

*Year 2178*

Planet Earth.

Crush!

A look at the horizon allows us to see everything that we had not seen before.

Certain beliefs began to crumble about that civilization based in rituals and liturgies that only served to entrench its ills.

In the distance, a storm; nearby, fiery winds that take away rare birds from our view.

“What is all this?”

“Where are we?”

“Watch out! It's perhaps only part of a bad dream.”

Our protagonists just realized that in this instant they are stepping on a place that many had not been in a long time.

Certain suspicions haunt the minds of everyone as no one can understand why they are surrounded by giant plants with sharp leaves and flowers with petals edged with some orange color.

Just a few moments ago, we heard the voices of Anair, Odan and Rad. They are members of the advance party sent by the inhabitants of Carbal. And, I'm Maz, an adventurer with few resources who self invites to any mysterious journey that reaches his ears.

So, yeah, yeah, that's why my feet are sunk six inches into the sand, that's why a week before I was enjoying the pleasant company of

Inga, the beautiful daughter of the Speaker of the People of Carbal, mir Felkac.

A few days ago, the inhabitants of this small satellite, Intervida, began to have problems with supplies coming from Planeta Primario, which will not be really a problem for their survival. They had developed food technologies available that are outstanding and well known throughout the system.

That fact worried the founders of the colony, partly because their families were still living on Earth.

We are twenty, we arrived in my ship about twenty minutes ago.

In the stories my grandfather Conra told me, Earth was a planet full of life, with a beautiful blue sky with white and gray clouds, and where our civilization had created its Planeta Primario.

We expected to find buildings and people, but after hours of wondering around we saw no signs of human life, and yes, yes, we saw hundreds of strange life forms, but nothing like the creatures that all of us had studied and expected to find on Earth. Everything was so different from what we were told that it was certainly disconcerting.

Meters from Anair, a unique and cute insect flies by showing its impeccable art in the use of its wings.

Sshhhuuuuuffffff!

“Damn! What was that?”

“Be careful, Anair!” screamed Rad to her partner, while unable to react as he saw this giant bird ripping her head off.

“Noooooo!Nooooo! Where have we come to? This cannot be happening!”

“ Biber,Biber! Biberrrrr!Answer, fuck!”

My colleagues' faces expressed our shock at one of our team members being slaughtered by who knows what! No birds of this kind were included as part of the database we received on this planet.

“Biberrrrr! Damn, are you there?”

“Yes, Yes, tell me! Is everything okay down there?”

While the four of us were on the planet's surface, the other sixteen selected for this journey were waiting for orders in my ship, a former spatial module that I converted a decade ago.

“Biber! Fuck! Check the coordinates of the planet we're at. Down here everything is weird. Very, very weird!”

One of several theories that haunted my mind tried to make me think that perhaps, only perhaps, some technical failure had brought us to the wrong place, and that our inability to think that it couldn't be possible, our full confidence in the procedures we followed didn't allow us to accept that possibility. On top of that, from the distance that place we reached seemed like Earth. Without any doubt, it was Earth, it had to be Earth.

“Odan, be prepared to go ahead”, Maz said.

“What? Because we have come in your ship, you're not in charge!” Odan responded.

That was true, but Rad had collapsed. The sight of his wife's head rolling down the sand had exceeded the threshold of his strength; he was far from the right person to be in charge at that time.

Our mission was to place a number of devices installed correctly, so that we could broadcast a series of electric signals of light that will

give us all sorts of data about the current condition of the planet when we return to my ship. In it, I have the latest technology to be able to study organic and electro thermal life forms.

“Do what I say! We'll move around the ship about one hundred meters, and we will leave the detectors that you carry in your backpack”.

“I can do it!” shouted Rad.

“Come on! I do not think this place will give us too much time”, Odan said concerned about their timeframe.

“Rad, you take these two to the west!”

“Odan, you must place the antenna right where we are now”.

The antenna is a key part of this simple procedure, Rad and I will post the multidetector in six different locations, creating distance between them between eighty and two hundred feet.

“Do not go so far away, Rad. Leave one where you are now”, Maz indicated to have everything prepared as soon as possible.

“OK”, it was told.

“Let's do it quick! Quick!” Maz ordered getting concerned that they were running out of time.

I had placed three of them when I turned my head and saw another of these birds fly with sudden aggression toward my position. I jumped to the ground without thinking; a small hole under a rock let me escape that attack.

While Rad had placed his two transmitters and was coming towards me to help me with the last placement, I realized by looking at his

face, Odan had seconds before his life would be over. That same bird had cut short his flight and directed its anger at Odan, who had just put the antenna up, but life had come to an end for him.

“Nooo!” Rad yelled.

“Come, Rad! Let's go!” I, Maz, told him.

We boarded the module and got out of this place.

“Rad, how are you doing?” I asked him.

“Phew, aacckkk! But, what is this damn place?” he just didn't know what to do after what just had happened.

“Hopefully we'll discover it upon arrival at our ship. Biber is investigating the navigation data. Odan and Anair could not prevent their death”, I tried to assure him.

“Anairrr! Anair!” Rad kept on repeating over and over.

With plaintive gesture and tears running down his cheeks, now my colleague calmed his tone and looked proud.

I kept on saying: “I do not know where we are, something has happened on Earth during these years that we know nothing about, but I assure you that we'll find out, Maz, and I do not know how, but I assure you, Maz, I shall end with those knives with wings”.

The state of anxiety and anger of Rad was only the primary basic response of any human being; all began to crumble, he had never seen death so close, in its satellite it had never been any record of violence, and the latest events had managed to break his strong personality.

“Open the gate”, Maz ordered.

“Welcome! We were worried”, Biber received us.

My ship is a modification of the SMFB (Space Module Fly Bird) which started the commercial interexchanged between Earth and Sistema Creacion over one hundred and fifty years ago.

My grandfather, after the Great War, had been assigned by his company as a pilot of the first non-military mission crew for shipments of supplies to the inhabitants of the project who had begun years ago. The purpose of those missions was to perpetuate the human race all throughout the universe.

When my grandfather had a few years left, and, after seventy-three years of service and a large fortune made, my grandfather decided to spend it all purchasing this ship that represented more than half of his life.

It's important to make a note that the average age of man after the war had dropped to sixty-four. We do not know why but it had arisen from the presence on Earth of a multibillionaire, Bash, which devoted one hundred years of his life to create formulas to rejuvenate.

In our Planeta Primario, the average age in 2025 was around one hundred and twenty years, the economies of rich countries had collapsed and emerging countries were booming. Many of the latter countries had managed to break free from the oppressive hand of the powers exercised by the great nations and began to assume great power.

*Year 2087*

THE GREAT WAR.

Twenty crazy rich people changed the world order. After annihilating ninety-nine percent of the population with systematic attacks on every

major city in the world, we were just around one hundred million inhabitants, but the state of nature was stable and clean.

Man took advantage of it, under a dictatorship, and the colonies had only economic and trade exchanges.

No one in the new worlds was allowed to visit Earth for years, but so far we did not have an answer to this situation, why this was happening.

“Hi, Biber! Have you done what I asked?” Maz inquired.

“Yes, Maz, but I have some doubts. We may have strayed, but nothing in the stellar coordinates tells us we have done so”.

I had not told you, but Biber is my second. I trust him completely. Besides being my ship's pilot, he is also my friend. I've known him since childhood. The two of us grew up in New Galicia, the colony founded in 2110 in the satellite Pequeno Io.

“It is very strange! What we have seen and lived down there has nothing to do with the beautiful world that our parents have told us stories about. And, on top of that, until just a few months ago, everything was normal in terms of shipments to the colonies”, Maz tried to explain.

“I think something serious has happened to the people and the planet”, I continued saying.

“We can orbit it again, but looking for human life signs more closely”, Biber responded.

“I completely agree. Tell the others. Let's get everyone down to work!” I firmly agreed getting ready to get things accomplished.

Throughout the ship, a siren is heard indicating the need to stabilize.

We will have to navigate Earth's sky and we'll go through turbulences and jumps by the presence of air despite the power of my machine.

Such a long range study would not be possible with the shuttles we have available. They are only good for a few hundred miles and they also do not have the right equipment to detect life forms.

Two hours and a half later, we detected a small town with large tracts of uncultivated land known as Europa.

Initially, we do not see anybody, but we could see something similar to what it looks like farms. We doubted that all that was human, though.

Without knowing from where, a pair of laser rays tried to break our defenses.

We sent signals of peace and whoever was shooting at us stopped.

After initiating talks by radio with them, they let us go down in one of our shuttles. They were really nervous and did not trust anything that came through the air. Biber, as always, was left behind in command of the ship.

Rad, Sali and I went down to the surface using shuttle number three.

The entrance to the village was a gigantic rock which opened at the will of those men. Others came to meet us before letting us see their world.

They wore clothes that really looked archaic, not airtight, and made of organic materials. That was strange as it was assumed that our skin rejects all organic materials, and yet these "original" humans used them normally. Some concerns would remain in my mind by the use of these garments.

They had pretty basic weapons available, just a few laser submachine



guns and one or two canons that look like turrets.

But, certainly what most catches my attention, was their gestures and feelings that were full of anxiety and nervousness.

A few seconds later we were already walking through a tunnel made up with dry organic cylinders that created a frame that supported meters of ground and stones.

Sali, who was very intelligent and knowledgeable of the history of the system, began to tell us about the use of those facilities. Both, Rad and I, could not understand how men made those huge structures to remove material from inside the earth.

In New Galicia and Carbal, as in the rest of our system, mining was left to machines. The men and women of the colony only managed the movement of materials extracted from the subsoil of its satellites or planets.

After a few minutes walking almost in the dark, a bright light opened in our eyes, and a whisper began to shake our ears.

Natives who had escorted us to the place began to give us more space.

Sali, somewhat distrustful of the attitude of those men and women, began to slow down the pace, leaving us, Rad and I, at the entry of that place. Nothing could be distinguished beyond that intense brightness at the end.

Each time the sound was more and more intense and I could finally distinguish two words: "Human Aliens." Rad and Sali also heard those words. All of us felt more relaxed as the tone in which those words were expressed was warm and comfortable.

We were facing a door, a symbolic door because it was a laser arc.

None of us took the first step to cross it until Anxo ordered to deactivate the shield.

On the other side we found a big surprise.

Anxo had been sent to pick us up. He was accompanied by a red hair girl, Carla. From the first moment she began to talk to us, we noticed she had a very pleasant nature. She was very young, no more than fifteen or sixteen. Her language was similar to ours, but full of strange words.

“No doubt you are going to be caught in the mine!” I managed to understand.

“What? Pay attention!” I told to my scared colleagues. This place could easily be the last thing I saw in my life.

“Relax! Hahaha! You haven’t understood me”, Carla repeated without stop laughing, “What I said is that you will like a lot our mine”.

She walked a little faster and left us behind when Anxo began to make conversation.

“Where do you come from?” Carla asked, “We have needed help for days now”.

“Have you received our warning signs?” Anxo inquired.

We finally began to understand that we were not wrong in our calculations. That place was definitely Earth and those people were the genetic origin of our species.

We begin to lose our radio signal. Biber was concerned and was calling us.

“Relax, our friend! All is good down here. How's everything up there?”

I asked.

“Well, how can I tell you?? We are being watched by hundreds of birds of metallic appearance”, Biber responded nervously.

“Eeeehh! Maz”, Biber called for me as I was still thinking on what I heard.

“I’m listening”, I responded to Biber.

“They look like birds but they are really machines. We have created an ultrasound shield around the ship and the mine entrance”, Biber explained shortly.

“Great! As always I am relaxed with your decisions!” I answered.

“But, there is a ‘but’. You have twenty minutes to get out. Then, we have to get out of this atmosphere to clean the equipment of the ship and recharge in outer space. If not, we will be without enough energy to overcome gravity”, Biber explained shortly.

Just as I finished the conversation with Biber, we went into what it looked like a taxi lane.

“Let’s hope this will go very fast, Anxo! We have only fifteen minutes to return to my ship”, I was already thinking on our return to protect the ship.

A mischievous smile showed on her face at this time.

ShuuYuuuuuu!

“Hell, uufff, this is speed! Hahahahaha!” I was enjoying the ride.

Within seconds this artifact had brought to this huge hall, gorgeous, filled with stone figures that were over ten meters high.

“Welcome to Earth, friends!” We heard throughout the PA system.

Ten or twelve illuminated signs welcomed us to the place, and after giving about twenty steps we found what it looked like a terrace, under which thousands of people gave us a big hello.

This was overwhelming. We didn’t know what to expect or what these people were expecting of us. But, I realized quickly that with the time I was given by my second Biber, we would not have enough time to absorb what was happening in that place, so I ordered Rad to go back to the ship and give the necessary instructions to Biber. It was vital to keep the safety of the ship and he waited for our team to finalize all the issues and concerns we were working out in that place.

Sali stayed with me there. I was enjoying every step and second spent there. Everything I had learned throughout my life about our origins; I was living it there in person. I was beginning to find the link that made all of the cultures of the system so similar, the origin.

Sali said this reminded her of those giant figures at Stonhein Moon, a satellite of Z12, the world's largest service center throughout the known universe.

As we got closer to the rail of the lifting platform, two heads were appearing, that of a woman and of a man. She certainly was very beautiful.

“Greetings, friends!” Dario said.

Dario was the speaker of these people.

“You are in Mondariz! This is the fallout shelter built by the Galician before the Great War. At the end of the war, some twenty thousand Galicians hid here for thirty months, and for years we have become an underground city”, he explained more in detail.

As we descended in the platform, we realized the true situation of these people; though we still had in our minds the origin of our mission: Why the lack of trade with the Earth in the last few months.

The beautiful woman who came with Dario was Fani, who, with feline eyes, told us of the reason for the presence of those metal birds outside. But, I was unable to pay attention to anything beyond the delicacy of her curves as it had been months since I was with a woman. Suddenly, in this old planet, I had found the woman of my life.

“Hey, you!! Are you listening? I did not expect the aliens to be as horny as the guys from here! I see that not even the outer space help you guys to improve! hahahaha!” she just plainly laugh.

Despite her scolding, something morbid was left floating in the air, and I, embarrassed like a little child, I started paying attention to what she was telling us:

“It is now about three weeks that these birds arrived to the planet. It started in South America, a continent across the ocean that connected these shores of the part of the Earth with South America. Bright lights started to appear all over in that part of the planet. A week later, almost all surviving population of the planet had been attacked by these creatures”.

“At any time of day or night anyone could be attacked”, she kept on explaining what it had happened. “From that point forward, the people in the planet had to stop trading with the exterior for safety”.

As we continued down to the underground city, I found myself even more surprised as there was like a giant greenhouse with camouflaged homes with the environment. Everything down here was spectacular.

But, I kept on thinking on those events that Fani had just told us about

and I found myself disturbed by it. I also didn't understand why they had not reported this to the rest of the universe. None of us knew more about those original people than beyond the long time exchange of goods.

It was sort of taboo in the system the History of the Great War, and was forbidden to have conversations beyond business with these people. But now the situation was different, we were face to face.

Some birds lacking in tone colors flew ahead. Those people had reproduced the same structures and systems of conservation for different species that had throughout our system over the last century. These were called Noah's Arks. They tried to preserve as many species as possible to recreate a new world in other galaxies, or even in the planet itself by what we were seeing now.

At last, we reached the level where they were taken us. A small vehicle with seats picked us up and took us to a huge room where lots of these people were awaiting for us. Everyone was looking at us with nervousness and happiness. These were similar feeling to ours as they were our originals, and we were their evolution. We haven't seen them in centuries. These people were certainly a little different than what we thought and studied. They were wrapped with "rags" and unrefined whiff permeate them all throughout.

That contrasted with the glamour and elegance that my eyes appreciated in Fani. And, it was then when I started to wonder what type of government existed there. You never know what kind of leaders you have to deal with, hence my pursuit of Fani was restrained to avoid confusion or bad reactions, but it really brought some of my aggressiveness.

Once I observed in detail the room we were at, I noticed that this was like a gigantic root that embraced this space. It looked like an amphitheater and at the top we saw Xurxo, the Prime Minister of this town. We were greeted by him with a big hug and a huge smile.

Sali began chatting with Fani and one of the watchers. A relaxed atmosphere began to flow, and suddenly a diver, a fire breather, and various clowns came out of nowhere and started doing tricks for all those present.

Xurxo introduced me to his wife and children. Just as his family left, Xurxo and I sat on a bench covered with skin dramatically long. It was very, very, I mean very comfortable. And with plenty of food in front of me, I felt like I was in a dream, and I was unable to comprehend that what happened on the surface was a problem for these people as everyone was happy, occupied, ready for more work.

That same concept was explained to me by Xurxo. The invasion of these birds was not a problem for them; it only prevented them from going normally to the surface and using their ships to finalize the trade. Their very survival was based on the use of the subterranean areas and the ark created there.

Both Sali and I watched the beginning of our way of life, the first facilities that served as the study rooms to develop architectural technologies, agricultural, aquacultural, etc. She lived this experience with great intensity as it was much more significant to her than to me. All that information, rooms, technologies, all that came into her eyes meant something to Sali, gave practical content to a lot of theoretical knowledge. This trip had become the adventure of her lifetime, the best experience ever.

At the same type, my thoughts went to Rad and my team. Has Rad done what I sent him to do?

I have not heard from him and the ship since I've been down here. No radio contact at all. I just hope everything went well and my ship was refilled.

I honestly did not feel the need to intervene at all in the invasion of the

planet. That community did not seem disturbed by the presence of these birds.

Xurxo explained to me they knew that these birds were a migratory race and that in no more than two years they would be going to another planet. Hence, the need of protection and defense was not needed. These people had become a highly peaceful civilization, with very little appetite for confrontation. Unmistakable a sign of the violence experienced a century and a half ago.

I asked if they had contact with other colonies in the planet.

Xurxo led me to an open space called Karma Lounge so that I could see with my own eyes and hear with own ears their communications with other colonies, so that I didn't have any doubts about it. He told me that this lounge was used to pray in the first years of the war, although now this lounge was used as a communication room and it just had radio stations of all types and a couple of old computers that served as internal communication network.

“How do you use these radios?” I asked.

This town was able to communicate with twenty villages scattered around the planet. Xurxo could not assure me that those twenty colonies were all the existing communities in the planet. So, I thought that perhaps our new task would be to track the status of all of the communities on the planet and try to find new ones if any new ones needed finding.

As Xurxo was told by the other colonies, everyone was in the same situation than this town.

I finally was able to be relaxed and calm as I saw that everything was in order, more or less, and I finally began to enjoy that place.

Shortly after that brief reception, we were invited to eat something. We



had all that food sitting in front of us. Sali, delighted, went two steps forward toward the sitting area, smiling and happy. It seemed like she was hopping. But, now, I was thinking back about how my old ship was doing, whether the recharge was completed. Crossing the atmosphere was not the best thing for the ship given its state of conservation. My thoughts were going back and forth between the peacefulness and greatness of this place and the latest events in the last few hours.

The death of two members of Carbal's crew, who is with me and pays for this mission (and, of course, my expenses), really worried me. I did not know how to explain it. We took perhaps too many risks without considering the situation. We knew that something was going on in the planet and we just went down with no security or defense of any kind. And, as we could see, this resulted in disastrous events.

While I was deep in those thoughts, my eyes came across Fani who was looking at me with intense depth. Everything about her made me leave those thoughts behind. The sweetness in her eyes was calming and peaceful. As if she were a mermaid, I followed her to sit down next to her at the table to which all of us were invited. All my concerns were gone.

A lot of trays full of delicious food were before me. It had been many years since I had the chance to choose what I would eat that day. It's hard to believe, but life in space is very, very complicated.

While I enjoyed that peaceful moment, Sali was taking notes and asking about the meal's preparations, but neither, notes or questions, stopped her from continuing eating. It seemed like this was heaven.

Fani, after lunch, invited me to her home. I accepted and we went to her very small but very cozy cabin. And, although it may sound bad to say, she left my body totally relaxed for a while. She turned out to be a great lover.

There was something really special about that woman. She was not like any other woman I had relationships with. I have to say that this had nothing to do with the feelings I had discovered when I saw her for the first time, or the incredible sex we just had shared. I could not describe. She was just special.

While we enjoyed the kindness of these people, a sense of anxiety hung in the air in the ship above. Several colleagues started ridiculous discussions and fights.

Biber had been trying many attempts to communicate with us through our communication system. I finally got my communicator ring tone and started to talk to him asking him about the ship:

“Hello, my friend! How’s everything up there? Here, we are very happy, we are treated divinely. Sali is taking thousands of notes and generally these people enjoy a peace that it’s almost unusual”.

“Maz! Shut up and listen! You've been three days with those people and...” I stopped him.

“What? It can’t be”, I said as those words went beyond my understanding. It was impossible. We could not have been there more than twenty hours, not even a full day.

“On the ship” continued Biber, “strange things are happening. Daniel and Glass have had a serious confrontation, while Laura and Lhasa began to go crazy in the engine room, and they almost blow us all”.

“I do not understand”, I responded to Biber. There has never been a fight between any of the members of this team. Mir Felkac was very proud of that when he decided on the team to send to this mission.

“Well, you should know that hysteria attacks coincide surprisingly with the whistles made by these crazy birds. I'm thinking you should get out soon and that we must reach out to other communities before all

this gets even more complicated”, Biber just added simply.

“Roger, Biber! Wait for my call, we’ll leave shortly, let me settle a couple of things here and Sali and I will be up within the hour”, I just instructed.

“Perfect, boss. I’ll try to calm down the troops”, giving for finished the communication, but I had remembered I needed to request the shuttle:

“By the way, get Rad and send him with the shuttle to pick us up at the entry of the community”.

After the short chat with Biber, I saw Fani. She noticed me upset and asked me what happened. I saw in her face that she was not surprised about my behavior and that she had the answer to the questions I was going to ask. The day I was at her home, she drugged me and she had made love to me. It almost felt like a dream. But, why? Why did she have to create such a great experience to deceive me? Why?

“Do not ask me that”, she responded, “I don’t have an answer that you will like. You just find out why we live down here, below the surface, and while Sali and you were with us, your teammates up there were fighting each other for no reason, right?”

“Order your ship to leave!” she ordered me, “You will no longer get out of here!”

“What are you saying?” I responded, “I’m about to do so as soon as I locate my colleague. We are leaving”.

“Those damn machines will not allow you to do it... and Xurxo either”, she just said.

Taking advantage of the situation and with the intelligence that

characterizes Biber, he got the ship completely out of that atmosphere, thus avoiding the sickening sound of those damn birds. This will help Rad to come out with the small shuttle to pick us up.

“What do you say about your prime minister?” I was just surprised by that comment.

“He is a dictator, a damned crazy fool, but our boss at the end of the day. Everything was going well until he became our minister”, Fani explained.

“What? What you are saying? I don’t follow”, I was saying in disbelief.

“Along with other representatives of the other colonies, it is unclear what kind of deals he reached with the residents of Zender to increase their influence in the system. These deals have not been met by our people and, therefore, the birds are here to ensure compliance”, she explained calmly.

“I still do not understand! They are just birds”, I responded still unable to react to what I was being told.

“They are Zender’s army. They are just waiting for a weakness in our defense system, our people, to break into and take over everything. They’ve already come with their war ships and giant warehouses, and they have taken it all. They've taken everything, but the mini worlds we create underground. Those are the only ones that are saved”, she continued.

“And, this climate of peace in which you live?” I responded because nothing there seemed to show this kind of situation. If she was not explaining it to me, I would have not known even about it.

“You've been only three days with us. In the future, the drug floating in the air will not help you fall to sleep so fast. You’ll adapt and you’ll see everything clearer”, she said sadly.

A drug? What drug can do something like this? Everything sounded so weird! My brain was going insane thinking on what was going on.

“The few inhabitants who lived for months on the surface of the planet and not too long ago cultivated their fields, tended their cattle and enjoyed the fresh air, were either with us down under or dead. Everything above us belongs now to Zender and their machines are just patiently waiting in the hope of our surrender to have for themselves the tellurium mines”, Fani continued explaining getting to the why of this invasion.

“But,” I said, “I thought there was an agreement not to attack the Planeta Primario, an agreement which would be respected by all communities in the universe.”

“True,” she continued explaining, “but, if members of the confederation heard of the agreement between Zender and Xurxo, that agreement would be invalid immediately.

Xurxo wanted to sell all the ore to Zender and his army. And, Zender, with the support of the people, would acquire full control of the system.”

“Hopefully, one of our chemists had developed just on time a drug that prevented us from breathing normal air as the air down here was not oxygenated sufficiently for us to survive. We had to adapt. And, you are now part of the group”, she just responded with a smile.

“Only humans are able to tolerate this drug. And, while the air conditioning of this facilities continue in the current condition, we will continue needing this drug to help us to survive here and make it impossible for outsiders to take over”, this is how Fani continued describing what it was going on there. Truthfully, those last few months had to be very harsh in these people. “It was the only way to prevent Xurxo and the others like him to allow access to these premises to those beasts. And, likewise, it was also how to prevent

them from leaving to deliver the ore and enjoying the powers granted as new masters of the system.”

“We will need to survive here until those creatures leave the planet. Once they leave and we are able to return to the surface, we will try to rearrange the order on the planet”, that was our plan.

“I hope you don’t tell anyone about this. Xurxo trusts me”, Fani looked at me making sure I understood what it could happen if I showed that I was made aware of this new situation.

“Fani, I need to get out of here! Tell your friends to develop a formula for my departure. I promised I’ll continue to enjoy the hospitality of your people while in here and no one in here will know about our conversation. And, no one will know how sweet your kisses are”, I whispered in her ear.

After Fani left, I continued looking for Sali. When I found her, she was fascinated with everything she had seen, with the history of the colony that was portrayed on the walls. She also mentioned that she had the feeling of having lived a day like if it was actually many more. It was a strange sensation.

I started laughing. The drug had affected her completely differently; it had kept her awake for hours and days and with no worries of any kind; while I had been sleeping and it seemed everything was worrying me (and now even more than just an hour ago). After I calmed down and stopped laughing, I explained the situation to Sali. Both of us understood what was going on and what we had to do. We prepared our things and took a couple of mementos of that place. Even with everything that was going on, we had enjoyed the company of the people and had learned lots of things.

Not listening to Fani’s words, we headed towards the exit. We remembered that we had to climb up to the surface as we had used several lifts down. No one stopped us and we just kept on climbing

one step at a time.

I found myself thinking on what that beauty had told me just a few moments ago. But, I kept on thinking that we needed to take the risk. I trusted the great doctor we had on board. If anything happened, she would be there to help us out.

I kept on repeating to myself: “After all, we had very little time under the influence of that air. How much can it affect us?”

To our surprise, when we got to the top, no one stopped us from leaving. The guards that were there and seeing our intentions, open the laser barrier that we had come through days earlier. A few meters from there, Rad was waiting for us.

When we went to the shuttle, I began feeling without air, I was drowning. I saw Sali and she seemed to go through the same horror I was. What Fani had told me was true; she had not lied to me. Still, we got into the shuttle and with no time to loose, Rad took us to Marta, the doctor who comes with me to all my missions.

Luckily, she knew how to improve our breathing and after the treatment she applied to both of us for about two hours, we were breathing again normally and had left all the danger behind us.

It's important to note the human quality of Martita, how I like to call her affectionately.

We should know that we all owe our lives to her. Many of the formulas of the new retro drugs that allow us to survive the dangerous spatial biological agents that existed in the various satellites that we met in our missions were found by her; some others, however, have already been made during the more than 150 years of space travel.

Just before leaving the planet, we spent some time looking for the radio frequencies by which those colonies communicated. We needed

them to help locating the other towns of the Earth.

Upon leaving, a transmission came by ordinary means. Only a threat from the people of Zender was reflected on our screens. His army of machines had communicated our situation to his commander, and, although, we were not a war ship, they felt that we would be a threat to them. We knew now what they were doing and what was happening in the planet. If the other communities in the system learned of their plans, it would result in a great conflict between the colonies and others in the outside too.

They were right. We could not keep this information to ourselves and just let them be. We quickly sent information about everything we saw and lived to both New Galicia and Carbal. We also sent a message to all members of the system. Shortly, everyone would know what was happening.

After this task was completed, we began to orbit the Earth in search of the other communities, emitting radio signals of greetings just waiting for an answer from anyone who may have been listening.

We started to notice a lot of movement on the surface of the planet: those birds were starting to go up in the space looking for us, or maybe they were regrouping to who knows what. We were just making guesses at this time.

What was clear is that the dignitaries of other nations should already be preparing their ships of war to defend that agreement made so long ago by all societies of the system and to defend the tellurium from the abuse of others.

After many years of peace, that would change. Zender had started one of the most terrible traps that could have started. At that time, Zender's people were leaving other civilizations without one of the most important components for the manufacture of control centers, tellurium. Tellurium was the basis for the tigochips, our memory units



of supercomputers. Computers allow us to travel through space. Without them or with the inability to improve them, we would be limited to known space, and within our culture it was very important to explore the whole universe. All of us wanted the same thing: create a new world, full of life, where the human race would not have to simply live in their biopreservation superstructures.

In my mind, I remembered everything from my grandfather's stories. None of us could imagine what a war meant or was. Our cultures had very limited internal defense and knew even less about the strategy and the arts of war.

On the other hand, it was left in me an intense feeling. The depth of my feelings told me that sooner or later I would end up returning to the place which I had left some time ago.

Perhaps, in Mondariz, the love of my lifetime had been left behind and only time would return me back to her. I had so many feelings and thoughts going through my brain that I was not sure what to do and how to do it. But, no, now I had to think about many other things that were much more important than just my love. After all, that just might have been the effect of the drugs given.

My friend Fisco lived in the Commonwealth of Elgar. He would have answers for me. I did not know what would be the mechanics to be followed by the Interstellar Senate, what steps to go through, who I should talk. The process was too complicated, but I did not care much. If anything, I had learned through my own experiences to go ahead on my own and always support those who I consider my friends, for treason and ambition are two of those bad human virtues that are never lost.

I ordered Biber to leave the planet and stop the search on Earth, as what could we do with this half rickety transport ship at this time?

“Go ahead! Directly to Elgar! Coordinates...”, I was directing Biber.

“I know them; I have a very special friend there”, Biber said laughing.

Accompanying his laughter for a short moment and quickly stopping, I called for Glass, my communications technician. I asked for the confirmation messages sent to the system, to which he replied affirmatively and added:

“New Galicia replied instantly. He thanked the details instantly, and said that Parliament would meet in two days. Ask for your assistance.”

That request was not possible to fulfill. I asked my radio operator to prepare a holotransference with my community. That would be my way of communication to be able to report everything to the majors.

“Also, Call Elgar.” I ordered, “I need to talk to the President of Warsa. When you get the communication established, pass it to my cabin. Daniel, I need a system map! Pass the information to my cabin as well.”

“Perfect, boss”, Daniel confirmed a little nervous. Both he and I knew there was pending talk about what happened while I was away.

Many of the crew on the expedition was not my part of my team, but everyone coming on board knew that in my ship they had to abide by a set of standards. Anyway, I knew already what had happened and wanted to keep them worried with some trepidation. After all, it had been a silly fight and it was not much of a problem.

Meanwhile, I went to my room and I realized that everyone showed curiosity about Earth and was asking Sali about everything we have done down there. I guess they wanted to know about the Earth, for it was hard too for them to be so close to our origins and not be able to walk on, smell, touch, or feel what we had felt. Well, after all, most human aliens had dreamed at least once of coming to our original planet.

“Now, what I've lived is nothing so special!” I said loudly.

That world almost deserted, with so little life on the surface, everything we had studied eagles, rhinos, lions, all that we hold in our genetic memory no longer exist. Only two centuries had passed and our race had eliminated everything. First, the Great War had finished with most everything, and now with the help of machines from Zender we will finish with what little remained.

I knew that what was beginning to take shape from that time forward would involve the creation of a new world. Different communities would join forces. No one could know at that time which coalitions would be created, so the rulers of the various communities would have to start talking and negotiating among themselves, and coordinate a Senate Interstellar Call for all its members.

When I got to my cabin, the two noncommissioned officers had carried out the tasks assigned successfully.

I started with the map, I wanted to know where Zender was. I knew of its people by hearsay, and I never had any negative news from them.

To my surprise, it was much closer to New Galicia than I expected. My concerns began to be very intense. My mother, my father, my brothers and sisters, and their families live in this giant rock orbiting the star of Santiago, with very similar temperatures to those of Earth but with very, very little water, just the necessary amount, but insufficient to enjoy it. No one there was able to understand our grandfather when he spoke of swimming in the pool, taking showers, and even less to walk into the sea and enjoy the waves of the ocean hitting your body. Every time we talked about it was like talking about science fiction. But, I knew of what he spoke. The Earth had oceans, vast amounts of water. At my thirty-four years of age, finally, one of my missions had led me to Earth and, although, I was not able to enjoy those feelings, I could understand what my grandpa Conra had told his son, my father, and I have come to listen.

As I thought more and more about it, I had to meet with Fisco as soon as possible. His company specialized in weapons, defensive weapons, but after all weapons. I needed to equip my ship and receive some accelerated classes on military strategy; otherwise, I would have nothing to do in the conflict that it was coming to be. On the other hand, I needed to feel that the Governor at Elgar would be a friend in this conflict. I had requested a hearing, which was sent promptly earlier on, so as not to waste any time as soon as we arrived at Elgar.

You may think who was I to take such a step like this.

The truth is that my grandfather was the founder of the colony, Nueva Galicia. Because of it, my family had great influence, and thinking of the future that it was coming, I would have to set my feet on the ground, as my grandfather used to say, and occupy the place that my inheritance gave me.

I changed my clothes after shaving my beard and cleaning myself. I went to the main hall. When I got there, just Biber who had been with me for many years, knew about my family and my position, and what the new mission for Nueva Duna would be.

I don't think I told you, but Nueva Duna, is the name of my ship. And, this ship was just like a projection of me. To keep it and maintain it in good condition was a priority for me and my family.

An alarm sounded via the megaphone.

I left my room and went directly to the cockpit. I observed the small crew that was on board. I then realized that none of us were prepared for these situations of violence. Everything was a lie! How beautiful everything seemed to be now and how false it was!!

It was necessary to talk to the older members of the communities,

only they knew how and to where extent the greed of other human beings would be. Although, on second thought, I had left behind an encyclopedia of wisdom, the people of Earth. Those were the most knowledgeable about wars and violence as they were the seeds of change.

In the cockpit, everyone was at their posts.

Diana, who manages the interstellar highways, had detected something strange.

“Where is Maz?” Rad asked aloud.

Biber who had seen me arriving not too long ago, began to laugh, realizing what was happening.

“Quiet!” Biber said softly, “For you, Maz is a simple captain of a transport ship, but I have to give you some good news.”

And, he said that I paid close attention to what he said next:

“My good friend is the grandson of the creator of the Interstellar Agreement, and consequently carries the Key to the Door of the Hole Step.”

Perhaps it was too much information all together. All those present even showed me his affection excessively and respect instantly.

I had not told you, to those of you who is reading this. Sorry, it was a big secret. Only just in case of an immediate need, the truth of my condition could be revealed. From the moment of my birth, I was predetermined; my destiny was set, just as my father’s destiny was.

I am the protector of the great secret, time travel. The origin of the Great War.

“Return to your posts and pay attention!” I ordered.

“Diana, what's so strange in what you see?” I asked her as she was observing me.

I noticed that she was surprised by my new look and my new position. The truth is that my appearance had changed two hundred percent from my previous look, and the discovery of who I was probably was a surprise for everyone.

“A large ship is following our same path and it's been there for the last twenty minutes and I was surprised, because when we left Earth, no other ship was orbiting the planet”, she responded with energy.

“All right! Keep track of it and if it gets too close,...” I started responding.

“I'll notify you, sir!” She confirmed promptly cutting my verbiage.

“Have you contacted Elgar?” I asked Glass, “Have you gotten an answer from their diplomats?”

Glass confirmed that an audience had been granted by the governor between him and I.

Almost reflexively, over the megaphone, I gave orders to Lasa and Laura "to get ready, prepare to work hard, and stop arguing. We need the engine running at full power.”

“Daniel, I need to talk to the people of Mondariz and tell us what happened to the birds after the reunification. Get going!” I kept on ordering to different crew members, “Glass, keep contacting the other known colonies for confirmation of messages sent. And, also, if they do, ask them what their view or position of what is happening is, what their point of view is.”

“It will be very important for everyone to do what I ask or order! I hope you don’t doubt me, for surely we have to make decisions and do things that we have never lived nor have we been prepared for. I hope you all do your best and I know you will” I was expecting their best behavior from now forward.

Biber said yes shyly and the others followed. He was certainly a very important part of that ship and that crew.

After that, I went to the small bar of my ship, it looked a little hippie. I needed a drink before all that would not leave a minute for me and my problems. Everything else was going to come first after that drink.

I opened an old whisky bottle which had been waiting to be opened more than ten years ago. I poured slowly the whisky in a heavy glass and drank it slowly enjoying each sip of my glass, while I was thinking on how wonderful our lives had been up to that point. That whisky had been given to me years ago by a couple as a thank you for saving their child’s life. I was waiting for a great occasion to open that bottle and this was it.

A few minutes later, I called everyone. I invited the sailors sent by mir Felkac and my crew.

We all drank and sang, and laugh. We were worried. We didn’t know what it was coming. But, we had to laugh, even laughs without meaning, just to relax and have a good time before the craziness hits the fan. Because we wanted it and no other reason was needed.

I think we all realized that the effects of alcohol were being felt on everyone and put the drinks down. It was time to go.

Diana was there, but she had not accepted my invitation to join us. She was really concerned about the presence of this ship. It seemed that it was getting closer and closer.

We soon discovered, thanks to Fani who had contacted us, that the ship that was following us was actually all these birds that got together and created a great spaceship. With no doubt, that new spaceship looked like it was ready to destroy anything.

Without doubt, our departure had placed the “birds” on alert and they would try to stop us from arriving at Elgar. It was already too late; we had already told the other members of the Senate.

“We are within minutes of entering Elgar’s space”, Glass indicated to me.

“Luckily for us, its barriers will protect us.” I just responded to assure the crew members that everything would be OK. As a major weapons company that it was, guarding the entrance to its mega structure was done with great suspicion.

“Sir, we have the Zender ship at our tail. In a few minutes, we will be within range distance”, Diana alerted.

“Request entry into Elgar, Glass!” I had to get this done as soon as possible to avoid a confrontation with that ship.

“I’m on it, Maz!” Glass responded, showing its effectiveness. To have this wonderful girl in communications guaranteed success in any mission in which we embarked.

“Biber, full speed!” I instructed, “Let Lhasa and Laura to put the cane thrusters, to monitor the temperature.”

As I was getting more worried, I asked Diana: “How long before will those fools arrive?”

“More or less about three minutes,” Diana responded.

“Though, we’ll be within their range within twenty seconds,” Biber



added.

These news were of a lot of concern, but I was waiting any second now for confirmation of entry into space friend. It could not be much longer. Their surveillance systems controlled a great distance and I knew that it would be enough to overcome any attack by those beasts.

None of us knew exactly what their technology was. Zender had been a quiet community, separate from the rest of the human communities. Even when doing the exchanges among them, they all had remained fairly detached from the rest. Still, I never was mistrustful of these people. We would have to discover what it was happening to have this change in their behavior.

“Four, three, two... One... They are shooting at us!” I heard in the background.

“They are too far away! They know that we’ll make it there and they are just trying their luck,” it was told.

“Safety maneuvers... three degrees to the right and maintain high speed,” I ordered.

After this evasive maneuver, two more shots are repeated. This time we had them too close.

“No!” Diana yelled.

“We don’t get out of this one!” Sali replied.

Suddenly, a super intense light shone around us.

"Are we dead?" someone asked.

None of us understood exactly how we had not blown to smithereens. That attack had been rejected by the Elgar barriers and absorbed the

laser attacks.

“Thank, God!”

“Biber!” I yelled without any control.

It was a reflex. It never had happened, but I do not know how something reminded me that secularism was a norm in our societies and mentioning the name of deities was absolutely forbidden. I don't know to explain why or when it all started. But it was like that. And neither I nor anyone else should discuss the norms that dictate the order of the system. Or so we thought.

All reacted with surprise to my yelling, but after just being saved, that silence that was created after my call ended with a laugh that started with Sonia, our cook, and became general among all who were there.

“Now that we are safe, notify Rad. We have about ten hours to arrive in Elgar,” I plainly said to the crew.

“Sonia, cook one of those great dinners that characterize you,” I asked to the best cook in our galaxy.

“You were already taking too long to ask for it, sir” Sonia answered.

This girl is so great. I think it would be the woman of my life, but I don't think she would take care of my craziness, or foolishness; I don't know what to call it.

Whenever I travel and I need to relax, I go to the kitchen and I take anything she has out there ready to eat, and she always gets me something hot for a good snack. I could say that those are one of the best moments of my life. In addition to being an excellent cook, she is a wonderful conversationalist. She always has that word you need, that makes you laugh when you're happy, and that makes you look up when everything's sinking.

“Lower power output and keep me informed about the status of the thrusters. After, I want everyone at the main hall. We have to enjoy these last few good hours very much, haven’t we?” I said.

“Vardan is a master with the organ, and I think Moana hits the guitar very well,” Rad commented and continued saying, “and, if you want me to ask them to prepare a little concert...”

“Yes!! That’s a great idea!” Martha said right away without letting Rad finished his sentence.

“Well done, I guess they will not mind giving us a moment of good music after all” I said.

I went to my quarters. I had to finish a few things before dinner, and after, I would need some rest to be ready for the Governor of Elgar.

Luckily, we were out of reach of the enemy ship, but a new war would be declared soon. Or, at least, that’s what I thought it was going to happen thirty hours later in the Senate. What it had happened on Earth was indescribable.

Back in my little office, I opened the drawers of my nightstand. In the depths of the last drawer, there was a letter that had not been opened in over thirty years. I took a small knife and prepared to open it.

Knock! Knock!

“Come in!” I directed to whomever was at the other side of the door.

I stopped what I was doing and I saw Diana coming sticking her head through the door. She came in. I knew this visit would come and it was not going to be a pleasant one.

“You’re a pig!” she said and slapped me without saying anything else.

She left as she had come.

I guess I knew it would happen and she would be fine. Actually, she was not the love of my life or even a very important woman in my life, but she definitely was a great lover. She reminded me of Fani. Although Fani had deceived us into getting into that megamine without notifying us of the danger, she had left a mark. I thought she could be the mother of my children. It was strange for me to have these thoughts as such nonsense was never part of me. So, why now? And, without giving it too much thought anymore, I let it go and dismissed these feeling saying to myself "it was the drugs giving to me down in the mine."

Knock! Knock!

"Wasn't it enough?" I yelled to the door thinking Diana was coming back.

"Hi there! What have you done to the genius of the highways? She left your place grinding her teeth out and looking not very friendly. She can bite!" Biber ended saying with a laugh.

"I'll tell you on another occasion, Biber! Right now, I just want to rest a bit. I'm really tired!" I answered. He left me by myself in my quarters. It almost felt like a few seconds when another knock came into my door.

Knock! Knock!

"Sir, the musicians are ready. Would you like to enjoy a bit of relaxation with the group?" Rad asked from outside.

"No, thank you, my friend of Carbal! You all enjoy it while I rest a little bit. I have much to do once we get to Elgar" I responded without getting up.

While I relaxed lying on my bed, some of the crew members did the same while others listened to the music played.

In the cockpit, both my second and my pissed off friend were in command.

The expedition of Elgar apparently set out to eat. They ate and ate and sang. They had never tasted such delicious dishes as the ones coming out of that kitchen. The cook as I said before is a very, very special woman. Without her, I would not be who I am.

When we arrived at Elgar, they didn't allow the ship at their facilities. It was a safety issue, especially in current conditions. We were asked to use our shuttles to go down to their hangars.

Biber was the only left on board as usual!

We got nineteen of us in two of the shuttles and got to the hangar.

What was my surprise when the Governor himself came to our reception!

With great haste and after just a few greetings, I left with him. We went on a cart with leather seats to this huge library that was full of screens.

My crew and those from Carbal were well treated by our hosts. "Fisco! How long my friend!" I said as soon as I saw my old friend.

"Right! Very true! You are just too crazy to know when you will be seen again" Fisco responded.

"I would have preferred it was for something more comfortable and entertaining than what it is currently happening" I said while I was directed to my chair by Moller.

"Tell us more, my good friend! What's happening?" Fisco inquired.

“Silent, gentlemen! Current circumstances do not give us much time to gossip. For some time now, we knew of Zender maneuvers and that they were preparing something, but we never imagined that it was the occupation of Earth” Moller started the discussion.

“It’s a sacrilege! A direct attack on the agreement we all signed thirty years ago” Sebastian, Ambassador of New Istanbul, said exalted. He was there with us as well as another seven presidents or representatives of other community stars.

Zender apparently had no allies. It was really strange. How were they able to create that stressful climate in the system? Were they considering themselves so powerful? What kind of weapons did they have available to make them feel so comfortable to want to go to war? In the midst of those talks, no one had a clear reason of the why of that situation. The common goal of the human race was to move towards the union of all civilizations. Why that race had the need of inserting their influence unto others?

Suddenly, Aspen, president of Caribbean Space, an old man with more than one hundred years old, raised his voice:

“We all are selfish pigs! They know that sooner or later some of us would want to be in charge! They know even better than ourselves the history of the Earth; only a few of us survived the Great War. And I thought for all this time and now that I have a few years left, that the order would be possible.”

“And, it is! Final order is possible,” Sebastian shouted, “and we have been in order. Humans have learned from our mistakes.”

“But, don’t you see it? They have found the apple” the old man replied.

“True, but our new civilizations have respected each other and us, and anything is still possible” Sebastian responded back.

At that time, I felt I needed to intervene in the conversation as they were missing the point:

“The people on Earth are like us; their leaders are ones who have made the mistake.”

“Don’t be a fool young Maz! The germ of evil was born in that rock, I know it well” Aspen added promptly.

The talks were extended in length. After all that talk, the most important point we all cared about was the war itself, how could a few peaceful communities fight against what it was coming our way without even knowing it well?

Fortunately, the host governor had an answer for everyone. He had for years now recycle materials of all types and convert them in different tools, which with slight changes could serve us as weapons in our ships.

None of us at the end of the meeting came out of that room with the feeling of losing the fight. We all rather were satisfied and positive of the results. Even thinking of such a serious occasion had not stopped all of us feeling good as it had been a long time since all of them had met and talked. Most of them knew each other for a long time and they not only knew each other at a professional level, but they also knew well the reason for the destruction of great civilizations in our Native Planet.

“I knew your parents!” I heard behind me while I was finally hugging my friend Fisco and I turned around instantly.

“What?” I instantly responded looking for the one who had made that comment.

“Yes, I was your father's partner. He was a beautiful person and a real

man in adversity”, he added.

I looked surprised. He ended by saying "I much regretted his death."

That phrase was a defining moment in my mind. The truth is that I knew very little about my father. My mother had never wanted to talk much about him and told me almost nothing about him even when I asked. I don't remember much of him, or at least I have no memories of him beyond a couple of stories I was told many years ago. Instead, I perfectly remember my mother walking around the greenhouses of flowers and getting ready with strangers 3D puzzles. She would often tell me: "Maybe, in the future, you will need to play these games." I had never seen these board games again.

Without still knowing who was talking to me, he added:

"I had met your mother at your home. You were with her too, but I guess you don't remember me; you were just a little kid! What a great woman she was, wasn't she? I have such beautiful memories of her!"

"She was" I said agreeing with him, and without saying anything further, he just left. I could not tell you who he was at that time, but I was left in shock and I couldn't even think of how he knew my family.

"So, what? Have you finally come together with a beautiful Elgar woman?" I asked Fisco getting back to my friend after that strange short conversation.

"Do not expect less of me, I know! You've always been an adventurer, but for me the comfort of my home gives me enough stress and adventure" my good friend answered.

"Children, then?" I asked inquisitively.

"Yes. I have two, Lucy and James. I'll give my life for either one. And my partner, I'll introduce her to you later on. She is just something" he



continued.

“Well, I’ll stop by your home later on” I said. Then, I went to that representative who just had left me with all those questions and thoughts about my parents. I intended to learn more about my parents, and of course, about that person that knew my parents and I knew nothing of him, not even a name.

“Excuse me, sir! Excuse me!” I pointed at him trying to call his attention.

“Tell me, my friend Maz”, he responded, “what do you need?”

“To Know” I simply responded.

“To know? To know what?” he asked me. It seemed he was making fun of me.

“I think you know more about me and my family than I even know.” I explained. “It would be nice if someone would tell me finally who I am. I have this strange feeling that I am a very important tool in this conflict.”

Laughing, Thallium, which was his name, told me some details about my birth which, of course, I had not been aware of. Later on, I’ll let you know about them.

We reached a large room, a very large room. There were seats for thousands of delegates and several representatives of thousands of communities.

What was that? It was not possible! Our system consisted of a few communities. I tell you the truth. At that time, I still had a hard time understanding that even a small initial revolt from Zender had such a great impact.

“Buff!” I said.

“Maz, what is it? Is this debate about you too big for you?” he asked me laughing at the whole situation.

“What do you say, Thallium? About me what?” I could not understand what he meant.

After laughing at me for at least two minutes, he knelt before me and said with subdued voice, “you're the key.”

Just before opening my mouth for what it felt would be a loud, clear voice, suddenly absolute silence was in the room.

“The KEY enters the debate!”

In my face, uncontrolled movements started to show my restlessness: my right eye was twinkling without control, my lips were twitching. I didn't know what the hell was happening. For the first time in many years, a sense of panic sank in my chest. What the hell was going on?

A giant hammer blow broke the silence.

I got a seat at the top of the stands overlooking the room and on top of the control command.

I could see from the seat I was at that there were different colors of seats. From what my friend Thallium said, each color corresponded to a tablet of the universe. Each tablet corresponded to the representation of four members. There were hundreds of members in that room.

I was really at a loss. I knew the system that our system follow in our Parliament, but what I was currently seeing was overwhelming and overflowed anything I knew or was aware of. There were creatures in there that my imagination had never imagined. I felt like I was in a

typical fiction film of the twentieth century.

“We will not allow a rebellion in this system!” someone yelled in the room.

Hundreds of us rang in unison and with various anxieties sounds. No! No! No!

“Humans have lost control of your minerals, with the consequent danger to the rest of the system!” another race added to the yelling.

Hundreds of yes resounded in unison and with various anxieties sound. Yes! Yes! Yes!

Somehow, I started to respond to everything that everyone there was asking. Without even realizing it, I was the voice of the entire human race to the creatures of the entire system.

We had been populating our known space thinking we could not travel farther and, now, in front of all these different civilizations, I realized that we were still that primitive people we believed we had overcome already.

We were allowed to know only a few non-human civilizations, as our technology could not reach beyond the map of the known universe. Hence, the big problem with zenderianos had emerged. The tellurium ore was the ores that allow us to develop the technologies needed for the calculation of new spatial maps.

These maps are live maps. They are in constant creation and evolution, to avoid relativity and have control over space and time. It had been years since the human race had at its disposal the necessary ships for space travel, but another thing was the ability to tell those machines where to travel without finishing being smashed.

“You are a selfish civilization!” one of the representatives pointing in

our direction yelled.

“You have hundreds of samples in your history that show us that you are not trusted” bursted another one.

Those words hit hard within the representation of humans that were there, among them I.

Her Witecher, who was the representative for Constellation Metter, had taken the turn and with words and gestures that were very hard and aggressive began to tell a story.

“Now, Maz” Thallium muttered to me, “you will know and understand.”

I listened carefully, without opening my mouth for a second to reply to any of the harsh words said in that room.

“Nearly 200 years ago we came to you to give you the opportunity to perpetuate your species in space” Her Witecher started.

Total silence was made. Every member of that mega board wanted to hear what Witecher had to say. He was the spokesman of the Universe's oldest town, I learned of this little detail later on. For me, it was all so new and unexpected that my mouth kept on wanting to ask more and more questions.

“At the time we found you, your survival was limited to the use and exploitation of Dether 105, or as you call it Earth”, he just plainly said.

In my head, I repeated 105, 105... what?

“You were a race we did not want to know and give extra knowledge because you, as a race, always want more. You are selfish civilization. Selfish! A big mistake we made with you”, Witecher said putting us down.

Thallium noticed my anxiety. He didn't seem to be surprised by anything that was said or told in that room. He was not concerned. He just seemed knowledgeable of everything told. To me, though, every minute that I kept on hearing about us made me think more and more about the big lie we all have lived for centuries. We thought we had colonized those satellites that now had become part of our land and our knowledge. Laughing inside now, I realized that those other civilizations there had arranged the order of our civilization, that in a way they had created for us one of their tablets, and now we were pawns of the system.

I was somewhat small and somewhat ignorant, or very ignorant. On the other hand I could not understand what I was doing there. Why was I given the representation of our species? Why was I the key? What did all that mean?

"Thallium, my friend! I really need you to explain something to me" I said to Thallium.

"Whatever you need, my friend Maz!" Thallium responded just quietly and without any anxiety in his voice. By the way he responded, I realized that I needed to be ready for more, many more surprises. None of this was a surprise to him, but it would be for me. I knew he had much to tell me.

"What am I doing here?" I asked without thinking.

First, he laughed and, then, he laughed again even harder.

"Do you remember what you played when you were little?" Thallium asked me.

"Yes, of course, I do" I responded.

"Open the box" he ordered me.

What would my childhood games have to do with what was happening there? Actually, everything was getting even stranger and stranger to me by the minute. In that drawer, there was a small computer with a controller hologram. I took it out.

While Witecher was still talking shit about our race, my friend and I were talking about our affairs. Everything Witecher had said so far was no more than complaints and until he changed his arguments, we had time to discuss this further.

“We want to see the map!” we could hear in the background with strong demand.

Everyone stopped what they were doing. Watecker had spoken for the first time. He seemed to be a great warrior, a prominent member of Metter and he continued saying:

“I do not doubt the ability of the human race to prosper and want to grow as a species”, the great warrior said, “But, I will not consent these traps to do this faster than it should. The history of your planet is a clear example of what you are. Years ago, we saved the human race by giving you the key to space travel. You had finished with his wonderful planet and its various organizations.”

We were all attentive; his tone of voice would not accept any interruptions.

“Now, what?” He yelled hard.

“Even the original ones are selling our technology in desire to get rich!” another one added to the yelling.

“Selfish! They do not learn!” someone else yelled in the background.

“Yes, it is true. They are with the people from Zender wanting to create

new maps and beyond our control”, Watecker added to everyone present.

“Noooo!” Thallium finally answered to all these disgrace about the human race, “That's not true. The people who inhabit the space do not have that anxiety or need. We should not pay for them.”

“What do you mean my friend, Thallium?” Watecker asked, “Should we, perhaps, think that if we terminate earth, you and your group shall not oppose?”

“Yet, where is the map?” Witecher finished asking Thallium, “We left it 150 years or more in the hands of Duna, the girl who was able to decipher its mechanism among all humans.”

Duna! Duna! That was the name of my grandmother.

Thallium saw my reaction and said: "Now, you will discover who you are and why you are here".

“The map is here”, Thallium indicated to those present, “It’s in possession of the humans who do not deserve your retaliation.”

“That will be determined together”, Watecker answered, “Here the only thing that is clear is that because of you we are here now together and we have to discuss the rearranging of our universe.”

“Who is the Apprentice?” Witecher asked.

Thallium pointed at me indicating I was the apprentice and I startled back feeling uneasy and doing strange grimaces and twitches in my face.

“We want him to demonstrate what he knows”, Watecker asked flatly.

But, with much discretion, Thallium requested a break, which it was

granted. We had been there now for a long time and all of us needed to stretch our legs. Well, some others, their tentacles and some others, their nasty snot.

I was more interested on knowing what was going on than stretching my legs. I needed to have clarification about all those balls and stars circling around my head.

“What the hell is happening, Thallium, my friend?” I asked Thallium as soon as we were by ourselves.

“I had come to just notify everyone of what was happening on Planet Primario and I find myself in the middle of this tremendous event”, I continued.

“Be quiet! Wait a minute! Do you remember I told you a while ago I had many things to tell you?” Thallium told me this so nicely, that I do not know how, but I began to listen and to be more calm. The man had a special ability to talk to you and convince you of anything he wanted; no one had been able to contradict him. This was, perhaps, because he was wise and always acted in good faith.

“Your grandparents, especially your grandmother Duna, joined years ago, in their youth, a group of astronomers who created the first three-dimensional map of the known Universe. To accomplish such a task, they needed to use a compound until then unknown. Tellurium. It increased the capacity of computers considerably”, he started explaining and continued:

“They coded the algorithm to access your super computer with a three-dimensional game of great difficulty, which only an insider would be able to open.”

I was just astonished at what I was hearing. This seemed to be out of a movie.



“The human race is considered an inferior race, but... pay attention now... we were the creators of the space highways. Until that time, other civilizations roamed the space in a random fashion, invading other inhabited planets and satellites, getting into trouble with other communities and fights would arise. The highways gave rise to trade between different species, enabling communications, and making almost mandatory peace”, he explained more in detail.

“Fuck!” I got choked up after his words and continued in dismay, “That... What my grandmother what?? She had discovered what??”

I could not still believe what I was hearing.

Yes, I remember having played for years with my mother a few games when I was little, but I could not understand how these moments of great satisfaction and laughs for both of us were the key to an interstellar project.

“Where did I get into? What the hell is going on here?” I still responded looking still in dismay to Thallium.

“Relax, Maz. I’m positive you will know what to do when it comes your turn to do it! Just let yourself be you and go!” Thallium responded looking at me like a father looks at a son who is trying to help out in a big project at school.

And, I thought to myself. If he was so sure of me and how I was going to be OK, why would I doubt it?

“Come! Let’s go inside, my good friend Thallium, and let’s assume the obligations of our race”, I indicated to Thallium now much more relaxed and ready for whatever was coming next.

There was a lot of noise inside the room. Most everyone was already inside. They were waiting for us, for ME. They were waiting for my answers. And, I was not yet sure of what I had to answer. In a way, I

had two feelings which had invaded my thoughts and body: The first one a sentiment of joy for belonging to this time in history, and the second, a sentiment of fear to the unknown. We were now all there and everyone was looking at us.

Tac!

Tac!

Two strong blows rang just as I was sitting down. Silence fell again in that room.

After a moment, Witecher requested what those present there were expecting:

“We need to have assurances from the humans that they will recover control of their tellurium. We cannot allow the people from Zender and your people to join forces and extend the map of your highways.”

Next to me, Thallium could not believe what he was hearing. Nothing had changed.

I was neither too completely satisfied with what it was being said in that room, but I kept on listening without opening my mouth. Witecher continued to complain about our civilization:

“You must recover all the ore you have left uncontrolled. The people from Zender has always been a plague for the rest of civilization; we have been able to keep them away from us and the rest of the universe by keeping them outside of our own highways and other civilization’s highways. They have never been organized enough to go against our defenses. We will not allow you to be now, after so many thousands of years, the allies of these beasts, and, if necessary, we will go against all of you and terminate you both.”

And, Witecher continued now more excited and shouting to the room:

“We come from all over the Universe for the importance of your discoveries pasts, but we are going to enable this collaboration. No, sir, we won’t.”

“In no way, you’ll go out of your space!” a disgruntled Watecker shouted.

“Quiet!” Witecher had not finished speaking and he did not accept any interruptions and because Witecher still wanted to talk more, his viceminister stopped talking immediately.

And, then, Witecher, gave us the ultimatum:

“You have twenty days to resolve the situation.”

So sharp was this last sentence that none of those present said anything else. Everyone was quiet, just looking at both Witecher and myself.

“Now, show us the map” Witecher ordered looking at Thallium.

Without hesitation, Thallium pulled out a very old wood box. Until then, I had never seen this material, even though I knew of its uses in the past.

“Give me the key you have around your neck”, Thallium asked.

“What??” I answered confused.

“Yes, sir! Your pendant. The memory of your mother”, he answered calmly.

How could he know about my pendant? No one had ever seen that key; I had always carried it with me since my childhood, but my mother had given it to me on the condition that I would never give it to anyone. Until that moment I had never asked about my mother and

her ancestors, but many things were happening now in my mind and all those wonderful years that were spent in my youth with my mother were the ones that were coming flowing down to me in this instant. Slowly all of those games that years ago I had played with my mom were coming to me, which one would be the one they were looking for? Would I need to know which one had to be?

I took a bag off my chest and handed it to Thallium. Inside it was the famous key. It had been a very long time since I had seen it, but I had promised to keep it safe and that was my intention for the rest of my lifetime.

My friend opened the very old wood box and pulled out of it a small computer with a couple joysticks.

A big smile grew on me. That machine was the console that allowed me to fly warships with my mother. She found always outlets to get away from my attacks, but always ended up losing. I could not say how, but doing certain tricks I could always see the spatial corner that she used. She had explained to me many ways to separate stars from planets and other obstacles.

I told Thallium, to which he didn't respond in any particular way.

He put his hand into the box and took a cube with many buttons. He also had a cable with connectors for that console. Staring at me, he said:

“This is really important, Maz. Do you remember the password your mother used to turn on this hub to enable the highway system?”

“What? How?” I thought to myself still thinking, “the only thing that this game started was the Space War, a super fun game.”

“That's what you could've known at that time. Today you'll know what it really is and what it does. You will be able to understand why you've

spent so many hours playing it. But, please, tell me... you remember the key, don't you?" Thallium responded.

"The key?" I asked again.

"Yes, sir! The password you had to add before you could start the game", he responded annoyed.

"Relax, my friend! There have been many years since I have the encoder on my hands, but it'll come back to me as soon as I have my hands on it. I remember that I had three opportunities to figure out, but my mom would always take it off of my hands if I failed the first. That bothered me a lot, so I ended up doing it with my eyes closed and doing a little dance with the hub", I responded very happy of knowing something nobody else knew in that room.

"Refrain from nonsense! Make us the demonstration now. We need to know that the map is under your custody and that you will use it when the time comes for all communities present here and those communities that are missing could not be affected by your selfishness," Witecher added impatiently.

I quickly got ready and connected the console. And, then, in that instant, I was relaxed, with no worries at all. That device had been like a part of my life, a member of my own family. I knew it.

Before starting, I argued in favor of my race, because thanks to my "friend" of the Earth, Fani, I had understood that this trick was a matter of a few selfish leaders of our primary Planeta Primario.

"Quit your pitiful explanations!" Watecker yelled.

To which I had no other out than to reply:

"If you are judging me and my people before you really know the truth, then we are doomed. If this is your truth and don't want to hear

anything else, why so much farce?”

When the uproar started again throughout the room, two new strong raps sounded.

Witecher listened to my words, but, in a calm voice, he again gave us twenty days to solve our problems and promising to continue in peace if we returned back to track.

“But, before you leave, do demonstrate for us the use of the Map,” I said flatly.

I then began to sing.

Many of those present showed faces of surprise and were unable to understand my actions, but it all made sense to me. My song was as follow:

In the universe, there is a reverse order. Then, I discovered the position of the cube.

If you go forward, the eight is far. First number.

If you take your sister, seven days a week.

When you go to your mother, one is, as one is your father.

In the universe, turn in reverse order. Then, I turned left.

Eight fingers to the corners, you will sting like thorns.

But when you want to account, the credit of your game increases.

8711 and tighten corners.

“It was a simple code, right?” I thought to myself. It had been years

ago since I had to think of this song, but it was still in the back of my mind all this time.

In a few moments, the console turned on, and, soon after, a huge hologram came out in front of all the presents there.

In its center, the solar system. Members of other civilizations made offensive comments to this detail, but I did not give it the slightest importance. If something I was starting to value and grow on me with even more intensity than before was pride. Pride of myself; my family, starting with my grandmother, my mother and the rest; and, from there, pride of my race. What it currently was happening showed me that a few members of an entire species had no awareness of the real impact of their actions in current events and we had to make them understand of this situation. If they did not stop their intentions, they would destroy everything that mattered to our civilization and to us.

Looking back at my game, I could now see that every civilization represented in there had visible control of specific areas marked by different colors. That hologram was the map of the universe known to my grandmother and her contemporaries.

But, how could my grandmother know about all this and I had just learned about it a few hours ago? I was actually still learning about it.

Actually, it was really strange that only a few selected members of each of the civilizations knew of that condition. Why had we been denied such knowledge?

Many more questions haunted my mind: “how and why was the tellurium a problem? How tellurium was going to serve the people from Zender without the associated technology? Or, what was even more disconcerting to myself, if that key was all that it was needed from me, did I need to do anything else? Would it have already finished my mission? Was something else expected of me?”

“Thanks, my friend Maz,” Witecher said bowing his head as a thank you for the short demonstration, “The last time any of us had seen this little cube was in the hands of Bash, a young entrepreneur with a lot of power in the world. We had real suspicion that the key was in good hands. But, you have shown that your people have struggled to bring peace to all, and that’s why we are giving you the opportunity to redeem the evils caused by your primary originals.”

“Remember, twenty days, though,” Witecher reminded us while Watecker was nodding with his head showing approval after our demonstration.

Everyone of my race was finally relaxed as just a few moments before this warrior was showing a boost certainly aggressive towards our race, and, if all that had not worked out, we could have started the destruction of the human race.

Shortly after our demonstration ended, that macro-meeting dissolved as fast as we had all come together at the beginning. Almost no one was left in the room.

Thallium and I left together, and though he seemed really pleased, something in his face showed a gesture of concern.

“What's up friend?” I asked.

“You’ve been awesome! After more than twenty five years, you had in your mind the code and key in your chest. I've been carrying this box for so long!!” He answered.

At that point, both exploded in a loud laugh. Without knowing, we had been part of the history of mankind. I should say unbeknown to me, because my friend Thallium was more than aware that this could have happened from a long time ago.

“Maz! Now, let’s go have a drink, breathe calmly and relax. Then, I'll



tell you a couple of things that may be of interest,” Thallium told me as he took me by the shoulder and took me with him through the place.

As we walked throughout those facilities, many ships were getting out of there in different directions. Humans had a few days. We had never been in this situation; that alarm was true and, with no doubt, we had not created enough technology to overcome the machinery war of the people of Metter, which were two of the thousands of members who had been present for that tumultuous meeting.

“I organize parties that are sometimes more crowded than this,” Thallium said laughing to downplay the violent vision of what we just had come from.

Accompanying Thallium’s laughter and already being close to what it seemed like a place where drinks were served, I invited him to come in and have some drinks with me. Of course, I continued treating him the same way than with the rest of my crew. Knowing who he was in that place didn’t change my way of thinking of him. That day nothing seemed to matter. He seemed not to care either, so the next two hours were the most fun I had lived in recent months.

And, after a few hours and being a little drunk, we decided to return to our obligations, but Thallium wisely said before leaving:

“We have been long without sleep or rest at all. We probably should do it and, after resting for a few hours, we should take the necessary measures. I would invite you to dinner at my house, but I think it’s better if you go to your team and be with them, so you can tell them what you have discovered today. I’m sure that they will appreciate the sincerity of their command. On my hand, I will order all my operational managers to start working on something I’ve been preparing and waiting for years. In fourteen hours, let’s meet at the hangar where your ship is at.”

And, he ended saying:

“Until then you and your team have the freedom to do what you all want in my installations.”

“Thank you, my friend Thallium,” I answered politely.

“And, don’t forget to tell Biber my daughter is waiting for him since his last visit,” he added with a smile.

“Certainly... I will let him know. My second should not let this opportunity go,” I answered explaining, “Iri, your daughter, is a very beautiful woman.”

“And, she’s crazy about your pilot,” Thallium said between intense guffaws.

After those surprising news, we broke apart and went our different ways.

That place was fully known to me. After separating my steps from those of Thallium, I soon found The Tavern, another great local place where on top of extensive tapas, there were the best reserves of prúsulas in the Universe.

In the background, in a separate space, I could already see Biber and the rest of my team, and they had already been there for a while for what I could see. That was perfectly normal. The expedition had been under way only a few days, but those days had been, perhaps, one of the worst and most complicated that until that time any of us had lived.

“What? How did it go?” Lasa asked.

“What will happen now?” another crew member asked inquisitively.

Those questions were being raised from the largest of the ignorance, as not even remotely, they could imagine what was really happening.

“Everything is good!” I answered rapidly.

“What would you like, sir?” I heard next to me.

I looked up and I was questioned by a young woman to know what my answer to the tremendous number of products around my eyes would be. The Tavern was a place where culinary traditions were preserved from the XXth century, especially Spanish food. A true renowned chef had managed to recreate all the flavors in foams and delicious liquids. And, you see, almost two centuries later, this still persisted and were tasted by all of us. How important the XXth century was for our race!

“Ah! Yes... Hello! Please, bring me a glass of prúsula, the best you have, and the best steak in the house too,” I ordered.

“Very good choice, sir. Are you familiar already with our menu?” she asked.

Jejejeje! After I laughed for a little while and while seeing that this girl could not understand what was happening, I said more submissive:

“My grandfather brought from his land these flavors into space.”

All those present, except my second, showed surprise.

In our world, no one wondered about the origins of anyone.

The Great War had planted a lot of hatred and confusion.

Only a fortunate few had managed to be part of those chosen to inhabit the new world before. And very few of the survivors had been in the last great missions.

My companions had taken some of those delicious plates, but everyone had been waiting for my presence to ask for something

more filling.

After twenty or thirty minutes, each of us, or nearly everyone, had already unbuttoned a few buttons on our shirts, and were sweating from the warmth of these delicious meals.

“Dear god! It is the best time ever! At least, in a long while!” Martha said jumping into the lively conversation.

“Madre mia! How uplifting is this prúsula!” I responded. I was really enjoying that great meal and company.

I’ve noticed Rad in the corner. I was certainly worried about him. He didn’t look good. What happened on Earth had been too painful of an experience. I thought at that time that everyone was having too much fun, and this seemed to no go well with him as these overjoyed may have seem a little disrespectful. I know that while it was unintentional and without malice in the part of everyone, I could see his hesitation as Rad sat there listening to everyone laugh and having a good time. I finally said:

“Well, everyone! After such a nice time I have to ask you to go to rest,” I requested of my crew and my team.

“What the hell!” it was responded by several of them indicating they were just having too much fun.

“Nooo!” another of my team members yelled.

Turning my face to everyone and thinking on those that we had left behind, I started talking to all of those present at the table. That small alcoholic rebellion stopped quickly and fell into silence:

“I understand the need for entertainment in your life! But, furthermore, we must not forget that we have left behind two of our companions, two of our partners.”

Rad paid attention too as you could see a relief coming to his face.

“This mission began as a simple courtesy visit to gather information. But, everything has gone awry. Tomorrow I will need all of you. Everyone!” I said and above all addressing Biber.

We both knew the meaning of that and a brief smile came to both without saying any words.

“Rad! You take a few days off and come to talk to me when your mind in order,” I directed my eyes to Rad.

“Thanks, Maz, but I am going back to Carbal. I have a lot to explain. And my children need me,” Rad responded.

“Perfect! I think it's the right decision,” I continued asking the rest of the team, “Any other members from Carbal who need to go home? The adventure that awaits us tomorrow and that I’ll describe to you more in detail is dangerous. You can come or go back home. Both choices are perfectly understandable and I’ll be no opposing anyone to go back home.”

“You must know that it was an honor to have shared with you all these weeks, and you all are a great team,” I finished telling my team. I was really very proud of them.

After those words and some hugs, we all went our separate ways and each finished the rest of our day doing what we wanted before retiring to our chambers.

I decided to go toward the house of my friend Fisco, who I had meet shortly before the great meeting and invited me to meet his family.

“So good to see you, big man! I can see that you had done not much lately carrying that pouch” I was glad that I was able to spend some

time with my friend and thinking to myself that I had no noticed earlier, but my friend weighed more than twice than when I first met him. I told him, "You are an animal!"

"How are you doing, my crazy friend? It was a long time since your snout came by this tin world," my friend Fisco said to me giving me a big hug.

After a brief chat, a very pretty young girl of no more than seven years of age could be seen in the background coming our way.

"If I remember correctly, I would say that beautiful girl is Lucia?" I asked Fisco pointing at the young girl.

"What?" he asked and finally realizing that his younger daughter was almost there, he responded, "Oh, yes! That's my little Lucia. And, not too far away, her older brother should be coming shortly!"

"How are you doing, little one? I don't know if you remember me, but your father and I have been friends for many, many years," I started telling Lucia.

After a few words, Lucia left the room and went to her own playroom. To see the older Santiago, we had to wait a little longer. That gave some time to Fisco to introduce his wife to me as I have not met her in all this time.

"I have heard of many adventures where your name appears," she said.

"Oh, yeah?" I responded with curiosity.

"It's clear that you are a very important person for my husband," she continued saying while giving a kiss to her husband.

After a while I had the sensation of being in my own home. I felt very

welcome in this home. My friend had created a beautiful family and a gorgeous place to make this home. It was a very calm and lovely ambience.

I was not hungry as you all know that a little while before at La Taberna I had satiated my appetite. But, as they sat down at the table, I decided to sit with them at the table.

In addition to being an excellent conversationalist, Eva, she was demonstrating that she was also a wonderful cook.

“How delicious everything was!” I told Eva while eating a delicious baked potato.

“Thank you. You are like Fis had described you, a perfect gentleman,” she said smiling to my compliment.

“So, what has brought you back to Elgar?” Fisco asked me.

“The System is messed up. The people from Zender certainly have created a climate of war,” I explained to Fisco.

“What??” Fisco asked in surprise.

“Yes, my friend, yes. We are waiting for a war coming soon,” I told him without giving too much importance to this. Eva was still picking up the table and I didn’t want them to worry about this.

“Are we waiting for a war? We have been fighting for decades avoiding confrontations, how can we wait for a war?” Fisco started asking without keeping control of him

“Our past is finally passing the bill to us,” I just answered in a simple way. We are in the spotlight now of many civilizations known and many others unknown to me until today.

Both Fisco and Eva changed to a state of concern.

“I should not have told you this, but sooner or later Thallium will have to let you know,” I ended this conversation by changing the conversation to something more light.

We spoke for a short time about our lives; we took some shots together; and, after spending a good time with that lovely family, I finally went to my apartment.

I was in need of a little bit of loneliness. This day had been too full of excitement.

I knew that at this time I needed time for me. I had always known that throughout my life, I always had a need to take important moments for myself. All of us should do that from time to time. It’s important to think and organize your thoughts.

The next morning. You may be surprised by this expression, but as an important data point to you, my readers, to maintain order in space we continue to respect the time zones of Planeta Primario. And, no matter which place we are at, the days have twenty-four hours and one hour has sixty minutes. It was something that had worked for centuries and that no civilization had even thought about changing it, at least not until the date on which this story is being told.

“My God!” I heard in front of me. Coming from a bakery and his eyes still absent from worries, Toni, my cabin controller, stood in front stopping me and leading me to a different hangar where my small Nueva Duna was.

Thallium stepped out a few minutes later and in a bold and proud spirit he said:

“My good friend, Maz! Shortly, you will find a surprise.”



I didn't understand what he was talking about. Yesterday I already had as many surprises as I could handle for a lifetime. My concern was increasing at every step. I was not feeling at the top of my game, so I talked the least and let whatever was coming to come.

The governor, three feet in front of me, was talking now to an officer.

"Sorry, Thallium! I think I'm understanding that I will be at the orders of a single carrier?" I asked Thallium in surprise.

That was all I was able to distinguish between the noise, but I kept quiet as he was not paying attention to me or my questions.

After a long walk, a large door.

"Enter the code, colonel!" Thallium requested.

"Are you sure, sir?" he responded in a surprising way.

At that time, Thallium turned his head directing his gaze to me.

"Sure. Enter the code," Thallium ordered again showing irritation.

Something deep and mysterious began to ride then on my thoughts.

While those huge gates opened on the other side loomed a great warship and, at the foot of the gateway, all my crew and two or three of the expedition of Carbal stood there. To the sides, hundreds of men and women of Elgar fully equipped.

"This is your new ship!" Thallium said showing me the beautiful new ship in front of me.

A sudden gesture done by Elgon, whom he named himself the Colonel, made me understood what was happening.

“I've always known of your ancestors and I have always known about you. It's time you assume your right position in this world and fulfill your destiny,” Thallium said looking at me.

All that had flooded my mind and the hangover from yesterday was not helping me to understand and let me be.

“How? What? I do not understand, sir,” I said very confused.

“You have in your hands and in your memories the survival of our species. For my part, I can only offer technology and men. We are required to destroy the ships from Zender holding back Earth and help the rulers there to be reasonable and return back to the old ways,” Thallium responded softly.

“The latter we, the diplomats, can work on it, but the first is a thing of two,” Thallium smiled and continued explaining the plan:

“At your command, I put Elgon, my best warrior and worshiped by my soldiers. He will put all his potential in the fight, but we need the Apprentice to drive the highways of this and new systems.”

“And, what do I have to do with it?” I asked still trying to figure out what I exactly had to do in all this.

“You are the one who has played!” Thallium just simply said, “All the rest of us will get lost in the Universe and there won't be a chance of not being destroyed.”

I was introduced to all those people. I had never had on my hands so many lives being my responsibility, but worse even than all of those lives was to know that if I fail in this enterprise, all my race would be annihilated.

I ordered my people in the positions I needed the most control and trust. Nothing that I did seemed good to Elgon, but both he and I knew

our roles, and had no choice but to accept it.

We had no much time left. Only nineteen days were left that would mark the history of our species.

We started fission accelerators in the ship. I had never been in a structure so quiet yet so powerful.

“Destination: Earth. Full power!” I said.

“No. Destination: Warsa and sixty percent,” I heard behind me.

Elgon contradicted me already in my first order, but he was right. We needed to supply us with certain materials, but of course I was not aware of it.

“I hope in the future you inform me about this kind of details ahead and have no future discussions,” I told him, “The truth is that I have no need to discuss the control of this machine as I’m leaving it in your command and disposition. I just want you to follow my indications of what to do, are we in agreement?”

“I see you are rational about our different positions and you know well your part in this mission, so I agree,” Elgon responded coherently.

That man was not a bad person. I just needed only a few words with him to reach an understanding.

“Between both of us will have better control of everything,” I said.

“Perfect, Maz, that’s how you call yourself, right?” Elgon said already in a jocular tone.

It did not take long to reach Warsa. Within minutes, a large shipment had already been introduced in our lower deck and, without any time to lose, we left Warsa a few moments later. I would have liked to stop

and chat with the president and a few others. There were outstanding accounts between us and the talk we had a few days back had not solved anything. In addition, I had several of my old friends from Nueva Galicia who had decided to start their lives there. Not for anything in Warsa there were the most beautiful women of the system and many moved there to find their soulmate.

Not even an hour had passed since our departure from Elgar.

“How was it possible? How fast have we gone?” I asked in surprised.

After smiling, Elgon told me about the capabilities of that great ship. It was really the best ship I had ever driven, and I dare say even seen.

“Now! Destination: Earth,” Elgon ordered to our pilots.

As we approached our final destination, our instruments were telling us how far we were from the metal birds and spacecrafts from Zender. My crew and I were overwhelmed by this technology; it was as if we had until then batteries and they had living machines. That technology was providing data to us without even asking for it. The computers were listening to our conversations and giving responses to facilitate our control. In reality, the best machine in the history of mankind had been placed at my command.

Now. On our way to Earth, I kept enjoying this technology. Huge screens throughout showed maps of the universe and we could see where we were at all times. At the same time, we were also given information on other ships and, in particular, our interest was centered on the ships from Zender. We were able to see a total of eight ships on the surface of the earth and even hundreds of birds, like those we had met at the beginning of our original mission, so we had to assume they would have a fleet of at least eleven or twelve ships. There was no way to know exactly.

“When we reach the Planeta Primario, we will send warning signals to the human inhabitants and give an ultimatum to the people from

Zender,” I told to my communications team.

“Elgon, you have to be prepared for any eventuality that may arise,” I explained, “I hope you and your men are a hundred percent if these bastards just end up attacking us.”

The colonel took my orders at heart.

That situation was really uncomfortable for him, for he was accustomed to command and to have everything under his control, but in this mission he knew his place.

Although, even I didn’t know why the command was my responsibility! That was how it was and I had to just run with it. I knew that I probably would have to expect also great surprises from here thereafter.

Three or four minutes away from Earth, my operators discovered a hidden code in emissions from the enemy. This code seemed a sequence, but they had not still being able to decipher it, so we were not able to understand its contents.

Perhaps, it was a good time to upgrade the ship status to War, so that every member of the crew would be alerted and prepared.

When we entered the atmosphere, that feeling of danger that my old carrier gave us disappear this time. This ship was definitely a different story.

“This machine is amazing!” Biber said.

“Certainly. It must be the best work developed by man,” I responded.

“It has everything you need to not to be defeated. So hopefully we’ll get out alive of this one,” my second kept on saying.

I had just finished my argument when by the other side of the horizon

we saw through our radar two ships quite big approaching from the west. We had too little time to avoid them, so we decided to attack us first.

“Elgon! I leave the governance of the ship at your disposal. I hope you are able to squeeze us out of this one,” I said at once to Elgon.

Gritting his teeth and scowling, that officer began to give orders on speed, angle, and preparation of weapons. As he gave further and further instructions, I was able to figure out the great power of that flying machine. Actually, just after a couple of minutes, it seemed Elgon have everything controlled, which it gave me some breathing and relaxation time.

The Zender ships began firing back to us from afar, to which our shields responded with complete accuracy.

Along those terms, our guns opened fire against one of the ships that beset us. To my surprise, we destroyed that first enemy machine in the blink of an eye.

I was completely happy to be part of that adventure. I knew that the future of our world was dependent of my actions: that race wanted to finish with us and I just knew that only with devices like this ship could account for them.

The second enemy ship immediately retired, and after a few minutes we saw the rest of the Zender fleet left the surface and atmosphere of the Earth.

It was not quite understandable what was happening, but who were we to understand what those things were doing?

A delegation formed by Elgon, five more of my officers, and I left on a shuttle to land. We knew of the current situation, a dictatorship had developed, so our mission was to liberate the place. Mission that was

developed with great diligence, as the external threat that favored that situation had been removed.

The first place we stopped was Mondariz, that village where I had discovered what was happening and started all this craziness. We were greeted by Xurxo already on the surface. His face like the rest of his companions reflected tranquility and peace; we could see that they lived again being free. For us it was flattering because, with very little effort, we managed to re-offer the use of the land surface to this people.

“Welcome, Maz, what a surprise to have you here again!” Xurxo responded while he gave me a hug.

“I don’t think you’ll like so much the reason why I come to see,” I replied.

“What? I do not understand,” Xurxo said very surprised.

My mission on Earth was to free all people from their dictators while at the same time setting in the planet the right defense needed to overcome that war that was beginning. We all knew it would not be an easy mission, but certainly it would get done.

“Xurxo, it’s very simple, in my previous visit I noticed that you were the one applying somewhat restrictive rules to the inhabitants of your town,” I responded without any hesitation.

“No! That is not true. Your visit was very short and there was no time to explain things,” answered Xurxo in dismay.

“Do not give me any excuses. It was short, but I could clearly see that your people were not satisfied with your government,” I responded. I didn’t forget that they had me drugged up.

“I’m still telling you that you have no idea. The visit and future

occupation by the people of Zender completely changed our order. Until that time, our people lived on the surface in a democratic and peaceful order. It was normal that once we had to lock ourselves in the old mines, all of us would be uncomfortable and forced to live in a very restrictive way,” Xurxo insisted in explaining the reasons of what was happening.

“All right! As of now, we will do the following. You'll get your people from the mine and will prepare your army to defend the Earth from future enemy attacks. I, on the other hand, will talk to the rest of the communities on the planet to do the same,” I responded shortly.

“What defense? How? If we were not able to do it before, how do you think we will be able to do it now? Not enough weapons, let alone fight a technology as powerful as the one from Zender,” Xurxo responded not believing what I was telling him to do.

“Xurxo, be calm, organize your people. I'll take care of providing you with weapons. To your knowledge, we have full support from the Interstellar Senate,” I responded knowing that more answers would come.

“What? What are you talking about?” Xurxo said not knowing.

That place, our home world, had been out of the system for years; the rest of the other inhabitants of the universe had turned their backs on our primal beings and, these were the weakest point, so that's the reason for the occupation from the people of Zender.

“You, relax and just do what I ask. Later on, I will explain everything more in detail. Now, we will talk with other leaders of the planet and once we have spoken to all, we'll gather all the leaders and explain our strategy to beat the Zender people,” I responded without giving any more details and deciding to terminate that conversation.

I returned to the ship and got in contact with Thallium. I explained that



just after one fight, the ships and “birds” from Zender had left Earth and that we started to work on the communication with the different communities throughout the planet. Thallium explained the new situation with the army and the strategies to be followed by us from that point forward.

Over the next two weeks I directed all my efforts to manage the communities on Earth. It became clear that democracy was the choice made by those people, but they had changed their position after the alien occupation to ensure order and discipline. My initial interpretation was not too successful, so it was easy to reorganize the communities back to their original order. Luckily!

Meanwhile, in the rest of the universe, all communities had already organized themselves to defend their borders. At the same time, our enemies were also preparing its war machinery to get ready for what was already on the verge of happening.

Elgon was very concerned. Based on the latest gathered information, it appeared that the main goal of our antagonists would result in a total attack of Elgar, where all his family lived. And, on top of that, not only he, but we all knew that there was much of our own war machinery in that location.

On one side, I trusted the defense capability of its people, but on the other side I had my doubts about what it could happen.

“We armed Earth with weapons from Elgar, but will this population be able to defend themselves from the hordes from Zender?” Elgon wondered aloud.

He did not forget of his usual place, and did not trust the military capacity of his assistants. So I requested a change of fate, wanted to come back in one of our auxiliary vessels to their village.

I did not know the full capabilities of our ship, so, after requesting a

quick explanation of all of our features, and consent of his command, Thallium, I authorized him to leave.

With twenty other soldiers he began this journey.

“Sir! Sir!” I heard someone calling me next to me.

“Tell me, Biber, what’s happening?” I responded as I saw Biber coming my way.

“Two enemy ships just came in our radar in their way here. I figure that they are trying to intersect with the ship where Elgon is traveling,” he responded softly.

Up to that moment all the maneuvers that Zender had done were of assembly, but with that movement the formal assault had just begun.

Fortunately for all, my previous visit to Earth had warned the whole system of these future enterprises, so actions from Zender had been expected, and now it did begin!

Both Thallium and I launched the defensive systems of our ships. I, for my part, sent Conima, one of my best drivers and close friend of Elgon, on a ship which had the last generation devices loaded with highly effective weapons. The governor, in turn, ordered all his weapons to be ready in a position of active defense in order to safeguard the arrival of their number one warrior.

I don’t know how, but suddenly we were able to see in our instruments hundreds of enemy ships leaving for different parts of the system. It seemed they were expecting a slight movement on our part to start their offense.

No humans wanted that situation. Our history on Planet Primario had taught us that war is always the last option and that nothing good out of them would come out.

My mission was to protect the Earth and collaborate wherever possible with Elgar and Carbal. For me it was the first time I saw them, the peace of our people had stopped. Luckily for us, our enemies did not have the formula for travel beyond the system. So our enemies' objective was to get possession of our technologies. Overall we were technologically superior, but of course our civilizations have not been trained for fighting and the strategy and the defense of our lives was in the hands of a few.

"Sir!" Biber yelled.

"Tell me, Biber, what's going on now?" I responded.

"They just attacked Metter!" he responded in surprise.

"That confirmation of the beginning of this war does not bother me," I responded without much worrying as Witecher had prepared his planet to any adversity, not for nothing were the most powerful among us.

"Direct the crew to the situation of war. It will not take too long before we'll see them coming this way and it's better to be prepared," I responded.

"Also, please warn the different government of the Earth," I ordered Glass.

While giving all these orders, I could not stop spinning alternatives in my mind that could develop depending of what kind of attack we were going to have. Of course, what it was not in my mind was to send my people to the pursuit of our enemies; I did not believe in that hackneyed phrase that says "The best defense is a good offense" and what I was waiting for was for the arrival of the ships from Zender.

My ship had at its disposal a large number of weapons and there were over two hundred very well-armed ships too.

“Conima! Conima! Everything ok in the sky?” I communicated with Conima.

“Yes, sir, I am flying over Europe and, so far, I have not come across any enemy ship,” she responded giving us current information on the current events on Earth.

“Thank you, Sister four. Keep us up to date on what happens there and take care,” I responded closing communication.

What I was really worried about was not knowing my enemy’s war capabilities. After all, Zender was a warrior people largely unknown to us and, although, we were certain of their technological inferiority, but we did not know the number of troops and ships at their disposal.

“Sir, we got a report from Florida that the attack has begun on Earth,” someone told me.

“Inform me as things are happening,” I ordered and continued saying, “Sali, try to find out everything you can about each and every human colonies in our system.”

“Yes, sir,” Sali said starting to gather the information requested.

“We need help! Help, please!” we all heard over the radio intercom.

From North America we were asked for help. A small horde of enemy ships intended to lay down on the ground and then send their infantry. The weapons we had left there were not enough to eliminate this immediate danger.

Daniel explained that the problem that had arisen was directly related to the ability to join and separate their ships into separate smaller units. Every time our weapon was able to hit the enemy ship, this would divide into several smaller ones, hence the difficulty of

destroying just one ship.

“Tell them not to give up and do not stop shooting, and, of course, keep on protecting their defensive lines,” I ordered, “Please, send the coordinates to Sister Four to shred those pigs.”

In the meantime, Metter had completely repulsed the attack and some of its personnel were now available to help other communities, news that lifted the mood of everyone at the ship.

“Please, send fifteen ships to Florida,” I ordered.

“But, sir, they will be intersected by enemy ships,” he responded.

“I don’t doubt it! Please, send those ships,” I just responded quietly.

Through the megaphone alarms sounded throughout the ship and fifteen great pilots were sent to their first war. Some of them went out nervous; some others like Ruben went excited.

“Just get as many ships as you can and return alive,” I told them hoping to be inspirational.

The quality of our ships gave me the confidence needed and I believed that mission was possible.

From Florida the data received was not too encouraging. Many of our cannons and weapons had been destroyed. But, so far, everything was going pretty well. Our enemies had lost many more ships.

Just after three hours of being in battle, thirteen of the fifteen ships sent by me had returned to the ship safe and well

“What the hell happened?” I asked Ruben.

“As we neared Florida, hundreds of Zender small ships attacked us

and as we got closer and closer to our friends, we realized that they also attack us, and as soon as I understood the organization, I order to return back to the main ship,” Ruben explained shortly.

“OK,” I responded now in deep in thoughts, “Glass, put me in contact with JR, Mayor of Melbourne.”

“In a second, boss!” Glass had me talking to JR in no time.

“What’s going on down there? I send reinforcements to help you out and your people attack them?” I asked JR very upset.

“Sorry, man, but...” JR started explaining.

“Neither Bat nor but. Do you need our help or not?” I just plainly asked JR.

“Yes, yes, we do. But every ship looks the same and we have started an open fire. Sorry, it’s the only way to kill them, there are too many at once,” JR finished explaining what was happening down there.

“All right! But, for what I’ve seen, I recommend you to dose your ammo. We don’t know yet how long we will be at war and how many of them we have to fight,” I finished terminating the communication with JR.

“Sir, we report that Oslo is being attacked. It seems to be approaching from the north,” I was told.

“What is known of Elgon and the ships sent to Elgar?” I asked inquisitively.

“They have successfully reached their destination, sir, although one of the support crafts has been damaged,” I was told.

“Good! I was worried,” I said feeling a sense of relived.

“Please, have Reuben come to my presence as his ship comes in the hangar,” I asked.

The arrival of Elgon to his community left me relaxed, but inside me I knew that Elgar did not need him, but Earth did need his expertise. How was I going to defend this planet if I had never fought? I thought to myself.

“To your orders, sir!” I heard behind me.

“Ahhh... hi Ruben! What happened down there?” I asked as soon as I realized who was talking to me.

“Ships from Zender are significantly inferior to ours, but there were too many of them for our short group and... that coupled with friendly fire made it impossible to continue providing the support ordered,” Ruben explained shortly.

“Ok. Do not go too far from your ship. You’ll have to leave soon,” I responded turning back to the rest of my team.

“Perfect, sir. To your orders I’ll wait,” Ruben responded leaving the room and directing himself to the ship.

After the words with this great serviceman, I saw Sali, the historian and archivist of all my missions, coming quickly to me to explain the current situation of all communities. Although nothing that told me worried me too much, it was very clear that this "invasion" of Zender was no nonsense. I saw it for the first time on Earth, and by now they had approached their ships to all human settlements along the different interstellar systems. No doubt they had no good intentions. We were starting to live a full attack on our race.

For whatever reason, this civilization needed to expand their domains. We had at our disposal the necessary technology to make that

possible, and perhaps that was their only goal, to obtain this technology.

“Biber!” I called looking for my second, so that my communication agents and he were to contact all the different prime ministers, governors, and other representatives of the different colonies.

“I need to explain in detail the need for dialogue with our attackers to Moler, Witecher, Thallium, and the other commissioners who attended the Interstellar Senate,” I said, “I have a feeling that something is happening outside to our and their understanding, hence these pathetic attacks of our enemies.”

They had been found originally back in Earth, original planet of our first space travel and creator of the Key Step. Would this last matter?

“Sir, news just arrived that Elgar's atmosphere is currently undergoing massive concentration of ships from Zender,” I was just informed.

The thoughts that haunted my mind were even taking more form with this news.

I don't know how, but the Zenders thought the box was in the hands of Thallium and they were exerting as much pressure as possible to obtain it. They were not going to obtain it in any way possible; it was held by us.

Humans were at risk. If we could not keep it protected, we would be attacked by the other civilizations of the Senate.

One way or another the people who attacked us already had the material available to them; they were just looking for the technology, but why? What was happening now exactly to act now?

“What do we do?” I was asked.



“Let Conima and the rest on Earth and change our route towards Elgar. Our friends need our help,” I ordered. I knew about the superiority of the defenses of Thallium; seeing the machine that was placed at my command, what would he not have? But, following my sixth sense, I went to his aid, I had many things to discuss with him and I would not let anything happen to him.

“To the crew, prepare for a possible battle,” the megaphone through the ship was preparing everyone in the ship before we were to encounter the danger ahead of us. Hundreds of Zender ships were to be found at the entrance to our new destination.

“What will it happen to the Earth's inhabitants, sir?” Sali asked, always concerned for others.

“The enemy forces are moving away from Earth as we have to do. They certainly have gotten what they were looking for in there and, now, they are regrouping around Elgar. Precisely because of these changes, I fear that this sequence of events is not accidental and something more complicated is probably going on,” I answered to her concerns.

“You, what do you know of civilizations alien to our system? Why the Zender residents are doing this madness now? I cannot understand it and it doesn't make any sense,” I responded and asked Sali.

Sali who had the same questions as mines for days now was trying to investigate an irregularity in the end of the known world that was particularly strange. A series of lights had been observed by freight ships for the last twenty days, but none of the witnesses of these visions were clear or sure of what these lights were. Of course, they were not artifacts of intelligent beings, they were clear about that; nor could they be comets or asteroids as they were giving off great light. And, especially odd was the shape of these lights.

“Well, Sali, continue to study these events and regularly inform me of

what you discover,” I responded after hearing what she explained to me, “It’s very weird.”

“Yes, sir!” Sali responded quietly.

“Diana, I need to get a map of all highways created so far. And, if you find occurrences of other systems, let me know right away. I think we will discover much more than we’ve ever seen,” I said just knowing that many more questions would come.

“It is strange what you request, sir. Other systems? Sorted?” Diana asked surprised.

“No doubt we do not know anything about anything about everything around us,” I just responded without getting into much discussion.

Already my greatgreatgrandfather said that his boat was the most delicate of this immense sea. A few days ago no one knew the zenders, and now you can see.

“No one knows what await us,” I just said.

I called for everyone I needed at that time: “Laura! Daniel! Glass! Lasha!”

“Yes, sir!” they all responded together.

“I need you to put all your ingenuity and smartness to gather as much information across the length, width, and depth of the universe about any strange news that may be of importance to this war. Do not disregard it for being strange,” I said.

“I need to know everything that may seem even a little strange,” I repeated observing everyone and everyone, even the rest of the crew present at the room, looked at me puzzled, but as a good crew they were, as soon as I finished my words, they were quickly getting ready.

“We are getting very close to Elgar, sir,” I was told by my officer.

“Prepare the defenses and warn our hosts to help us with the invaders and open their gates for our arrival,” I ordered to those present. Everyone knew what they had to do.

The arrival was easy. Really easy as if the rulers of Zender knew of my intentions and they let us in without resistance, which greatly relieved everyone in the ship.

As we were informed upon our arrival, the war as itself had stopped, the zenders were all clustered around this community and had abandoned their attacks against other civilizations.

No doubt we were at the very epicenter of the galaxy troublemaking.

For a single carrier as I was just a few weeks ago, it was awesome to be involved in those interstellar senates, battles, etc, etc, etc.

“Welcome back, my good friend Maz,” Thallium greeted me.

While I said hi to Thallium, someone had given Biber a strong grip full of sensuality in front of me... and, yes, I do have to say the governor's daughter was full grown!

“Well, as you can see here we are all very calm. I worry much more about a preemptive strike from Metter than these parasites around us. But, you're right, something weird is happening,” Thallium just said calmly to me and added, “But, we have a few days to resolve all our doubts and solve the problem. Let's see what we can do.”

“Haven't you noticed anything extraordinary lately? I have the feeling that something more powerful than this absurd attack from Zender is happening. How do you explain that a civilization like this inferior to many others does what is doing?” I just simply asked Thallium

inquisitively.

“It is true my friend Maz. I've been thinking about this for days now and I put my best researchers to study the known universe, and though we have nothing confirmed, it appears that more civilizations outside our system have gone through this without creating any altercation,” Thallium responded just looking at me.

While Thallium and I were discussing, a strong signal of alarm rang in our ears. Instantly, a sharp jolt shook that whole gigantic structure.

“What was that?” I asked looking for an answer from Thallium.

We all looked at each other and were able to see in our faces an unusual fear.

It did not take long before we saw an assistant to come looking for Thallium asking him to return to the control room of the complex.

“Sir, our observers were looking at a cloud of gas that appeared about twenty minutes ago in an unexplored quadrant when it suddenly came toward our system,” the assistant just informed us.

“OK. I hear you, but what that cloud has to do with the shock that we just had?” Thallium asked.

“We have also observed a movement of the people from Zender moving in the opposite direction to the direction of the cloud. It appears that they have desisted from their warlike attitude towards us,” the assistant continued without actually answering the question just made by Thallium.

“Sir, we are receiving messages from unknown sources!” we heard as we entered the control room.

While in that room we all were aware of the different changes

occurring in our system, I ordered the entire crew of my ship present there to get ready to get back out in a minute's notice. We had to find out what the hell was going on, something really bad seemed to be coming our way and the Zender revolt was just only a prelude. It was starting to be quite clear that their movements were justified and were coordinated to start something else. Their withdrawal had made that point even clearer.

“What is it really happening, Thallium?” I asked him with a look of concern.

“It'll be better to get in touch with all the civilizations of the system, so that we can coordinate a response, sooner rather than later,” Thallium responded also worried.

Across the control room, in the other side of the installation, in the meantime there was a fire and a large bedroom area had to be isolated; the whole structure was in danger if that was not taken care of.

“Help, help! Somebody, get us out of here, please!” we could hear people.

Hundreds of people had been locked in that space, but they were not able to remove them to a safe area while the incidence was not addressed.

“Sir, we have contacted the people of New Galicia and they had informed us that hundreds of clouds like the one we have just observed have come across on their radars,” Thallium was told by his personnel.

“But, what the hell are they?” Thallium asked just impatient with no information on what was going on.

“New Galicia also reported that their people have decided to leave in

mass. They are the population of the system closer to the origin of these clouds and they have confirmed the death and destruction of much of their village and ships,” his personnel just continued providing information to Thallium.

This cannot be happening! We know we are nothing or very little in the Universe, but at least we thought we had controlled the space in our system. What is this that comes from abroad and it's now beyond what we are even able to understand?

We were now observing our enemies' behavior in those that were like us, a massive flight of their populations.

Throughout the different speakers we could all hear the different alarms and the captains of various ships of Elgar were called to the room where we were at, the control room.

“Ladies and Gentlemen,” Thallium said with strong voice, “We need to have everything prepared for a possible emergency exit. Instruct your different crew utmost care and prepare all ships to spend a long time in space in the worst of the cases. We do not know what could attack, we do not even know if we are attacked. The only thing we do know for sure is that something very powerful is coming at great speed toward here and certainly that it will kill us before we even know it.”

At that point, I interrupted my host and I encouraged those present:

“We are intelligent and brave, nothing has so far prevented our people from being a winning society and with high responsive capacity, but this new threat is an unknown and we may need to open new routes of escape and colonize new dimensions.”

Suddenly, our talk was interrupted by a thunderous new jolt. At the same time, a communication from Metter was coming through.

“Humans, new space highways should be open. If not, all of us will

end up being destroyed,” we could hear through the communication system.

We quickly ordered the entire population to embark each of their assigned ship. There was no more time to talk, we had to act now.

“Maz, you have been trained for this; now it’s your time, your crucial time. You’ll have to put all your attention on providing us with an outlet for everyone in our system,” Thallium said, “Warn every community of the current need to escape. Something beyond our control is happening and we need to get away from this area of the universe within a very short time. No one can now know what it will be of our species. We had always known how insignificant and little we were, but this is clear evidence of that knowledge.

“Send orders to all Earth orbiting spacecraft to return immediately,” Thallium continued.

Both humans and other species that coexisted in peace were being threatened by unknown forces and only a rapid response would give the “solution” to what was happening. Only just a few days ago we were worried about the Zender threat, but we could not even consider it very serious. Now we realized that something more powerful had forced them to act that way, had witnessed this threat long before us, and all they wanted was our technology to escape this terrible power.

The smaller ships were beginning to leave Elgar and other towns. Hundreds of ships sailed the space waiting for new directions.

Thallium went up to my ship, the one that he had prepared especially for me. All the food and other essential items had been loaded in the different devices very quickly. We were all witness to the power of this threat and no one wanted to be left behind, hence so diligently, that it was even strange in a species as partying as ours.

We got in touch with Witecher and communicate our decisions and

movements we were going to do, to which he responded affirmatively leaving under our control the whole operation. Although they were a powerful civilization, they did not have the Key to the Door of the Hole Step, which was the only tool that would allow us to leave in this huge rush, hence their complicity. Those previous threats by the Zender attacks had been erased of their minds, as they were also realizing what was happening.

“We are with you! Help our people to survive and we will be eternally grateful,” Witecher said in a completely different tone from previous ones.

These words of the governor of Metter had been intense and full of greatness. People were now above different power levels and the need for survival made us all equal.

At that time, my mind went back to the delicate image of Fani.

“Thallium! We have to go to the Native Planet and help their inhabitants to flee with us,” I just told Thallium with a sense of urgency.

“Forget about those ungrateful ones!” Thallium responded not even thinking about it.

As a connoisseur of our history he understood that those who lived there were the source of our disintegration as a species. The cause of the Great War. But, I had known a few of them recently and I knew they were exactly like the rest of us. In addition, willingly or not, I had sort of fallen in love with the image of that beautiful woman, and, even though Thallium didn't like the idea of going to Earth, I ordered our exit toward Earth with three other ships that were almost empty to gather those on Earth there.

We sent clear orders to their scientists to prepare their people to get out of those facilities in just a few minutes. We did not have much time to pick them up, so they had to all be prepared to be picked up and



leave. At full speed and leaving behind the rest of the inhabitants of the various ships of the system, we left in direction to Earth to do what I considered needed to be done: to get them.

Thallium and I had a small discussion over it, but after a while he also understood that it was the right thing.

We were on the verge of another historic shift in the evolution of our species, as well as others. No one was left behind.

While gathering the people on Earth, a notification came through our systems that indicated that the people of Carbal, already uploaded in their ships, had observed the destruction of their entire colony. But, they could not define how it had happened. The mere presence of those clouds close to the vicinity of the planet had destroyed everything.

How haven't we seen those tremendous clouds of energies? Where were they coming from? What the hell were they?

The representative of the People of Carbal asked from us clear indications of what to do next. The truth, to me all that was too much too handle, was beyond my knowledge. I had never been responsible for the lives of more than just my small crew, and to think that I had been put in the position to make this kind of decisions and responsible for having to save all human and nonhumans in our little space in the Universe was just getting on my nerves. But, I didn't have time to complain. That was my mission now and should not get carried away by my fears.

As I had contacted mir Felkac, I got in touch with the other representatives of all communities, and told them to turn their ships toward the side opposite to the origin of the clouds, thus gaining some time to discover which way to move forward.

After finalizing the picking up of the inhabitants of the Earth to the last

ship, we headed into the same space recommended to them just a few minutes ago.

One after another, each community had let us know of the total or partial destruction of its facilities. It was strange, it seemed to be accelerating all that great devastation. Very few human casualties, but all that had been created over the last two hundred years by all of us (humans and non-humans) was being swept away with extreme ease.

The meeting point was near Metter who was one of the most distant of all. When we arrived, thousands of ships were concentrated there.

Maybe, just maybe, a few hours were the entire margin that we had to work with and figure out where to go. We all had to act now as the Zender people had done just a few hours ago; a life without clear direction lay before us. How would many thousands of people and other living beings live now? My head was exploding with so many doubts and responsibilities.

"I need to stop a second and have a drink before proceeding," I told Thallium.

"Okay, let's go to the cafeteria and take some time, and in the meantime, I'll also have my team set up an emergency meeting with the Interstellar Senate representatives," Thallium said realizing that I was paralyzed and I needed some time to relax.

Hundreds of ships were leaving the various representatives on the deck of our ship. Although there were much larger structures, they all had placed all their hopes on us and now we had to discuss all our options with me.

Luckily I still had a few minutes to relax and asked for a glass of prúsula, like my friend Thallium had just done. As an old friend said "how good these drinks are!"

We did not have too much time and as we were leaving that cafeteria, I saw Fani passing us by. My face changed its expression from concern to happiness with a smile from ear to ear. Some cuddly nerve was reflected in it. I was sure that as soon as we had overcome all this that was happening, my youthful craziness would lead me to a beautiful relationship with this woman. No one had fulfilled me like her.

No time to linger and, without further delay, Thallium and I headed to the room where we met all the leaders of the system.

When we arrived, a great uproar in the room was silenced. Everyone's attention was put upon us and no one interrupted our update in the current situation.

We explained to everyone there what little we had discovered, and although it seemed insufficient information to those present, no one dared to get us upset, because in our hands was not the solution to the current problem, but the escape.

Watecker, whom we had met at the previous meeting, asked us promptly to discover new highways for the survival of all our people as we were all at risk at the current location.

Without giving more time for discussion, Thallium unboxed the map and I took my mother's pendant. I started playing with the machine under the watchful gaze of all those present. Everyone was puzzled. Because my mother had taught me to play with this and not find new spatial pathways, some incredulity was reflected in many of them, but my mission was to discover a new way and I was not paying attention to any of those reflections.

Warning signs began to sound at that moment. Our scientists were working to uncover the source of those powerful energies and were investigating at what distance they were starting to act on their surrounding area, and the why its acceleration to our movements. They didn't appear to be natural, had to have some control of some

type, and, certainly, they didn't mean anything good.

This energy was showing a higher power in the universe and did not seem to need spatial highways to cross through the systems.

How on earth could we then escape from such destruction?

At this time we were most worried about being able to escape its influence, and we would study them later on, if we could.

Alarms warned us of the destruction of another planet, one after another our settlements were being destroyed, to which none of those present could do nothing. So many populations of other species represented there had been devastated by these incredible energies, we were convinced that they were intelligent beings who directed them to get our total abandonment of the system.

What were they looking for in that small space in the universe? What did we have that they needed? Who were they?

It did not take long to find a new highway, and a few minutes later, another one. Both were connected with each other and we decided to send half of the fleet by one and the other half on the other. The most powerful people, people in Metter would go toward the Fengar Star. They would take with them half the humans and other alien people.

The other half would come with us. First in line, my ship traveling towards the constellation Euriapias.

Both destinations were a huge distance from where we were, so I was confident of getting around these attacks at least for a while. Before leaving the space, we left behind floating in the space very heavy-duty equipment that hopefully would allow us to gather at least some type of information about the energies that were attacking us. It was necessary for our final survival to discover what or who they were in

order to repel them, fight them, or partner as a last resort. My grandfather used to say "when you cannot win your enemy, join them."

None of the alternatives must be discarded because we knew nothing, absolutely nothing except their great power. We did not even know their origin.

It also made us realized that we had to work together and had brought us all together. These civilizations which for centuries had never got together for more than just a fruitful business relations or not even knowing each other literally to having to work together in a common goal. On that side all that was happening was giving us a more positive sense of who all were and how we needed to relate to each other.

I like to think of positive things so as not to demoralize never in adversity, and if this was the way to unite so many different civilizations, these cloud energies were welcome.

As the two fleets traveled through space in the new highway, the equipment deployed and left behind to get a better understanding of our common enemy began sending information. This information was being studied by our specialists.

Meanwhile I got one of my shuttles to approach one of the Zender's ship. They had joined us by Metter's diplomacy. Humans would have not allowed them to come with us, not for nothing was Earth the first place which they besieged. But, now we all had the same problem and had to understand their situation too. The fears that roamed them were fully justified, and had decided to attack as their first solution to the problem that they had discovered months ago. I personally would have liked to hear about these clouds months ago instead of just a few hours ago. That could perhaps given us more time to get prepared for what was now happening. That was time the Zender people had wasted for everyone.

As my ship was getting closer and closer to the Zender ship, I contacted them for permission to be heard, which of course I was not denied. The attitude of this people was now cordial and apologetic. They knew of the damage they had done by attacking everyone and the lack of communication with the rest of the communities in the universe.

As I approached their ship, I could now see that this ship was made as we originally had thought of: the union of all those little metal birds coming together in one. It seemed a curious technology, which we humans should eventually learn great things from.

“Have you noticed, my friend Biber, of the complexity of these supports?” I asked Biber as I was observing the ship in detail.

“True, Maz,” he responded, “I have never seen anything even similar. Giant three-dimensional puzzles. It also clearly shows that could join unlimitedlessly.

“Do you think they are all on this ship? Or will only this be a small part of them?” Biber continued asking.

The truth was that we humans knew very little of those now going to visit, but nevertheless still I was curious to know everything I could about what was currently happening, what was attacking us. It was worrisome to everyone and they were the ones that had more time to study that event. We did not know even if we could communicate with the Zenders, but I kept on thinking that they were able to communicate with the original inhabitants back in Earth, and they would somehow be able to understand how and be understood.

We were now in what it appeared to be their front gate when through the speakers strange sounds started to come through. They didn't make much sense to me, but they did have a sense of rhythm. I asked all those present silence to be able to see if I could understand anything that was being said.

"Jach ki'imak in wool in k'ajóolt kech". None of us had ever heard anything like it. We all thought it would be zender's language, but one of the youths who were part of the expedition came rushing to the control room saying that language was something akin to the old dialects of the Maya, and explained that it was one of the civilizations they studied in the faculty of human history.

Nothing was making too much sense, were the zenders the ancient gods of the earth? Were they those ones for which we had built those huge temples? I, in my ignorance, I asked the young man his name, to which he replied Seth, and after identifying I asked him to tell me everything he knew about that language. We didn't have much time.

He began to tell me stories about an ancient civilization that lived on Earth back on time whose language was the Yucatan and apparently that was the language we were being exposed at this time. What we just heard translated to "Welcome".

Surprised by the knowledge of that novel I decided to add him to the expedition that would leave the shuttle to parley with the occupants of that ship. Luckily, some of my crew seemed to be students of first rate and I knew they would know how to chat more or less with our hosts.

We prepared our ship to go aboard the Zender's ship. I brought with me just three people; I needed the rest aboard my ship to evaluate all the information received from the other ships that were part of our expedition, including, of course, that information that came from our scientists studying what was happening in the origins of our systems.

"Seth, when we go down, please make sure we do the proper greeting to our hosts," I asked Seth.

"Of course, sir. But, I may need to take my computer to help translate all the different conversations. I was able to understand something simple as a welcome, but my level in ancient languages was just

enough to pass, but I cannot consider myself an expert.” He responded being a little concerned of this new position.

Amid laughter I told him that my level was zero and that it would no matter what he would be my interpreter. I did not even know there were more languages than those we speak among humans. After all, I had only been able to study the module to pilot transport ships and a couple of things about space loading and unloading.

At that time my thoughts went back to thinking about what I was doing there, with so much responsibility as I had. Some fear came through my face again; I just wanted to not screw it up and to continue our journey to who knows where.

After stopping the ship, we went down to the Zender’s ship and I asked the young man to announce them my name.

“In k'aaba'e' Maz,” he said.

Ahead of us a being of more than two meters with a face like a bug responded with a long argument, which of course I did not understand, and by looking at the face of my assistant, I could understand that he didn’t get much either.

Among the many words said, my assistant could make out one, Dzots, and was able to understand the tone of panic felt by the alien.

Of course, none of us had ever seen those things and so we were ourselves amazed with that surreal conversation. That young man was able to gather more information and tell me something about what was going on. Bat-like creatures had come in huge flocks throughout space destroying everything in its path.

When trying to make sure he understood what they had said, he had for a couple of times used the word Dzots and all Zender bystanders gave clear signs of anxiety just listening to it. None found these



people too organized or even having too sophisticated weapons, and we did not understand two main things: what kind of being could that be? And, how could any of us had ever heard of these beings that were going through space with their own bodies?

This was beginning to scare me a bit, and I had always considered myself a person of great courage. We knew the zender people had lived for centuries on the edge of our system and they had rarely approached us, though they had maintained other relationships with other races to the East.

I asked Seth to ask the parliamentary authorization for us to view the ship. I was impressed by what we had seen from afar and this was part of my initial interest visiting the Zenders. And, of course, I wanted Seth to continue communications with this group to gather as much information as possible about our now common enemy from which we are were escaping from.

To our first request, they responded with a Ta biem. They had accepted it without causing too much trouble.

“Jalale,” I was told by one of the beings in the room. And, I followed him as he did a gesture that I understood as “Let’s go”.

Leaving behind my promising young assistant, I started to walk with Sali, who was part of the group that had come down. With every step I took, everything was surprising. It seemed incredible that such an immense structure was assembled from all those mini ships. It was really impressive.

Behind me, they were chatting amicably with those beings. I had a tour without too much understanding of what it was being said, so I had to learn from what I saw. Little by little, I was seeing things that united our knowledge with that of them. They had similar propulsion technologies to ours as well as our housing dwellings. After all, we were not so different in customs, though we were vastly different in the

anatomical.

When I returned back to my group, I felt great complicity between the two races. Without any further delay, I ordered my people to embark on the shuttle and to explain what they had learned from those beings.

“Sir, it’s impressive. Many years ago, these beings visited our original planet and were treated like gods,” Seth said.

Interrupting him, I questioned him about what I was concerned at that moment, about the beings that we were all fighting, how they had been forced to flee their quadrants, to which he replied with answers that were not hopeful.

“It seems that these beings feed on ‘Puksi ik’, hearts of their victims. Another word that kept mentioning was ‘bak ah don ts’, meaning meat hunter,” Seth responded seeing the concern in my face.

It was becoming clear that the threat that besieged us was a race of beings who ate their enemies and that for whatever reason they had, they had come to our borders with the intent to wipe out everything they could find alive. None of our technologies were of interest to them; we were just a prey to them. They also had to be especially powerful, because, although insufficient against us, Zenders possessed powerful weapons, which they had not been able to use for much of their defense.

My team and I were getting ready to return to our ship. The way back was simple and had already been marked. The two groups had begun some time ago our escape. In my mind, doubts arose whether this was the best option; sometimes it is better to repel the enemy attack than to flee to the confusion. What it was becoming apparent is that people come together with common threats and perhaps this could serve us all to join forces and get to know each other better. I, personally, before I started all this, did not know the existence of so many disparate races and creatures, although I had always thought of

their existence.

“We’ve just been told that we must return urgently to the ship,” Sali said.

“Why is there so much hurry?” I asked.

“As we are being told, we are receiving numerous communications from the group traveling to Star Fengar,” she just responded nervously.

It was not still clear the seriousness of these data rushed to my computer, so without delay, I ordered everyone to climb to the shuttle in which we had arrived. The visit to the Zender ship had been very productive and I, personally, had been able to understand and get a clarification of the strange behavior that these beings had previously. As we, humans, their only intention was to survive.

“Elgon, what’s happening?” I asked wanting to gather information as soon as possible.

“Sir, we are being told that the group headed by Witecher is being attacked by strange creatures,” Elgon answered.

“And, what else?” I asked looking for farther information than just an attack.

“At this time, they are able to repel their attacks, but they ask us to join forces with them and help them to destroy a huge hive of what it looks like giant insects,” Elgon responded.

The distance between us was a tremendous impediment to lend a hand immediately, but making use of the Key Step I could get a new path for our group.

As I got into our ship, I ordered the entire crew and all occupants to

get ready to go into battle. Although there was still plenty of time before we could reach the other group, I wanted to make sure that whatever we could do ahead of time was being done and that would help us to be a step forward.

I then question Elgon about the military capabilities of our ship and I had my communications team to do the same with the commanders of the ships that were part of my group. I wanted to have a full understanding of what we had available and where. It was vital to our success to structure the group to defend the ships less prepared for war and that's what I was planning on doing. More or less when we had divided into the groups, a balanced distribution of ships had been done. What I didn't know was whether Witecher had already time to order his group and if it had already casualties. No doubt the power of the creatures that were attacking us and worried us was something unknown to everyone, or so I thought.

The total number of civilizations that had come together in both groups was awesome.

"Glass, I need you to start interrogating each and every one of the coalition members for information about these creatures. Someone has to know them. They could not have come from nowhere and so fast taken us under their control," I ordered him.

"Yes, sir. I'll start right away on it," Glass responded starting to communicate with different groups.

When I had a moment after organizing the operations, I went to my friend Thallium and both discussed how we could get together as soon as possible to meet up with the Metter convoy. If we could not lend a hand before their extermination, we knew our community would run the same fate. As the saying reads "the union is strength".

After creating a new highway to take us faster to Fengar, I changed our course, and I began to receive data on all I had asked previously.

The truth is that we had a very good ship of war and another two hundred good war ships preceded us fully staffed and with ready-made material. We were amid some six hundred transport ships loaded with beings of all kinds; all of us had shipped together to find a new future for all, or at least that was what we were expecting, having a future.

As I expected Watecker was a first-rate military and was keeping out Dzots. As we had done within our group, he had ordered promptly all of the ships from the coalition military and the military capacity achieved was allowing him to reflect the barbarian waves of these space eaters.

This good news allowed me to relax a little. Just a little. At this time, the coalition had sufficient capacity to stay in space without problems too pressing to handle. We had enough food to endure several cycles waiting to find new places in other quadrants to get our civilization started or, if possible, even return to our original settlements. Everything would depend on the evolution of the attacks of our opponents and their ability to follow us, or even our own ability to finish them.

The flight of our settlements had perhaps been hasty, but what it was clear was that communities which did not have power weapons would be destroyed, so the fact that we all became a group was a success.

We all had to rely on each other and, although, we did not know each other, all of us were a commercial pyramid that had great success together. Therefore, we would need to continue fleeing together and we would thrive wherever our trips would take us. Each one would bring to the colony their little grain of sand.

On the other side of the system, firing lasers, security screens, and very various modes of defense were keeping at bay Dzots. Surely they did not expect our rapid grouping and in the absence of ships, their attacks were powerful but of low-tech. Luckily for all of us they

were precarious as a civilization; they had character like a pack. They were like packs of wolves attacking buildings. While we were having the doors closed, they would never achieve to get in. The difficulty we had was that we were in the space, and these buildings were the union of our ships in space; if, for any reason, one of our ships would go slower than the rest of the group, they would stay behind and could become prey to the enemy, while at the same time this would be opening our defenses of the group.

The news that was coming from our friends gave us hope. At this time, no ship had been destroyed. The entirety of the groups was kept and the beasts that attacked us failed to separate us or create anything that might threaten us. No casualties on our side. Only on theirs. But they were many and this fight had only just begun.

On our part, though with fear, we were bravely following the path to help those in need. We were ready to fight those things because it was our life and that of our related ones. Although none of us wanted really to be involved on what it was going on as in the depths of our hearts we had hated wars and confrontations for many years now, in this case we will be showing to the other beings of the universe that we are and what we are made of. Not for nothing we had the key to solve the problem that we now had all.

“Prepare the shields!” I instructed.

A few minutes ago our equipment had detected a cloud of Dzots. And, even before arriving at the other group, we had to defend ourselves.

“All staff to their posts!” I ordered at once.

“Let the transport vessels to adapt their movements to the ships war. If they don’t follow these movements, let them know they’ll be destroyed by the enemy,” I indicated to my communications team.

Everyone in my communication team got to work right away. It was

needed to coordinate the movements with all the ships to be followed by all without separating and creating openings. This was going to be really hard work. We were many and this group wanted to end this first attack all intact. We would fight to provide a safe venue to the rest of the group.

As we saw them approach us, we were finally able to have an idea of what those things were. We were able to distinguish them based on what we had heard from the Zenders. They were not overly large, but they were definitely ugly and tremendously strong; they had wings and no man knew how they were able to fly through space, but it did. When we arrived, the first thing they did was to surround us and issue thunderous cries, which we also unexplained, as how it was possible the emission in the vacuum of those sounds. In all the radios you could see the nervousness of the various crews, whether of one kind or another, none of us had that ability to fly across the room, let alone the speed at which they did.

Where did these beings come from? Why had our system been attacked by them? These were questions I would like answers too but at this time the only important question was how to stop them and how to end them.

“Sir!” I heard behind me.

“Yes, Laura?” I answered.

“One of the ships where the inhabitants of the Earth are leaving the group,” she answered shortly.

“Give them the information necessary to regroup and not jeopardize our defenses,” I answered.

“At your orders!” she said while already starting providing the right information to the ship.

“I expect from you the most attention to detail. The priority now is to stay in group. We must be all well-controlled ships,” I explained to all my team.

Luckily for my communications team, the military ships were run by highly trained teams and the error was almost impossible, but civilian and supplies ships were carried by unskilled persons accustomed to the quiet and lack of concern. We could not let them at their ease because they complicate our way of how to protect them.

A few days ago that was my situation, a job where I marked my carefree routes, and nobody told me how, so I understood the lack of professionalism of my counterparts. But, now, thousands of people’s lives and other beings of different civilizations had been placed under my responsibility, I had to get my act together and redo myself and make my team a high performance team. Maybe if we succeed, we would be rewarded for it; but if not, at least, we would be alive and that was enough.

One of our friendly ships shot several photon torpedoes toward the Dzots. It seemed that finally we were in front of our monstrous enemy and the attack to our group had just begun. The defense gave its fruits and at this time all was well controlled.

“Sir, there is news from the other group,” I heard.

“What’s happening? Tell me what you get,” I answered impatiently.

After a short but complete description, it was explained that a couple of transport ships of the advance team headed by Metter had been occupied by the Dzots. Horrific images had to be seen by the members of the fleet. All the occupants of those transport ships were dismembered limb by limb to be devoured by those creatures. To all those present, the single narrative of the events caused dread.

“Ladies and gentlemen, you just heard what the outcome of our lack



of diligence will be. You must use all your senses and skill to protect us. Do not let any of the ships in our care leave the group. As you can hear and see, they stand no chance of survival if they leave our protection,” I said dryly.

From that moment all ship staff became aware of what was really happening; those creatures were dangerous enough to be able to end all races therein assembled.

At least I, who had traveled before and seen a good part of our system, did not know of their existence until now. So, we all were learning together about this sickness. And what we would need to still learn if we came out of this one!

“Main ship to Transport Nelma! Main ship to Transport Nelma!” I heard Glass giving instructions, “I need you to divert your course 20 degrees higher; again, divert your course 20 degrees higher and keep up to cruising speed.

“What's going on Glass?” I asked him being worried.

“We are seeing some leeway to the tail of the group; our safety systems are stretched and certain ships are coming out of the group,” Glass just answered quietly.

“Right! Good job! Make them aware of the warning and let them realize of their current danger,” I told him as my team was coming together and taking initiatives.

“Biber, I need to reduce the speed,” I didn't want anyone left behind.

“Yes, sir! Cruising speed at three quarters,” he responded.

Under my responsibility, there were more than two thousand ships and thousands of people. I had full confidence in my team and I knew that they would not lead to errors. The technology in this ship provided

by Thallium was such that it was perfect for this purpose. But even with all this, the power of the Dzots was of concern that kept me on edge.

“More news from the Metter group, sir!” I heard expecting the worse.

“Silent, gentlemen! What’s happening?” I asked nervously.

Between strangers and loud noises, voices and noises came through our speakers:

“Crisshh crishhh have gained entry crisshhh crisshhh our barriers. Crisshhh help! crisshh help!”

Within seconds that communication was lost. Everyone's mind was spinning at the notion that they were gone. The fear was becoming more intense and nervousness in all the ships was present; none had experienced war in a system like ours based on respect and trade.

“I need a full connection with the ships of the advance team headed by Witecher. All of my communication members start the chores now and start to work on this connection while not forgetting to keep control of our own group. Any errors in the defense will be the end for everyone,” I ordered swiftly.

“I need to consult alternatives with Thallium and the other governors,” I said aloud, though I was just thinking it,” Biber, prepare my shuttle to go out and order the other leaders an urgent meeting on Thallium’s ship.

The view around us was terrifying. Thousands of Dzots circled around our shields and our shots did not hit home with them too much; only when aimed at the top of their bodies caused sufficient damage to them, and most of our weapons were not designed for that accuracy.

Leaving my ship I saw hundreds of ships that preceded me in the hope of my success; something went down my throat and even more

pressure fell on my back; after all, it was not the same to be told of your responsibilities than to actually see it. And, to think that half of the living system blindly followed my steps was a responsibility that not many would assume.

Arriving at the ship, many of rulers who were called were already waiting for my arrival in the hangar. Actually, we didn't have much time and the meeting would take place in the first room attached to that space. Thallium's ship was amazing, all their factories and their city was in it; the satellite were we met was just merely a support. Tremendous energies had to be used and developed in order to fly this mega structure and provide for thousands of humans living in it.

Among them, a team of leading scientists were working with the other sages of the group trying to get as much data as possible on the Dzots.

“Prior to the referendum, you need to know something, Maz!” I was told by a creature with bulging eyes and small ears, with longer arms than legs, and color quite unusual. He stopped my pace with these words and began to discuss about the possibility of escaping from our system to another nearby. He claimed to know the origin of these beings that attacked us and the inability to overcome them.

A guard tried to remove him from me, but Thallium who was attentive to my gestures stopped him from doing it, but he still showed him his appreciation as he had done his job properly.

“First, tell me who you are and which civilization you come from. And then explain to me what you are talking about,” I said to this being quite embarrassed as I didn't know much about them.

“Sorry for my boldness, my dearest Apprentice! I am Yashem and I am part of the Etsham government,” he continued talking.

In my face he could see that I was totally unaware of that civilization,

so he explained more in detail and said:

“Etsham is a small satellite of the fifth star Methid, one of the last living spaces of our system. In the borders we have always lived with these terrible beings that now are attacking us and the Zenders had been our greatest allies so far. When Zender began their mad flight trying to obtain more energy sources, we left our satellite and came with the coalition in the hope that you know where to take us.”

“This is amazing! How do I know where to take us?” I stopped him in surprise.

“Yes, sir, you are the apprentice, and an old legend says that only the Apprentice will free us all of the figures of blood,” he responded just quietly.

Thallium, in complicity, smiled at that moment and asked Yashem to continue telling the legend:

“The Dzots are demonic beings whose only truth is the blood of their enemies. Until now, they only attack for food, but these are the times in which they need something else. According to the prophecy, they’ll only be free when they release all the souls of the foreigners.”

“This cannot be! Are you saying that these beasts are meant to end every race because of a stupid old prophecy? That they are demons? I do not understand,” I answered sarcastically.

Thallium stopped me from saying anything else and tried to clarify a couple of things about religion that I did not understand. That ancestral knowledge of human culture on the journey of souls seemed to be a nonsense in my eyes, but current events may have to make me think more about certain beliefs. Religion was never my strength.

I began to mix concepts in my head such as religion and space and time. And even after a good explanation to me that I did not care for, I

just knew I had to lead an expedition and free my people of those creatures.

Tac, tac!

“Special meeting had just started.” We could hear throughout the room.

As always, after the tumult, the calm, and Thallium took the turn:

“All of us here we are in danger of being annihilated. The only point of debate is how to proceed with this threat and the ability to rescue the possible survivors of the second advance.”

“The Apprentice must get us out of this!” Shouted a hairy creature that took me at least two feet without waiting his turn.

I was getting already quite used to being the focus of these meetings, so I didn't even move. After what it was said by Yashem, little could amaze me now.

“We want the Apprentice to tell us what our destiny is and where to go. He has to know. He's the chosen one,” I heard in the background.

Thallium, seeing that everyone there was becoming more and more enthusiastic, made the batons sound two loud noises requiring silence from those present. As everyone came to a halt, Thallium asked me to give a few words to all those leaders.

Quietly I called them first to help our fellow group which was being attacked and annihilated as we were there and established that:

“We must protect our borders and heading to Star Fengar to try to unite our group to every survivor from the Dzots attacks.”

A verbal fight was instantly born as soon as I finished my first

sentence. Some supported the measure and others refused it.

“You all have said a few moments ago that you want the Apprentice to direct us,” yelled Meleg, Prime Minister of Z12. He was one of the most powerful people of those present. He was one of the largest marketers of the system and, therefore, he had great influence. Just to see his colossal ship could give you an idea of his power and wealth. He then directed his words to me:

“But, I am missing information, my Apprentice. Where will we go next?”

I replied promptly and tried to assure all those present that from the moment I arrived back to my ship, I would put all my efforts in making new highways that would take us away from those monsters.

For the concurrent gestures, they did not seem convinced, but that was all I could offer, and I certainly could not assure anyone that our objective would achieve, but I still did not know how far that invading army could reach. Until now, we could not make them disappear and they had managed to reach both highways.

We didn't have more time available for discussions, so we all went back to our ships. Before getting on my shuttle, I asked Thallium for the Key Step, because I now needed to play a little and try to get a new destination. Those found so far were too close and dangerous.

The route to go to Fengar would not take us too long. In three or four hours, we would be there. If nothing worse happened with the Dzots, we would arrive on time to help our partners and then we would open a new route to start a new life.

Luckily, we managed to keep us safe at one hundred percent effectiveness and together we were able to reach the survivors of the outpost from Metter. Only a few ships were left. Only those ships that were the most powerful and better armed had successfully emerged

from those murderous hordes.

To my surprise Her Witecher's ship was not part of those who had escaped, but we still had the one from Watecker. He had under his command the most powerful ship of Metter and possibly the most powerful ship of the coalition.

We had now left behind more than half of the ships, thousands of "friends" lost their lives. The fear of further attacks squeezed tight the minds of those who we found left behind. None of us that just arrived to the scene of the devastation could imagine how horrific the events leading up to this destruction, but we really did not need to see it to understand it.

My work was now beginning to bear fruit. Since the completion of the assembly I had put my efforts in finding new routes, relying on my crew for the pilot and war-fighting capability for the defense of Elgon.

My task was not easy. How could I know where those beings around us could not follow? Did the place where we would go be habitable? What kind of new beings could we find along the way? There were so many doubts and concerns throughout my mind, that I needed to take a break and asked my good friend and second, Biber, to accompany me to the bar for a drink.

"The first thing to do is make an inventory of supplies and ships," he said.

"The first thing to do is take a good prúsula," I responded.

After a few laughs, drinks, and snacks, we started a really serious talk. I relied greatly on the judgment of my partner and any ideas he would bring I was certain would open a wide range of concepts to consider and what to try to perform my best to complete this task at hand.

Undoubtedly I needed to find somewhere outside the known world.

The one we knew and were going through now was totally known and used by those creatures.

On the other hand, all beings that we were part of the coalition had a common factor: water. Wherever we went, we all had the need for the existence of water. Each of us used water with different purposes and uses, but necessary for the continuation of everyone's species.

Other key elements were oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, and various chemical elements on which we based all the cycles of growth of our food. These could be obtained from complex industrial facilities, but in principle we would have enough to start wherever we decided to go. Or so I thought.

“Okay, Biber, so first things first... As you said before, let's look at that inventory of assets, weapons and food,” I asked him to do, “After getting this information, we will both gather in the meeting room of the ship, and between the two of us will operate the Key Step and we will bring all of this madness to a halt.”

While we were chatting, one of the ships left the group and alarms sounded warning us both. We stopped what we were doing and went as fast as we could to the cockpit, but when we arrived, it was too late. We just had enough time to see how those demons tore the bodies of their victims while still alive. There were no less than three thousand Leuto bodies there. These were beings whose lives were the mines in Leuto and whose ship had no more security than that we provided.

I got to see tears from my people. I do not know whether compassionate or fear itself.

A couple of days later, only a few remembered what it had happened, and no matter what, we no longer feared the attacks from the Dzots. There was much distance between us and the space that they had taken over and the damage done in our alliance would be enough for them for a while.



“Sir, sir,” I heard behind me, “We found what it looks like a quadrant full of opportunities for us.”

It was big news that quickly spread through the entire group of ships. It was necessary to bring together the leaders of each of the races that we helped to decide where we should do.

A meeting was arranged at my ship. Having been the creator of new highways had given me a power that I had never imagined. Some of those beings trusted now my opinions and, not even knowing how, I was declared Chief Counsel of the Alliance. Although, there were many that trusted me and granted me this honor, many others had not agreed with such recognition and would not come to this important meeting.

I ordered to set one of the main conference rooms for the arrival of the community leaders. Not as many representatives as we had wished would be there or at any other meeting participating in the different arguments and discussions of our future. But, those of us left, had to make it happen, and here and now the future of our species and many others had to be decided.

Once we had as many representatives as would want to come, and after stopping the entire buzz going around, I started explaining our new discoveries.

“Ladies and gentlemen, my scientists have discovered no more than a week from now a planet that seems to meet our basic needs.

I didn’t need to finish or go into more detail, cross talks started throughout the entire room showing the enthusiasm of those present.

“Is it true?” I heard many asked.

“In the end, we may have survived and we may find a place where to

start again," I heard others.

Although, not everyone was so happy or trusty at this time.

"I am certain that's not true! I'm sure it's just a false rumor!" I heard a few complaining, to which I just responded simply:

"We all know that sometimes joys may become sadness, gentlemen, but we hope that this area with all its possibilities may hold the answer to many of our questions."

Thallium glanced at me proudly and just said quietly.

"You'll be a great governor!" To which I was just astonished.

As I felt more comfortable with my persona and my abilities, I kept explaining to those present, who were witnesses of historical creation, the news that my staff had made me aware of.

It is a planet very similar to those of early Earth. It has large areas of what appears to be water; it also has an atmosphere which, in principle, is made of non-toxic gases, and what I have been told with certainty is that the gravity is bearable for each and every one of us.

"Is it true?" I kept on hearing throughout the room.

"This is great news," a representative said directing his approval to me.

"My people will applaud this finding," another representative said.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" Thallium shouted stopping all the noise in the room, "During the next two weeks we have to prepare everything that we were able to rescue to start there, if it finally meets our expectations, a new life. But, there are many other issues to discuss. We must also clarify what kind of community we want to be. The

grandeur of our ships, under my opinion, allows us two alternatives. On one hand, we can go down to the surface of this planet.”

“That is too risky!” it was heard toward the end of the room.

“Who has made this comment, please explain,” I asked emphatically.

From the end of the room, a being somewhat peculiar stepped forward. I don’t think I had ever seen one of them until this moment. That being started by saying:

“I am Floj and I represent the people of the lost Mizgdar. We are as you can see small in size and very weak, but we have technological skills far beyond most of those present here.”

Again a murmur went through the room critical of those words.

“Stop talking, gentlemen, he certainly has an interesting idea to offer us. We must not forget that from the union of all of us we will be able to achieve, if we are lucky enough, to save everyone and be able to move forward,” I responded as I wanted to know what Floj had to say.

“Thanks, Maz! What I mean is that we have sufficient knowledge and technology to no venture ourselves to take over an unknown planet at the moment. Why would we start going down there without complete knowledge of the planet?” Floj just said unnerved at the thought of going to the planet so fast.

“I agree,” Witecher said loudly.

A statement that no one present would argue and Floj continued his argument:

“Our ships could stay together and orbit for at least a good season. Often, we could send shuttles to collect samples to study the ground and we could even get what we most need from this planet that we

may need and it may provide.”

Surely, those words were seeping into the minds of those presents at the assembly.

“Why not to take a chance and install our civilizations now?” Quila said, King of the Xapis.

“My people need space, my people need air,” he continued, “We are a people in great need of movement and a long stay on our premises will lead us to death.”

I, personally, thought what it was said by Floj seemed reasonable, but I certainly shared the idea raised in the first place. But, I understood that for security reasons, we should stay on our premises, to be sure where we would get into. At that time, I realized that I would be the primary responsible for everything that happened there and I added to the conversation.

“Well, Quila! We have still a week before we can even reach the prospective planet. We’ll have this time to study the planet throughout our journey there and evaluate what the planet has to offer. If we see that it’s possible to go down into the planet, you’ll be the first wave going down,” I looked at him firmly and repeated, “but, again, only if it’s safe and we know well in advance what we have to deal with.”

“Are there any others that wish to be in the first wave down to the planet if it’s safe?” I asked to all of those present. I didn’t want to leave anyone behind.

Representatives of three or four civilizations responded affirmatively; to which none of the others put any impediment. On the contrary, we all were able to understand their situation and how these had to be worked among all of the groups.

Societies like humans, had been living on mega structures; but, others

had never ceased to live openly with the freedom of their systems, and none of us had the right to tell them or decide how they should live now.

Comparing the volume of "people" who we were originally and those that now were joining in that alliance, we were just a few. In those few thousands of ships that had been able to escape the unimaginable, no more than a million beings now formed the new alliance.

It might be possible to start a new life for everyone in this planet.

I did not extend much more that meeting and every one of the representatives directed their steps, or tentacles, toward their ships to communicate the news given there to everyone in the community.

I, particularly, did not have too much work in this regard. The news of the discovery of that planet had run like wild fire upon the ship and the rest of our species knew of the discovery within a few hours.

At this point, humans were not the majority of the group, but contrary to the past, we had become much appreciated by the other colonies, and that thought filled everyone with joy.

“What do you think of the talk today, my friend?” I asked Thallium.

“There is no doubt, my friend, that you have opened a bright spot in all of us. It’s true we don’t still know what is yet to happen, but what it’s clear is that we will form a colony together, and not seeing reflections of friction between all these different civilizations and through the union we are all creating, even more possibilities for survival and respect are opening every moment,” Thallium responded with a big smile.

“Thanks, my friend; it is always comforting to hear these words,” I responded feeling the warmth of this great friendship.

It had never crossed my mind that this could ever happen, and even less that I would form a central part in something like this.

Little by little we were getting closer and closer to that spatial marble size point that was still so far; just a dot that we could see very, very far away.

We were in a new galaxy, new for everyone, and certainly it was spectacular what our eyes were able to look at now.

Engineers were designing structures. Biologists were trying to decipher the immense amount of data that we were continuously receiving from the new planet's surface to optimize the processes to be followed on arrival. But, as this happened on our premises, other advanced nations were doing likewise. All our teams worked together toward a common goal.

We did not have all the time in the world and every second we could get ahead, it would be a big plus for everyone.

We knew that not everyone would adapt to these new conditions. Some people would adapt better and some others worse. Maybe some of those civilizations would not withstand the new conditions, but everyone would work hard to get the best of this situation.

Throughout my ship, a beautiful story started to be heard.

“She is born, she is born!”

Those words arrived to the cockpit and all those present just smiled.

“It is the first birth of this new era, sir,” I was told.

Amid this uproar, someone came and open a bottle of prúsula.

“Open the prúsula for the entire ship. This should be celebrated!” I said with a carefree voice for the first time after too many days of only thinking on bad things. The truth is that I had not noticed, but a giant anxiety had gripped my mind and too much responsibility had fallen on me without myself being prepared nor mentally ready for this to happen, and what we humans called stress was taking its toll and you could see it on my face.

“Sir, after this drinking, you should go to rest,” Biber said.

The truth is that my second had always known when to open his mouth to give good advice, so as suggested, and after a while being with the team enjoying this moment, I left the cabin and went to my quarters. I just laid on my bed.

Before falling asleep, I remembered I had a pending task since days ago. That issue was whether Fani was still among us. A strange after taste I still had in my body from that gorgeous woman, and somehow I should solve it in the next few days. Still, I closed my eyes and let my head relax on my pillow.

After a while I woke up, got up leisurely, and through the windows of my room I saw hundreds of ships that were part of the expedition. The truth is that all that I was seeing was just overwhelmed to me. How can a simple pilot of a ship of goods was now in "command" of a mission of survival of this magnitude? How had my mother left me this legacy without even warning me that it might fall on me? It was so amazing!

Shortly after, I left my quarters and walked through one of the big hallways that led me to the main cabin. All my officers were controlling the craft. Elgon was there too. He had remained silent since the evasive maneuver, but now he turned to me with some concern. As a good soldier he was and who was worried for the safety of the fleet, he was concern about this unknown planet.

In a way, I felt he was arrogant, yet quite ready to give always the best he could offer. I mentioned to him that I thought of him as the head of security for the future structure that would hopefully be our home at some point. I knew, of course, that he would not refuse such a task and, after a brief discussion, we agreed that he would be best for this position.

Not before long, my chief of medicine came to me talking to me of a similar subject than that discussed with Elgon.

“Who will manage the health facilities needed for such a gigantic complex?” Martha asked me.

After three or four approaches more from my people, I realized that my trusted people was going or had gone through a period of reflection. Why were these interests taking shape so quickly? We did not know yet whether we could build a settlement in that place and everyone was starting to be eager to know which place they would take.

On one hand I saw this quite normal, but on the other hand I had to think that this could create some anxiety if bad decisions were taken and further create community problems. I had to remember at all times the variety of lives that were mixed in this adventure. So, I decided to leave all those decisions for another time; perhaps, to be supported by the council which later on would be founded by all the races.

I left the cabin and went to the hall that would take me to the cargo area. I wanted to check our provision level. As I got closer, I saw something that surprised me.

“What are you doing, gentlemen?” I asked to those present.

Two crew members were fighting, releasing punches to each other as the devil was attacking them. One of the two struck such a blow to



one that knocked him down, where the latter remained perfectly still.

“Arrest this man, and help the other one to get up. Within half an hour, bring them both to the cockpit,” I ordered one of the man there.

“Yes, sir!” he responded sharply.

I moved on and saw things lying on the floor. All of this was very strange. Order was one of my main and most important rules and everyone in my crew had worked with me long enough to know this was a must. This was a must from the beginning of my international travel space.

Something strange was happening.

“Captain, come back to the cockpit,” we could hear through the PA system.

“Captain, come back to the cockpit,” it was repeated.

I was being called over the PA system. This had to be serious. I rapidly turned around and went to check why I was called.

As I entered the cabin, another fight was taking place. But, what the hell is going on here? I'm a few hours away to finally take a well deserved rest a few hours and when I come back, a big mess is all around.

Martha slowly approached me and told me that we could have an air pollution problem as half of the crew and passengers of the ship were in a state of anxiety that encouraged the brawl.

Since the only thing I understood of fights was to actually provoke them (I had started them many times), I asked her to what this problem could be due, to which she answered on her somewhat flippant tone that this was due because of the concentration of carbon

dioxide in the air we were breathing. I had been isolated from the cabin for at least 7 hours, so I still had some clarity of mind to handle this.

I left the cabin and run down to the area where air reserves and stocks of cleaning air filters were located. I found the air system machines stopped. Luckily, nothing was broken and could turn them back on. If my doctor was right, calm would soon return to my ship.

“Biber, where are the men responsible for these items?” I asked wondering.

“I do not know, sir,” he responded shortly.

“Look for them and put them in their jobs immediately,” I ordered upset that this was happening.

We had the best technology ever created by man, but like all good machines, it always required constant monitoring of it.

After a while, I turned to look at people's faces. I observed these were becoming normal, and I even got to hear requests for apologies. This left me satisfied and no penalties were given to anyone because of these events as I preferred to think that the gas was the cause and it was not necessary to create more annoyances than those already existing.

There were still six days left to reach Osiris. This was the name given to the planet observed at the meeting of the heads of civilizations.

“I need two things,” I was starting to manage the situation again, “On one hand, all of our engineers will go to the Metter ship to coordinate actions and to design the future mega structure in which we live. On the other hand, I need to know what kind of artists are in the whole colony to organize a welcome party once we arrive to our new planet.”

“Ah! One more thing,” I continued almost forgetting about this so important task, “I have been told that Princess Sheila is on the ship that immediately precedes us. Please, contact them and ask her to approach us closely as soon as possible.

I was perhaps taking the command too seriously, but if I wanted to take that mission in the right direction, I should do it.

As normalcy was coming back throughout the ship, I asked my second for the full report of incidents. I wanted to understand if the earlier climate of tension had left some troubling incident between the passengers or the team. It took not too long to give me a full report. And, luckily for all, only a couple of isolated events in which two passengers were sent to the hospital with facial cuts and a few bruises was of concern, but nothing that could be considered disturbing.

“A ship requested permission to approach us, sir!” I was told.

“Who is it?” I asked cluelessly.

“It’s the shuttle that brings Princess Sheila as you have requested,” the same voice answered.

“All right, give them permission to approach and tell them it will take me a minute to be there,” I responded nervously.

“Thallium, Thallium, where are you?” I asked looking around the cabin and not finding him.

“Sir, he’s gone to the cafeteria a few minutes ago,” Biber responded.

“Contact him immediately and let him know he is due in the launcher housing to receive the princess. It is very important that he’s present at the time the Princess comes down,” I just said expecting my team to just do their job. I left the cabin.

At the same time, in the Metter ship, everyone was working hard and discussing the different ideas that were to be the structure of the mega colony. I needed something to present to who would be our leader. Of course, other civilizations would have to organize who would be their spokesman at the new community and that would be not too long, but my interest right now was to give a hierarchy to those I was concerned and directed. Humans. I had to make sure that an order was provided for all humanity.

An escort of ten men and women of that great ship came down.

Before I could see the princess, I felt a nod on my shoulder. It was Thallium who had already been alerted, and he hinted that it supported the action taken by me. The truth is that he felt a respect for me that nobody had ever shown. My old crew had always shown their appreciation, but the respect and appreciation coming from Thallium, a man with such power and influence, created in me a certain pride difficult to explain.

That angelic looking, young woman started going down the ramp. I had never seen her. I knew of the existence of her family, but I had never in any of my previous adventures come in contact with her. She was sure beautiful and walked with an air of grandeur. And, with no doubt, by the reaction of the crew who worked on the shuttles, her lineage was recognized by our entire race, because despite the years, her lineage had maintained a representative value of great importance. The truth is that they had no executive power, but their performances throughout the different communities were greatly appreciated.

“Welcome to our humble ship,” Thallium said while prostrating before her.

“Please, dear friend, arise. You know that in these circumstances we are all equal, and although I know of your respect for my family, you

well know the esteem in which my parents had for you,” she responded sweetly.

A couple of years ago, the princess had lost their parents. I remembered because it had been declared a mourning in all human communities, and many of the other beings from other planets that lived in our quadrant had sent hundreds of presents and condolences by using my old ship.

“I present you, Maz. Surely our savior,” Thallium introduced me to the princess.

At these words, I blushed overwhelmed by such a claim. I was only the son of my mother and I was just an interstellar carrier to whom all of these had fallen without even knowing how.

“So, you're the famous Maz! During these last days, you have been the topic of our conversations,” she said friendly.

I bowed my head and smiled at the young woman.

“Thank you for accepting my invitation,” I told the princess.

“A pleasure, sir! I was hoping this time would come. I needed to know the person who had managed to save us all from the attack of such powerful murderous hordes,” she said proudly.

At that moment Daniel, one of my radio operators, approached me.

“With your permission, sir,” Daniel said quietly.

“Excuse me, your highness,” I said a little ashamed of this interruption. It had to be something really important for Dani to interfere in the middle of such reception, so I deemed it appropriate not to ignore him.

“Sir, hundreds of representatives from other communities are asking

for entry to our ship at this time,” Dani said nervously.

“And, the reason for this request so out of place?” I asked with incredulity.

“Clearly, my friend Maz,” Thallium started to say, “They have noticed the presence of the princess in our craft and want to take advantage of the occasion to present an assembly to decide on a new order, without allowing our race to act as they please. Remember that many of the civilizations that have joined us are not friends of our race, but at this time they have no choice but to follow us through the universe.”

“And, what should I do?” I asked as I was thinking this was now getting out of control.

“Of course, avoid unnecessary confrontations,” Thallium responded simply.

“I totally agree,” Princess Sheila said.

“You just heard what to do. Welcome all of them and prepare the hangar for a massive arrival of representatives from all civilizations,” Thallium indicated.

“Excuse me, your majesty. As you have noticed, we just multiply our work,” I told the princess as I was getting prepare to proceed to my next task, “I will prepare everything to be the first assembly of all communities, while I leave you in good company with thallium, and, of course, I am at your disposal if you need me for something. Personally, I wanted to pay my respects before reaching Osiris and ask your majesty to prepare a speech to encourage the whole human community in order to do everything possible to overcome this crisis.”

“You're excused,” she responded softly, “and, for peace of mind, just to let you know that I have been preparing for days a speech, confident that sooner or later I would be called to give it to my

community.

Complicit laughter was born of our faces and without further delay, I left to direct my focus to my current duties, while my friend and the princess remained behind to talk about their things.

“So, Daniel, how many commissioners have requested to be present?” I asked starting to wonder how I was going to coordinate all this.

“Well, without exaggeration, and not counting any other coming from the time of my departure from the communications room, no less than three hundred,” he responded expecting me to be surprised.

I grabbed my radio and called the main cabin.

“Elgon, do we have space in the shuttle hangar for five hundred ships?” I asked without having much knowledge on the real capacity of our own ship.

“No, sir,” he responded dryly.

“Well, then I need you to coordinate the arrivals and departures of all the ships that are going to arrive in a few moments,” I ordered him.

Still feeling a somewhat reluctant tone on him, Elgon took my order and hung up.

“Daniel, return to your post and indicate the access method to allied ships. We cannot allow them to stay in our hangar more than the time needed to drop their representatives,” I told Daniel who needed to start to notify the different civilizations immediately.

I again took my radio and I called for Biber. I was in need of his help as he had done in the past. I needed him.

“My friend, I need you to drop everything you are doing and I need you to prepare the giant hall for an assembly of civilizations,” I asked my friend for his help.

“What? Didn’t you just leave one?” he asked in surprise.

“What you just heard me saying. Within minutes we’ll have under our responsibility the most powerful rulers of the system and I want to have them all controlled in the same space. So do all you can and do it well,” I replied not having time for explanations.

“At your orders, chief,” Biber replied with a laugh.

Funny, but a few days earlier only a few had responded to my call for a meeting; now, with the princess on board, everyone wanted to address the issues stated previously. Perhaps this showed me a little touch of humility! Who was I to summon such powerful rulers in the first place?

I retraced my steps and met with Thallium and his companion. It was at that moment I understood the full extent of the greatness of the person who I had called and I apologized for my doing.

“Don’t say that! You have acted as you ought to. But, you, certainly, still have much to learn and to do to fully understand what you will shortly see,” Princess Sheila said without giving much explanation to her comments.

“I don’t know, Sheila! He’s participated already in a couple of the Interstellar Senate meetings and has participated in very important dialogues with the greatest leaders face to face,” Thallium said defending me.

“I know, I know. But, he was brought before them to give an explanation. This time he will have to face them as a future head of our community, for I intend to approve him as our leader and he will



have to know how to deal with the rest of the other leaders,” the princess responded as she had not just changed my entire life.

What? Leader? Leader of what? I? What? My head was spinning. No. no. I?

“Even though you've already had the opportunity to share information with some of the leaders and rulers of the other civilizations, we have been talking for days about this new order, without your knowledge of course, and even though other races consider us inferior to them, we've all come to an agreement that you've got to be responsible for our lives,” the princess completed saying, “You have shown great courage, know many of the races here today and their needs, and not for nothing you have been the carrier of goods for all this time, “ she finished saying a little sarcastically.

And, as she finished saying this, I thought to myself that all those details were not entirely correct. I had never known what I was carrying. To me, it was just a job and whatever I was carrying it was not of my business.

“You have been appointed Director of the Alliance just a few minutes ago, and your situation will be somewhat different. Today you will be appointed Prime Minister of the new community to be,” the princess said smiling.

“Did you know this, Thallium? Why didn't you tell me?” I asked him with surprise.

“I didn't know, my friend. I didn't know what the Council's intentions were,” he responded not in surprise of what was happening.

From now forward, a new world lay before me.

"In search of answers II"

