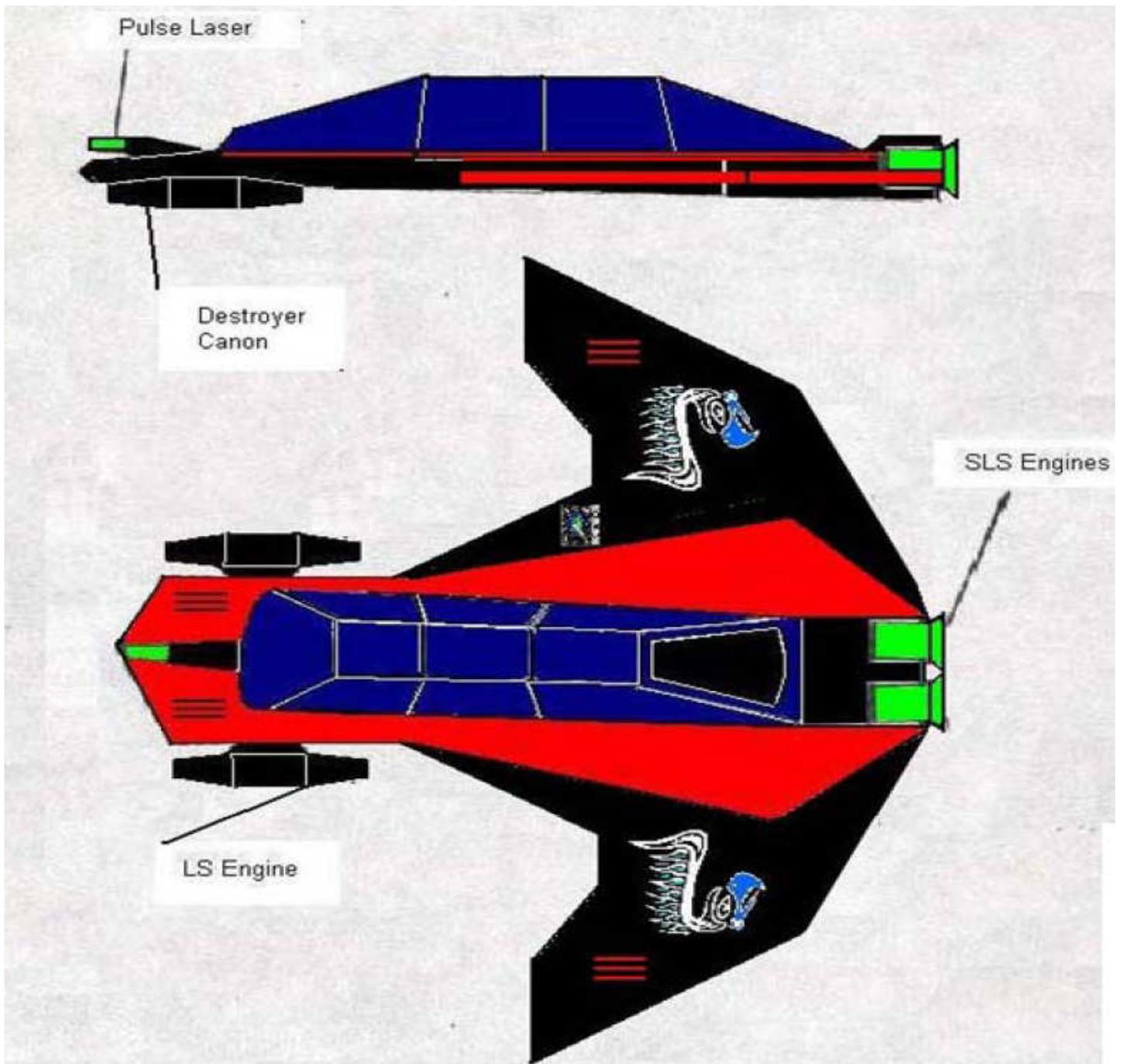
Maneuverability: 9.5

Sensor Equipment: Unknown

Shield class: Class 1A +78000 strength

Engines: 2 LS, 2 SLS, fusion thrusters, attitude control thrusters

Weapon Equipment: 1 Pulse Laser



The Intervener – CRC

Owner: Reloch Beltran

Maximum Speed: LS factor 21

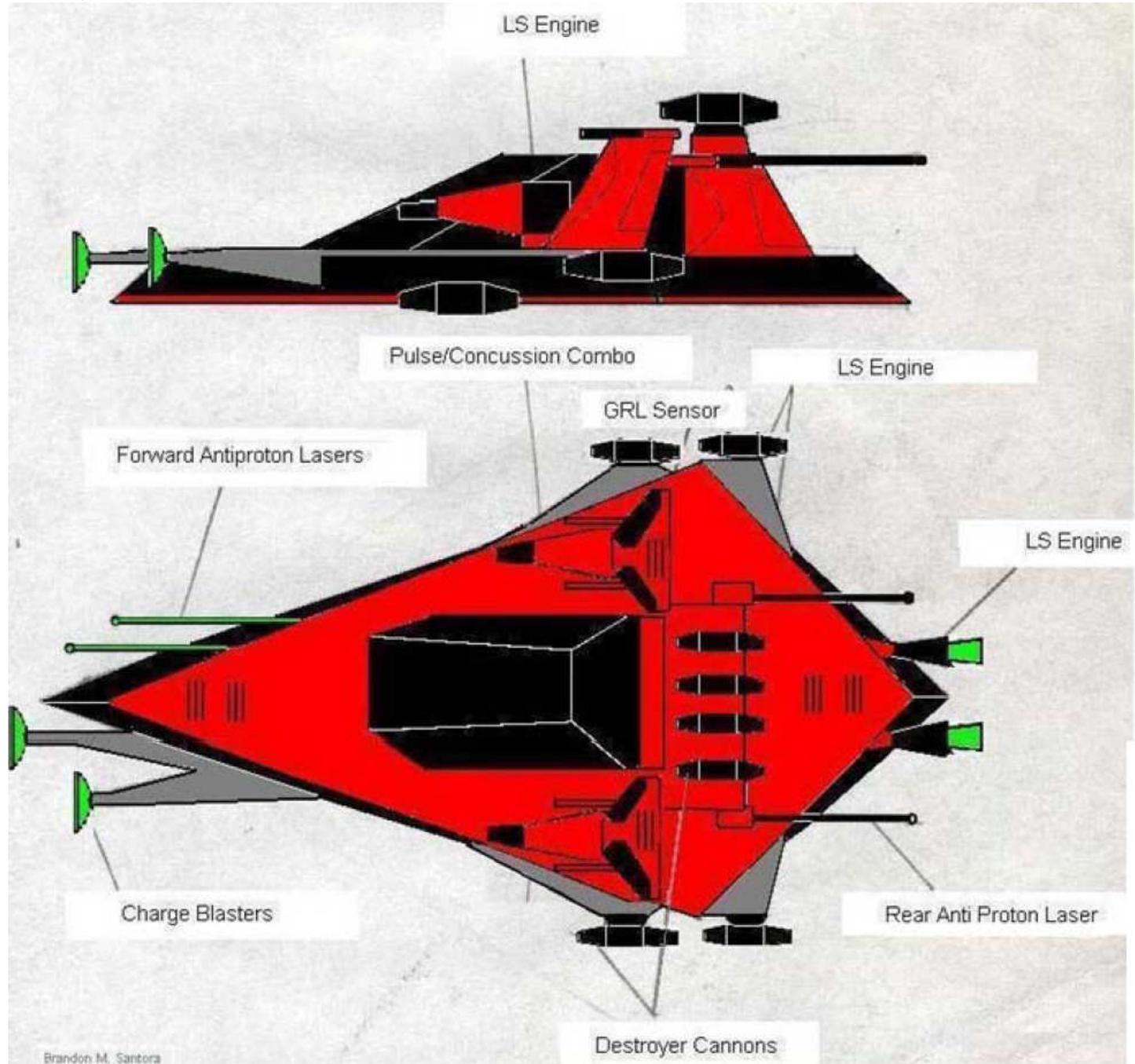
Maneuverability: 9.9

Sensor Equipment: 6 GRL's, One Unknown Sensor Plate

Shield Class: class 6 multiple +637000 regenerative

Engines: 4 SLS engines, 12 LS engines

Weapon Equipment: 1 Twin Antiproton Lasers, 2 rear antiproton Lasers, Dual Charge Blasters, 8 Destroyer Cannons



New Resistance Piranha Assault Fighter – CRC

Owner: The Confederate Resistance

Maximum Speed: LS factor 5

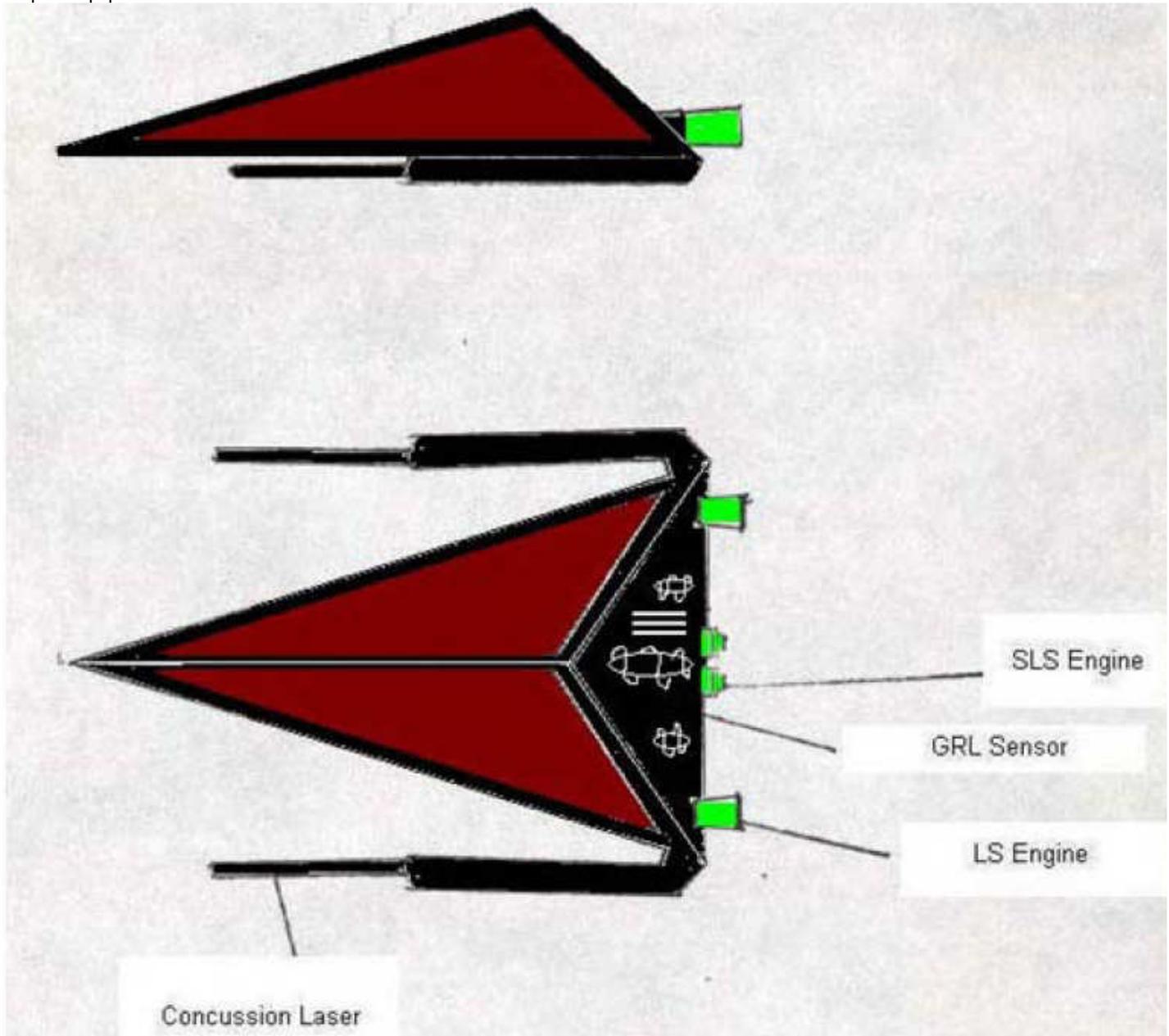
Maneuverability: 9.8

Sensor Equipment: 1 GRL's

Shield Class: class 3 double +225400 regenerative

Engines: 2 LS engines, 1 SLS engines, Fusion thrusters, 2 Lateral thrusters, multiple maneuvering thrusters.

Weapon Equipment: Twin concussion lasers



Attack Fighter – KMD

Owner: Krystonian Military Defense

Maximum Speed: LS factor 2

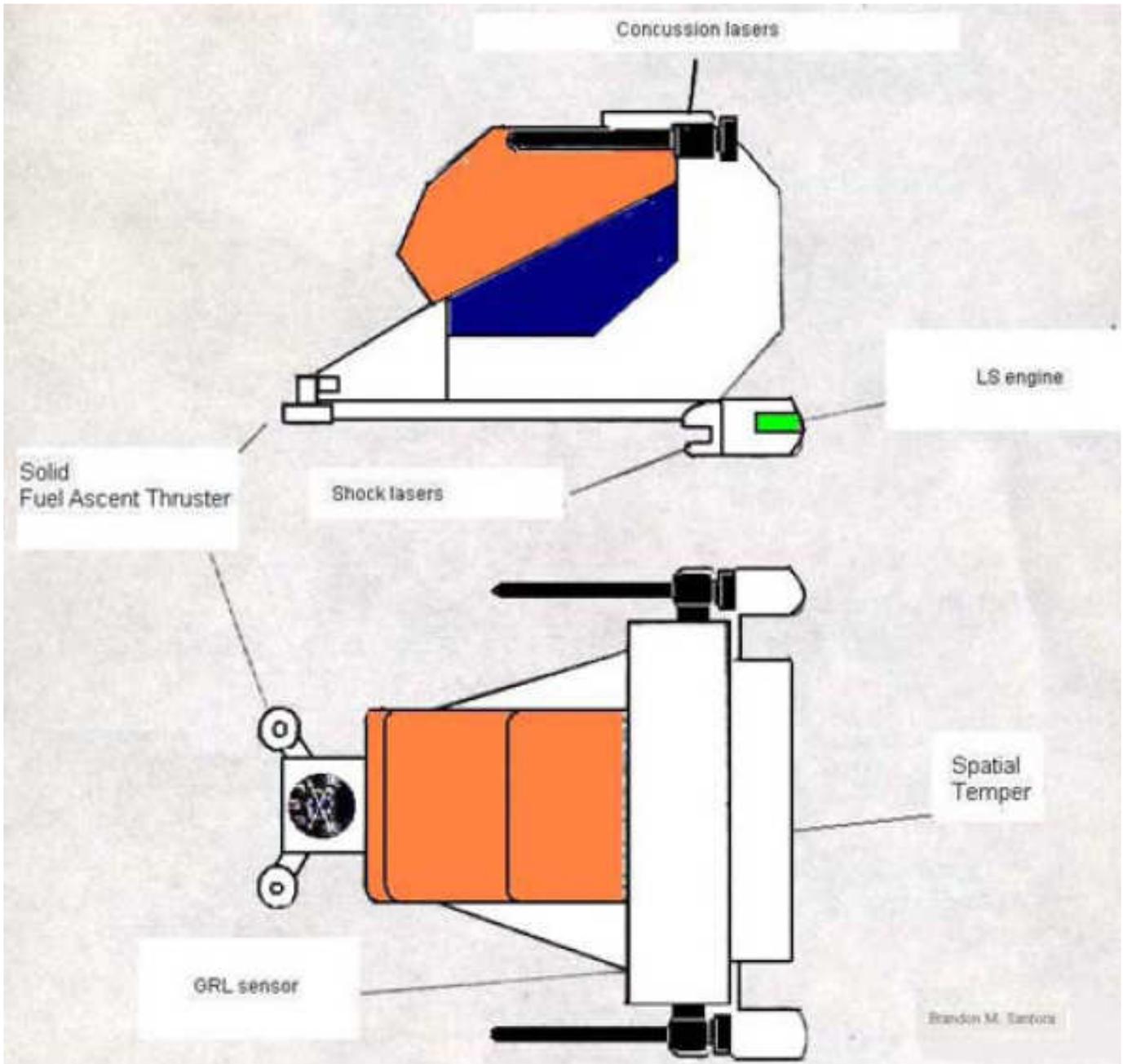
Maneuverability: 9.8

Sensor Equipment: 2 GRL's

Shield Class: class 2 double +98000 regenerative

Engines: 2 LS engines, 2 SLS engines, 2 Fusion thrusters, 2 Lateral thrusters, multiple maneuvering thrusters.

Weapon Equipment: Twin concussion lasers, Twin electroplasmic shock lasers



More Places

Katlar

Peaceful and green this lush world of beauty can sooth the reservations of any skeptic to the home world of the Felidae Genus. Its three suns allow for a notable take on triple system life, though the breathtaking planet orbits only 36 Opiuchi A from its cozy forty seven million mile distance. Rugged landscapes, coral oceans, wild vegetations to astound even the most experienced of botanists one will almost certainly find his or her enjoyment about the face of Katlar.

Lactronia

Ominous yet thrilling the bustling alien city of Lactronia provides visitors with historical and fascinating progress of technological engineering. The city is thought to be millenniums old and may be a remnant of the basic building structure of the Mentor Aliens. A place to go for the most deliberated and high esteem, the city is no playground. Yet offered here are scores of interactive entertainment from media broadcast, to exotic music and holographic imaging technology. In the sky from Town Square you may witness the double stars of the Sirius System. The giant blue star, Sirius A. takes on a color shift via the hue-altering chemicals in the cloudy sky.



Lactronia City Square

Pristine Canyon

If it is romance you are looking for try the awesome beauty of Canyon Lagoon orbiting Upsilon Cassiopeia for a close place of serenity and wonder. What other mysteries does this dancing planet harbor?



Giraffia

The lush green lands of the Giraffidae home world expands with growth of flora across its fertile plains. For fresh air and soothing humidity the planet Giraffia provides the landscape for the nature lover in you.



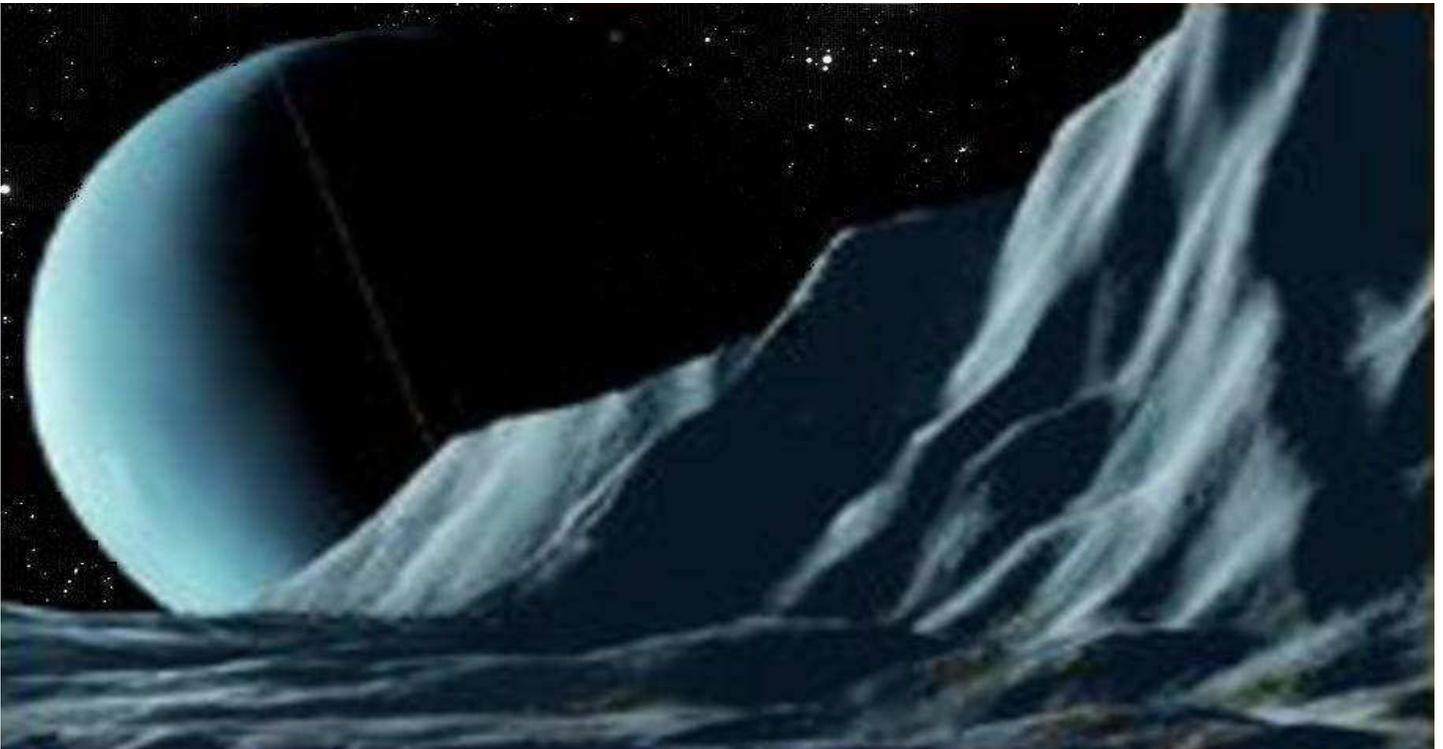
Snowy Dwarf

A curious little planetoid its size and density promotes a shallow atmosphere of oxygen. Near at one-third the pressure of Earth it is unnerving to release your helmets and breath the thin air yet viewing directly into space across the horizon. Some freelancing pilots who have traveled the stars everlongly say that it could be a core remnant of a gas giant whose atmosphere was blown away by supernova. This is definitely a place to see with its snow-covered hilltops of permafrost.



Miranda

Like Hiking? Miranda can compensate for the mountain climber in you. With the tallest and steepest cliff in the solar system Uranus's moon Miranda holds many explorations of wonder. Visit the intricate hollows and caves about this cold little world in orbit of the fourth largest planet in the Solar System. Go for a heart stopping repel down the side of Verona Rupes Cliff for a twelve-mile source of thrill.



Ganymede

Does the largest satellite in the Solar System interest you? Feel free to come and explore this hefty moon at your own leisure. Spend the night at the high star hotel in the colony of **Joviton**.



Glossary

A.I. Circuitry - Electronic programming facilitated by a predesigned data chip arrangement which promotes the function of artificial intelligence executions.

A.U. - A measure of distance approximated to 93,000,000 miles

Alpha Canidaes - An official designation for a genius subgroup on the planet orbiting Tau Woltula.

Alluring Mystery - A meditational music track from Seiwan Li's selection upon the perspective: The mysterious is luring.

Antiozonic - Being of a diminishing or denaturing effect to ozone.

Army Ant Formation - A military term used to designate a fleet arrangement similar to the configuration of ant insects enroute to battle—larger ants in the middle with progressively smaller ones toward the sides.

Auto Fire Assistance - A setting of a computer on a spacecraft, which can memorize a target profile and readily mimic the function of a weapon specialist.

Auxiliary Cruiser - Formerly known as an alternative, raiding vehicle in battle now commonly used as a term to designate a comfort voyager with modified onboard equipment tailored to the owner's desire.

Backblindness - The lack of attention offered by the transitioned to what is "behind."

Blazing Reality - A meditational music track from Seiwan Li's selection of the perception: The intense vividity of what is real.

Buoy Sync - A part of most registered craft as a system data link net between the vessel and specifically placed transceivers in the form of a stationary or motional buoy designed to enroll the ship into a software list for the purpose of index availability.

β:/sailormoon/destination1{14} - A linear computational path of preprogrammed symbol arrangements following a line of hardware functions meaning the following: [β:/] From the Greek alphabet beta meaning the second panel where the Alpha console is the master linked interface, [/sailormoon/] as the text designation for an allotted hardware storage segment, and [/destination1{14}/] as an instruction sequence to display legible alphanumeric characters. [[14]] represents the prearranged graphic interface assortment for displaying the text information titled "destination1". Symbols such as : and / serve as systemic statements of coding functions portraying virtual signposts for storage space allocation as well as representations of hardware separation.

Cartoon Theme Song - Compilation of tune, melody, and rhythm tailored to the opening presentation of an animated motion picture.

Casting Chamber - A compartment on board a spacecraft usually in the form of a small hatchway in the hull, which incorporates an ejection mechanism for unwanted, or discarding objects out to the exterior of the ship.

Chamber of Lust - An enclosed area arranged to test one's *immediate* sexual resolve.

Combatory - Equipped for combat by design.

Council Leaders - Member of the Planetary Council with the highest level of pacific edification.

Counterpolar - Of electrostatically opposite charge as of an ion and its antiion equivalent. (See also electron and positron pairs).

Clostening - Of the affix “closten” as to draw nigh over time.

Cryptic Journey - A meditational music track from Seiwon Li’s selection detailing: An enigmatic expedition of the mind.

Darmazon Hotel - A luxurious family owned hotel on the Planet Zemorg.

Deep Frequency Scan - An emission that is a part of an intended scanning system, which uses very short wave spectrum signals designed to penetrate dense material to reflect partial atomic recoil energy of various elements of matter.

Depressurization Alert - An alarm designed to activate on the mark of a preprogrammed setting to indicate a lack of gaseous or liquid pressure within the volume of a spacecraft.

Detection Mines - Essentially a signal explosive, these small easy-to-deploy transmission buoys have been used by military units traveling deep behind what has been considered enemy lines and reacts to preprogrammed **proximals** resulting in a “loud” *signal flare* for the acknowledgement of a detector possessed by the user preventing **backblindness**.

Detector Heads - Device components placed in frontal or forepositional arrangement within an assembly, designed to react to contiguously emitted charged particles such as photons, protons, or electron emissions.

Discharge Dampener - A loose term to designate the functionality of the stealth field generator which effectively hides radiant energy being expelled from a multitude of sources on a space craft or station settlement.

Dragon Phoenix Shirt - Customary Chinese upper body attire often used as a marital gift worn by Seiwon Li as practice-wear.



Drop-off Opening - A term used in a military scenario to designate a tactically sound point in time to release a team or teams of specialized advancing agents.

Electrocash - A form of currency stored into a battery card as energy credits.

Emergency Floatation Balloon - A deflated rubber sock connected to a pressurized CO₂ canister attached to the standard space environmental suit bearing an inflation switch for the purpose of promptly increasing buoyancy in a liquid environment.

Enduring Season - A meditational music track from Seiwan Li's selection: The newness of mind and spirit at the dawning of the next climate turnover.

Enviofinder - A device working in conjunction with software programming intended to identify the encompassing median such as a gaseous atmosphere.

Equanimity Rank - A level status on a scale established to determine an individual's ability to process strong emotions and is an application originated by the Planetary Council.

Fleet Rank - One's class order appointment according to the experience of the individual in question as a consisting component of a group of spacecraft owners loyal to a coordinated status.

Forrest Creek - A meditational music track from Seiwan Li's selection which generates the images and accompanying feelings portraying a section of land in the woods of summertime under a moderately clustered canopy above a trickling stream.

Freighter Minor - A rank in a military rating system between large cargo carrying spacecraft as a lesser to Freighter Major.

Gaming Vessel - A term used to portray the superior defense or assault capability of a pursuing spacecraft.

Geoencompassing - The position of surrounding a spherical object such as the Earth.

[Green Saunter](#) - A meditation music track from Seiwan Li's selection encouraging a pleasant stroll about a serene woodland.

Ground Tamer - A big-wheeled vehicle designed for transit over rough terrain.

Hoy - Christopher Williams's allied subordinate of the **XF Fleet**.

Hugo - The second leader of XF fleet.

[Heavenly Harmony](#) - A meditation music track from Seiwan Li's selection, which creates: The peace of unearthly bliss.

Hyperion - A small-sized satellite in orbit of the Planet Saturn containing craters of dark material compounds and sponge-like surface also hosting the a small settlement repository.

In-field Coordinator - One whose task is to host desired operations for a specific purpose inside an area of activity applicable to the intended objective.

Infoview - A combination display and communications protocol programming promoting the representation of video and audio data.

Intracomm - An arrangement of audio output and reception devices within a relative volume for the purpose of internal communication.

Ionic Shielding - A technology, which manipulates friction to promote the channeling of kinetic matter flow along a dividing median.

Katlar - The Human designation for the planet whose inhabitants are the Felidaes.

Magteth - A word conjunction meaning "magnetic tether" which consists of a long cable and circular magnet intended to electromagnetically adhere to most metallic surfaces for use during space walks.

Mandate Concurrence - An event which must be resolved safely and justly that cannot be done-so by individual consensus, yet, requires the input of a hierarchible decision-making framework.

Niim - The solitary satellite of Krysto as a collection of **vulcanized** natural minerals and metals.

Mag-shoes - Short for Magnetic shoes, these slip-ons connect to the SES feet soles securely and are used to maintain an anchorage to a magnetized surface.

Minicarrier - A small host craft designed to harbor smaller lightweight vessels.

Mount Apo - A medium-sized monadnock mountain covered by thick vegetation.

Multiradiant - Having the property of numerous classes of spectral energy emission.

Multisation - Of the combining form *multi* and the suffix *sation*, of the noun conversation: The act of maintaining more than one conversation at once.

Neptune Ship Harbor - An equipment-supporting platform in high orbit of the planet Neptune designed to be used for space vessel construction and anchorage.

Neuromap - A deep-scan image of the arrangement and structure of neural branching of the cerebrum.

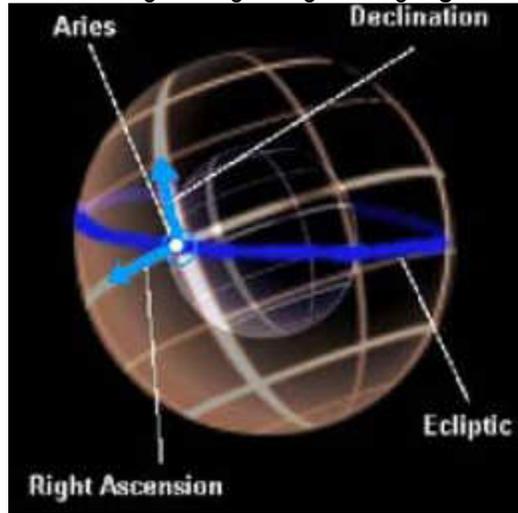
Omicron Ray Inconsistency - A pattern seen in the light spectrum, of electromagnetic radiation becoming visible more than once along the increasing frequencies where the next emanation after visible light, which is between infra red and ultraviolet, is at the Omicron frequency and has been suggested to correspond to the resonance of Apparitional Life.

Oort Cloud Avenue - A street title of a roadway on the asteroid named Kuiper town in the outer solar system.

Ray Conversion Devices - Advanced electric generator, which transform light quanta into electron/positron pairs for energy use purposes.

Ray Shield Umbrella - A foldout mechanism much the same shape as a classic rain blocker, which uses a special lead plating about the umbrella web and light ray-diffracting device.

Right Ascension (and Declination) - A parcel detail of a stellar positioning system involving imaginary spheres of equally gauged square units essentially portraying a transparent window of which both equatorial and celestial measures are combined to designate a location in space according to a right angle along a **geoencompassing** ecliptic circumference.



Paranomenal - Adjacent to phenomenal; as a conjugation of the affix *para*, to be an accessory to or apart from, and suffix *nominal*, to be acceptably related or closely affiliated.

Planetary Protection Officer - Interplanetary contagion inspector.

Planetoid - An intermediary terrestrial mass somewhere between a planet and an asteroid.

Phenomena Specialist - One whose appointed task is to analyze unusual scientific wonders about the environment.

Pizza Pouches - A brand of snack food arranged as a breaded pocket containing classic cut-sized ingredients of pizza.

Prey Ship - A term used to portray the inferior defense or assault capability of a fleeing spacecraft.

Protonicity - The acquisition of power by way of the motion of alpha particles.

Proximals - Any object of a predefined radial distance from a designated relative position.

Psychocycle - A repetitive series of practiced behaviors interdependent of original revoking stimuli.

Quantum Reaction Gradient - A designation for an exponential variance result of an energy-recycling device by way of an applied potential from an alternate source.

Quickcart - A battery-powered rolling vehicle intended to transport civilians over short distances.

Road Rocket - A hovering high-speed, jet propulsion transport similar in size to a standard bicyclical motor vehicle.

Space Angels - An elite team of pilots and accompanying spacecraft who perform periodic prerehearsed space flight shows for the entertainment and edification of all viewers.

Spacefinder - A desk mounted scope instrument covering the eyes for concentrations sake and displaying within the view portal a specialized **ultraradar** display sensitive to the smallest debris within its scanning range.

Scanning Filaments - Long coiled metals of a wire made of specific metallic elements or compounds, which release useful emissions upon receiving a passing for example electric, protonic, or neutronic current through the metal winding.

Sham Kwai Street - The title of a neighborhood road in the temperate regions of china.

Ship Readiness Inspection - An integral investigative review of a vessels active functionality.

Silverback Canisians - An official designation for a genius subgroup on the planet orbiting Tau Woltula.

Single User Mode - A main control adjustment inside the Star Voyager incorporating a hinge and arm assembly allowing the starboard console to rotate toward the pilot into a stationary position.

SMD Protection Protocol - All Federal Citizen members of SMD allied status must uphold the principles of the preservation of life with the intention taking safety and definitive measures to protect the good and oneself.

Substitute Registries - A documented enrollment account used as an allocation of privilege to replace the primary registrant.

Supercraft - A ship designed to outperform its competitors through technologically superior construction.

Tailsleeve - An extending socklike cover attached to the pants of lower-body clothing wear of Felidae owners.

Talisman of Nypt - An alien archeological item alleged to contain original answers from before the human era suspected to be buried somewhere in the caves of mars.

Tampering Alarm - An alert system, which indicates damage or modification to an object.

Tangibility Scan - A detection emission from a spacecraft designed to determine the material consistency of an object most conclusively. **Tellestic** - Of enchanting mystery; as to be dazzlingly astounding of appearance and capability.

Terran's Jukebox - An electronic media device positioned at the Mars Barr Restaurant containing Human historical media for alien edification.

The Grand Tellestica - A large unidentified spacecraft.

The Star Sailer - The name designation of the spacecraft owned by Jacy Abeytu.

The Universe Beyond - An upbeat meditational music track from Seiwan Li's selection: Forget not your roots.

Trapping Field - A stretch of applied force by way of the generation of **counterpolar** ion sheets within a desired field of influence designed to inhibit the pressure of a mass of adjacent substance often a gas or liquid.

U.O. - Acronym for Unidentified Object.

Ultraradar - A detection hardware device working in conjunction with an externally mounted high frequency omnispectral emission apparatus intended to detect the smallest particles in space over the longest distances as part of a navigation sequence.

Verona Rupes Bluff - The steepest cliff in the Solar System approximately twelve miles high on the surface of Miranda.

Vessel Volume - A term used to determine the **Fleet Rank** of a ship owner according to the vessels interior size.

Visual Code Link - A presequenced transmission pattern sent from a messenger device to a receiver containing data instructions for the initiation of a screen display communications conference.

Volcanized - Having undergone a process of the heating to sufficient temperatures that facilitate the subsequent bonding of certain inherent material elements.

Volumous - Being of relative, high sound output.

Waterrider - In integrated antionized plate of "negative water" in a solidified state repelling hydrogen and oxygen molecules when energized usually attached to a craft intended to hover above water.

Waterzone - A distance around a given star based on its mass, composition and gravity in which a terrestrial planet retains liquid water.

XF Fleet - A league of XF class fighters controlled by Christopher Williams and coordinated acquaintances.

Yahweh - The Everrighteous Entity



God So Loved the Worlds