

Kreskin

Chapter 1: Introduction

During the years of supposed superior thinking men spent time building weapons and machines that would advance, in their beliefs, the human race. In their quests for achieving predominant power the earth's resources were heavily battered. Efforts to solve the world's resource problems came far too late for the problem to be solved. The Earth had seen many years with the human race and now her time for sheltering Earthlings was coming to an end. Scientist realized the Earths would not and could not continue to hold the human race. Mars was excavated, and then Jupiter, but man had not learned his lesson and would continue to corrupt these planets until it was too late. Man left Earth leaving only a few faithful behind to continue to reap from the Earths good nature. But many men were concerned that the Earth's Solar System was also now running low on resources. So a selected few were brought together to safe guard what was left. These few were known as the Solar Resource Watch. [SRW]

The SRW began a brutal watch on the resources, many people died from their cruel ways of supposedly keeping things safe. The SRW were eventually despised on the three major planets, Earth, Mars and Jupiter. The SRW fled from the three planets and colonized Venus, Saturn, Uranus, and Pluto. The powers on the three allied planets, Earth, Mars, and Jupiter formed a defensive alliance. Know as the EMJ Mutual Pact. The left out SRW planets formed their own alliance known as the VSUP Pact. Both sides built their armies and prepared for a stand.

The Great War or War of The Worlds as it was later called started basically by accident. A visiting diplomatic member of the SRW was visiting the Solar Habitat of the then Neutral Moon when his ship was mysteriously destroyed leaving no survivors. There are many speculations of how the ship was destroyed but many believe that it was intentionally set by the SRW as an excuse to start an offensive movement. Saturn launched nuclear weapons against Jupiter. Jupiter in returned blockaded Saturn with its overwhelming fleet power and bombarded Saturn by day and by night. Pluto then launched the largest armada of troop transporters in the history of space flight on Jupiter. In return Jupiter's fleet was split into two groups. During the meantime Earth was fighting a battle for control of the air. Venus and Uranus were fighting together against Earth. Troops were landed on Earth and were being moved to take down the last stronghold of the Earths forces. But in a miraculous turn of events nearly all of the SRW troops were wiped out in a freak storm. The remainder of troops was cleaned up by the Earths forces. With Venus and Uranus out of offensive mode, Earth was able to focus on the remainder SRW planets. Pluto was soon beaten back from Jupiter and confined to their home planets. The forces at Venus fell, then Uranus, then Pluto, and

finally Saturn surrendered. After thirty-two years of war the leaders of the SRW were sentenced to life on the prison planet of Mercury. Some Rebels escaped from the grasps of the Allied forces by retreating to the moons of Jupiter, and Pluto. The Global Air Force [GAF] was created to suppress the rebels and ensure the safety of the remaining planets.

Jupiter was heavily damaged from thirty-two years of nuclear warfare and had to be abandoned. Venus was given up as lost from the SRW's military tactics of scorched earth. Pluto, Uranus, and Saturn were considered waist lands after years of bombardments from allied fleets. The human race again moved to the caring arms of the Earth. Man was more careful with the Earth this go around. They treated the Earth gently, but it was too little to late. The Earth was dying. One final force was to be assembled for exploration out of the Milky Way. This expedition had to succeed or the Human race would not.

It was the year 7977 A.D.

Chapter I

"Blast!" shouted Craig.

"What's going on in there?" Clay said looking into his best friends sleeping quarters.

"Aw, hey man," said Craig, "I was playing some crappy game and lost, again."

"Was it crappy before, or only when you lost?" said Clay with a smile.

"You ready to head of to the mess hall?"

"Sure man," said Craig "let's go."

Clay was a Global Air Force Pilot. He had raised himself from the ranks of private to Lieutenant 2'd class in the War of the Worlds. His family had been in the military since ever it seemed. His family had participated in every single war that had ever taken place since the 18th century. He even had a relative that served in the Civil War. Clay's father had died during the Battle for Earth along with many other soldiers. Clay had taken the different route than his father though, he had become a pilot. He was the best frigate pilot in the Allied Royal Fleet. Eventually Clay had taken control of a modest armada of ships ranging from fighters, bombers, and a few frigates. The name of the command he was given was called Allied 9th Fleet. He had played a key role in the blockade of Pluto and was credited with the capture of the Chief SRW Pluto official. He was an instant hero. But Clay didn't care much for fame, besides it getting him free drinks all the time it didn't help him

much he thought.

Craig was Clay's best friend and had always been since Clay could remember. Craig was bigger and a little tougher than Clay but Clay was the thinker. Together they made an awesome team. Craig had been Clay's command during the siege on Pluto and they had become friends. Craig was a mere fighter pilot but Clay promoted him the Second Captain of his Flag ship in the Allied 9th Fleet the Winged Grace. After the war they were stationed together in the GAF space station and assigned to routine checks of the 1-3 sector.(*)

Craig and Clay walked down the hall to the mess room. They entered the crowded room like everyday.

"Come on man lets sit over there." Craig said dragging Clay to sit down at a table."

"What's so special about this table?" asked Clay.

"Well," said Craig, "It's where a girl and I decided for meeting for breakfast, you know kinda like a date."

"Oh," said Clay unconcerned.

He was eating his breakfast slouched over the plate when a girl walked in the mess hall, behind her was a second lesser attractive girl. Craig looked at Clay and grinned from ear to ear.

"Craig, I am going to kill you if this is what I think it is." said Clay.

The girls got over to the table and sat down both across from each of the boys. Clay was looking unhappy as Craig and his little girl were making idol chit-chat. Clay was looking very unhappy with the girl; it seemed that she hated heights, going fast and root beer, an absolute opposite from Clay. He was in absolute misery when finally relief came, over the loud speaker the announcer requested Clay to come to the Admiral's office.

"Finally," Clay said quietly and under his breath "I don't think she liked me anyway."

(*) Sectors were set up after the war as the planets were no longer assessible. Sector 1 would be Mercury, 2 Venus, 3 Earth, 4 Mars, 5 Jupiter, 6 Saturn, and so on and so on...

Chapter 2: Appointment with the Admiral

Clay walked down the hallway to the the admirals office. Clay had only visited that office once before and that was nearly twenty years ago. That visit was to receive his commision as the officer of a fleet. The admiral had then commented about his wit and skill on the battle field, now twenty years later what could the admiral want with him?

He walked into the sitting room. The secretary was sitting behind a large desk, he walked up to her. She said, " the Admiral is not ready to see you, he has more important buisness at hand currently. Please sit down it will only be a few minutes. of time. More important buisness? He wondered. Time passed very shortly. A few minutes turned into two hours. He was dosing off for the second time when the secretary called his name. He walked behind the secretary into the admirals office.

The admiral's office was a large room with books here and there and chairs, and a private bathroom. Clay drooled. The admiral looked up from the desk be was sitting behind, "Welcome," he said.

"Thank you for having me, Sir." replied Clay.

"Son," he began," as you know the war damaged the earths capability for holding humans, and all of the remaining planets have been unredeemable scarred.So the only thing left for us to do is to leave the solar system and to search for living planets outside the Milky Way. Now this plan for colinization was put on hold at the beginning of the war but now is when we must have results. An expiditionary force will be sent out to pass the outer rim of the solar system.Now we have looked over potential canidates for pilots and you have come up several times."

"Sir," Clay began," galaxy travel was proven nearly impossible becasue of the Gamma theory.(*)

"Yes, well our scientists have worked out a solution to the problem and are currently testing the hybrid engine." said the admiral.

"Well ,Sir, how long would this mission be for? asked Clay.

" Well son, that's why we choose you , because you have no family and nothign to tie you down." replied the admiral.

"So, it will be a long mission I gather?" asked Clay.

"Yes." responded the admiral.

"I will do it." exclaimed Clay.

"Good, because if you didn't have a choice anyway." said the admiral grinning.

The admiral handed to Clay several folders explaining the details of the mission and it gave him several options as to who would be coming along with him. A crew of six was to be chosen, himself included. Out of the several hundred he choose:

Alex Walker:

He was chosen as Data Annalist for his calculator like mind. Alex was 6 foot 2 with dark brown hair. He wore contacts only and not glasses becasue all of his glasses had been crushed by someone's fist. On his face and throughout his entire body their were large scars from fights he had been in. There was a story behind every mark and he told them about a thousand times. Alex was known to go overboard for a particular thing if he belived it was what he wanted. He was known for his ability to be able to defeat someone twice his size in hand to hand combat. Though his past was raked with stories of when he would get pulverized standing up again and again. But despite all his flaws Clay needed someone with character, and Alex was defiantly that person.

Craig Harvey:

He was chosen as Engineer for his skill with mechanical objects. He was 5 foot 10 with dark brown-blackish hair. He liked to wear hats to cover his longish hair. He was deeply tanned and very muscular. Craig was what you would consider a ladies man. He always had a different girl beside him and sometimes more than one. He was the dependable type of guy if it was something important, but not very reliable if you just wanted to maybe get a drink together or something. He would always forget. Craig loved to build things of no particular consequence. In his sleeping quarters there were several of his inventions lying around. Most of which were broken or never worked to begin with. His talents for mechanical devises and the fact that he was Clay's best friend was the reason Craig was chosen.

Genae Thompson:

She was chosen as computer annalist. Genae was 5 foot 9 with dark blonde hair. She wore glasses when she was reading but at no other time. She had graduated from her computer school with the best grades in the glass setting the record for the most 100's received in a row. She had learnt how to manipulate a computer to whatever design she wanted and had built some of the best designed navigational computers around. She had one run in with the law during her courses at her school. She was accused of hacking into the Human Emotion Recorder [HER](*)but nothing ever became of it becasue there was no proof of the entry. Her talents for computers lead her to be Clay's pick for Computer

Technician.

Hunter Henery:

He was chosen as Communications Expert. Hunter was 6 foot 1 with boyishly blonde hair. Hunter graduated last in his class of three-hundred. He hated school with a loathing and thus refused to do anything that the teachers wanted him to do. He only made enough of an effort to pass. Many times the teacher would ask him " what is your problem?" he responded mostly with, " I cant help you are a twit." Hunter was building satellites to play with when most children were still crapping in their pants. He was even credited with uncovering a secret coded message about an planned escape from the prison planet of Mercury. For his talents Clay chose Hunter as Head Communicator.

Jennifer Catchings:

She was chosen as Resident Scientist. She was 5 foot 7 with long auburn hair. Her life consisted of looking through a telescope most of the time though there were those rare exiting times when she discovered a new specie of mold. She had been the first of the scientists who discovered cures for some of the biological weapons the SRW used against Mars. She had even been infected with a biological agent but found the cure to it herself before the disease took full affect. But there were rumors about the effects that the weapon and the cure had on her. But nevertheless she was chosen because of her great skill in the scientific field.

The last of the crew was of course Clay.

(*) Gamma Theory: the gamma field was a hypothetical force field on the outside of a galaxy. In theory if a person strayed to far to the edge of a galaxy and then left the magnetic field of the galaxy then he would be left in a distorted gamma field were as travel with normal fusion motors was impossible.

(*)Human Emotion Recorder [HER]: This was a master computer that during the time of war was supposedly able to read every though from an individual. Certain rights groups tried to stop the machine but they government only then ran it in secrete. The purpose of the machine was discover spies among the Allied Planets. Many officials also used this device, illegally, to see what the public thought of them.

Chapter 3: The Launch

With the final crew chosen the launch countdown took began. In four days time the crew of the ship Redemption would leave the gravitational pull of the Earth and head off to the tip of the iceberg so to speak. The six man/woman crew was placed in a building called the Containment room. Inside the rooms they would remain isolated from the rest of the world until their launch. Such measures were taken to ensure that one crew member didn't become ill before the launch then infect everyone on board.

The days pasted slowly with the crew normally spending the days watching TV and doing meaningless routines. Craig was the only one who didn't really mind the confinement because to him, closed in a small area with two attractive ladies was a plus no matter how you looked at it. Craig had become rather addicted to the daily Soap Operas and during the four days he watched the plot unfold. When the days were up Clay had to pull him away from the TV. It seemed that Craig's favorite Soap Opera star had had a son with her estranged deceased brother. A plot that Clay could not follow.

The crew was sent to the GAF's Global Space station that orbited the Earth. This would be the first step to launching out into space. They were received at the station with a hero's welcome. Clay was wondering upon why they should be treated like royalty when they had not done anything and could quite possibly not do anything. Craig enjoyed the attention but Clay was hardly able to notice the other crew's reactions to it, they were nearly never able to stay together. All of them had some kind of interview or signing to do. But despite all the attention Clay tried to put on a good show and have fun. The party group meeting , or whatever it was considered was drawing to a close and now Clay was only left with having to pay respect to the host. He did that and left all of his crew there or so he could see. He walked back to the confinement of his cabin and tried to get some sleep. Sleep did not come...

It was the day before the launch and the Station was roaring with noise. Clay hardly got any sleep and by the looks on the faces of the other crew they did not either. The transport they boarded was smelly and cramped. Their transport was to take them to the Moon and then they would rendezvous with their ship, the aptly named Redemption. The transport ship touched down seventeen minutes late, living up to transport ships reputation. It was commonly said that freighter pilots should not be paid by the hour as to ensure that they arrived on time. Also many thought they should have a regulated cleaning. Clay and his crew stepped off the transport and walked into the Moon Complex. They passed through the mandatory SCC (*) and were waved through to their final step to leaving the galaxy.

A bottle of champagne was cracked over the hull of the Redemption and the ship lifted from the ground and slowly turned to the black. The engines roared to life once they left the Moon and they headed into the abyss. To Clay the ship felt surprisingly agile for its size, and it seemed to Clay to fly more like a fighter than a battleship size outpost ship.

The ship had one final stopping point as to pick up its weapon stores. The ship was flying under heavy escort as she was unarmed. Clay looked out the window to see a rather large armada of ships considering what they were guarding. The fleet ranged from about one-hundred fighters, fifty to seventy-five bombers, ten frigates, five cruisers, and two battleships. It was an impressive thing to see these ships fly together.

The Flag ship of the fleet signaled the Redemption. "Redemption please set course for sector 9, quadrant 001." reported the fleet commander.

"Roger that," replied Clay, "course acknowledged."

The ships, in unison, turned and headed for the designated coordinates.

"Redemption," the radio crackled, "prepare to set overdrive (*) acknowledge?"

"Roger that, overdrive set." said Clay.

"Genae," Clay said, "prepare the ship to go into overdrive."

"Yes, Sir," she replied.

"Alex lets see if everything is in order before we start jumping into any hoops." said Clay.

"Redemption, overdrive to be set in T-10 seconds." reported the fleet commander.

"T-9"

"T-8"

"T-7"

"Sir," reported Genae, "The overdrive is safe and ready to go."

"T-5"

"T-4"

"T-3"

“T-2”

“T-1”

“Launch.” said Clay.

In unison the ships of the fleet shot forward in a stream of white heading for the Pluto Space Station.

(*) SCC, Security Clearance Check. Back during the War of the Worlds both sides had serious problems with spies. The SCC was implemented from the side of the Allies to cut down on infiltration. The strategy worked almost perfectly but there are ways around everything.

(*) Overdrive is the fastest way to move about the galaxy. The process was created around 3000A.D. though no one is completely sure when to be exact. The precise formula for the engine was guarded by a secrete organization called Last Stand Watch [LSW] many of their members committed mass suicide when they discovered that their guarded prototype had been copied and leaked to the public by one of their own members. While most died some left the earth and went searching for life on other planets, but never got past Mar’s asteroid belt. They were later discovered trying to create a colony on a rather large asteroid.

The precise idea behind the engine is as follows:

The engine is powered by Purified Uranium-Platinum. The idea was that the elements U-238, U-235 and U-234 would combine at strenuous heat levels with Pt to form a chemical element that would no longer break down into smaller particles. Then the mixture would be run through a magnetic-ionic filter to further purify the fuel that would then be processed into a fueling tank to be later burned with Nitro Chloride sulfuric acid. The “fuel” would then be pressurized until ready to be used. The economical safe point for this was it was very easy to get and a very small amount could supply you for a long time.

Chapter 4: The Pluto Station

The armada of ships came out of overdrive together and slowed to a stop.

"Redemption," the radio blarred, " prepare to enter Pluto Space Station orbit for arming.

"Roger that," replied Clay.

The Redemption and its armada of ships slowly came into seeing range of the station. It was a massive piece of machinery. Hundreds of thousands of ships could dock at this station and close to three million men, workers, pilots and soldiers could live there. Many of the crew in the ship had seen this before but only during the great wars while it was still under construction. No one could imagine that the floating peices of metal, iron, and men would finally assume this role.

The ship came to dock with the station and right away it was being borded by maintenance men. The ship was alive with hundreds of men coming on bord with some contraption and then leaving after installing it somewhere.

"Captain Clay, please report to Pluto Station Authorities" the bay speaker blasted.

"Dang it," said Clay, "just what I need, going to lisen to some pointless guy telling me about the standard equipment."

"Have fun," Hunter said laughing.

Clay walked to the Administration office and was recieved by an elderly man with thick glasses and crazy grey hair.

"My name is Einzstonespritz, I am cheif resident scientist here at the PSS.(*). I designed most of the equipment you will be carrying on your ship."

Clay shook his hand and was escorted to a smaller room with quite the collection of weapons.

"We are currently installing a small weapons room in your ship where as you will have the only key to the room. In that room you will have every weapon on the ship. Your voice will provide the second security measure. Where in the event that you should die your key would be given to the second in command and your voice key would be automatically changed over to his or her voice. Do you understand?" the scientist asked.

"Gotcha." responded Clay.

"Well as I am I am sure you are also very busy so I will let you go. Here is the electronic key card." the man said with a smile.

He walked out of the room leaving Clay all alone. Clay looked around the room. There were some very interesting devices in there for sure. Some of the weapons Clay reconised from his years of pirate like fighting. He picked up a small rifle one very similar to the weapon he used to use. It was a reliable piece back then and he could tell that the weapon had been modified so that it could go longer without being reloaded of as they used the phrase now-a-days recharge. Clay put the weapon down. Clay could see at the very end of the room a small box that said "DO NOT OPEN". This intreged Clay more than any other devise in the room. He slowly

made his way to the box and stared at it for some time. He picked it up and shook it. It made a rattling noise and thus assured Clay that it was not explosive. He pulled out his pocket knife and opened the box. Inside he discovered a small metallic ring with eight artificial dimonds on it. Each, Clay was sure, some sort of mecanical device. He placed the ring on his finger. It was rather heavy for the size.

He was getting ready to take the ring off when...

"Captain Clay, report to the Redemption immidiantly. This is an emergancy." The speakers blarred.

Clay forgot about the ring and flung the box aside and went dashing for his ship. When he arrived there was a medical team on site and a few PSS police on the scene.

"What happened?" Clay said with a rather worried look on his face.

"One of the maintenance men was accidentally killed by an explosion from the weapons compartment in the fire room. It was a faulty energy cartridge(*)."

"Was anyone else hurt?" asked Clay.

"No one." Responded the police man walking away.

"What a great start." said Clay with a depressing tone.

(*) PSS Pluto Space Station. During the Great War, or War of the Worlds both sides sought to build great stations where as to house great armada of ships and soldiers. Many were built but after the war was over many of them were dismantled to assemble larger stations. The Pluto Space Station was the largest ever built.

(*) energy cartridge are changeable clips used in weapons. Energy cartridges are used primarily for ship weapons and rarely need to be recharged unless severely damaged.

Chapter 5: The Voyagers

The Redemption left the protection of the Pluto Space Station and soared forwards into the black nothing. At the PSS Clay was informed that he was to pick up the Voyager I and Voyager II as

secondary missions as they had been left to the wilds of space for quite some time and with the ships new motors now would be an exelant time to grab them up.

You see Voyager I and its sister spacecraft Voyager II were both launched in the summer of 1977. Voyager I performed a flyby of Jupiter in 1979 and one of Saturn in 1980. Voyager II flew by Jupiter in 1979, Saturn in 1981, and Uranus in 1986, before conducting its Neptune flyby. These ships were antique pieces and had been traveling for quite a long time. The data these ships stored was extremely valuable. Inside the hardware on that satellite contained information about the mysterious heliosphere. The Voyager collected the data and transmitted the information to earth. Both had made a historical race to the edge of the galaxy and had long been forgotten.

It had been a few days when Genae called for Clay over the loud speakers that she was picking up something on the radar. When Clay entered the cockpit everyone was looking out the window at the small object that they were slowly aproaching. Clay told Craig and Hunter to get on their suits and to wait for his order to head outside.

"Lets reel that bad boy in." Craig said with a , "yippee!"

In a few moments Craig and Hunter were outside and Clay was watching their progress towards the satellite.

"Ok, were here boss." said Hunter.

"Clamp her to the cargo arm." replied Clay.

When they had ensured that the arm was firmly grasped to the Voyager then Genae brought it in. When the Voyager II was saftly inside Clay entered the Cargo Bay and surveyed the old satilite. Eventually the inspections of it showed nothing abnormal.

The moral in the ship was high that day, and there was much celebrating done. Mostly by Craig who used the excuse to organize a party in which dancing was involved. So Clay let Craig organize this so called "party" but Clay knew it was just a chance for Craig to dance with the girls, and that was the only reason he wanted the party. Well the party was successful in Craig's mind and rather boring in Clay's. There was dancing, and even Clay danced a bit, forced to by Craig. Over the next few days . Hunter went around with a Video Camera and recorded the thing (the footage was later sent back to Earth and was showed on T.V.).

Over the next few days Craig looked over the Voyager II and Jennifer studied the information stored on it. Each Voyager had within it a golden record to be played if it came in contact with and non-human life form. But much to Craig's dismay, this record had not been tampered with. Life went on, and the look for Voyager I was on. The two satellites had been launched at almost identical times so they should be theoretically close to each other. They were all looking forward to having both of the Voyagers in their cargo again.

Two days pasted and the Voyager I was discovered on the radar, and the same process was followed to pull it in as the first. Clay entered the cargo bay and took a look at the Voyager I. It was nearly identical to the second but if there was a difference, he wouldn't be the one to tell that's for sure. He left the room when Craig and Genae were cracking it open to retrieve the all important disks. The frame of the Voyager was taken apart piece by piece. Craig was exited but he never let feelings and excitement get in the way of his work. Clay could hear the screwdrivers from his personal cabin and tried to remain there to act like the strong unmoveable captain that he wanted to appear like. But he couldn't remain there and walked in just as the final protective shell was coming off. Craig replied after a moments silence with a gasp.

" What's there?" said Hunter , looking over his shoulder.

" Nothing, absolutely nothing." said Craig.

Chapter 6: The Borders

** One week later.

After reporting the strange occurrence to his authorities Clay was told to take precautionary methods to ensure that no foul play was to take place. The PSS's theory was that rebel Forces from the remaining SRW troops that escaped to certain moons had removed the organs, so to speak, of the Voyager II. The ship was to be fully armed as if it was to encounter strong resistance and all parties were to take on arms to defeat a boarding party if necessary. Craig was excited about that fact. He sort of pictured himself as some sort of a modern cowboy and quite enjoyed carrying around a high power assault weapon.

Things went on as normal and no sightings of enemy forces were seen. It was rumored that SRW forces had escaped out this far, but if they did then how much fire power could they have was the question in all of their minds.

Clay walked into the lounge area on board the ship and sat down to drink a cold glass of root beer. He had lifted the first sip to his lips when Jennifer ran in and screamed, " You better get in here quick boss!" He spilled the root beer over his shirt as he ran into the cockpit.

"Whats up?" Clay asked Genae.

"Thats the thing, we dont know." She replied.

"What are you talking about, and please, make it simple." Clay said.

"Well we have been running a straight course since the PSS but we suddenly came to a dead stop not but three minutes ago. There is nothing wrong with the motor and the computers are fine, it is just that the computer thinks there is something in front of us, and basically put, it wont let us go any further." Genae explained.

"Perhaps there could be something out there?" Clay asked.

"Impossible," Alex interrupted, " we have run several bio scans and are picking up nothing."

"Hum," Clay sounded, " this is a certain situation you dont incounted in the simulators."

"If the computer thinks there is somthing out there, purhaps if we fired at where the computer thinks there is something, it will let us pass assuming that it will think it has exploded." Hunter stated.

"Brilliant, " Clay said, " and lets make a fire work show.Arm The photon cannon and set for 3000 yard explotion.If there wont be for long," he said with a laugh.

"Fire," Clay said."

Instantly the space infront of them flashed, and at the 3000 yards the weapon exploded.A flash imminated from the space infront of them.In the blink of an eye a massive space station apeared.Some of the station was damaged form the hit it was given by the Redemption.Clay glared at the station. It was huge, and nearly as big as the PSS. This was and only could be the work of the rebel SRW.This station was a large holding base for soldiers ships and supplies.

"The computers are screaming numbers at me," Genae said," Bio scans are off the roof.There has to be at least ten million men in that station.

"God, lets hope they are not soldiers." Craig gasped.

"Hunter," Clay said," send a message to the PSS and the GAF and tell them about this.Inform them we are under distress, we are probable gonna be in a bit anyway."

"You had better take a look at this," Genae said, " there is alot of mecanical movements going on in there, they are organizing their fleet no doubt."

"Captain has the helm," Clay said as he sat down in the captain's chair and manually took over the ship.

The scene was a frightening thing to experience. Ships poured out of the station. Luckily for Clay's heart it seemed that most of them were fighters and not any of the ships were more powerful than a frigate.

"Arm machine lasers guns, set cannons to hit the high armoured ships then make their way down." Clay ordered.

"Sir," Genae reported, "There is a ship headed on its way that the scanners don't recognise."

"How much time we got till it gets here?" Alex asked.

"About ten." said Genae.

"It's a slow bugger isn't it?" asked Craig.

The ships clashed in a battle that seemed one-sided but not in the way that you would assume. The Redemption shot down fighters before many of them had even fired once upon the ship. Their efforts were mostly in vain because even had they reached the ship their small weapons would have hardly pinged against them. What few frigates and bombers they had were destroyed first by the Redemption's targeting computers. They had not even gotten to fire once at the Redemption. The battle continued on.

"Sir," said Genae, "I think we have a problem. The mystery ship is closing in on us."

"Let's try to avoid it then." Clay said with a smile.

The Redemption surged forward with a show of power. But, its power slowly turned into a desperate struggle for speed.

"I need power! What is happening?" asked Clay with a scream.

"We are being drawn into the station, and we are being guided by the mystery ship." said Alex.

"Blast." said Craig.

The crew headed towards the boarding room of the ship.

"Prepare for boarding." said Craig with a wry grin.

The alarm sounded with a deafening roar. The ship came to a complete halt. Sounds were heard from the outside of the ship.

The overhead speakers sounded the computers warning. "Boarding party attempting to board."

The door blew open with a loud explosion. A man entered the room with what seemed to be a large tranquilizer gun. He was stopped dead in his tracks by a shot from Craig.

"Consider all hostile." Clay said.

The firing increased until there was a pile of dead or wounded men at the door. They were at a disadvantage seeing as they had to enter a small door with six powerful guns pointed at them. They stopped their advance. Clay began to worry. Suddenly a gas filled the room.

"They are gassing us!" Clay shouted.

"Heck, thats not fair." Craig said before he passed out on the ground.

One by one they all passed out. Clay was left awake last. He looked around and fell on the ground.

"Blast." He said.

Chapter 7: The Escape

"Good evening Mr. Clay. I hope your sleep was a restful one." a voice said.

Clay couldnt see anything, the room was so dark and he was still groggy from the gas. But he knew he was in some form of prison cell with someone looking down at him.

"Where am I?" Clay asked.

"You are aboard the SRW'sPSS. This is one of the last SRW fortresses left. You unfortunately had the opportunity to run into us on your "top secrete mission", to explore the universe was it?" the man said with a chuckle.

"The war is over bud, you lost, remember?" Clay said with a smile.

"Yes, 'The war' as your people call it, ha. 'The War' was only a beginning. Your precious GAF has not seen the last of the SRW, no, not nearly." the man said.

"Well I dont expect I will be leaving your accomidations anytime soon will I? I do so hate to be a burden." Clay said with a mocking tone.

"Oh, you are no problem. Rather on the contrary, I am sure we will enjoy your company for a long long time." he said with a smile, "now I will let you be in peace for awhile seeing as you will be needing your rest. I have much things to look into, such as how to get into your ship."

Clay had been stripped and put into a grey uniform. As he figured, his weapons were gone. The man was a psycho but he wasn't stupid that's for sure. The only thing left on him that was actually his was the ring he had taken from the arms room at the PSS. He glared at the ring. What could its purpose be? He wondered. The room he was in was about eight foot by eight foot with a small bed and a toilet. The only way to exit was a small steel door with an opening of about one and a half foot that was covered with steel bars. Clay walked over to the door. He put his hands to it and tried to force it open. It wouldn't budge but, in the process he scratched the ring against the metal door and a screeching noise sounded, that was similar to finger nails across a chalkboard, nearly deafened him. Then he looked down and saw the ring shift shapes. A small rod came out of the ring's tip. The hole in which his finger was inserted shrank slightly enough to have the ring form a sort of pressure trigger. He was quite perplexed by this but extremely interested. He squeezed his finger and a red beam came from the ring. The beam hit the steel bars and in seconds he had burnt through the bars and had broken free from his recent prison. He took a look out into the hall. There was a guard walking down the hall towards him, two at the information desk, and one more apparently taking a nap. The guard came closer. The guard walked into the prison with a seriously shocked look on his face. Clay had hid on the other side of a support beam and now jumped out from behind his hiding space and hit the guard over the head with what had previously been his toilet seat.

"Oh, you lookin for the guy that was here?" Clay asked the unconscious man, "oh, he escaped."

Clay grabbed the guard's keys and his weapon. With the weapon he snuck as close as he could get to the information desk without being seen. He jumped up and fired two shots into the guard. With enough time left to peg the guard that was just waking up from the sound. He walked over to the remaining cells and released his crew one by one.

"What's the plan boss?" Craig asked.

"We make for the docking bay, and from there for our ship, and then for space." Clay answered.

Hunter interrupted, " We got company."

He pointed over to the entrance of the jail. There were four more guards coming, obviously to take the place of the recent guards.

"Craig , Hunter and Alex , get the remaining guards guns, quick before they come in." Clay commanded.

The guards came in.

"Alright boys your shifts over," the leading guard started.

They were only answered with the sounds of four weapons being answered. The guards fell down. All but one died instantly. He lifted up his weapon as if to fire it but was hit again by a shot from Craig.

"Alright, that's that then." Craig said.

"Get in their uniforms." Clay said.

The group of six started down the hall where the four replacement guards had come from.

"Genae I need to know where I am going." Clay started.

Genae had picked up a PCD(*) and was working over it.

"Head south east, that should get us to the docking bay." Genae instructed.

The group walked down the hallway. Occasionally they would get weird looks or get stopped for Identification Badges but besides that they were not really hindered in any way. They came to a guarded passage way and stopped.

"That there is the entrance to the Docking bay," Genae said, " But you have to have a specialized tag for that. One we do not have."

"OK then," Clay stated, " We will find a way around it."

"Boss," Craig began, " We could just shoot our way in and take our chances."

"I thought that might be your idea Craig, But there is a better way to do this." Clay said.

Clay walked over to the prisoner he had released.

"I apologise for doing this." Clay started.

"Doing what?" the prisoner started.

"This ." Clay said hitting the man over the head with his rifle.

He picked up his body and headed for the guards.

"We found this man trying to escape, he pegged eight guards getting out to." Clay said, " We are heading him down to see...uh...the General..."

Without a word, the guards let him pass.

One guard said, "Follow me. I will take you to the General."

"Brilliant Idea, huh?" Alex whispered to Craig

The eight walked through the docking bay. They saw their ship in the distance as well.

"Ok, here is the plan," Clay whispered to the group as they walked by their ship, "I will draw their fire while you make a run for it. Then pick me up and unleash all you have."

The crew then broke from the convoy and made a dash for the ship. The guards leading them realised what was happening but not in enough time to avoid being hit from blasts from Clay.

Clay continued to fire his weapon upon groups of men, hitting some and missing others. But he wasn't exactly aiming to kill everyone he saw but only to allow his crew enough time to get them into the ship.

SWHSH PING, a bullet had hit close. Now they were firing back and it was a different game. He found a nice little spot to make what could be the last stand. He noted quickly that he was being advanced on from all sides now. Just a little longer and he would have stalled enough. He remembered the ring, and quickly removed it. The ring then returned to normal size, and he swallowed it. If he was to be captured he would need a way out. Then...

"FREZZE!", a soldier screamed, "DROP YOUR WEAPON!"

Clay realised he was surrounded by over a hundred men, and so he complied.

"I surrendered," He said.

"Come on," the soldier said.

Clay looked over to the Redemption. Had he given them enough time?

Then the room filled with the noise of engines coming alive and powerful weapons being fired. The Redemption had managed to take off. The men around Clay turned around and opened fire on the heavily shielded ship. But they all soon dropped away in a hail of accurate gunfire. The ship then gracefully swooped down to grasp him. "Got you now man." Craig said.

The ship bolted out of the station. It wasn't long until Clay was in the pilot's chair and bulleting out of the station at ungodly speeds.

"We got a problem," Genae said, "the mystery ship is back."

"Losing power Sir," Alex said.

"Blast, not again." Clay shouted grinding his teeth.

The Redemption was being pulled back into the arms of thousands of armed men, now ready and capable of blowing them to bits. Then an AASR(*) wizzed by their ship. Then another.

"They are getting closer" Jennifer said.

Then Hunter looked up and said, "Sir I am getting some funny readings on my comms(*). Call me crazy but I would say that it was battleships."

"Good God," Clay began.

But then the battle ships appeared. But instead of firing at the Redemption They opened fire on the SWR's PSS and the ships that were now preparing to come out and fight.

It was a sight to see, ships being destroyed and not one of them a PSS ship. The SWR's PSS was in a wreck and almost all on fire. There were only a handful of ships that took off after the bombardment commenced. The battle ended, and they had escaped and survived without a loss of life or blood.

They were informed to dock with a resupply ship to check for damages. After the check and a few minor repairs they were leaving the armada and on their way again to the outreaches of space.

After the last battleship left them Clay started to leave the cockpit after he had given instructions on the path they were to take.

"Where you headed boss?" Hunter asked.

"Going to get my ring back." Clay responded with a frown.

(*)PcD Personal computing Device are very high tech devices that are hand held. Some are so small they are held like watches on your wrist. They are information data bases that can hold almost unlimited knowledge.

(*)AASD Anti Armoured Ship Rockets Heavy portable device that are carried on small vehicles. They are like small tanks but when being fired are not movable. They are specially designed for ground forces who will encounter armoured ships. Their rocket is designed to enter into the armour and

detonate beneath it. It is very effective though it can take several shots to completely destroy a ship in that manner.

(*)commsS Communication Scanner scans frequencies such as ones that ships motors could be heard on. Its specialty is determining whether a ship is allied or foe. It then relays that information to the central computer then to be processed to the ship's targeting computers.

Chapter 8: Try to be Reasonable

The room was filled with confusion. There was just simply nothing there, no fuel, motor, hard drive, no nothing. What was worse of all was that there was no explanation to this occurrence.

Craig believed that some form of aliens had taken it to learn about the Human Race, but Clay preferred a more reasonable approach to it, though he wasn't sure what else it could be...

...You see even to this point, scientist had failed to prove that there was life outside of the known universe. There was vague ideas about how aliens could have lived without being detected by earth, and that possibility was great. Most anyone could hide in space and not be ever found out due to the fact that not enough of the galaxy was mapped, much less any other galaxy.

Everyone was excited, the fact that there was nothing in the Voyager I lead everyone to believe that something, nonhuman took it. Clay didn't necessarily believe this but he was wondering "how" that's for sure. Craig and Robert had already come to the firm belief that there were aliens somewhere out there and that they were hostile. How they came to this assumption already, Clay wouldn't know. But despite his protests, they took over a storage room, by emptying the storage into the Cargo bay, and started building devices for self protection.

You see the ship had been supplied with a whole arsenal of deadly and extremely powerful weapons. But Clay had all of these in a room that he alone knew the code to, and he alone could give access to the room. But Craig and Robert, and later with the help of Alex, made their own weapons. All day long you could hear the bangs and explosions, and after everyday The three would come out of the room, with burns cuts bruises and smiles on their faces. Clay knew that crew moral was important and they all seemed happy with their work so Clay let them carry on, plus

how much harm could they cause?

Despite Clays firm belief that there was nothing out there besides them , Clay had a member of the crew take watch during the night, that person to be replaced by another after a few hours, and so on and so on. The person on watch also carried a rifle, a pistol, and a stun grenade.

With all of the protective messures taken and their secondary mission accomplished they could now, go into overdrive and finally leave the Milky Way in search of other habitable planets. The jump was set and the ship entered overdrive. They would remain in this overdrive for two months.

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