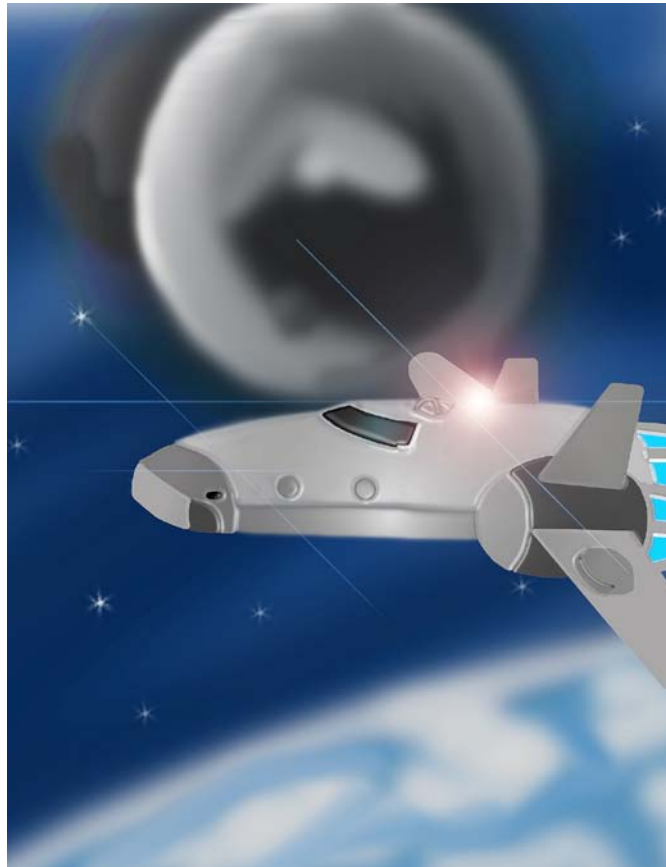


PROLOGUE INTO DANGER



“Stop! Wait a minute!”

Jimmy cried trying to calm Irene down. Not listening, she scanned over her PDAC checking the status of her ship.

“All systems seemed to be up and ready.”

She cheerfully called back to a frustrated Jimmy.

“Irene you need to think things carefully and not act rash!”

Said Jimmy once again tried for the tenth time to appeal to her sense of caution. Ever since she saw the INN news report about her **mother Isabella Stanton** being held for trial by the Vangarrin Empire, Irene has become almost frantic with uncontrolled fear, and desperation.

Jimmy himself was trying to come to grips with the knowledge that his assistant detective is in fact **the** Irene Stanton, billionaire heiress of the Stanton family fortune. He couldn't believe she was right here in the middle of his living room pacing around in agitation. Irene Stanton, the daughter of Isabella Stanton, went missing two years ago without a trace. Her shuttle was making a trip from a school in the Einstein system back to Earth, when it vanished never to be seen again. Jimmy marveled not for the first time since hearing her last name, and realizing who Irene truly is. The string of events that leading her from a shuttle ride home, to here on Vestia with scars marking her body, and no memory

of what happened to her. It all made Jimmy insane with more curiosity so he began to convince Irene again.

“Listen to me! You need to stop and pause for a moment to figure this thing out!”

Irene whirled on Jimmy, eyes wide with distress.

“There is no time to think of a plan! Can’t you understand that Jimmy!?”

Yelled a frightened Irene. Jimmy was shocked. He has never seen her like this even in the short time he has known her. Seeing the look on Jimmy’s face, Irene tried to calm down by closing her eyes and taking a deep breath. *Wow Jimmy is right, I’m about to loose it* she thought to herself.

Slowly letting go of the air in her lungs she opened her eyes. Feeling more in control, Irene stated calmly.

“The Vangarrins have had my mother for three maybe four days now, and soon they’ll put her on trial. A Vangarrin trial does not cater to aliens, so I just know they’ll make an example out of her. The best thing that could happen is she will spend the rest of her natural life as some Vangarrin nobleman’s slave, or the worst case scenario is...”

Irene paused, and taking a deep breath to maintain her composure and continued on.

“The worst case scenario is that the Vangarrin Empire gives my mother the death penalty. If that occurs, it will take place that very day, even as early as an hour after the trial! Now can’t you see why I need to get to Peridum the Vangarrin homeworld immediately!?”

Irene went back to her PDAC, with her fingers tapping furiously at the touch screen with lightning speed. Jimmy shook his head, for he was helpless to find the right words able to soothe Irene. He knew that as soon as she was done with her ship’s diagnostic checks, she would make a beeline for the Vangarrin Empire.

Even though Irene now knew who one of her parents is, she was still in the dark about her true past. Nothing was clear to her except for the small minute knowledge that Isabella Stanton is her biological mother.

“Irene stop! That’s enough!”

The authoritative tone stunned Irene, who was still in mid-calculations on her vessel. But what shocked her more was when Jimmy grabbed her by the shoulders, and placed her in one of his recliner chairs.

“Look I know you want to help your mother, I would if I were you!”

Irene was about to utter a retort, but Jimmy quickly continued on.

“Howevrrrr! I doubt that you are unaware of the history between the Vangarrin Empire and the Hucen Nation involving the **Rakishi Conflict**. After that, the Vangarrins and the Hucens ain’t exactly on friendly terms! Irene, that’s why we really do need to come up with a solid plan of action.”

Jimmy took a deep breath and gently waited for Irene to reply. For a half a minute she said nothing but Jimmy could see that she was wrestling with a lot of inner turmoil.

“She’s my mother.”

Irene finally managed to say in a low slow whisper.

“But I don’t know anything about her! I can’t even remember us being together. Although, I do have a strange sense we are close...closer than mother and daughter. I feel like Isabella and I could be best friends.”

A tear escaped Irene’s left eye and ran down her cheek. Jimmy knelt down on one knee to clasps her hands with his.

“Listen to me, we will figure out the best plan to get your mother back safely. But if you rush in without planning, then the Vangarrins will dismantle you!”

“I know, I know.”

Irene nodded back in a subdued tone. Looking up into Jimmy’s eyes she said

“You’re right. I do need to think this through...let’s come up with an effective plan to help my mother.”

Irene said as she got up from the turquoise recliner. Smiling, Jimmy moved out of her way and said.

“Get some rest, tomorrow is a new day. When you wake up things will be clearer.”

“Of course Jimmy, a good night’s sleep is just what the doctor ordered.”

She passed by him heading to the back door, which lead to the outside guesthouse. Before going through the door, Irene turned to face Jimmy and said.

“I’ll see you in the morning Jimmy.”

After she was out the door, for a second Jimmy felt that something was off, because the tone of Irene’s voice was different somehow. But he shook it off, for it’s probably just natural for the poor girl just learning that her mother is a prisoner in the hands of the Vangarrins. A race of people that view aliens as lesser life form. Their entire Empire is built upon the backs of conquered alien slave worlds, and Jimmy wouldn’t want his own mother among that lot either. He went to bed hoping that tomorrow they could put their heads together and come up with a plan. Jimmy not only wished to save Isabella Stanton, he also wanted to keep her daughter alive. However while Jimmy was sound asleep, a figure ascended the skies of Vestia from the guest house. Irene felt bad for leaving Jimmy in secret, but she left a message on his PDAC. She knew he would help without her asking, but deep down inside something told Irene that she needed to do this alone. In a few minutes she was taking off in her ship, from the Darin spaceport. Irene’s silver dagger starship streaked into the planet’s atmosphere studying the star chart displayed on her galactic index. Irene plotted a course for Vangarrin space with an estimated arriving there in just six days. Although, Irene intended to try to make it there in four days by pushing the space slipstream highway engines to their maximum capacity. As the space around her vessel began to fold, the ship entered the sub-transitional dimension, which is the slipstream highway.

Millions of light years away on the planet Peridum, the homeworld and capital of the Vangarrin Empire, lay the power of the Emperor, the seat of the Vangarrin government. In the capital city called ‘**Empirus**’ sits the Vangarrin Royal Palace, a tall structure containing five-finger like towers of different height. The towers can be seen from anywhere inside of the city limit. The Palace is a monumental symbol of the Vangarrin Royal Family’s power and wealth. In the second to highest tower of the palace on the very top floor a Vangarrin male sits in an ornate wooden chair with soft cushions. Wrapped in a fine robe of golden material embedded with sliver threads, he possesses green skin like the rest of his species but of a darker complexion. With four long, slender fingers on each hand, his tentacle like hair is equally long and golden. He sits in a decorated room with elaborate furnishings, artworks, and trophies. This Vangarrin male is young and has a glass of orange liquor beside him on a side table. In front of him is a projected holo-screen showing nothing but static, however the audio sound is as clear as crystal.

“Greetings Prince Tyron Sorador. I hope I am not disturbing you at this late hour?”

The voice from the holo-screen is polite, but deep. The prince sipped the fine orange nectar of wine from the glass goblet, while dabbing a richly made handkerchief lightly on his lips to savor the taste.

“Not at all! I’m quite awake and engaging in my **nightly activities**.”

Prince Sorador’s commanding arrogant tone rings like a man who has and will get everything he wants in life. He chuckles at an inside joke, leaving the other speaker out of the true meaning. The voice from the static audio holo-screen replies,

“I assume that all preparations have been made for our guest?”

Prince Sorador waves a hand in dismissal forgetting that the person on the other side can’t see his movement.

“Everything is as I have commanded it to be! When this Hucen girl Irene arrives, she will have no choice but to play into my games if...what you say is truly accurate?”

“All the information I have provided to you pertaining to Irene Stanton is factual. We know she will come for her mother because Hucens have a strong sense of family loyalty, especially when it concerns their Human parents.”

Replies the voice. The Prince broke out in a cruel sadistic laugh.

“She will not survive the games and all of the Empire will be pleased to see a Hucen brought low. I simply can’t wait.”

“That would please me as well! Enjoy the rest of your evening Prince Tyron, until we finally meet.”

The holo-screen vanished in flickers of bright purple lights while the prince stood up from his comfortable chair. Walking to his bedchamber, Prince Tyron mused on what was to come in the imminent future. How Irene Stanton had no idea of what awaited her here on Peridum. As he pushed the large double doors to his bedchamber open, two beautiful slender female Vangarrins awaited in his bed underneath the smooth sheets. Both females are of the same size and shape, but one had lighter green skin than the other. Each woman’s long tentacle like hair is of different colors, one has dark pink the other blue. Prince Tyron smiled, for he loved his status in life. Even though he is third in line to the throne, one day soon

“I will be Emperor!”

The prince shouted to the giggling females as he closed the doors behind him.