**Chapter One**

*TEC Homeworld: Triton*

*February 25th, 5328*

*Captain Arctos*

“I can’t believe it’s already been 15 years.” Captain Arctos thought to himself as he peered out of his window overlooking the large crystal blue lake, Ageus. He could see a faint hazy outline of an Argonev Starbase orbiting the planet. The constant hum of trade ship engines buzzing over the sky was starting to annoy him.

 Suddenly the intercom system came to life, “All military personnel please report to the Command Room for a mission briefing.” Captain Arctos looked around his room for his holodec for the mission briefing. Rummaging through his piles of paper work and battle plans he found a picture of his son and wife. Ever since he was drafted into the military 15 years ago he has only seen them once, his own son barely even recognized him.

 He found the holodec and headed out and down the hallway. The halls were extremely crowded with all types of military personnel; some were brand new while others looked like they have been in the war since the beginning. He followed the wave of people for another 5 minutes and then walked into an enormous stadium with hundreds of rows of seats encompassing a central stage. Captain Arctos was to be seated in the center of the stadium because he was one of the captains that would be giving battle plans to retake the Kabel system from the Vasari.

 He walked down to the center of the stadium where his fellow Captains were already waiting and discussing their own plans.

 “Well look what the cat dragged in!” The officer sitting next to him yelled.

 “What do you want Joanne?” He sighed. He looked forward trying to ignore the woman sitting next to him; he saw the holoprogector sitting in the middle of the podium which was going to show the rest of the military personnel what they would be doing to retake the Kabel system.

 “You’re not seriously going to try to get another one of your plans passed by the Counsel are you? Come on James, remember last time we followed one of your plans? We suffered 3 million casualties and 300 billion credits worth of ships destroyed. Why are you even here?” She asked. Her voice was extremely high pitched witch drove her fighter squad and everyone else that had the *pleasure* of knowing utterly insane.

 “The council wanted me to develop a plan so I *have* to be here.” He said. The council’s president Yvin Montgomery’s holographic image was projected into the center of the stadium. The mumbling of the crowd died just as he began to talk.

 “Ladies and gentlemen, first off I would like to thank you for your enormous courage during these times of war. Just 4 decades ago war was barely even in our vocabulary, but now that it is all that we can think about. Our enemies thought this would be easy, but no, we fought back. Our resilience as a species is a marvelous trait that caught our enemies off guard and I come to you today to see what the best minds in our military has come up with to take back key systems and switch the tide of war in our favor!” Captain Arctos started to tune out; the president’s speeches were always the same; blah blah courage blah blah war, etc. After 5 minutes his speech ended the crowd erupted into a loud roar. The President waved his hand and once again the crowd went silent.

A newly promoted captain went first. His battle plan was projected into the center of stadium. His plan was atrocious; he wanted to warp into the stars gravity well. Then from there, scout out the moon of Vafthrudnir (the planet that the TEC were trying to take back). From there we would set up a radar satellite that could spy on enemy fleet movements at the planet.

 His plan was almost laughable. The time it would take to get all that done the Vasari phase detectors would have already sent a signal to the Vasari war fleet orbiting the planet. One after another various captains’ plans were introduced; finally it was Captain Arctos’s turn. He stepped up to the podium and inserted his holodec into the port. A projection of the Kabel system appeared; there are 12 planets orbiting the star.

 The first planet, Belenus is an extremely hostile world; the surface is completely covered in lava due to its extreme proximity to its parents star. Then a few astronomical units out there lay a pristine oceanic world called Govannon, it isn’t much use to the TEC except for a tourist destination, but now after the Vasari invasion, the tourist locations lay in ruins and not a single person is alive on the planet. Then only 1 A.U. from Govannon you can see Vafthrudnir. The planet is massive, over 24,000 km in diameter. Due to its size there is an absurd amount of seismic activity, which means volcanos constantly spewing out ash which then causes lighting storms that span for hundreds of kilometers and last for months. The TEC were interested in this death trap of a planet because there is an abundance of Trianium pouring out of the volcanos which we use for armor on our war ships.

 After Vafthrudnir there are 9 gas giants that orbit 10-15 A.Us out from the planet. Their names are Cormac, Olokum, Anosia, Antandre, Ekstatophoros, Logios, Ulupoka, Walutahanga, and Zaoshen.

The projection zoomed into 15 green arrows orbiting Triton. “This is Alpha Fleet,” Captain Arctos said. “Alpha fleet would consist of 10 Kodiak Heavy Cruisers, 3 Percheron Light Carriers and a Marza Dreadnought.” The Captain pressed a button and a map of the ten closest stars appeared. The projection zoomed into the Gateway system. There were 20 arrows orbiting a terran world.

 “This is Beta fleet, consisting of 2 Dunov Battlecruisers, 3 Hoshiko Robotics Cruisers, 10 Krosov Siege Frigates, and 5 Javelis LRM Frigates. Since the Beta fleet is only 75 light years from Kabel, and Alpha fleet is 100 light years away Alpha fleet would leave first. Once Alpha fleet is 4 light years from Kabel, Beta fleet would commence phase jumping. Once Alpha fleet arrives the Kodiaks would protect the Marza as she would start bombing enemy instillations on the planet. Fighter squadrons would start harassment runs on any planetary defenses. Then once Beta fleet arrives the Dunovs would start repairing shields of all ships in need. Lastly the Krosovs would begin planetary bombardment and the rest of Alpha and Beta fleet would destroy the last of the planetary structures and the enemy fleet.” Once the Captain finished his speech the hologram flickered a way and he took his seat.

 The president’s holographic image appeared once again in the center of the stadium.

 “Thank you very much the council will deliberate these plans and choose the one that we find that would be the most optimal.” He said, and with that the stadiums occupants stood up and exited the stadium.

*TEC Homeworld: Triton*

*February 28th 5328*

*Captain Arctos*

 “Captain Arctos may I come in.” said a voice from outside the door.

 “Yes.” The captain said just as he was finishing up writing a report for the council. A large man dressed in a standard issue TEC military uniform; an all-black skin suit with an assortment of medals on the right shoulder walked into the room, it was his friend, Commander Gregory.

 “I have some good news; the council has chosen your plan for taking back the Kabel system.” He announced. Captain Arctos stood up and shook the commander’s hand.

 “That’s amazing thank you! When does the operation begin?” he asked.

 “In two weeks, and you will be in command of the Marza Dreadnought, *Montgomery*.” The commander added. The captain was stunned; the largest ship he has been in command of was a Kodiak heavy cruiser.

 “That’s great, now if you would excuse me I need to start refining the battle plans.” The captain said with renewed enthusiasm in his voice. Commander Gregory nodded and walked out of the door. The captain sat down in front of his shinny chrome desk and began to alter the battle plans based on resent enemy movements. The entire journey to the Kabel system would take roughly 3 weeks. The Vasari have been picking off industrious worlds for a couple of years now. Their ability to move so quickly around the galaxy is extremely concerning. Since their first attack on TEC worlds 40 years ago the TEC haven’t learned very much about their way of life. All that they have been able to do is translate the Vasari language into English, German and Spanish and discovered that the Vasari have been on the run from something for over 10,000 years. The Vasari resembles insects native to most TEC occupied worlds. Their ships are a marvel of engineering technology. They are a slaver species meaning that the native species on the worlds they conquer are put to work in floating cities above the actual planet. They believe this is necessary to maintain an “effective” colony and to deter any thought o rebellion. They are about a meter taller than an average male human and because of their exoskeleton they can be a difficult to kill in a one on one battle.

 As the captain it was his duty to set up fleet movements to give to the captains of the other ships. He constantly had to make revisions depending on what the AI on the holodec threw at him. Sometimes it was an entire war fleet at the planet and other times there was barely anything at all, but every situation he had to make an outcome for. Once that was done the ships on-board computers would assess the situation and select the best plan.

 Once the Captain finished the battle plans he walked over to his bed situated right bellow he window and fell asleep to the hum of the city only 2 km away from the military instillation.

*Vasari Military Outpost: Vafthrudnir*

*Rii #10050.56*

*Vasari War Officer Tarsis*

 “This is War Officer Tarsis; I am ordering all ships capable of combat within the Kabel system to rally at Vafthrudnir for an attack on the Gateway system.” Within a lii of sending his communication to the fleet multiple capital ships exited phase space around the gravity well of the planet. The Vasari war fleet orbiting the planet comprised of several Kortul Devastators, a dozen Skarovas Enforcers, 10 Lasurak Transporters, and at *least* a hundred Ravastra Skirmishers.

 “This is enough to destroy anything in our way of Gateway.” Tarsis thought to himself as he looked at the fleet amassing in front of him.

It was Vasari custom for the War Officer (the highest rank in the Vasari military) to be in control of the largest ship in the fleet, which was, in this case the Jarrasul Evacuator, *Atorak*. The command bridge echoed with the clicks and beeps of Vasari crewmen running checkups on everything from engines to weapons. The Vasari took great pride in their warships and didn’t take too kindly to anything that would destroy one of them.

 “I want this ship to dock with the trade port to get some back up pulse emitters for our journey to the Gateway system.” Tarsis growled, not intentionally but that’s just what their language sounds like especially to other species. The ships started to plot a course to the trade port only a thousand Minir from their current location.

 Once the ship turned around to face the trade port the planet Vafthrudnir came into view; massive gray and black vortexes covered the surface, lightning was so intense that it lit up entire portions of the planet. The planet itself was very bleak and desolate the surface was littered with kilometer long valleys and the soil, if you could call it that was gray and lifeless.

 As the Jarrasul closed in on the trade port Tarsis could see the scattered remains of TEC planetary defenses like Gauss platforms, and Hanger Defenses.

 The Vasari War Officer started to laugh.

“What is so humorous sir?” One of his 2nd in command officers asked.

 “It’s a shame that theses pitiful TEC still try to stop our inevitable advancement through their systems.” Tarsis responded.

 “I agree.” The 2nd in command officer added.

After 5 lii the Jarrasul reached its destination. The Jarrasul was designed to transport large quantities of Vasari civilians and slaves to distant planets; so Vasari ship designers needed to make a very large ship capable of holding a city within its hulls so that Vasari citizens wouldn’t become distressed in the cramped courters of a Vasari capital ship. The Jarrasul Evacuator was the product of these issues. Compared to other civilizations capital ships the Jarrasul was a beast. It was ovular in shape and has a large front facing debris vortex that is used to suck resources right off the planet surface. The inside of the ship is comparable to large Vasari cities. These “cities” comprised of mostly housing compartments. Vasari citizens spent most of their time lounging around; they are able to do this because other enslaved species could do all the work for them. They spend most of their time reading and watching Vasari propaganda. The military on the other hand are not as lazy or easygoing as the civilians. All Vasari military personnel are in peak physical condition, which is more than enough to over power any TEC or Advent adversary in a one on one brawl even though most Vasari don’t lower themselves to those levels.

 Once the Jarrasul was docked with the station a recently enslaved species of avian-like creatures poured out of the ship to collect the necessary supplies for the journey to the Gateway system; the Vasari being masters of nanotechnology have no use for large scale factories like their TEC or Advent counterparts. All they require is sufficient antimatter and a small set of quantum computers and they can make almost anything that would be needed by Vasari civilians or military.

 “Only 3 more lii until the ship is fully stocked sir.” Reported one of the pilots facing a large green screen with alpha-numeric symbols racing across the screen, Vasari intelligence allowed them to read information extremely fast which comes in handy when you are fighting a war in space and calculating large numbers.

 “Perfect, how many more ships are still in phase space?” asked the War Officer.

 “There are about 15 more ships in the proximity of Logios. So they will be another 150 lii.” said one of the pilots.

“Why is it taking them so long to accelerate?” Asked the War Officer.

“Due to a rare occurrence, all the gaseous planets are aligned meaning that the ships have to phase jump through 7 times more gravitational fields than normal.” The pilot announced.

Tarsis grumbled and walked out of the command bridge and down the corridor to his quarters.

Vasari architecture is very elegant and not very practical. The Vasari homeworld was a lush jungle oasis. Corridors and rooms, and building all resemble the root systems or foliage that was present on their planet. Most of the hallways were decorated with large grooves decorated like an extensive root system; even the interior was colored to match the brown pigments of the roots. But because of these design choices the interior of the ships were not very strong. This means that most ships that have their shields disabled suffer massive casualties to crew due to falling pillars and collapsing roofs and floors. But the exterior on the other hand was very dull mostly gray with the occasional cluster of yellow light emitting from the center of the ship.

Tarsis sat down in his intraconscious chamber to drain all worrying thoughts so that he could be an optimal condition to lead an invasion fleet of this size. The chamber removed negative thoughts through a process called anitemotional nanorepultion. This is executed by nanites. The nanites enter the brain tissue and are able to pinpoint neural receptors in charge of “suboptimal” thoughts and emotions and disassembles them allowing the Vasari to focus more important tasks

Ever since the Great Retreat all Vasari citizens and military personnel must have nanomedical implants to make sure that the Vasari race would continue to live on. Due to this decision the Vasari’s already long life span of 150 Rii is now extended to 200 Rii; meaning that Vasari captains were more experienced in the battlefield, and more deadly.

*TEC Military Installation: Chimera*

*March 14th 5328*

*Captain Arctos*

Captain Arctos woke up out of bed and looked at his clock. It read 4:29 a.m. He didn’t have to report to the bridge of the *Montgomery* for another 2 hours.

“Uhgg.” Captain Arctos groaned. He threw the bright white blanket off of his body. Walked to his bathroom, the automatic door slid open to reveal a small metallic room. The walls, floor and ceiling were made of chrome with a small sink attached to the center of the left wall with a rather large mirror above it. Then on the right wall there was a shower and hidden behind the shower was the toilet. The captain undressed and stepped into the shower. Afterwards he was brushing his teeth. He was in pretty good shape, unlike most of his other Captains. Since they sat on the bridge all day they… let themselves go, but James made an effort not to become like the rest of them. Before he was a Captain he was a part of the marine platoon assigned to every Corsev Battlecruiser as a boarding party. Since most of the time they were face to face with the Vasari and their god like strength or the Advent’s ability to corrode your mind they needed to be in perfect shape, and after 15 years he still kept that mentality.

The Sun was just coming over the horizon as the captain walked out of the base and down to the ship yard. From there he would take a shuttle to the TDN *Montgomery*. He walked into the shuttle which was roughly 5 meters long, 3 meters high, and 3 meters wide. It was a standard surface to ship shuttle that the military has been using since the beginning of the war.

The Captain swiped his wrist over a scanner attached to the entrance to the shuttle. The door open and a gust of cold air blasted the captain. He walked into the ship and took a seat in in front of a massively complicated panel of buttons and screens.

“Welcome Captain Arctos. I am Sally the AI that will be piloting you to the TDN *Montgomery*. Please fasten your seatbelts.” Said the AI, “This trip will take approximately 10 minutes. Thank you.” Then the transmission ended and an almost inaudible sound was coming from the speakers of the shuttle. It sounded like, classical music. When the shuttle lifted off the captain could see the city of Proxima just overhead. There were thousands of 100 story skyscrapers shooting into the sky. The traffic in the sky was horrible even at 5:00am. Thousands of buses, cars and trade ships darted across the sky at 100kmh.

The shuttle was weaving pass the cars and busses, the shuttle was at about 2km above the planet’s surface, and he could see the other cites surrounding Proxima. They were just glorified suburbs compared to Proxima. The city is the capital of the Triton, housed over 65 million people and is the largest trading city with in 100 light years. After 5 minutes the shuttle was in space and the city became a grey smear on the planet’s surface. The longest part of the journey would be docking with the TDN *Montgomery* that was docked at the Repair Platform on the outer edge of the gravity well.

At last the shuttle was only a minute away from the ship. The captain was in awe. The ship was 1km across. Almost the entire left side of the ship is a large missile launching platform. The planetary bombardment weapons are located in the bottom center of the ship. The Marza is especially good at bombing runs due to its ability to raze a planet, but some people forget that its large usage of missiles makes it good at long range fights.

The shuttle finally docked with the dreadnaught, and Captain Arctos walked out of the tiny shuttle and into the largest ship he has ever set foot in.

To his surprise there were many hundreds of military personnel already on the ship. The docking bay had to be the busiest part of the ship due to the fact that fighters needed to be reloaded, ammunition needed to be shipped to the weapon depots, and food had to be shipped to the various mess halls. The captain walked around the enormous hangar; pass automations and crew members in exosuits moving various supplies around the hanger and found an elevator that would take him to the bridge. These elevators moved crew around the ship very fast.

On his ride to the bridge all the crews sleeping quarters, the weapon rooms and recreational areas zoomed passed him, then the elevator came to an abrupt halt, almost knocking the captain off his feet. Once the doors opened a flurry of beeps clicks, and yelling came rushing into the captains ears.

“Ahem,” The captain coughed. One person noticed him and quickly stopped what he was doing and saluted the captain.

“ATTENTION!” yelled the crew member. Everyone looked around and saw the captain. The stopped what they were doing and saluted him and the room went dead silent.

“That never gets old.” He thought to himself.

“At ease.” He declared. The crew went back to work and they seemed, more organized than before. A very tall woman walked up to the Captain. She was at least 5 inches taller than him so that put her at about 6’ 5’’. She was very thin, almost sickly looking.

“Hello Captain Arctos, my name is Leah Montgomery and I’m your intelligence officer, you’re second in command and Vasari diplomat on this mission. I assure you that I’m highly qualified; I have masters in xenolingustics, xenoculture and xenorelations.” She announced.

“Wait… are you the president’s daughter?” Captain Arctos asked stunned. She chuckled.

“Yes, yes I am but I don’t want that to affect any part of the mission just treat me just like any other crew member.” She said.

“Oh trust me I didn’t plan on treating you special, I just wanted to make sure who I was talking to.” He declared.

Ever since the attack on Kabel a year ago the captain decided to distance himself from all crew members. The reason for this is during the battle he lost 7 of some of his best friends. They were all stationed on the TDN *Phoenix* and he was commanding a fleet of Kodiaks like he always has. The Council got word from a reconnaissance mission that a Vasari assault was coming for Vafthrudnir. The Council decided to send most of Echo fleet to defend Vafthrudnir. Echo fleet was one of the largest fleets in the TEC military, it contained roughly 500 ships, but only 375 ships were sent to the Kabel system. The fleet sat there for days waiting, and waiting. Then out of nowhere what seems like the entire Vasari fleet jumped out of phase space. Later the captain found out that it was *only* a dozen Skirantra Carriers, and 150 Skarovas Enforcers. The bombers with their phase missiles tor the fleet apart, within 10 minutes Echo fleet lost 150 of its ships most of those losses were cruisers*,* mostly the captain’s fleet of Kodiaks. They even were able to wipe out 9 of TEC capital ships, one of which was the *Phoenix*. After only 15 minutes of battle Captain Arctos and the remaining 10% of the fleet phase jump out of the Kabel system. It was one of the worst defeats in resent memories.

*TDN Montgomery*

*March 15th 5328*

*Captain Arctos*

**Dear Lucy and John,**

**Hello, how are you to doing? How’s the farm? I’m sorry I haven’t been able to write to you in a while. It’s been… hectic. As I am writing this my crew and I are headed to the Kabel system. That isn’t very far from you guys. I know it’s been tough and trust me if I could drop out, I would. I will be able to visit you guys soon, and by soon I mean in a couple of months, if I’m lucky. Tell John I said hello and to keep up the good work on the farm. I’m sorry this has been so hard for you I can’t wait to come see Gateway, and you guys again.**

**Love you both,**

**James Arctos**

**Captain of** ***TDN Montgomery***

 After finishing his letter he headed out of his room and jumped on the elevator to the Mess Hall. When he entered the elevator it was packed, 20 or so people were crammed into the elevator.

 “Hello Captain, how do you like your first day on board the *TDN Montgomery*?” A man that he recognized from the bridge yesterday, the first one to salute him, asked.

 “Very well thank you. What is your job here aboard the *Montgomery*?” The captain asked.

 “I’m the chief weapons coordinator; I get to tell everyone what to shoot at. But only after your orders of course.” The crewman replied. He was surprisingly scrawny for someone who was in charge of telling people where to shoot 500 megaton missiles. He looks more like he would be suited for navigation.

 “Ah, so you’re the one I’m going to be yelling at most of the time, what is your name?” The captain asked with a smile on his face.

 “Ha-ha, I guess that’s true and my name is Robert.” He replied. The two didn’t have time to say anything else because the elevator came to a stop and the doors opened letting every poor out of the elevator. With a sigh of relief the captain walked down one of the rows of tables and to the serving station.

 The choses were brown goop, green goop and yellow goop.

“Not exactly 5 star food but it least its edible… I think.” The captain thought to himself. Once he got his “food” he sat down at a table with other captains that he knew. He had a chance to look around the large room. The room was at least 200 meters by 200 meters and the ceiling was 300 meters above his head, so safe to say it was a pretty large room. The interior of the ship was all covered with chrome or steel which gave the interior of the ship a shiny silver color, like mostly everything in the TEC military, the reason for this is because it’s cheap and durable.

“So looks like this little operation is going to cost the TEC another 300 billion credits.” Joanne said as she approached the captain’s table.

“What do you want Joanne?” Asked the captain.

“Oh nothing I just wanted to chat with some of my fellow captains before, you know, your plan fails and we have a repeat of last time.” She said, the captain could tell she wanted to get some kind of reaction out of him.

“You know what? If I’m such a horrible captain then why did the Council pick *my* plan and not yours? Oh that’s right because your just a little fighter commander and you don’t know how to command *real* ships like mine.” Announced the captain. Joanne’s face got red and just as about every one of the other captains started to laugh. She grunted and stomped off angrily to the table where the rest of her fighter crew was.

“Thank you for saying that cause I was about to punch her.” Leah said. This surprised the captain. He thought that the president’s daughter would act more… presidential.

“Also I was told that you’re needed in the bridge, the commander of Beta fleet wants to talk to you.” Leah added.

“Thank you; do you have any idea what they would want?” Asked captain Arctos.

“Not a clue.” She replied.

The captain rushed back took the elevator up to the bridge. When he walked into the bridge the windows were lit up with a green electrical field, which was the effect of the TEC phase drives on the space around them. Since the TEC phase drives were so primitive there was a lot of antimatter that was wasted in the process which made the TEC phase space fracture broken up like an electrical storm. The crew on the bridge were seated a meter below where the captain walked and observed the rest of the crew. The cat walk that was raised above the rest of the crew extended 4 meters out and then lowered to the level of the rest of the crew. This was where the captain could take incoming transmissions form other ships; there was a large rectangular screen and 4 chairs positioned in front of the screen, each chair was for the captain, second in command, captain of the fighter squadrons, and the zenorelations expert.

 “Open a communications network between the *Montgomery* and the *Retribution*.” The commander requested.

“Aye sir.” Replied a random voice from behind him and was followed by a series of beeps and taps. Some static appeared on the screen for a few moments and then appeared the face of the Captain of Beta fleet, Captain Ryan.

“Hello captain, how are you today?” Asked Captain Ryan.

“Very well, thank you. I was told that you had a message for me.” Replied Captain Arctos.

“Ah yes, there seems to be an issue with our ships phase drives.” Captain Ryan told Captain Arctos. Everyone in the bridge of the *Montgomery* immediately stopped what they were doing at the sound of those words.

“This has to be a joke, how did this happen!” Yelled Captain Arctos, frantically searching for some sort of good side to this.

“I don’t know I have engineers trying to fix the problem but I’m sorry we won’t be able to reinforce your fleet.” The Captain’s tone showed remorse, he knew what was going to happen.

“When is the quickest time you can get reinforcements?”

“You would have to last 9 hours by our calculations.”

“*Nine* hours! How the hell are we supposed to last 9 hours?!”

“I’m sorry we are working as fast as we can try to avoid contact with the enemy for as long as possible and-” the communication shut down and Captain Arctos was left sitting in his chair, while everyone was looking at him waiting for something to do.

“Damn it, what happened the communication?” Asked the captain.

“Sir we don’t know, I’m trying to repair the signal.” Replied one of the crewmen.

“No don’t try; I don’t want to talk with him. Can you patch me through to the intercom?”

“Aye sir, okay you’re patched in.”

“Ladies and gentlemen of Alpha fleet I come to you with bad news, our reinforcements from Beta fleet will be 9 hours behind schedule. Despite this we are still going through with the attack on the Vasari colony. The plan will be change and please stand by for further instructions.” The captain took a deep breath and walked out of the bridge and into his room.

*Vasari Military Warship*

*Rii #10050.59*

*Vasari War Officer Tar’uul*

“How much longer until we exit phase space?” Asked Tar’uul

“Approximately 0.01 lii until we exit phase space.” Replied one of the Vasari pilots. The Vasari cringed with fear; Tar’uul was notorious for doing horrible things to Vasari that gives him answers that he doesn’t like. The crew a genuine reason to be scared. Tar’uul isn’t very easy on the eyes even for Vasari standards. His appearance is enough to give TEC captains nightmares, but Tar’uul like it that way. He was quite different from common Vasari morphology. Most Vasari have segmented conical shaped heads and are brownish tan in color. Tar’uul on the other hand is from a very small group a Vasari usually out casts due to their appearance, Tar’uul was green colored he was significantly bulkier than the average Vasari and due to his size he needs a large breathing apparatus that wraps around his face, it is not very friendly looking to say the least.

Tar’uul was in command of the Vulkoras Desolator *Kulsoras*. The ship specialized in planetary bombardment but was also able to easily hold its own in a capital ship fight due to its large amount phase missile launchers. The Vulkoras can be compared to the Marza of the TEC.

Tar’uul walked around the perimeter of the bridge watching, and waiting for someone to make a mistake. Out the windows Tar’uul observed the constant orange vortex that encased the ship. The Vasari had extremely advanced phase technology so they could travel far faster than the TEC or Advent could.

“Sir there is an incoming transmission from War Officer Tarsis.” One Vasari announced.

“Bring up the transmission.” Tar’uul commanded. A large green cylinder of light situated in the center of the bridge showed War Officer Tarsis.

“Hello, Tarsis.”

“Hello Tar’uul. What is the status on your position?”

“My crew has informed me that we are 7 lii from your location.”

“Perfect, I want you to form up with Fleet 573 and phase jump as soon as possible.”

“Yes sir, is that all?”

“Yes, I want you to contact me when your 1 lii from Vafthrudnir.”

“Yes sir.” Then the transmission ended. Tar’uul hated having to answer to Tarsis, as did many Vasari males. It is in there DNA to need to be first in command. Tar’uul however can never be first in command due to his heritage. Tar’uul walked out of the bridge and walked down the empty corridor of the Vulkoras Desolator.

The Vasari name there ships after the Gods in their religion. Although the Vasari have become such a scientific race and almost reaching transiency they still maintain a belief in higher powers. For instance Vulkoras is that Vasari god of war and destruction. Jarrasul is the god of migration, Antorak is the god of phase space, Kortul is the god of the gods and the Skirantra is the god of fears. Not much is known about how the Vasari practice their religion and there haven’t been any sort of religious temples on Vasari occupied worlds so the debate still continues on the Vasari religion.

Tar’uul was wondering why there was such a high priority to capture this Gateway system from the TEC. There have been rumors passed around that there is some type of artifact on the planet, something that could rid the Vasari of *them* once and for all. The Vasari government has been ordering system wide searches on all Vasari occupied worlds. They recently reported that an ancient map of the galaxy was discovered on an inner world and within that map there are star systems that we highlighted. Vasari scientists had no idea what it could mean but the Vasari government took it as a way to stop the constant running.

The Vasari government today didn’t have a central leader with supporting branches of government to help make decisions. In the Before Years the Vasari used a form of government similar to the TEC but since the Great Retreat they have switched to a new form of government. The constantly changing Vasari boarders are split up into 15 districts and are assigned leaders for 1-2 Rii there they would be able to make their own rules and laws. Every 0.5 Rii the various leaders would meet at the Vasari homeworld to discuss species wide laws and start voting on new leaders.

The Vasari have been using this form of government since they were forced to become a nomadic species, and they have been able to push away TEC and Advent advancements, so they must be doing something right.

 Tar’uul’s thoughts were interrupted by the sound of the ship’s warning alarms going off. Tar’uul turned around and started to run back to the bridge of his ship to figure out what exactly is happening.

*TDN Montgomery*

*March 16th 5328*

*Captain Arctos*

 “There has to be a way. This can’t it.” The Captain thought to himself. He restarted the program once again plugging in the numbers; 14 TEC ships, 7 squadrons of strike craft, versus an estimated 50 Vasari ships. Time till reinforcements: 9 hours. The holodec projected ship icons on the system.

 “If I keep the ships on the outside of the gravity well, and send the strike craft to intercept Vasari ships once they reach 10 kilometers from the fleet, this should work” he moved the ship icons around the projection, the Vasari engines would be able catch up the fleet in only 4 hours that left a 5 hour fire fight against overwhelming odds.

 “Odds of survival: 5%” Announced the holodec AI. The captain slammed his fist on the desk and swiped all the paperwork off his desk.

 “Captain, its Leah I’m coming in.” She announced.

 “What do you want?” Asked the captain.

 “I’m your second in command and I know the Vasari more than anyone on this ship, I think I can help you with this issue.

 “Okay, fine what do you got?” He sighed.

 “First off we need to use the Marza to our advantage.”

 “And how do you plan on doing that?”

“Since we know that our missile batteries can out distance the Vasari weapons we can use that to a huge advantage. The Kodiaks will need to stick next to the Marza for obvious reasons.”

 “Okay but we only have so many missiles and our laser cannons can’t do much damage to the Vasari capital ships.” The captain added

 “Yes but once they get close enough we can hit them with our planetary bombardment weapons.”

 “You’re joking right? For that to even have a *chance* of working we would need to be at least a kilometer away. At that range our shields could maybe last 30 minutes against the Vasari wave cannons.”

 “That’s right but don’t forget by the time we run out of missiles and the Vasari close into our position the reinforcements, will only be an hour away, and with the nuclear warheads on the Marza the Vasari crew would die of radiation exposure before they could do significant damage to the *Montgomery*.” After Leah finished her plan the captain sat there for a moment contemplating the possible casualties of the battle.

 “This just might work. I can’t thank you enough; the crew of Alpha fleet is probably going to survive this ordeal,” The captain said as he was getting up and heading out of the door. Leah was left in his room just sitting there.

 “I hope this works.” She mumbled to herself. The captain entered the bridge and ran up to the command consul.

 “Listen up; this is our revised plan for taking the Kabel system.” The captain announced. All the screens of the crew switched to Leah’s new plan. Captain Arctos could see the shocked expressions on every one of their faces. They were going to be in for on hell of a ride.

*Vasari Military Outpost: Vafthrudnir*

*Rii #10050.62*

*War Officer Tarsis*

 “Tar’uul is too late; we can no longer wait for his reinforcements. I want all ships to rally at the edge of the gravity well for a phase jump to Gateway.” Ordered Tarsi; after his order a furry of clicks ensued, the crew was broadcasting the message to the rest of the fleet.

 When phase drives were developed the Vasari discovered that every planet and star has some strong gravitational line that, if given the right circumstances, propels a ship at faster than light speeds. But this also comes as a disadvantage because not every celestial body has a phase lane that connects to the exact location that you need to go to; so most of the time fleets have to plot a course around many systems to get the destination that they need to get to.

This issue has caused many scientist from around Vasari occupied space to try to develop a phase drive that could activate without the need of the phase lanes, but Vasari scientists have been researching this for centuries with no break through, so there is little expectation from the Advent and TEC to create something.

“How much longer until the rest of the fleet reaches the gravity well?” Tarsis asked.

“Approximately 100 Wri sir.”

“Perfect, make sure all personnel are ready for phase jump I don’t was a contorted mess I want us to arrive at the same time.”

“Yes sir, I will tell the rest of the fleet to coordinate their phase drives with ours.”

The last of the Vasari ships reached the edge of the gravity well. Moments afterwards, hundreds of bright orange vortexes lit up the surrounding space. The ships were then engulfed in a veil of orange radiation and light then blink out of the solar system.

Moments later, on the other side of the gravity well, Tar’uul and his fleet entered real space.

“What set off that alarm?!” Demanded the war officer; there was an eerie silence on the bridge. Then all of a sudden one of the crew members jumped from his seat and started to run for the door. There was a series of gasps that erupted form the rest of the crew. Tar’uul took out his pulse beam pistol and shot at the fleeing Vasari. It landed with a loud hard thud. There was a hole that went straight through the center of the Vasari. He laid on the floor smoking on the ground for a few moments the crew stood there in shock.

“One of you call the nanite cleanup. I don’t want to see his body ever again.” The war officer proclaimed. Only a few moments later a large spherical ball came floating into the bridge. It released a colorful cloud of nanites that disassembled the body, molecule by molecule until there was nothing left. The proses only took 30 Wri for the body to completely disappear.

*TDN Retribution*

*March 16th 5328*

*Captain Ryan*

 “It’s no use; I’m ordering all ships so fall back to the Argonev Starbase and get ready to receive survivors of the battle.” Proclaimed the captain.

 “Yes sir, ordering all ships to fall back to the starbase and have all repair platforms ready to receive the injured.” Answered a crewman.

**Chapter 2**

*TDN Montgomery*

*March 17th 5328*

*Captain Joanne*

 “Attention!” Yelled a fighter pilot getting ready for launch. Joanne, the commander of the fighter squadron aboard the TDN *Montgomery* walked down one of the rows of fighters to the senior flight officer.

 “Are we already for launch?” Commander Joanne Asked.

 “Yes all the fighters have been stocked with 10 million 100mm kinetic rounds.” The senior flight officer replied. TEC fighter and bomber designs were very similar to Vasari and Advent versions. TEC fighters carried 100mm kinetic bullets, sometimes they were retro-fitted to have incendiary properties for a bigger bang. The bombers on the other hand have 100 high impact nuclear missiles. Having nuclear weapons in space is very good if you want destroy something very quickly. Due to the low gravity in space, the shockwave created by the missile can expand far quicker than if it was in an atmosphere of a planet.

 The Marza Dreadnought is able to hold one squadron of either fighters or bombers. The captain of the vessel is able to choose what type of squadron would best suit his or her mission. The captain chose the fighter squadron because of their ability to take down enemy bombers, which is usually the death of cruisers and siege ships. The bombers were 10 meters long and could seat 1 person. Most of the fighter was filled with ammunition for weapons and life support. Life support machines eventually will become the death of fighter and bomber pilots due to their extremely large size.

 “All fighter pilots please get ready for launch we are approaching phase space collapse in 5 minutes.” The captain announced over the intercom. The pilots looked at the large hanger doors, in less than 5 minutes they would be fling out at over 100 kilometers per second, and hurdling towards the enemy just hoping they don’t die in a fiery explosion.

 “You heard the man get in your fighters, now!” The captain yelled. The pilots immediately climbed the ladders and into the cockpits of their 15 ton death machines. The commander was to be leading her squadron into battle. Her fighter was decorated with red wings and a plethora of hole and tears. She walked up to her fighter and climbed the small ladder up to the cockpit.

 The small glass window slid back and sealed the cockpit shut. Imprinted in the glass was a large green square with a small redical in the center. In the top right corner numbers showed amount of ammunition, oxygen, and fuel in the fighter. In the top right of the window it showed approximate distant to target and description of target. The consul a little way below the HUD showed a map of the star system and a summary of tasked that is constantly updated by the captain of the fleet. The joystick was situated between the pilot’s legs, this is how they steered and fired their weapons.

 “Redwing leader, ready for launch.” The captain announced.

 “Redwing 3, ready for launch.”

 “Redwing 4, ready for launch.”

 “Redwing 7, ready for launch.”

 One by one each of the 8 fighter pilots ended their preflight checkups and got ready for launch. Moments afterwards the Marza exited phase space and the captain took one last long breath of air.

*TDN Montgomery*

*March 17th 5328*

*Captain Arctos*

 “Okay people I want everyone on red alert.” The captain commanded. He didn’t want the rest of the crew to hear the nervousness in his voice so he started to talk louder than he normally would.

 “Higgins, I want a full sweep of all enemy vessels in the gravity well.” After he ordered that, Higgins, the navigation specialist began to press some buttons and resituating some symbols on the screen in front of him.

 “Sir there appears to be only 15 enemy ships on the other side of the gravity well.” He announced.

 “You got to be joking, run a second check.” He ordered.

 “Sir I already triple checked should we engage?” He asked.

 The captain paused, “Yes all units engage the enemy fleet. Keep the Percheron close and tell the Kodiaks to go ahead and start some trouble. I want all fighters and bombers to launch and immediately engage any capital ships and strike craft in the area; they are probably already launched and headed towards us.” The captain ordered.

 “Aye sir, right away.” After all orders were given the captain looked out the large windows into the gravity well, the Kodiaks were already accelerating and approaching the enemy, hundreds of fighters and bombers zoomed passed the capital ship, finally the capital ship itself began to accelerate. The inside of the bridge buzzed with activity, everyone on the bridge was giving orders to other crewmen on board, the constant sound of typing never stopped but in an odd way it was calming to the captain.

 “I want all weapons ready to fire, tell the weapons crew to fire when ready Commander Robert.” The captain said.

 “Yes sir.” He replied.

*TEC Command Fighter*

*March 17th 5328*

*2 hours into battle*

*Captain Joanne*

 The fighters were just now closing in on the enemy ships. Captain Joanne was told that their primary target was and capital ship. The fighter’s onboard scanners finally detected the enemy fleet.

 “1 Vulkoras Desolator, 10 Ravastra Skirmishers, and 5 Lasurak Transporters are present in this gravity well.” Announced the onboard computer.

 The captain pressed on the fleet command transmitter that would allow her to talk with the rest of the squadron.

 “I just got information that there is a Vulkoras Desolator inbound, the bugs call it the *Kulsoras* or some fancy shit like that, all I care is that it’s our primary target. All fighters I want you to focus fire on the cap ship until the *Montgomery* arrives to finish it off.”

 “Yes sir!” The rest of the crew replied. Moments later the fighter squadron along with several other fighter squadrons closed in on the *Kulsoras*. Just as the TEC squadrons closed in Vasari fighters were launched, and then the two forces clashed.

 Redwing fighter squadron closed in on the Vulkoras and sent thousands of bullets hurdling at the shields. The shield at that point became a dazzling bubble of antimatter rippling with every bullet that smacked into it. Vasari fighters started to close in on TEC fighters. Deathwing another squadron disobeyed orders and started to take our Vasari fighters.

 “What the hell are you doing Deathwing?!” Screamed captain Joanne over fleet com. A fellow Redwing pilot flying next to her exploded into a flaming pile of twisted debris, and the Vasari pilot that did it zoomed past her. Vasari fighters used pulse weapons that were far more accurate and more deadly than the TEC kinetic rounds.

 “We are not going to get slaughtered out there! We are going to take care of the fighters!” The commander of Deathwing yelled. Captain Joanne and the rest of her squadron turned and came back for a second run. By that time the Kodiaks came in to support the fighter and bomber squadrons.

 The TEC strike craft were dropping like flies. The Vasari fighters were just too accurate.

 As Captain Joanne went in for another run she fired over 2 thousand shots on a 10 second period. She maneuvered her fighter to fly along the shield so that it could fire as many rounds into it as possible. Joanne looked down at the radar screen, 5 Vasari fighters were right on her tail. She noticed that a pilot form her squadron was about 10 clicks out.

 “Redwing 5, Redwing 5 this is Redwing captain, I need immediate assistance, I have 5 boggies at my 6 o’clock.”

 “Aye sir, coming in to assist.” The Vasari pilots began to shoot their pulse beams at the captain’s fighter, the bright green beams of radiation whizzed passed her window. She pulled up and began to fly upside down, just in time to see Redwing 5 fire upon a Vasari fighter sending it crashing into its neighboring fighter, it was beautiful.

 “Much appreciated, Redwing 5.” Joanne said.

 “No prob-” The pilot wasn’t able to finish his sentence because several pulse beams smashed into the wings and engines of the fighter. Another large flash of light and fire erupted from where the fighter was. Leaving behind more scrap metal. Joanne looked out her window to see more and more TEC fighters and bombers exploding.

 “What a waste of life.” The commander thought to herself.

 “Redwing form up on me, we are going in for one last pass on the capital ships shields.” She said from over the fleet com. She pulled away from the capital ship and moved out 20 kilometers to form up with the rest of her squad.

 She was surprised to see only 3 fighters left, but for the third time she went in and sent he remainder of her kinetic rounds at the shield. They finally broke, in a stunning flash the antimatter bubble popped and left the hull and armor of the capital ship defenseless.

 The captain heard the fleet com erupt into cheers. Once that was over the Kodiaks moved in and surrounded the capital ship, but Joanne noticed there wasn’t nearly as many as when the battle started. Then moments later the *Montgomery* came hurling into the battle already shooting at the defenseless Vasari capital ship. She moved carefully slowed her ship to dock with the *Montgomery*, it was infinitely more difficult to dock with a capital while it’s moving and when it’s in battle. But her squadron was able to pull it off and they landed inside the chaotic hanger of the *Montgomery*. Joanne and the remainder of her crew jumped out of the fighters to regroup and morn their fallen pilots.

*Vulkoras Desolator Kulsoras*

*Rii #10050.69*

*3 hours into battle*

*War Officer Tar’uul*

“You imbeciles!” Screamed the war officer as he frantically paced around the bridge. The Vasari crewmen were frantically typing and scrambling to get something done. The shields were brought down approximately 400 Wri ago. The Kodiak’s autocannons were ripping holes in the armor of the capital ship each shot shaking the entire ship. Out the windows of the bridge Tar’uul saw a line of Kodiaks roughly 2.5 Minir from the ship, their large autocannons flashing with every salvo of projectiles fired at the ship.

 The bridge was placed at the back of the ship and Tar’uul could see the entirety of the 1.5 kilometer hull. There was massive holes and gashes on the ship. Fighter and bomber wrecks littered the ship as well.

 “Sir, fires have broken out on level C10, C11, and D5.” A Vasari crewman yelled over the monotonous loud beeps of warning alarm.

 “Sir our hull is at 89%, at this rate we can last another Lii.” Another Vasari announced.

 “I want to speak with the Skarovas Enforcers!” Demanded the war officer.

 “Yes sir.”

 “This is War officer Tar’uul; I want you to send the remainder of our Skarovas to engage those Kodiaks immediately!” Tar’uul yelled. Moments later 6 Skarovas Enforcers come from behind the capital ship. They immediately started to fire their wave cannons at the Kodiaks. Several wave projectiles smashed into a Kodiak. They vaporized the shield and tore the hull apart. The Kodiaks then started to focus their fire on the Skarovas Enforcers.

 “Fire all weapons on the Kodiaks!” The war officer demanded. The order was flowed by several beeps and clicks of targeting computers then a volley of phase missiles and pulse beams. The phase missiles zoomed out of the launching tubes leaving vibrant purple contrails behind them. The phase missiles blinked into phase space just before they hit the shields allowing the missiles to directly hit the hull and kill ships twice as fast.

 For the Vasari, phase missiles were a very resent addition to their arsenal. The Vasari were able to make phase drives small enough to fit on a missile roughly a thousand years ago. This allowed the Vasari to quickly finish battles and move on to the next. Speed has become the Vasari way of life. Due to what most Vasari call *them*, their constant running have put a severe dent in their ability to develop new technologies, before they were able to develop hundreds of new technologies, now due to their overall lack of leadership the Vasari have been slowly sinking to a technological dark age.

 “There are only 5 more Kodiaks left sir.”

 “Wonderful, continue to fire on the-” Tar’uul was interrupted by the violent impact of hundreds of missiles hitting the port side of the ship. Tar’uul was knocked off his feet and slid across the floor. A large piece of the ceiling almost fell onto the war officer.

 The war officer stumbled to his feet, “Where did those missiles come from!”

 “They came from a TEC capital ship.”

 “I was never informed they had a capital ship in the battle!” Moments later another volley smashed into the capital ship setting off large explosions along the port side of the ship.

 “Sir the crew is reporting multiple fractures in the hull on all levels.”

 “Focus all fire on the capital ship, it must fall, even if it’s the last thing this ship does.” The war officer announced as he approached the window looking into the blackness of space constantly being lit up by large explosions.

*TDN Montgomery*

*March 17th 5328*

*4 hours into the battle*

*Captain Arctos*

 “Again! Fire all missiles on the Vasari capital ship!” The captain shouted over the talking of the other crewman. The captain watched hundreds of missiles leave the Marza’s missile pods and impact the capital ship. The Marza and the Vulkoras were roughly a kilometer apart.

 The Vulkoras started to turn around to face the Marza. The captain knew that the Vulkoras was twice as strong at the Marza, and the fighters would be launched in 5 minutes, the Marza will surely be able to last long enough for fighter support.

 “Captain, there is only 3 Kodiaks left in battle, should we support or continue to fire on the Marza?” Asked Robert, he was intensely focused on the screen in front of him, maybe he was a good choice for weapons coordinator.

 “No, continue to fire on the capital ship tell all remaining Kodiaks to fall back behind the Marza I don’t want to lose any more people.”

 “Aye sir,” Robert put a transmition through fleet com to have all Kodiaks to move back. Immediately after sending the message the Kodiaks started to move back, but the Skarovas Enforcers stated to pursue the Kodiaks, one Kodiak’s engines was knocked out by a wave cannon. The Kodiak began to hurdle towards the Marza at 1000 kilometers an hour. The Kodiak smashed into the shields and was vaporized on impact, huge shards of metal bounced off the shields and the shock wave rippled throughout the shield making the shield look like the waves rolling off the beach.

 The whole event only lasted 3 seconds, if that but it was enough to destroy the shields of the Marza.

 “All shields are down!” Screamed a crewman.

 “Continue to fire on the capital ship, and launch the fighters!” Commanded the captain. The captain walked up to the window hundreds of fighters poured out of the Percheron carriers and began attacking the Skarovas Enforcers.

 The Skarovas Enforcers were around 400 meters long; their hull was very menacing looking, as do all Vasari ships, most TEC military personnel say this because the ships aren’t very elegant, the hulls all end in sharp angles giving them the appearance of having spikes.

 The bombers let out a volley of missiles; they impacted a Skarovas Enforcer causing to erupt into a magnificent explosion that lit up the space around it. The Marza began to fire all weapons on the capital ship only a kilometer away.

 “We have one more volley of missiles left sir, should we fire now?” Robert asked.

 “Yes fire the last of the missiles, target the bridge, we need to kill the captain of the ship.” The captain announced and Leah looked up from her screen.

 “You will *not* kill the captain of that vessel, if anything, we need to capture him.” She announced.

 “We can’t do that, we don’t have any ships that can board that capital ship.”

 “Oh yes we do, send a fighter squad to enter the capital ship’s hanger.”

 “That is the most absurd idea I have ever heard of, we can’t risk losing any more men and women.”

 “I am your second in command so I get a say in this, let’s ask the crew.”

 “Fine, all who thinks that sending in a fighter squadron to capture the Vasari War Officer is a good idea, raise their hand.” He asked, knowing that no one would agree to Leah’s absurd plan. All but 5 of the 40 crewmen raised their hand to go along with Leah’s plan.

 “See, I told y-” Leah and captain Arctos were knocked off their feet when a volley of phase missiles and pulse beams impacted the hull of the ship.

 “Laser cannon Alpha has been disabled sir!” Yelled Robert.

 “How many active weapons do we have left?” The captain asked.

 “6 laser cannons and 15 autocannons are operational.” He replied. Leah got up, and spit the hair out of her mouth, and tried to straighten it up.

 “Send Redwing, and Deathwing to infiltrate the Vasari capital ship.” Leah ordered.

 “Aye sir,” replied Private Johnson, the communications officer. “Deathwing, and Redwing you have new orders from second in command, Leah Montgomery. We need you to infiltrate the Vasari capital ship and capture the Vasari War Officer and bring him back to the *Montgomery*.”

 The leader of Redwing quickly responded back to the new orders, “You have to be joking! There is no way I’m going to out my squad through that!”

 “Captain’s orders,” Replied the communications officer.

 “This is a death sentence for those people.” Captain Arctos cried.

 “They will be fine plus we need the information.” Leah replied, and then walked off the bridge down the corridor. The interior still continued to shake with every impact of the *Kulsoras* pulse weapons.

 “Focus all fire on the capital ships phase launchers, we need to take those out as soon as possible, oh and Johnson, prep the hangar for Redwing and Deathwing, they will be arriving a bit later.” Said the captain. Then thought, “If they arrive at all.”

*TEC Command Fighter*

*March 17th 5328*

*5 hours into battle*

*Captain Joanne*

 “You heard the captain, Redwing, form up on me we are going to infiltrate the bug’s cap ship.” Joanne announced. “Deathwing, form up on we as well, we need to enter as a team, we are going to encounter fighters on our way there so stick close and once we land get ready, we aren’t going to be welcome in there.”

 The remainder of Redwing and Deathwing formed a tight spear shaped fleet, Joanne counted the number of green dot on her radar screen, she counted 15 in all.

 The fighters zoomed past the battle field littered with red hot metal from the wreckage from all the ships. The newly formed fighter fleet was less than a kilometer from the Vasari hangar when a squadron of Vasari fighters began to fire at them.

 “Do not engage, I repeat do not engage” Joanne ordered. “Accelerate we are almost there.” The fighters all began to accelerate, they were now approaching the enormous capital ship at 1500 kmh. Moments later the fighters were approaching the hangar, thy quickly decelerated to only 100 kmh. They all entered the hangar at roughly the same time and landed. Vasari crewmen stopped what they were doing to look at the odd sight in front of them.

 The cockpits of the fighters opened and 15 fighter pilots jumped out holding standard issue TEC automatic gauss rifle. The guns were very clunky they were about a meter long and rectangular in shape. The guns could hold 100 gauss rounds able to shoot right through walls.

 “Fire!” Yelled the captain, the guns started to fire, impacting Vasari crewmen and throwing them off their feet, the crew was defenseless and tried to run but the TEC fighter pilots didn’t let anyone escape.

 “All right form up on me,” Joanne said “Richards, Vickson, Wilson, and Gregory I want you to take the right door and destroy the antimatter chamber then get out of here. The rest of you we need to get to the bridge and take down the Vasari war officer. Once he is apprehended I will take him myself to an escape pod out of here.” The 4 pilots that Joanne told to disable the antimatter chamber ran through a corridor on the west side of the hangar.

 The rest of the squad ran down a large corridor on the eastern side of the hangar. Joanne’s squadron didn’t get far before they were met with more Vasari crewmen, but this time they were armed. The Vasari weapon of choice was a semiautomatic pulse beam rifle. The gun was cylindrical in shape and could fire a seemingly unlimited amount of shots, obviously that isn’t true but no one have survived long enough to witness a Vasari solider having to reload his weapons.

 The pilots ducked behind ruble that littered the corridors. The Vasari soldiers began to fire at the TEC pilots. A crewman turned to Captain Joanne and started to ask her something.

 “Sir, how are we suppo-.” Before he finished talking he was shot in the head and fell to the floor next to her. The pulse beams lit up the corridors with a yellow-green light. Then the TEC pilots sprung up from their cover and opened fire on the Vasari soldiers. The Vasari soldiers were taking cover behind the bend of the corridor. Joanne was able to shoot one of the Vasari in the chest, sending him flying, pools of green liquid oozed from his wound.

 “Take that!” Joanne screamed. More Vasari continued to fire their pulse weapons. A large beam collided with the wall next to Joanne sending her sliding across the floor.

 “Cover me!” Screamed a pilot taking cover next to where Joanne landed. The three men started to fire their weapons at the Vasari. He grabbed Joanne and dragged her behind the fallen column that he was taking cover behind. Joanne slowly began to wake up.

 “Does anyone have an EMP Grenade?” Joanne asked, over the sound of pulse beams, alarms, and missiles impacting the hull of the ship.

 “I do!” Someone yelled. She tossed the EMP grenade across the corridor. The EMP grenade would be able to disable the Vasari pulse guns which allow the TEC pilots to advance. Joanne threw the grenade 15 meters and it rolled across the floor and then detonated. The blast sent a vibrant blue electrical shock wave through the corridor. The Vasari looked at their weapons, and then started to charge at the TEC pilots.

 With no weapons the Vasari were defenseless and the TEC new that, they sprung up from their cover and began to fire on the Vasari soldiers. One by one they collapsed onto the floor. A few of the Vasari were able to get passed the shooting. One of the Vasari was able to take a pilot and throw his body across the corridor killing him.

 “Fire!” Joanne ordered, and everyone focused on the last Vasari and tore it apart. The firefight only took 30 minutes but it felt like hours for Joanne. She tallied up her squad, they were missing 7 pilots, but they were able to kill 15 Vasari soldiers.

 “That was nasty.” A pilot said.

 “Come on, we need to keep moving before this damn thing explodes.” Joanne said as she picked up her rifle and headed down the corridor.

 “We are almost there, it’s just up ahead.” A pilot announced. They heard a loud explosion, and then the lights all switched off. The antimatter chamber was destroyed.

 “Turn on your flashlights.” Joanne ordered. The corridor was absolutely dark small circles illuminated parts of the massive hallways. All the pilots walked into the bridge. The Vasari crew and the war officer looked at the “small” TEC pilots walking into the room. Alex, a Vasari translator started to tell all the Vasari crew put their hand up.

 “Takykan grenoasph! Takykan grenoasph!” Alex screamed.

 “What are you saying?” Joanne yelled.

 “I’m telling them to put their hands up.”

 “Don’t bother, just-.” Joanne wasn’t able to finish her sentence because the Vasari crew started to charge at the squad.

 “Fire!” The room was illuminated with the flashes of the guns, and one by one the Vasari crew fell to the floor. The Vasari war officer didn’t even try to struggle. The squad tied a chain around his hands, and escorted the Vasari war officer and Joanne to the escape pods.

 “I got it from here, get back to the fighters.” Joanne told the squad.

 “Yes sir!” They replied. The doors to the pod sealed shut and she and the war officer were ejected into space. Joanne sat down at the controls and started to steer with what she thought was the Vasari equivalent of a fighter joystick. Luckily it was a joystick and she began to pilot the pod back to the Marza. She looked like a small child in the pod; it was the equivalent of a 9 year old trying to drive a car. The war officer did nothing on their way to the *Montgomery*.

 Roughly 10 minute later the large Vasari escape pod entered the hangar; it was 15 meters long it was cylindrical in shape and was almost invisible in space because of how black it is. As she entered the hangar she saw Captain Arctos, and Captain Leah waiting for her to land.

 When she did land and stepped out of the pod with a 3.5 meter tall Vasari War officer standing next to her the Captain went up to her and thanked her, then 12 TEC marines with large gauss riles escorted the war officer down to the interrogation room.

 “Thank you; you don’t know how much this will benefit the TEC.” Leah said to Joanne. Joanne looked out of the hangar door just in time to see the capital ship explode with a magnificent flurry of flames; the shock waves that emanated from the explosion made the fabric of space itself bend and contort. The explosion was so strong that it shook the entire capital ship. Joanne looked around the hangar to find her crew so they could celebrate, but she couldn’t find them.

 “Where is my squad?” Joanne asked.

 “Your squad… didn’t make it.” Leah announced.

 Joanne was beyond angry; her eyes widened “Why didn’t you stop firing on the capital ship so my crew could get out!” She screamed.

 “Their sacrifice was necessary to allow us to obtain the Vasari war officer.” Leah said.

 “Are you serious? You emotionless b-!” She was interrupted before she could finish her sentence, which was probably a good thing.

 “Joanne! That is ENOUGH! Do not speak to your superior like that!” Ordered Captain Arctos, Joanne looked at her two superior officers and walked onto the elevator and back to her sleeping courters.

**Chapter 3**

*TDN Retribution*

*March 29th 5328*

*Captain Ryan*

 The Dunov Battlecruiser stationed around the Argonev starbase has been sitting there for 2 weeks waiting for a response from Alpha fleet, the Captain was starting to get anxious.

"Try to open a communication to Alpha fleet." Commanded the captain. Before the crewmen could send a transmission captain Arctos was trying to make contact. Captain Ryan breathed a sigh of relief.

"Hello captain! I have great news!" Announced captain Arctos.

"Well spit it out!"

"We engaged the enemy and eliminated the Vasari from the system."

"That's wonderful. But how did you fight off an entire Vasari war fleet?"

"That's what I find odd; there were only 15 ships in the system."

"What!" The captain yelled he ran up to the window of the Dunov Battlecruiser.

"What is the problem?" Asked captain Arctos.

"There was over 65 Vasari in that system!" Captain Ryan yelled. Captain Arctos's face went straight.

"Sir we are detecting a large fleet of ships heading to the gravity well they will be here in less than a minute." A crewman announced.

"That wasn't the fleet; the one heading straight for Gateway is the real fleet!" Captain Ryan said to Captain Arctos. Moments later an explosion of orange light lit up the gravity well.

"Captain! The Vasari war fleet just entered the gravity well!" Screamed a crewman.

"There are 3 Kortul Devastators, a Jarrasul Evacuator 30 Ravastra Skirmishers, 10 Lasurak Transporters, and more still coming." A crewman said with terror in his voice. More and more Vasari ships started to pour into the gravity well. The large blue sun reflected off their hulls so it was nearly impossible to look at them straight on. The captain’s heart started to beat faster, he was starting to panic, he couldn’t think clearly.

“No, calm down, you need to keep it together.” He thought to himself. He took a long breath of air and looked up at Captain Arctos’s face.

“I'm sorry but I am about to engage in battle, I need you to get to Gateway as quickly as possible.” Then the transmission ended and he captain was left his reflection in the blank screen. “What happened to the transmission?” Asked the captain. Private O’Connor the communications specialist aboard the Retribution looked up in terror.

“They jammed our signal; they haven’t ever been able to do this before! We can't contact the rest of the fleet either, we are all alone.”

“Calm yourself private! This is no time for hysterics. We are going to stay where we are behind the cover of the starbase; this is our best chance for survival.” The captain announced sternly. The captain walked up to the captain’s chair and sat down and watched the enemy fleet advance towards the starbase.

*Starbase Aventura*

*March 18th 5328*

*Annabel Arctos*

 “What do you mean you can only give me 2000 credits for 50 tons of Ferish? That’s a rip off I could get at least 3000 credits from the guy in the SE department.” Annabel said desperately trying to get the man to raise his offer. Ferish is a crop grown by most early colonists it’s a large grain that has bright silvery blue seeds that can be used in almost everything, the plant grows to be around 15 feet tall. One acre of Ferish can produce 2 tons of grain. The stalk is completely inedible it’s just the grain within the stalk that can be eaten, or used for other purposes.

 “Fine, fine fine. I, I can give you 2700 credits, but that my limit. My boss would kill me if I went any higher.” The man said. He was very big, his blue suit barely fit his body, it was greasy and worn out, but she needed the money, badly.

 “I’ll take it.” She said, she took out her T.O.M, Trade Organization and Management, and proceeded with the transaction, the man signed his name and the transaction was complete. She turned around and walked down the main corridor back to the docking bay. The trade hub on the starbase was massive. Thousands of people walked up and down the walkway going to various vendors, shops and traders lined the walkway. Her destination was the docking bays. Large videos projected on the walls showing news from the war and other things from around TEC occupied space.

 Suddenly the screens shut down then warning alarms started to sound. People started to scream and panic pushing and shoving their way through the massive corridors. Annabel looked at the new video that was playing on the screen. What looked like massive warships were headed straight for the starbase, then an automated voice came to life over the loudspeakers.

 “Alien warships headed for the starbase Aventura, all non-military personnel please evacuate the base immediately.” It was complete pandemonium people were screaming and running around, military officers were trying to escort people the hangar bays but with little use.

 “Oh God I need to get out of here.” Annabel thought to herself. She began to run for the hangars, once she was there she saw hundreds of people running for their ships and speeding out of the station. She frantically looked down the rows of trade ships each one a different size shape and color. Her ship was a small bronze colored arrow trader, not the most top one the line ships, but it got the job done. She ran down one of the rows of ships and then spotted her ship, but someone was trying to get in.

 “Hey! Hey you what do you think you’re doing with my ship!” She screamed as she ran up to her shuttle.

 “Get outta my way lady.” The man said, he was about in his twenties, scrawny and looked like one of the low lives that inhabited city alleys.

 “This is MY ship!” Annabel screamed over the sounds of the warning alarms and frantic people still screaming and trying to leave the station.

 “It’s my ship now lady get lost.” He said and pushed her to the floor. Annabel got up and ran towards the man and punched him square in the jaw sending him sprawling on the cold metal floor.

 “Now get lost before I do something worse.” She said as she opened the doors and walked into the ship. She sat in her seat, quickly started on the on board AI and buckled up.

 “Please select a destination please.” The onboard AI asked.

 “Dresden Trade Ship Center.” She said as she buckled up her seat belt.

 “Request confirmed lifting off in 3... 2... 1... 0." The she shuttle lifted off and flew out of the hangar, the alien warships were still advancing and the TEC fleet stationed there was just sitting there.

 “Call John please.” Annabel asked as she began to enter the atmosphere of the large terran planet.

 “Your request cannot be confirmed at this time, please try again later.” The AI said. The flight was starting to get bumpy as the ship began going through more of the atmosphere. The city of Dresden was experiencing one of the longest droughts ever recorded on the planet. As she reached 2000 meters she could see the large colony of Dresden.

 TEC colonies are built by thousands of automatons delivered by colony ships. They are programmed to build the city out of refined materials from the planet’s surface. This process takes up to a year to make a small colony capable of off world transportation and sustainability. From then the leaders of the colony put in requests to the TEC council for extensions to the colonies, after 5 extensions the colony is able to apply to become an official city of the Trader Emergency Coalition. Once that is done then the city can extend its boundaries without a request and set up new cities.

 The colony of Gateway was set up in 5325 and has had 2 extensions so the colony was still quite small. Annabel’s trade shuttle came in for a landing at the Dresden Trade Ship Center which housed hundreds of trade ships. The shuttle landed in its designated area and Annabel unbuckled herself from the seat and ran out of the ship.

 “Annabell, did you hear? The Vasari are attacking the TEC fleet!” Screamed Richard, the head of the Trade Ship Center.

 “Yes I am fully aware of the situation, “I need to get to my son.” She yelled as she ran to her car. She unlocked her car and jumped into the front seat. She revved the engine and the car shot up 15 meters into the air and lurched forward. Annabel began to speed towards her house at over 200 kmh.

She arrived at her home; it was a small 2 bedroom house that shone in the glaring heat. She was surrounded by acres of Ferish stalks stripped of the bright blue grain. She looked up at the sky, she could see the starbase and what looked like flies circling it, she knew that the starbase was under attack.

“John! John! Where are you?” Annabel screamed. John was nowhere to be seen in the house. She looked in the back; he was standing out in the back looking up in the air. Annabel noticed that it was dark all of a sudden, she looked up as well. Then she saw the 2 kilometer long Jarrasul Evacuator hovering about 15 kilometers from the planet’s surface. It blocked out the sun. The ships debris vortex started to spin. Suddenly the wind was so strong it almost knocked Annabel of her feet.

“John! Get in the house!” Annabel screamed. The noise that was emanating from the capital ship was defining she couldn’t even hear herself scream. She struggled against the vicious winds and grabbed John’s shoulder. He looked back at her, and then pointed to the sky once again. She looked up to see a TEC capital ship fall out of the sky, fires were erupting from everywhere it smashed into the ground 10 kilometers to the north, an enormous ball of fire erupted from where it landed, the shockwave through both Annabel and John off their feet. They both struggled to their feet, they looked at the area around them, and large chunks of the planet’s surface were being lifted into the air.

The colony 5 kilometers to the south was being ripped apart, large building were being thrusted into the air. The planet looked like it was disintegrating before their eyes. More and more of the planet was being hoisted into the sky. Annabel grabbed John’s hand and ran into the house. Once in the house she could finally talk to John, even though the noise was still unbearably loud.

“We need to get into the basement!” John screamed.

“Will we be safe there?” Annabel asked.

“Of course we will let’s go!” Both of them ran to a small door in the back of the kitchen, they ran down the stairs and sat down in the darkness of the basement, waiting for the end to this horrible nightmare.

*Starbase Aventura*

*March 18th 5328*

*Weapons Coordinator Frederick*

The starbase has been under siege now for an hour, the fleet stationed around the starbase hasn’t had much luck against the Vasari assault. The fleet was now a third the size it used to be, one of the Dunovs crashed onto the planet’s surface and the Jarrasul is causing mass chaos on the planet’s surface.

“Sir we have 15 volleys of missiles left, and the laser generators are at 55%.” One of the crewmen announced.

“Keep firing on those Vasari carriers, and fire all lasers and beam cannons on the capital ships.”

“Aye commander, right away.” Hundreds of missiles poured out of their launching tubes, and headed towards the carriers. The missiles impacted several carriers causing them to explode with tremendous force. Vasari bombers swarmed the starbase. Thousands of phase missiles impacted the hull causing the fortress to shake.

The beam cannons began to fire as well, it impacted a Vasari frigate slicing it in half, the metal around the point of impact glowed white hot. The Vasari capital ships were causing severe damage to the fleet. The 3 Kortul Devastators were able to bring down one of the Dunov Battlecruisers half an hour ago; luckily it wasn’t the capital ship that housed the fleet captain.

“Sir! Communications are back up!” Screamed a crewman.

“Set up a link between us and the Retribution!” The captain ordered. The large screen in the center of the battle station lit up, and Captain Ryan appeared on the screen.

“You don’t know how relieved I am to see you!” Yelled captain Ryan.

“The feeling is mutual, now what are your orders captain?” Replied Commander

“Focus all fire on the capital ships, don’t worry about the fighters and bombers, we have Gardas enroot from Athena.”

“Yes sir.” Commander Frederick replied. The transmition ended and the commander turned to face the rest of the crew.

“You heard the man! Focus fire on those capital ships!” The captain bellowed. Volleys of missiles and lasers began pouring out of the starbase. One unlucky Vasari frigate drifted into a volley of missiles and exploded in a massive explosion. After 10 minutes of continuous fire one of the Kortul Devastator began to erupt into flames. Then one last beam from the laser cannon grinded along the hull of the ship; causing the ship to violently explode, destroying several TEC ship surrounding it. The remainder of the Vasari capital ship began to focus fire on the last Dunov. It would last only minutes under constant fire. The Dunov began to accelerate towards the starbase in an effort to get relief from the constant barrage of pulse beams.

“Captain there is an incoming transmition from the *Retribution.”* A crewman announced.

“Well, bring it up!” Said the commander, the large screen in the center of the command bridge flickered to life.

“Commander, we are not going to last much longer, our antimatter chamber has been breached, and it is only a matter of time before this thing explodes. We have crewmen from the *Retribution* coming in on escape pods, a few pilots and I will stay aboard and steer her into the Vasari fleet.” The captain announced. The commander was in shock, he looked at the captain, the bridge was practically destroyed, fires were everywhere, dead bodies still seated in their designated chairs, and only 3 people were on the bridge, the captain and two pilots that the commander didn’t recognize.

“Are you sure you want to go through with this?” The commander asked, hoping the captain would say no.

 “I’m sorry, I have to do this. Tell our parents that I died honorably.” Then the transmition ended. The commander ran up to the window to see his brother drift off into space; as the Battlecruiser accelerated towards the fleet tears started to form in the commander’s eyes. The Vasari ships knew what the captain was doing, they began to fire on the capital ship, but it was too late, the *Retribution* exploded in a dazzling display of fire, the explosion destroyed one of the Kortul Devastator the two explosions shook the entire starbase and destroyed most of the TEC fleet. The odds of the TEC winning this battle were starting to plummet. The Vasari fleet started to advance towards the starbase.

 “Sir out hull is at 15%.” A crewman screamed. The commander sighed. He saw the approaching Vasari fleet.

 “Start the self-destruct protocol.” The bridge went silent.

 “Anyone who wants to leave can, you have 4 minutes, and only 4 minutes.” He announced. Surprisingly no one moved. One crewman stood up.

 “Sir, with all due respect but, we all know you couldn’t do anything by yourself. We are staying.” The captain started to chuckle.

 “Alright, start the self-destruct protocol.” For several minutes the crew stood in silence while they began the self-destruct protocol. Then the starbase AI turned on,

 “Self-Destruct in 30 seconds.”

 “Okay, I want you to know that it’s been an honor to serve with you, and if we had to go sometime, this is probably the best way to go.” The captain said. The AI started to talk again.

 “Antimatter destabilization in 3, 2, 1, 0.” The starbase’s hull began to erupt into flames, and then exploded with the force of thousands of nuclear missiles. The space around the explosion warped and destroyed the entire Vasari fleet.

**Chapter 4**

*Dresden Colony*

*March 18th 5328*

*Annabel Arctos*

 The continuous defining sounds of the planet being ripped apart stopped and it was complete silence. No wind, no ship engines, no explosions, no screaming. Not a single noise.

 “Mom, what do we do?” John asked. The basement was pitch-black, Annabel couldn’t see anything.

 “We should go out to see what happened.” Annabel said hesitantly. She sat up and felt around the room to find the stairway. Both of them slowly walked up the stairs and opened the door to the kitchen. Light came pouring into the dark basement. Dishes and silverware was scattered across the floor. Dirt and dust was everywhere it caked all the furniture. They continued to walk through their trashed house and walked out the back door.

 The planet looked as if something took a knife to it and stabbed it hundreds of times. Large chunks of the planet were gone leaving 500 meter deep trenches on the planet, and they were everywhere.

 “H-how could they do this! Why?” John screamed as he looked around the now desolate waste land. The foliage was stripped off the surface leaving just brown dust everywhere, like an endless desert. Stretching for as far as the eye could see. In the distance Annabel could see the ruins of the Dresden colony.

 “Do you think anyone survived in the city?” She asked.

 “I don’t know. Should we go into the city?” John mumbled.

 “Yea, maybe we should.” Annabel replied; moments later several colony ships landed a little less than a kilometer from where she stood. The Vasari colony ships were massive, able to carry hundreds of citizens, or soldiers.

 “Get in the car, now!” Annabel screamed. They ran to the car. Annabel started to shake and she could barely put the keys in the ignition.

 “Mom, do you want me to drive?” John asked.

 “No! Just, give me a minute!” She exclaimed. She sighed, “Look I’m sorry, I’m under a lot of stress right now, it’s not every day I have to deal with an alien invasion.” John started to laugh.

 “I know, let’s just get going.” The car started up and they began to fly past their home. They drove for 5 minutes until Annabel came to a sudden stop.

 “Wait, the only way into the city it through the main highway, which is where the Vasari landed their ships.” John was silent for a minute, he was thinking.

 “Then we will have to walk.” He announced. Annabel looked at him like he was crazy.

 “You have to be kidding right?”

 “Nope, it’s the only way.” Annabel looked out at the highway; she turned off the car and opened her door. John did the same and they began to walk down the highway into the city. Parts of the highway was destroyed, luckily it was stable enough so they could continue their trek into the city. 10 minutes later they came up to the point where the Vasari landed their ship.

 “Mom, I’m going to check and see what they are doing.” John announced.

 “You will not! We are going to keep going into the city *away* from the warmongering aliens.” Annabel proclaimed.

 “It’ll be fine, it will be quick.” John began to walk towards the large colony ships in the distance, and Annabel began to follow. Several minutes later they were roughly 200 meters from the colony ships.

 They Vasari colony ships towered 150 meters into the sky, and gleamed in the late afternoon sun. Hundreds of Vasari soldiers were working around a large ditch. Large mechs were hauling large electronic parts and framework around to where the Vasari soldiers were hovering around.

 “They are building a phase gate, why I don’t know.” Annabel announced.

 “How do you know what that is?” John asked.

 “When we had a treaty with the Vasari I used to trade with some of them in their region of space, and I saw them everywhere. They said they were used to link up a direct phase lane between two phase lanes, so they weren’t restricted by the phase lanes we have to use.”

 “That’s insane. We need to see what they are trying to move.” John said, and he began to get up. Annabel grabbed his arm and shoved him to the ground.

 “No! We are done here!” She yelled.

 “Mom, what if there isn’t anyone from the military coming? We could be the only ones that could tell the TEC what they are doing here.” Then he started to creep closer to the ditch. Annabel followed behind John. They ran from boulder to boulder, dodging more Vasari soldiers. Luckily a strong wind picked up scattering large amounts of dust everywhere. They reached the large hole in the ground. In it was a massive metallic red prism. The object was 80 meters high and at its base it was 75 meters wide. Strange hieroglyphic symbols were etched into the prism.

 “What the hell it th-” Before John could finish his sentence he was thrown into the air by a 3 meter tall Vasari solider.

 “John!” Annabel screamed. John landed with a loud thud as he impacted the ground. He tried to get up but a rather large Vasari solider stepped on his back smashing him into the ground. Annabel ran towards her bloodied son but was thrown backwards. The large sand storm continued to grow in size; she could barely make out the outlines of the large aliens.

 One of them pulled a gun on Annabel, and started to talk in its native language.

 “I can’t understand you! Let me see my son!” Annabel screamed over the loud roar of the wind. One Vasari came up to the one holding the gun in Annabel’s face, and began to speak to him, or her or whatever it was.

 Moments later the Vasari that had the gun pointed at Annabel grabbed her arm and escorted her into one of the large Vasari colony ships. She could see her son being dragged into the ship with her; she could see he was bleeding severely and looked like his leg was broken.

 “Oh, please James come get us.” Annabel mumbled under her breath.

*Advent Homeworld: Jakari*

*Exactum 1246.7*

*The Divine*

 “We ask for your guidance on our journey of retribution.” The Divine said as she looked out of the large window on the Temple of Hostility that orbited the large desert home planet of the Advent.

 “We have decided that it is now time for our attack on our weakened brethren, we feel their suffering and torment, and it is now time my sisters to continue our path of enlightenment and retribution.” The Coalescence echoed through The Divine’s mind and through everyone’s mind.

 The Advent’s hatred towards the TEC started over a thousand years ago, when the old Trade Order found them on their home planet. When the Trade Order landed on the Advent’s planet, the citizens didn’t greet them with open arms. But both races noticed that they looked oddly similar. After months of searching through archives the Advent and Trade Order came to the realization that during the Antiquity Wars a religious group of humans were banished to the planet because of their radical preaching. The Trade Order wouldn’t allow there newly discovered brethren to reject them so they sent emissaries to the planet to find out there ways of life and how to better go about asking them to join the Order. But the Trade Order saw that the Advent were using hive-mind like technologies, the sale neurochemicals and biological experimentation on their own kind without any limitations what so ever, and these were but a few of the taboos that the Trade Order discovered. These were taboos that the Trade Order found repulsive. They immediately decided that, brothers or not they must be punished for their actions. So the Trade Order cast out the entire civilization into the darkness of uncharted space.

 This decision would greatly benefit the Advent. Now focused on revenge they focused solely on developing their technology in ways that the TEC could never imagine. Then 970 years after their exile they returned to take back what was rightfully theirs and to exact revenge on their brethren.

 The Advent assault was surprisingly easy due to the war the TEC were already fighting. Within a few short years the Advent were able to conquer dozens of TEC planets. But then out of nowhere, the Advent met face to face with the aliens that were giving the TEC such a hard time. At first the Advent tried to peacefully covert the Vasari the Unity, but the Vasari were uninterested with the Advents proposal and declined. A year later, the TEC were starting to put up a real fight, and the Vasari was beginning to lose planets. Once again the Advent tried to extend a hand to the Vasari but they hastily declined. Later that same year the Vasari attacked an Advent planet, killing everyone on it. This caused a massive scar in the psyche of the Advent people, so the Coalescence decided that it was their duty to avenge their people and convert the aliens to the way of the Unity, by any means necessary.

 The Divine walked through the research temple to the hangar where her ship was waiting to take her to the Revelation Battlecruiser. The corridors of the temple were elegant and seemed to flow like water. She reached the hanger and walked into her vessel. She sat the seat and leaned back in her chair, the fused with her mind and she was now able to take control of her ship. The transport pod quickly accelerated out of the hangar and across the gravity well.

 Dozens of Temples of Communion littered the gravity wells, along with ship factories and planetary defenses like beams defense platforms and strike craft hangars. The Revelation was stationed next to the Transcencia Star Base. The shuttle landed and The Divine unattached herself from the shuttle and walked into the Revelation’s hangar. The hangar was filled with strike craft. Due to the Advents ability to control objects from large distances, that Advent favor large amounts of strike craft because they can be controlled from the safety of the capital ship or carrier. The individuals that control the strike craft are called the Anima their mental control capability are unmatched by any other in the Advent community.

 The Divine walked down the corridor that leads to the bridge of the ship. The bridge was very spacious. A large blue orb hovered in the center of the room where the ship’s navigators steer the ship. The captain of the ship sits in the very back of the bridge where she overlooks the rest of the crew.

 The Advent military force consists of entirely women due the Advent morphology, the women have a stronger neural capacity allowing them to better control ship that require extreme concentration and neuro-communication abilities. The Advents ability to speak to each other over long distances through their minds, and instinctively know what one another is doing or needs is an advantage on the battlefield because this allows for quicker reaction times.

 “The rest of the fleet will be arriving soon Priestess.” One of the navigationalist announced.

 “That is perfect; I will be speaking with the Coalescence please keep your thoughts calm while I speak with them.”

 “Yes Priestess at once.” The crew replied. The Divine walked up to her captain’s chair and laid her head back in the neural connector on the head rest. When she connected with the chair her senses were transported through the ship and broadcasted to the Coalescence on the planet’s surface. When she connected her vision was replaced with a long blue winding tunnel, this continued for several moments and then she could see the members of the Coalescence seated in the Hall of Redemption. The room was several hundred meters long and at least a hundred meters tall. The room was made of silvery blue metal and the walls were littered with florescent lights. The ceiling had large paintings depicting scenes from Advent mythology.

 The fifteen members of the Advent Coalescent were seated on large podiums that stretched 50 meters into the air. The long blue and white robes that they wore stretched almost to the floor. The women seated in the room were almost 150 exactums old which is very old in Advent society.

 These fifteen women were the most powerful beings in the Advent hierarchy. Their mental powers are unmatched by any other Advent. They are to be treated with the upmost respect and dignity, if they aren’t, and if they feel like it, they could kill anyone with a single thought.

 “Hello your holiness.” The Divine greeted, her body was projected in the center of the fifteen women below them so she had to look up quite a ways to even see their faces.

 “Hello, what is the issue with witch you are troubling us with?” One of them echoed. Her voice was so calming, and soothing.

 The Divine stood up as straight as she could and began to speak, “The fleet is ready, and we are awaiting your decision to continue the assaults.”

 “Of course, we must strike when they are weak. May Unity be with you all.” One the Coalescence members replied.

 “Thank you, may the Unity be with you as well.” The Divine said. Then The Divine closed her eyes and she was transported back the bridge of her ship.

 “We have permission to continue the assault, is the fleet ready?” The Divine asked.

 “Yes mam all ships are accounted for, the anima is ready waiting on your order.” The Divine’s second in command replied.

 “Excellent, I want all ships to move to the gravity well and phase jump on my order.” The Divine said. Her thoughts were projected to the rest of the ship captains and in unison all the ships began to accelerate towards the edge of the gravity well, leaving the large desert homeworld behind to go the Gateway system roughly 250 light years away. Once the ships reached the outer gravity well, hundreds of bright blue phase tunnels opened, and in the blink of an eye the ships were gone.

*TDN Montgomery*

*March 19th 5328*

*Captain Arctos*

 “Damn it! What did the Vasari want with Gateway?” Captain Arctos yelled. The large Vasari war officer was handcuffed and was seated in a human sized chair that was obviously too small for him. There were 5 TEC soldiers in the room with Captain Arctos and Leah.

 “Don’t yell at him, if we want any information we have to do this carefully.” Leah said as she walked over to the chair across the large metallic table.

 “He’s not a six year old; he is an alien war officer.” The captain said.

 “Tar’uul? That’s your name correct? Well we need to get some information, we don’t want another battle, and I don’t think you want to lose any more of your people in another assault on one of your planets.” Leah said, she was trying to be as calm as possible

 Tar’uul started to laugh; it sounded more like a gurgle, but a laugh none the less. The translator started to translate when Tar’uul began to talk.

 “It is quite pitiful actually; you make hollow threats when you know your leaders would just rather hide behind your miserable defenses. Yes, you were able to take back your sorry excuse for a planet, but of you would have arrived an hour earlier, you would have met the full might of the Vasari Expeditionary Force, which the planet Gateway got to meet all too well, hopefully my Commander got what he needed and killed every last soul on that rock. As for telling you anything about what we are planning, you don’t deserve to be told the knowledge that I possess.”

 Captain Arctos, remembered his family was on Gateway, Tar’uul’s comment about killing everyone on the planet really got to him.

 “Listen here! You will tell us or I will jettison you into space in heartbeat, and trust me this is NOT a hollow threat.” Captain Arctos yelled. Leah looked over at him; the captain could see in her eyes that she was beyond angry.

 She turned to one of the soldiers, “Take our guest back to the brig, we’ll talk to him tomorrow.”

 “Yes sir.” Two of the soldiers raised their weapons and escorted Tar’uul out of the room. The sliding doors closed behind them leaving them alone in the small interrogation room.

 “Captain I know you’re very worried about your family on Gateway, but you can’t let that affect your ability to function as a captain.”

 “I am fully capable of balancing my family life with my duty as a captain; I don’t need any reminders from my second in command.” The captain said, and walked out of the room and down the corridor to the bridge.

**Chapter 5**

*Vasari Occupied World: Gateway*

*Rii #10050.78*

*War Officer Tarsis*

 The Vasari War Officer walked out of the Jarrasul Evacuator and walked down to where the newly excavated artifact was sitting. A dozen or so Vasari scientists were working on the artifact. The artifact itself was a metallic red, 100 meter tall prism. There were hundreds of carvings in the artifact, they seemed to look like a message, and large blue wires pulsed with a vibrant blue light across the object.

 “Has there been any progress with the artifact?” Tarsis asked the head Vasari scientist.

 “There has been one break through, we have found out that the writing on the artifact is indeed an ancient language, so far we have not been able to figure out what language it is but once we do, we suspect that the artifact will be easily activated.” The scientist responded.

 “Perfect, continue your work, but we need to move in less than a lii so we can take it to a proper facility.”

 “Yes sir.” The scientist replied. Tarsis walked back into his capital ship and to the interrogation room to talk to the humans that were spying on the artifact.

 The door to the interrogation room opened to revile two dirty individuals, one of which had something wrong with its leg. Tarsis walked up the large table in the center of the room. He sat down and looked at them analyzing every detail, and facial expression.

 “What were you doing spying on our operations?” Tarsis demanded. The female stood up and looked Tarsis straight in the eyes.

 “Listen here! I demand that my son get medical attention immediately, then and only then will I speak to you!” And she sat back down and began talking to her son again. Tarsis could kill them right now if he wanted but they might be of importance, and if they gave valuable information then he could finally get a seat in the council.

 “As you wish,” Tarsis pointed at one of the Vasari soldiers standing by the door. “Take the male to the medical center immediately.”

 The Vasari soldier grabbed John and walked him out of the room leaving Annabelle and Tarsis alone in the room.

 “Your son will be back soon, and when he does I expect you to tell me everything you know. If not you won’t like the consequences.” And with that he walked out of the room.

*TDN Montgomery*

*March 20th 5328*

*Captain Arctos*

 The captain looked through the hours of video footage that was captured from the various civilian structures when the Vasari attacked Gateway. The captain watched and analyzed every second of video footage looking at the Vasari fleet, and seeing how many ships made it through the planetary defenses. He was interrupted by a series of vigorous knocks on the door.

 “What is it?” The captain asked as the door slid open. A tall skinny man was in front of the door, he was panting and trying to catch his breath.

 “Captain, it’s the,” He stopped once again to catch his breath.

 “Spit it out!” The captain yelled in frustration.

 “It’s the president, he want to speak to you immediately in the mission room.” The captain’s eyes widened. He stood up, but almost fell over; his legs were asleep from sitting for hours.

 “Thank you for informing me.” The captain said. He made his way down the corridor to an elevator that was sealed off to only the highest levels of military power. The captain hovered his key card over the sensor and walked into the elevator.

 Moments later the captain entered the ICC or the Internal Central Command. Leah, Joanne, and several other advisors were seated and the president’s holographic image stood in the front of the room.

 “Ah, captain! Glad you can join us. Please take a seat.” The President said. “Leah has informed me that your fleet is still stationed at Vafthrudnir. The senate needs you back at Triton for defense, the attack on Gateway was extremely devastating and too close to Triton for the senate’s liking so we are telling all TEC fleet within 150 light years of Triton to return immediately for defense against any other Vasari surprise attacks.”

 The captain stood up quickly, “With all to respect president we can’t just leave all the colonies defenseless and we need to help the people of Gateway.” The captain knew that no one would agree with him. But he had to find out if Annabel and John were okay, they were his whole world.

 The President looked at the captain for a moment. “Okay the rest of you you’re dismissed, but captain, I need to speak with you.”

 The rest of the men and women left the room single file, one by one. Once they all left the president started to speak again, “James, I know Annabel and John are on Gateway, and you want to go see if they are okay, but I just can’t allow that, and when I say ‘I can’t allow it’ I'm talking about the senate. I have barely any power over those corrupt assholes.” The captain couldn’t help but crack a smile. The captain and the president went way back to when they were kids back on Osiris. Osiris was a small oceanic planet on the outskirts of the TEC Empire.

 “I'm this close from being thrown out of office. And I can’t afford you going off and trying to find your family. I have to think about the entire empire here. It’s not just you; there are trillions of lives at stake.” The president sounded desperate.

 “I know what the situation is, but I have to find them I don’t I don’t care if I get court-martialed I’m finding them and noting is going to stop me but death himself.”

After thousands of years of existence, most early human celebrations, and superstitions have been lost to time. But something about death has always shot fear into the hearts of everyone, thus allowing the personification of death to weave his way through human culture for millennia.

“Captain I order you to step down-” The president was cut off mid-sentence. Captain Arctos shut down the communication and walked out of the ICC.

The doors of the command center slid open and Captain Arctos walked in and took is position on his Captain’s chair.

“Officer Ramsey I want all power to the engines. We are leaving for Gateway.”

“But, Captain are you sure?”

“That is an order! Do not disobey me.”

“Yes sir. All power diverting to the engines. We will be at the outer gravity well in less than 20 minutes.” Just as the captain was starting to settle down and think about how smoothly his plan was going Leah walked into the bridge with several military personnel.

“Captain, James William Arctos I order you to step down and release command of this vessel to me.” Leah demanded.

The captain slowly turned around to face Leah and got out of his chair. “You have no authority to do this.”

“Oh yes I do. The senate gave me full power of this vessel. They suspect treasonous acts and I am ordering you to step down.”

“I will not. We are leaving for Gateway and that is that.”

“Fine, if you refuse to cooperate with me, the senate now views you as a traitor and you are now under arrest. Guards take him to the brig.” The guards advanced towards the captain.

“This is madness! I am not a traitor, this is insubordination! Let go of me at once!” The captain yelled. He was overwhelmed and dragged out of the bridge.

The crew looked in shock of what just happened. “You,” Leah pointed to Officer Ramsey, “We are now headed for Triton. And whoever is in-charge of communications, tell the rest of the crew so follow behind me.”

“Yes mam, right away.”

*TEC Homeworld Triton*

*April 1st, 5328*

*Captain Arctos*

 The captain stood in the center of the senate floor, with a hundred eyes staring down at him. One pair belonged Leah, the captain now despised her more than ever.

 “Your actions at Vafthrudnir were reckless, and frankly unintelligent.” The senate leader said. “We are at a very fragile position here. And we can’t have you gallivanting around the galaxy on your own agenda. After much deliberation we are putting you on an extended leave of absence. You will be able to return for duty at the end of this year. Do you have anything to say for yourself?”

 The captain cleared his throat, “I find it funny how when elections come around you insist on protecting the people of the Trader Emergency Coalition. Yet once you’re in here and something goes wrong you are all too keen on protecting your own asses instead of helping the trillions of people on the outer worlds. Why is that?”

 “That is enough!” The senate leader bellowed.

 “Oh wait, maybe it is because every crooked corporation that funds your worthless asses is here, on Triton and, God forbid one of those corporations was on, Gateway there would be ships swarming around that planet!”

 The senate erupted into gasps and conversations. Since the year 4100, religious practice outside of your own home was taboo, and frowned upon if you mentioned it to others. In the military it was strictly outlawed to speak of religion.

 “I said, THAT IS ENOUGH! I want you out of my site, and you are now revoked of your captain status and you will *never* be able to command another vessel for the rest of your life!”

 And with that the captain was hauled out of the senate floor and tossed onto the street. He stood and brushed himself off and walked down the crowed alley way to find the nearest place to wash way his feelings.

 The city of Proxima was a sprawling super city filled with all different kinds of life-forms. To someone looking at the city they would think that skyscrapers dominate the city. To an extent they do but there are plenty of “Old world” establishments that are more comforting than the new world 500 story tall buildings that run the city.

 It was getting dark and it started to rain so the captain decided to get something to eat. Luckily there was a place not too far up the road. He looked up into the night sky, the city was filled with all sorts of bright colors, oranges, purples, greens and blues all advertising trade and products that no one needed. He passed several automations moving some crates to a loading vehicle.

 The tavern was run by a large tentacled fellow, his several appendages were doing various tasks. He looked at the captain with one of his eyes, “Wha can I do fer ya?” He asked.

 “Anything I can buy with this.” The captain held out twelve credits. The creature took the credits and made started to mess with a devise in the back of the bar area. It created some sort of sandwich. Finding a place that actually makes food is very hard these days so the captain wasn’t too disappointed in his meal.

 The captain took the sandwich and sat down at an empty seat in the back of the tavern. Several holoprogector, were broadcasting some information about the senate, and himself.

 The captain activated the projector on the table and tuned into the broadcast.

 “After much speculation it is now confirmed, the TEC senate has now shutdown until further notice. Some sources have blamed this on former Captain James Arctos for his actions at his hearing today.” The reporter stated.

The captain saw someone talking to the tentacled creature and he pointed right at him.

 “May I have a seat?” The man asked, he was roughly in his mid-30’s average build, sort of your average Joe. Except for a large scar that extended from his temple to his chin, it was a very odd scar.

 “Sure, who are you?” The captain asked somewhat suspiciously.

 “I'm with the president; I need to talk to you.”

 The captain looked at the man with disgust. “I want nothing to do with you or the president.” James was about to stand up when the man started to talk again, “I can help you get your family James. All you have to do is listen.”

 “How do you know about my family, and how do you know my name?”

 “Like I said I’m with the president, and he, well we need your help.”

 “Who is we exactly?”

 “The president, some of the senate and a few military captains and hopefully you.” The man said.

 “I’m listening.” The captain said.

 “The president is worried about the Vasari artifact on Gateway, and he proposed sending a Recon fleet out to investigate, but most of the senate says that we need to bolster our defenses and stay put. So there is a huge division amongst the senate right now. And what you said at your hearing today really got some senate members thinking.”

 “Wait a minute, what Vasari artifact? What does it do?”

 “We don’t know, but this recon fleet will find out.”

 “Why am I being chosen?”

 “The president trusts you and wants to give you a chance to find your family. Any more questions? Are you in?”

 “Yes I’m in.” The captain said without hesitation.

 “You will meet me by the old abandoned military outpost in Verigrod. From there you just follow my orders.” The man said. He started to get out of his seat when the captain started to ask another question.

 “Wait, one more question, who are you?”

 “Me? Well you already know me.”

 “I’m not sure I do.”

 “It’s me, Joanne.”

**Chapter 6**

*Vasari Research Base: Gateway*

*Rii #10050.90*

*War Officer Tarsis*

 “I will not ask you again human. Where is the rest of your group?” The War Officer yelled.

 “I said, I don’t have a group we came from the colony!” The now bloody and bruised Annabel cried. Once again the war officer punched Annabel in the stomach. All day and night this has been going on.

 The war officer examined Annabel closely. His insectoid like face only inches away from hers. “If you won’t tell me, maybe you will tell your child.”

 A small segment of the wall split open to reveal John, his hair was matted and coated with blood. His clothes were torn and his face was bruised. The war officer threw him across the room he landed next to his mother.

 “John!” Annabel screamed, she struggled against the chains that held her to the wall.

 “You monsters! Why would you do this to us?!” Annabel sobbed looking at the alien in front of her.

 “You cannot even begin to fathom what we The Vasari Empire have had to deal with at this point in time and I will not waist my breath trying to teach it to you.” And with those words the chains released Annabel and he walked out of the room leaving Annabel to weep with her son, and their unknown future.

*TEC Homeworld: Triton*

*April 1st, 5328*

*James Arctos*

 “What? Joanne, how?” The captain asked. Joanne chuckled and rolled up her sleeve and revealed a small device on her wrist, she pressed a few buttons and the man slowly faded to reveal Joanne.

 It’s some kind of cloaking device, brand spanking new technology.”

 “Well, I can say, I am speechless. But why are you going behind the senate’s back?”

 “That bitch Leah got my whole squad killed and I plan on showing her that karma is my middle name.”

 “I’m with you. She’s bad news.” Joanne’s telecom in her ear began to ring, “Hold on, I need to take this.”

 “I need to go, remember, the old military station in Verigrod 5 am sharp.” She said after finishing her conversation.

 James was awoken by the ringing of his alarm clock. It read 3:12 am. He hopped out of bed ready to get on to some kind of ship, something about being on a planet made him uneasy, it’s like your restricted, in space nothing but gravity can hold you back and he liked that feeling.

He got ready and headed out of his room. Everyone back at base knew what he did, and they wouldn’t let him live it down. After the uncomfortably long walk to the entrance to the base he waved down a transport car to take him to Verigrod.

 The city of Verigrod is a very rural city, that’s why the military decided to build a base there, but after its completion it was abandoned for reasons unknown to everyone but the highest ranked officials in the military.

 An hour later James was finally dropped off at the transport terminal in the city center. He checked the time, 4:30 am. He still had 30 minutes and the military station was only a 10 minute walk away. The city reminded of just a smaller version of Proxima City.

The overcast sky really brought an ominous look to the military base. It was a large 4 story concrete structure, two giant pillars held up the second story that hung over the man entrance. A large landing field was off in the distance, it was overrun by foliage, and the base itself was covered in phalanx turrets able to shot down most aerial attack fighters or bombers.

 “It’s a shame they abandoned this place, I would have rather be stationed here than at Chimera Base.” Joanne said as she walked towards James.

 “I wonder why they abandoned this place.”

 “Don’t know, but luckily for us we got this place up and running. Follow me the others are waiting for us in the conference room.

 The conference room was a large triangular room with a large table in the center. Some senate members that James recognized from his hearing were seated, along with some military officers from around the TEC military one of whom was Commander Gregory. In total there was around 20 people seated around the table, 22 including James and Joanne.

 “Alrighty, looks like everyone is here, let’s call the president and get this show on the road.” Joanne said. The two took their seats and a holoprogector was placed in the chair at the head of the table. Seconds later the president sat in the chair.

 “Are we all here?” The president asked.

 “Yes Mr. President we are all present and accounted for.” One of the senate members replied.

 “Good, I will not need all of you for this mission, but in the long run I will, for the recon mission Commander Gregory we will need your fleet, and you will be accompanied by Captain Arctos.”

 Commander Gregory’s fleet was the perfect fleet for the mission because of the small size only 2 Kols, a Percheron and 5 Kodiaks.

 “Senate members,” The president continued “I will need your support backing up my decision to allow the fleet to leave when or if the senate finds out. The rest of you wait for further instructions and stay low we don’t want to attract any attention. Is everyone clear on their orders?”

 “Yes sir.” The group replied.

 “I have one question when do we depart for Gateway?” Captain Arctos asked.

 “Right now, we can’t waste any time.” The president said. The captain was pleasantly surprised.

 “Well in that case let’s go Commander Gregory!” The captain said.

 “Mr. President we will be ready in a hour, then we will inform you when we phase out of here.” The commander said.

 “Okay, I must go the senate needs me, the rest of you back to your normal schedule.” Then the president signed off. The captain and the commander walked out to the landing area where a transport was waiting.

 “How have you been? I haven’t seen you in a while.” The commander asked as the transport shuttle hauled them off to space.

 “I haven’t had the best of luck these past months. I don’t even know if my wife and son are okay. They are my whole world. I can’t even imagine a world without those two. And I have been revoked the right to command a ship for the rest of my life.”

 “Whatever happened, happened for the good; whatever is happening, is happening for the good; whatever will happen, will also happen for the good only. You need not have any regrets for the past. You need not worry for the future. The present is happening... that is all I have to say. We will find them and bring them back don’t you worry.”

 “We are now approaching *TDN* *Hellfire.*”The on-board computer announced. The Kol battleship was surrounded by the rest of the commander’s fleet. The other Kol battleship *TDN Pluto* was just off in the distance.

 “I’m commanding the *Hellfire* and you will be with the *Pluto.”* The commander said. It was wonderful to see the lights of the capital ship gleam, casting shadows on the magnificent vessel. Unlike most of the TEC's hasty conversions of civilian models, the Kol-class battleship is the first dedicated warship design in nearly 700 years. It admirably balances speed, protection and firepower. A Kol Battleship, with its array of heavy weapons, has a formidable presence in any engagement. They were marshaled to front lines to serve as a devastating weapon of war and a sign of hope for the embattled and weary TEC fleets. More than any other warship, the Kol has proven to be instrumental in halting the Vasari advance.

 The transport ship landed in the *TDN Hellfire* and dropped off the commander, “Set up communication as soon as you get to the bridge. Oh and just call the communications team and pre-phase checkup Tactical it’s much easier than learning everyone’s name.” Then he walked off.

 After a short ride to the *TDN Pluto* the captain walked onto the hanger. It was similar to the Marza. The captain walked through the busy hanger to the transport elevator.

 And finally the captain was where he belonged, on the bridge of a capital ship. The *Pluto’s* bridge was a controlled frenzy of activity. Captain Arctos stood in the middle of it; arms folded and face calm as he gazed at the main viewscreen.

"Status?" He asked Tactical.

"All weapons ready, captain. Shields cycled up to full power.” It was amazing how the crew could adapt to a new captain and not even be fazed by it.

 “Open comms with the *Hellfire*.” The captain told Tactical.

 “Aye sir one moment,” The Commander’s face filled the viewscreen.

 “We ready for jump Captain?” The commander asked.

 “Yes everything is ready to go. Waiting on your orders.” The captain replied with childish giddiness.

 “Wait sir, phase link can’t get a lock on Gateway itself, we are going to have to take a less direct route.” A PhaseTac crewman interrupted.

 “Dammit well what is the quickest route?” The commander asked.

 “Well we will have to go through the Anterus System.”

 “Very well, send the coordinates to the rest of the fleet and fire up the phase engines.”

 “Right way sir. Engaging phase engines in 3, 2, 1, go.” And they were off speeding way at over the speed of light with the rest of the fleet trailing behind.

 “Don’t worry guy’s I'm coming to get you, I promise.” The captain said to himself as he took his seat in the center of the command bridge.

*Retribution Fleet*

*Exactum 1246.9*

*The Divine*

 The pain grew worse. She mustn’t open her eyes for she would lose the sensation. The pain creped along her body, the agony of millions of souls coursed through her body. Now, she has the information and she needed.

 The Divine awoke from her meditation. Her body was drained of energy. She felt her vital forces leaver her body in the form of liquid through her skin.

 The meditation room was made of a shiny blue metal in the center lay an orb floating several inches off the floor. That orb is where the Advent focus their mental prowess to see and feel the future.

 “We must not continue or plotted course. We will wait for TEC to arrive at the Anterus system, where we will be waiting to crush them.” The Divine called from her room. The call echoed through the halls of the battleship to her sisters in combat.

 “Yes my lady at once.” The Devine sensed the starship stop its course in the Asteroid Field the TEC would be at in only a few moments.

 The Divine focused all energy on her echoes, “Sisters prepare for combat at once!” Her call echoed through space to the rest of the fleet. The entire fleet moved like a singular organism to face the impending enemy.

 Off in the distance the space lit up with the radiation of the phase tunnels openings. The Divine walked to the command bridge to help with the course of the battle. The smooth silver ship advanced towards the enemy.

 “We out number them 2:1.”

 “I see, focus our energy towards their capital ships. I sense there leaders are there.” The capital ship hummed with angelic energy as the Advent focused their energy to the weapons. The space was lit up with the dazzling brilliance of hundreds of laser beams shooing across the asteroid field.

 “Is the Anima ready?” The Devine asked.

 “I am, launching fighters now.” Hundreds of remote op- erated fighters and bombers poured out to the carriers.

 Now the ships were much closer; only a 100 kilometers apart now. The Kol’s laser batteries and autocannons impacted the shields causing the antimatter to flash brilliantly. The Revelation’s plasma projectiles devastated the Kodiak cruisers, upon impact the plasma melted through the hull causing the crew to be violently jettisoned into space leaving the cruiser to float into the asteroid field. One of the Kols has taken heavy damage.

 “Have all Illuminators focus fire on the capital ships.”

 “At once my lady.” The Kol launched several gauss rounds into the fleet of Illuminators, causing a chain reaction of explosions that rocked the capital ship.

*TDN Pluto*

*1 hour into battle*

*April 10th, 5328*

*Captain Arctos*

 “I want a status update on all fighter squadrons ASAP.”

 “Aye sir, right way, Alpha Squadron is gone, Delta Squadron is down 5 fighters, but is still in the battle.”

 “I want the Kodiaks to move up and destroy those carriers.” The captain manipulated the view screen so he could get a better angle on the battle.

 “Captain, incoming transmission from the *Hellfire*.”

 “Bring it online.” The captain commanded as he looked up at the comm-screen at the center of the bridge.

 “What is it commander?”

 “We are severely out-numbered. I am ordering a fleet wide retreat.”

 “Give me 10 more minutes I think I have a way for breaking their defenses.” The captain sent a battle plan through to the commander

 “Dammit, this is crazy, this better work.”

 “Hey. If it doesn’t drinks are on me.”

 “It’s a deal.” The commander said. Then the transmission ended.

 “New plans, Tactical order all Kodiaks to fire on theses asteroids.” The captain highlighted a cluster of asteroids that surrounded the enemy ships.

 “Yes sir, sending orders now.” Moments later the Kodiaks opened fire on the marked asteroids. The autocannons shot multiple salvos of uranium pellets at the asteroids, causing them to fracture into multiple pieces. Those asteroid chunks were hitting the Advent shields with such for that they were breaking the shields and destroying ships.

 The captain cracked a smile at the sight of the Advent ships breaking apart. The captain opened a direct feed to the Kodiaks, “Great job everyone I want you to change targets. Open fire on the Advent Illuminators.”

 “Aye captain.” The captain’s joy quickly subsided when he checked his viewscreen, it was pirates and lots of them.

 “DAMMIT! I want communication with the commander right now!” The captain ordered.

 “Hahaha, its working captain I guess I owe you a drink!” The commander chuckled.

 The captain tried to contain his fear when he told the commander, “Commander, we have pirates incoming, at least a hundred we need to leave *now*.” The commander’s smile quickly faded. It was replaced with pure terror. He turned to the communications manager,

 “Tell all ship to retreat to phase space immediately I don’t care where they phase jump just phase jump now.”

 “Right way sir.” Both the Kols began to turn around to find a space where they could phase jump, because hitting a rock the size of a small frigate at faster than the speed of light can do some pretty bad damage to a ship.

 “Phase jumping in 3, 2, 1, go!” But the *Pluto* didn’t move.

 “Why aren’t we moving?” The captain shouted over the sounds of the Advent laser projectiles hitting the hull of the ship.

 “It’s the Revelation, it shut down our phase drives!” The Navigation manager replied.

 “There is an incoming transmition from the last surviving Kodiak.”

 “Open it up.” The captain commanded. The commander of the Kodiak appeared on screen, he had a heavy Russian accent, “Ello captain, I see you are in a bit of a situation? Well I have a solution, I’m just going to plow this lovely lady into that vessel over there, and boom problem solved.”

 “Commander, you don’t have to do that, I will not let you sacrifice your life and your crews life, we can find a different way.”

 “With all due respect captain, me and you both know there is no other way.”

 “Commander that is an order, do not approach that vessel!”

 “Sorry captain. It’s a shame we couldn’t have met in person.” Then the transmission blinked out. The commander watched as the Kodiak plowed into the Revelation. It smashed right into the center of the ship causing a chain reaction of the Kodiak’s, and the Revelation’s antimatter cores to violently explode simultaneously. It erupted into a blue fireball that expanded in all directions, he even felt the *Pluto* shake violently.

 The explosion was so massive it vaporized all the surrounding ships.

 “Captain we are go of phase jumping on your command,”

 The captain stood looking out of the window at the chaos that was ensuing outside.

 “Captain! We need to leave now!”

 “Yes, commence phase jump to, Osiris.” The captain said still in utter shock. Then the battleship left the Advent and the pirates to fight amongst themselves.

 The bridge was abuzz with activity, “I want a moment of silence for those people that sacrificed themselves to save our skins and allow us to keep on fighting for another day. I want all of you to remember the selfless actions of those men and women; we could all learn a lesson from them.” Then the captain left the room, immersed in silence.

**Chapter 7**

*TEC Homeworld: Triton*

*Senate Floor*

*April 20th, 5328*

*Yvin Montgomery*

 “Okay, are you ready for this? We have over 100,000 citizens on the senate floor for the meeting, and the rest of the empire watching us.” The president whispered to the group of men that were present at the secret meeting held a few weeks ago.

 “If this goes as bad as I believe it will go, then no I am absolutely not.” One of the men said.

 “Well get ready the hearing starting now.” The president said as he walked onto the podium that was labeled *The President of the TEC Empire*.

 “Everyone quiet down!” The Justice of the peace bellowed. The room immediately fell into silence.

 “The senate recognizes President Yvin Montgomery.” The president stood up in his chair and began to speak.

 “In these times of war, it is without doubt that not only does war affects you, the people, but taints the minds of certain individuals of our government. These varying viewpoints have begun to worsen in the latter half of this year. These men and women of our government have been, unequivocally cowardice, and spineless. When, in the words of the 32nd president of The United States of America, Franklin D. Roosevelt, “We have nothing to fear but fear itself.” Those ladies and gentlemen are words we should all live by. I am certain that my fellow citizens expected that on my induction into the Presidency I would have addressed our war time endeavors with a candor and a decision which the present situations of our people impel. This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our empire today. This great Empire is falling in a direction that I wish not it to fall, and yet I am given no power to help it, thus I, President Yvin Montgomery, and fellow senate members have decided to cede from the Empire and take all other assets with us. This division need not cause war for we are peacefully leaving to take our fight directly to the Vasari, and Advent Empires, and end this war once and for all.” With the end of his speech the senate erupted into utter chaos. People panicking, senators screaming, and in the center of it all was the president, trying to stay calm in the face of this mayhem. The President turned on the loud speakers and his VPS, Voice Projection System and began to talk as loud as he could without yelling.

 “That is enough! Quiet all of you!” An eerie silence fell upon the room. The president could feel the uneasiness and the pure terror from the people.

 “This succession commences on the first day of the next month. All people that live on affected planets will have until then to leave the planets. Triton will no longer be run by me I will be leaving sometime today. Good day to you all and I wish all of us luck.” The president stepped off his podium along with all of his fellow senators, leaving the room of pandemonium chaos behind, and suddenly a weight was lifted off his shoulders.

 As the president and the senators walked down the halls of the capital building to a transport vehicle one of the senators, Vernon Maphis started to talk.

 “Mr. President, that speech was excellent, I couldn’t imagine that going any better, and including, ah what was his name?”

 “Franklin D. Roosevelt.” The president replied.

 “Ah, yes, that was a very nice touch where did you find his name.”

 “I found it in the very back section of the Library of Congress. It took me ages to find it.”

 “I see, well-.” The senator was cut-off when Leah came from a side hallway and confronted her father.

 “What the hell do you think you’re doing? You can’t just *leave*.” Leah shouted.

 “Watch your mouth, and I have every power to leave. Leah come with me, it is for the better.” The president pleaded.

 “I will most certainly not. This is my home, I know this place, it’s the only place I have known and I’m not going to up and leave because you and the senate can’t agree on something.”

 “Fine then, stay but don’t expect to hear from me, for the duration of the war.” He said sternly.

 “Trust me, we’ll talk again soon, there is already talk about war breaking out between you and the empire.”

 “That’s just talk. They want to scare me into coming back to the empire, but I won’t.”

 “Maybe war is what you need to stop this idiocy.”

 Something in the President snapped, arguing with Leah brought out the worst in him, “You’re just like your mother.”

 Leah gasped, she looked as if she was about to cry, “Don’t you *ever* talk about her!” She screamed, and ran off down the hallway.

 “Let’s keep moving, we don’t want to miss our flight.” The president said, emotionless.

*TDN Pluto: Phase Space*

*April 20th, 5328*

*Captain Arctos*

 “Tactical open a communication between us and the *Hellfire*.” The captain demanded, after a few hours he snapped out of the initial shock of what that Kodiak did, he didn’t know why it struck him so hard. He was getting soft.

 “Sir, communications are down at the moment, but we have Engineering working on that.”

 “Very well, but I want that up and running in two hours.”

 “Aye sir.”

 The bridge of the ship glowed with the radiation of the phase tunnel basking the room in a green glow. The captain was overlooking the data for Hamal System. Hamal is an average type star similar to Triton’s parent star with only one lone planet, Osiris, an outer world TEC trade hot spot. 80% of the planet is water leaving the population of the planet to mostly stay in space thus making it significantly easier to set up trade ports.

 The captain looked through the mountain of information that was pouring in from the view screen. He was shocked to see that all trade ports have been shut down.

 “Computer, I want a recording of the Osiris News from today.” The captain asked the onboard AI system. A few moments later he was watching a news cast from the Osiris broadcast center.

 “Until further notice we will be shutting down all trade ports until we can get more information about the rebellion, we are in an awkward situation and we will seek the guidance of our Senator when he returns.” The reporter stated.

 “Rebellion?” the captain thought to himself. The crew as well listened to the broadcast.

 “Did I hear what I thought I heard? Rebellion?!” One of the crew members panicked. The bridge of the ship erupted into chaos. The captain stood sat in his seat straight faced, trying to show as little emotion as possible. He stood up and walked out of the room leaving the crew to sort themselves out.

 The captain trotted through the halls of the *Pluto* thinking about Annabelle and John, and what he was going to say to the president when he get communications back up.

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 “What the hell Yvin!?” the captain yelled, “Rebellion? That was your answer? We are weaker than ever!”

 “Quite the contrary John, we are in control of the largest trade hub and production facility in the TEC Empire, we can manage.”

 “But still we are at a massive disadvantage. We have 50 planets to their 600. That’s a big difference if you ask me.”

 “I see your point but we can work around it. I'm actually sending you to meet Thomas Feritine on Apothos to talk about our new weapon.”

 “Weapon?”

 “No time for questions, I need you to take a shuttle over there and speak to him as soon as possible”

 “Yes sir, what do you want to be called now that you are in charge of a new empire?”

 “Call me the same as you always have captain.” The president chuckled. The transmition phased out and the captain walked to his bridge and got ready for his meeting with Thomas.

*Apothos*

*Captain Arctos*

*April 21st, 5328*

 The shuttle came out of phase space in a dazzling green blast of radiation. The small desert planet, Apothos gleamed in the distance. Data came pouring into the captain’s Data Log.

System Data Log: Sector Class Orange

System: Cerberus

Star Type: Ia Class K Super Giant

Planet: Apothos

Distance from Host Star: 300 million kilometers

Moons: 7

H2O: 15%

Age: 19 billion years

 Each sector in the TEC Empire had a color associated with it. Green being Trade Centers, Red being Fringe Worlds or Under Contention, Orange is Industrial and Blue is research. The supergiant star bathed the planet with an intense blue light. The surface was irradiated beyond what current TEC technology could handle. The men women and other aliens lived in space stations on the opposite side of the planet to halt oncoming radiation from the star. The only reason anyone would live here is the supergiant’s gravity is so immense that it warps patches of space around it causing the antimatter that holds the universe together to collect in the little indentations, so this makes antimatter collections much easier than before and in times of war antimatter is more valuable than ever.

 The TEC is also interested in the rather large amounts of Gas Giants in this system; 15 in all. These Gas Giants are able to capture asteroids and comets, which makes for great mining opportunities. All those conditions makes Apothos the largest manufacturing system in the Empire and now they own it.

 The captain’s shuttle whizzed around the planet and saw what looked like the largest capital ship factory in existence; it was probably the size of a city. And the framework for, something was being constructed inside it.

 “What in the world is that!” The captain exclaimed as the shuttle docked with the factory. The hangar bay was abuzz with construction personnel and engineers. A rather tall man, with the same build as the captain came walking up to Captain Arctos.

 “Hello captain, I am Thomas Feritine, I am the supervising engineer for the project. The president wanted me to show you what we have been up to, come, follow me.”

 The captain and Thomas walked into an access elevator to the observation deck. And what he saw ripped the words right from his mouth.

 “This beauty,” Thomas said as he pointed to the framework, “Is the Ragnarov first ever titan class warship.”