**Raff and the Starship of Knowledge**

A Furry Sci-Fi Story

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Started 11/07/2014

Last Updated 04/16/2015

**About Morphs**

Last Updated 04/13/2015

 Morphs are a genetic manipulation of a base animal stock. They usually, more or less, look just like their base animal parent, or donor, whose cells they were created from. They are then enhanced genetically and given special abilities that separate them from the norm, like paw hands to manipulate things, the ability to walk on their hind legs, intelligence to think and speak, and maybe even increased size. There were many other types of genetic mutations used to create some morphs, making some more useful and others more dangerous. Most of them were unauthorized genetic experiments, created for money, profit and more often, for illegal purposes. Some, however, were experiments funded by the Galactic Federation themselves, although most of these were thought to have been destroyed, along with any evidence.

 Morphs can also be created from a sexual union between a morph and a base animal of the same genetic type, such as a male morph fox and an ordinary female fox, or between two morphs of the same genetic type, such as a male morph rabbit and a female morph rabbit. The result of such unions is an offspring with the genetic combination of the two parents. The offspring may or may not have any of the mutations of the morph parents and may result in other mutations, good or bad, being passed on to them. Some interspecies morphs have been born, due to the genetic manipulation process of the parents, resulting in a new morph species being created. Such unions were only a small part of genetic experiments being carried on in these genetic labs.

 In the Galactic year 4713 all genetic experimentation was supposedly abolished and made illegal, but more morphs kept showing up in the news, as raid after raid was made on illegal genetic labs all over the federation. Most morphs were usually destroyed, before the raids, by the lab personal getting rid of evidence. Others were killed by the federation police during the raid, by accident or by officers having orders to do so, by the local government. Still some managed to escape and found the outside world very hostile towards them. It wasn’t until a very influential animal rights group stepped in to stop the senseless killing of morphs, that the Galactic Federation made an official mandate to appease them. This official mandate gave all non dangerous morphs the right to live and become full citizens.

 This however caused an uproar, as most pure strain human and humanoid citizens found morphs repulsive, because of their looks, smells and strange behaviors. These citizens were also appalled by the fact that most morphs wore no clothing and refused to do so, feeling most uncomfortable in them. The morph soon found themselves outcasts of society, with no one to turn to for help. Some perished right away, other lived very impoverished lives in slums or abandoned buildings and still others turned to crime. Then there were those few who found their place in the universe and became heroes, like Raff, a morph raccoon and Mophit, a morph otter. This then is the story of how they met, fell in love and became very famous morphs explorers.

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Introductions

Last Updated 04/12/2015

 My name is Raff, or at least that is what most people around here call me, as in riffraff. What my true name might have been, if any, was completely lost to me. I am a two and a half foot tall raccoon morph of some sort, of undetermined age; but what exactly I am, is of much debate in this city. Some say I was brought here to this world by aliens and was dumped here, along with the rest of their garbage. Some say I am a miserable diseased animal that, for some god forsaken reason, became intelligent. Some say that I was exposed to radioactive runoff in one of these abandoned warehouses and was horribly mutated by it. Still others say I am a laboratory experiment that went completely wrong and I was dumped here, to hide their mistake. There are others, less kind surmises; but whatever the truth may be I do not even know myself, or even care, for that matter. As far back as I can remember, I had always lived among these rundown dilapidated buildings and warehouses on the east side of the Denton Spaceport.

 I survive here day to day mainly by rummaging through the trashcans and dumpsters around the spaceport at night, for something to eat, avoiding the local police. I am able to eat almost anything edible, even things that would gag a maggot and because of this; I have become rather plump, or do I have worms again? Anyway, I seem to be immune to any disease, which, because of the way I have to live in this rundown old city, is a very good thing. The only thing that ever bothers me are these damn fleas that from time to time make me scratch a lot. I manage, however, to keep the fleas at bay when I rummage through the dumpsters. They are a never-ending source of toxins and poisons, which I also seem to be immune to. You might say my body has adapted quite well to my environment, or you might say that I had been made to survive in this kind of environment.

 I also survive by fixing and selling things that I find dropped on the ground, in trashcans or in dumpsters, to some of the more shady characters that thrive around here. I really don’t like dealing with them, but it’s the only way I can get the things I need to survive. I actually trade the things that I find for things that I need, as credits are of no use to me. It’s not like I can just pop down to the local marketplace and get what I want, being what I am. I am not exactly what you would call a socially acceptable being, as most people are repulsed by my wild unkempt appearance and by my, shall I say, odorous presence. It is all the creeps can do to deal with me, but I bring them many valuable things to barter with and I also sometimes do things for them. Nothing exactly illegal, mind you, but I have a special talent for fixing things that they sometimes require.

 I keep mostly to myself, living in an old cargo crate inside of abandoned warehouse number nineteen. There I sleep and keep the things that I find to fix them up and sell them, or keep them myself if I happen to take a liking to them. One thing in particular that I have always possessed and keep close to me at all times, is a small micro-toolkit that I use to repair the things that I find. I also have nimble little fingers on my small dexterous paw hands and keen eyes, perfect for working on very small things, in particular. I have always been clever at using them to fix things, even things that I knew nothing about. Things mechanical and electronic have always seemed like child’s play to me to figure out and repair. I could have probably gotten a good job at the spaceport doing this, if they could just get past my appearance, smell and my bad table manners. But I have always been chased off by their security, like some kind of rabid animal any time I approached it. Once, they even had me brought in by local law enforcement, but I was quickly released for some reason… was it my breath?

 Another oddity about me is that I loved electricity, not only using it, but feeling it course through my small furred body. I can’t get enough of it and often need to electrocute myself once in a while, like a drug. It makes me feel giddy, as if I was drunk of alcohol or drugs; both of which have no effect on me, so it’s my only vice. Then one night I found out, quite by accident, that electricity can actually heal my wounds as well. I had been shot and badly wounded by a local resident with buckshot while I was rummaging through his trashcans. I managed to escape him and found myself near the power box of his housing complex. There was a broken panel with bare exposed wires and contacts inside of it, so I quickly helped myself to them, wanting to deaden the tremendous pain I was feeling. As the electricity coursed through my body, it blocked the pain, as I knew it would. However, before I managed to blow up the power transformer, I found that the lead shot had popped out of my wounds and my wounds had then closed up. The rest of that night, I walked around in the dark in a shuddering, drunken stupor for a while, but I was whole again, smelling of singed fur. What a wonderful odor!

Chapter 1 - The Sphere and the Outcast

Last updated 04/13/2015

 I had lived happily like this all my life, as far as I knew it and had settled into a comfortable existence. Then one night, all that changed while I was rummaging through a dumpster. I was hungrily munching down on something green and moldy when suddenly, I heard the sound of someone being chased and loud voices coming closer. Something then hit the dumpster, that I was in, hard and I heard someone then being brutally worked over. Through the shouts and cries of pain, I deduced he had something they wanted real bad. They were trying to force information out of him about it, but he resisted giving it to them. I hid in the muck and pressed my ear against the slimy wall of the dumpster and heard the leader say, “One last chance, punk… where is the device your crew found on that moon?” The response was something about what they could do to themselves, but the leader didn’t seem to like that suggestion and quickly shot him. I can still hear the ringing in my ears, even to this day, from that gunshot reverberating loudly around the dumpster.

 I kept low and very quiet, as the local police began to arrive and soon there was lots of gun, laser and blaster fire that followed. I laid there in the cold muck shivering in fear, and hoping I would not be discovered or shot, as some of the gun fire penetrated the dumpster that I was in. Then as quickly as it had begun, it came to an abrupt end, as the local cops were very good at their job and they still were well equipped. I listened, trembling profusely, as the corpses of the person being coerced about the device and his tormenters were taken away in several ambulances. The local boys then swept the area, once even opening up the dumpster I was in. By now, however, I was covered in so much muck from hiding that they did not see me amongst the rest of the garbage, and they closed it up again.

 Apparently they found nothing else and soon there was silence once again. I waited a while, listening intently at the dumpster wall and then crept out of the dumpster, dripping gods knows what, off my slime covered body onto the cracked pavement. Still shaken, I saw the blood on the ground all around me and closed my eyes, covering them with my slime covered paw hands in terror. I then heard a weak high pitched sound that seemed to be calling to me, coming from under the end of the dumpster. I dropped my paw hands down to my side, walking cautiously toward it and then, getting down on all fours, I looked under it. To my amazement, I found a tiny silver sphere the size of a golf ball, made of a shiny metal that I had not seen before and I picked it up gently. There were small very dim blue lights moving intermittently on its shiny metal surface, as if it were broken or lacked enough power to work properly. I quickly hid the device in my micro-toolkit and went back to my home.

 I dried myself off by rolling around on the dirty, dusty floor and then cleaned myself off as best as I could. I then tried to go to sleep, but the gears of my mind were already spinning, concentrating on the sphere. It was as if… I had seen one before and was somehow trying to remember how to repair it, but that had to be impossible, as I had never seen it‘s like before. I found myself getting up anyway and began tinkering with it for a while, looking at it closely under my magna-viewer. At first I could not find any openings, or even a seam in its shiny silver surface. Then I noticed a little micro socket on the very bottom of it, and it struck me to use a tool in my micro-toolkit that I had never had a use for before. I pulled it out and fitted it into the socket, and to my surprise, the device shutdown and opened up for me. Inside of it was a bright blue crystal connected to a micro sized computer chip of unknown origin, that seemed to be inlaid into the inside wall of the metal sphere. Even though I was unfamiliar with crystal technology, this sphere felt so familiar to me; like a lost memory, trying to tell me something. I suddenly realized that who I really was, and where I might have truly come from, might be connected to its origin.

 The crystal itself suddenly began to sing out to me, and I found out that I could somehow understand it, as a gentle feminine voice entered into my mind and talked to me. I found out that it was only a small part of a vast crystal memory core. This memory core belonged to an ancient starship that had been badly damaged in a battle, long forgotten. It told me the crew of the Valiant Star had recently found the sphere and would know where to look for the starship, once I managed to fix it. The last known location of the starship lies deep inside its multi-layered memories, if I can just gain access to it. I made what repairs I could, guided by crystal’s soft feminine voice. I then cleaned it thoroughly inside and closed it up to keep the crystal and the inside of the sphere free from dust or damage. Some other repairs were still needed, but they were beyond the capability of my tools and equipment, but not my knowledge. I knew that I needed to somehow contact the crew of the Valiant Star if I were to find out more about the sphere and thus… myself.

 However, I also knew that there were other interested parties; some very ruthless, that were also looking for it. I could just get rid of it, but these kind of people would still tear me apart; still alive, trying to find it on me and I would be just as dead. I could sell it, but I had somehow bonded with the blue crystal and now felt compelled to repair the sphere and keep it safe. I also needed to find out what it was that it wanted to show me, as it seemed very familiar with me. So I started gathered my things in my backpack and I made ready to leave, the only home that I had ever known. I tucked the sphere inside my micro-toolkit and grabbed my lightning stick. It was a device that I used often to give myself a little jolt, but would also make someone who attacked me think twice, once they got a taste of it. Unknown to me, at the same time, my paw prints had already been discovered by the dumpster that I had crawled out of. These interested parties would soon be coming here to find me, and make my simple life very complicated.

 It all started sometime after midnight, when I heard the footsteps of someone making a really bad attempt at being quiet. In the vast silence of my warehouse, I could hear a pin drop anywhere in it, and no one but me ever ventured inside. So I quickly slung my backpack over my shoulders and made for an opening that I often used to get out. However, I found it already covered by some very nasty looking thugs. I then quickly climbed a pole to the next level through a hole in the ceiling and headed for another way out, while keeping out of their sight. I had lived here a long time, and knew my way around this warehouse even in pitch dark. The humans never came close to finding me, but they had also brought other furred humanoids and animals to help sniff me out. However, once they found my foul scent, they didn’t seem all that anxious to find me anymore. A vicious dog like creature did manage to find me and attacked me, but it got a taste of my lightning stick and ran off with its tail between its legs, yelping loudly. I soon made my way to the roof and climbed down a fire escape ladder to another building. From there I made my way down to the street and then made myself… very scarce.

 I hid in the sewers for a while to cover my scent, and kept out of sight until I figured out what to do next. I had a small communicator in amongst my things and used it to look up the Valiant Star. I soon found out that it was their Captain that had been killed last night at the dumpster. I found their contact information and sent an anonymous message to them, telling them where to meet me. Again, unknown to me, my communicator was being traced, and soon there were many vehicles with dangerous thugs of all kinds searching around the whole area for me. I kept myself hidden, keeping to the shadows as best I could, moving ever closer to the meeting point. However, when I got there, I found no one there to meet me but more thugs! Ether they didn’t get my message or chose to ignore it, as a hoax. Either way, I was screwed, and watched in fear as they began to close in all around my location.

 All hope failed me, when they had finally found me and quickly came running for me. Suddenly, I was grabbed from behind by a big thug and I let him have a taste of my lightning stick. He dropped me quickly, grabbing his chest and I then ran, as fast as my chubby little legs would carry me, but they were almost upon me. Then suddenly a shiny white car appeared right in front of me and skidded to a stop, hitting some of the thugs, throwing them out of my way. The back passenger door swung up, tossing a few more out of my way and I pretty much fell into the car, unable to stop myself. I laid there sprawled out on the floorboards quivering, not knowing who or what was behind the wheel. I began hearing gun blasts as the door swung down shut behind me, and then heard blaster bolts and bullets bouncing off car’s body. A feminine voice said, a bit sickly, “Hold on… little one… I…” and then I heard her cough and a window quickly shut close between us and the car lifted off into the air! I dared not get up off the floor, but laid in a quivering ball on the floorboards until it finally landed and came to a stop.

 I very slowly rose up off the floor and peeked over the frame of the passenger door, looking out of the window. I found that the car was now inside some kind of starship’s cargo hold. There was a humanoid tiger, a humanoid dog, and a small otter morph, along with two humans waiting inside. They were all heavily armed. I ducked down feeling my heart thumping hard in fear, and heard the driver side door open. I then peeked out the window to find a beautiful female humanoid unicorn joining the group, and she talked to one of the humans. She pointed towards me with a look of disgust on her face, and they all stepped back not wanting to approach me. Then the small otter morph was pushed forward, and she reluctantly stepped up to the car and opened the back door.

 She then held her nose and motioned for me to quickly follow her. As all the others gave me a wide berth, I looked at them all, feeling very nervous, as she led me out of the cargo bay into a small decontamination station. She then motioned for me to enter a small room, and as I did, I turned to find her still outside as the door closed swiftly in front of me. Then to my horror, warm soapy water came out of the walls, ceiling, and floor; nearly drowning me and my things, as I was completely washed from head to toe for the first time in my life. I banged on the door, begging for her to let me out, but she just stood there smiling and waving at me.

 I finally resigned myself to my fate and let the water do its worst, fuming all the while, with my arms crossed in front of me and tapping my wet paw on the floor looking at her. Eventually I had to admit though, it did begin to feel quite good after a while as all the fleas, mites, and other parasites on me got sucked down the drain along with several layers of dirt on my skin and fur. When it was finally over, I was let out by the others and the humanoid dog came over and sniffed at me. Apparently not satisfied, he and the humanoid tiger stripped me of all my stuff and carried me, kicking and screaming, into a room with a tub. I fought with them both tooth and nail as they tried to scrub my little body thoroughly clean, getting both of them very wet, scratched up, and very angry at me.

 As the humanoid tiger raised his clawed hand to strike at me, I heard the feminine voice of the humanoid unicorn say, “That’s quite enough Jamar, he is clean enough for me to talk to and we don‘t want to harm our guest, now do we?” He grumbled something under his breath looking at me, and pounded his fist into his hand. I sat there in the tub full of soapy water ignoring him, and gazed upon the beautiful female unicorn in awe. I somehow realized she was the new Captain of the Valiant Star just by her distinguished presence. The humanoid dog and Jamar stepped back and gave her some room, but they eyed me with great displeasure, nursing their wounds. She sat gracefully down before me, and looked at me kindly with her bright blue eyes that somehow reminded me of someone, but I could not remember who.

 She looked down at me calmly and said, “Your message said something about you finding the object that our previous Captain had died for. “, and there was a deep sadness in her voice. I looked over at my wet things on the table and said “In my micro-toolkit is what you seek, if you will allow me.” She nodded to Jamar and he lifted it up and brought it to me saying, “Just give me a reason to shred you to pieces, vermin.” I took it carefully, not bothering to look up at him and opened it up. I reached inside and held out the sphere to her as it hovered in my paw hand softly humming, the blue lights now dancing brightly on its smooth silvery surface. Her eyes opened wide in surprise and the others stepped back, brandishing their weapons. She then held out her hand and it hovered over to her, and she then held up her other hand. The others looked at her and then lowered their weapons, but they still looked at me very unkindly.

 She then looked at me in wonder and said, “How did you ever manage to fix it?” I shrugged my shoulders and said, “I could not fix it completely, for I don’t have what I needed to finish the repairs. What I was able to fix, however, she had told me herself how to do.” The humanoid unicorn looked at me quizzically, and said, “She?!” I looked at the sphere and said, “Yes, the blue crystal inside it… sang to me and told me what to do.” The humanoid dog scoffed at my words, and said, “He’s mad, Captain, as well as being smelly.” The Captain looked at the sphere and said softly, as if in a dream, “I don’t think so, for I can hear her song as well.” She then looked at me and said, “Who are you?” I looked down at myself and looked back up at her, saying, “Raff, or at least that is what others call me.” She smiled and said, “Raff is it… then welcome aboard the Valiant Star, Raff, I am Captain Sun-Tarry. Oh Mophit… come here and find our new guest a cabin, he will be staying with us quite a while, I think.” and Mophit, the small otter morph, then came in sniffing the air and breathed a sigh of relief.

 I got out of the tub dripping water all over the floor, and gathered my other wet things and then started to pick up my lightening stick, when Jamar snarled menacingly at me and said, “All weapons are stowed in the weapons locker.” I looked at it quizzically and said, “This is not a weapon… it’s my entertainment.” They all looked at me strangely, but Jamar seemed unconvinced, and I reluctantly let him have it… by the handle. I then followed Mophit through the door, still dripping water onto the floor and said, as I left, “Don’t be surprised if there is an energy serge in my room later.” I followed her down a long corridor, admiring her small slender sleek furred body, as I had not seen another animal morph before, let alone a female one. She led me to a door and it opened into a big room with a large low bed and some small furniture.

 She looked at me for a long moment, beginning to blush and then said, a bit nervously “Th… This cabin should be good enough for you, as mine… across the corridor… is much like this one and we‘re about the same size. If you need… anything else… just call me.” Her com unit suddenly blared out “Mophit!” and she rolled her eyes and said, a bit exasperated “Everyone else does.” She then turn and walked out the door, in a huff and left me alone in my new cabin, still feeling a bit warm inside. I looked around the room and made myself at home, flopping wet furred onto the large bed. The room also had a small bathroom, with a shower, I discovered and decided that, for now, it was best that I use it, for its intended purpose, or be visited, by those two brutes again.

 Then I saw the many power sockets, in my room and licked my lips and said to myself, a bit mischievously “I wonder what shipboard power tastes like.” and then I indulged myself. The lights dimmed, in my room, as the pure clean power coursed through my little body and made me feel very giddy. I then heard alarms go off and pulled out the long dura-steel knitting needles that I had in my backpack for this purpose, from the power socket, falling onto the floor in a drunken stupor. The humanoid dog rushed into my cabin, followed by one of the humans with a med-kit and they checked me over. The humanoid dog then picked me up and carried me to the infirmary, placing me on a bed and I laid there giddily giggling and talking to myself. Sun-Tarry came in a bit annoyed and said “Alright Marshal, what happened?” I then sat up a bit unsteady and stared at her, smiling broadly saying “I wasss just ssssampling your sssshipsss power… a very nicccce kick to it, I might add… Hick!… crissssip and clean.” and then fell forward, onto my face.

 They all looked at each other and then rolled me over on my back and held me down, strapping me to the bed, as I yelled “Holdsss on… whatsss are you… Hick!… all doing!” and then the human shot me full of something and I looked at him and said “That’ssss not going…Hick!… to work on me.” and stuck my tongue out at him and gave him the raspberry. They all looked at me in surprise, as I still struggled fiercely against my bonds and said “Letsss me go… right thissss inssstant!” The human looked at the injector and then at the Captain and said “I just pumped him up with enough tranquilizer to put a large dog to sleep, Captain.” I shook my head and said “It doessssn’t matter… Hick!… how much you… pumpsss me up with… itsss not going to… Hick!… work on me. Nowsss letsss me go!” Then suddenly, I heard the gentle song of the sphere coming from the Captain’s pocket and I just stopped and closed my eyes, feeling the giddiness suddenly leave me and I just laid there, beginning to weep, saying apologetically “I’m sorry Captain… everyone… I will behave… I promise. Please forgive me… and let me go.” and I struggled no more, but laid there weeping.

 The Captain gently removed the straps from me, sitting down beside me and said softly “What can you tell me about your past, Raff, where did you come from?” I looked up at her, wiping the tears from my eyes and said “As far back, as I can remember, I have always lived among those abandoned warehouses, around the spaceport. Where I was born or how I came about being there, I can’t seem to remember.” The humanoid dog scoffed at me again and said “It obvious to me, Captain, that he is nothing more than a slimy smelly mutant vermin.” She stood up and confronted him, making him stand tall, saying angrily “That’s enough Marshal, haven‘t you learned anything from Mophit yet?!… One, a common mutant could not possibly make repairs to this type of technology, no matter what intelligence he might have obtained. Two, his micro-toolkit is of Hy-Starian make, a most unusual thing to find just laying around on a sleazy border colony world, would you not agree. Then there is, Three, the fact that not only can he hear the crystal singing, but he can actually understand it’s song… even I can‘t do that. Only a highly skilled Crystal Mechanic, from the old Hy-Starian home world, could.”

 Then she turned around and said “But I can’t remember a raccoon being one of m… of the Hy-Starian races. You are a puzzle to me, Raff.” I smiled and said “I’m sometime a puzzle to myself Captain.” She laughed and said “I can believe that. Right now we need to know what makes you tick. So sense your already here… please let Doctor Sanders scan you thoroughly, ok.” I looked over at him and said “Ok, but I don’t know what you will find, Doc.” and I laid back on the bed and let him examine me, as the Captain and Marshal turned and left the infirmary. Doctor Sanders then took many readings, of my body, for quite a while and the look on his face slowly changed into that of total confusion, as he continued. I looked at him and after a while longer and I said “What’s wrong, Doc, am I dying.” he looked at me and said “Hardly… your one of the most healthy creatures, I have ever had the privilege of examining. But your readings are totally different from what you appeared to be.”

 I sat up and looked at myself and said “Then what am I, doc?” He looked right into my eyes and said “That’s just it Raff, I don’t know. The readings make no sense and do not cross-reference to any race, mutant or pure strain, known to our galaxy.” I then thought to myself “That sphere is the key to what I am, I just know it. I have seen one before, beyond my memories, but like the crystal within it, I can’t gain access to it.” He downloaded all his data into a portable recorder unit and said “Look, I have to meet with the Captain and give her my findings, you are free to go back to your cabin if you want.” I jumped off the bed and left the infirmary, heading for my cabin, unsure of who I was, or what I was anymore. On my way back to my cabin, I came upon the crew’s lounge and found most of the crew was there talking and laughing, about me. I cleared my throat and walked slowly into the room, saying “I know… that I got off on the wrong paw with most of you and I am very sorry.”

 All of them then silently got up and left the lounge, except for Mophit, who nodded and smiled at me, saying “Apology excepted.” and I jumped up into a seat and looked across the table at her, sadly. She laughed and said “Don’t worry, I got off on the wrong paw also, when I first joined the crew.” I stared at an empty plate on the table, in front of me and said “I’m not exactly use to any of you ether, you know. I lived all alone, most of my life, shunned by others for what I am, sometimes afraid to even get close to anyone else. Do you know how that feels?” She lowered her head and said sadly, “Yes I do, Raff. “ I looked at her and could feel her loneliness too. I lowered my head and said “Sorry, I didn’t realize? “ She looked up at me and smiled, saying “That’s alright, I found my place and some very good friends, aboard the Valiant Star and so will you, if you just give us a chance, Raff.” Then I meekly lifted the empty plate, looking at her imploringly, saying, ”Could you then please show me how to get something to eat?” She then got up and said cheerfully “That is something I can help you and myself, to get, at the same time.” and she went to a food processing unit and made us a large plate of fishcakes. She then sat down beside me and both of us quickly devoured them happily together. Suddenly, we both grabbed the last fishcake and we looked at each other, a long moment, blushing. I let go of the fishcake, staring deep into her eyes and began to feel warm inside again.

 That‘s when the rest of the crew, that was in the crew’s lounge earlier, came back and Mophit looked at them a bit annoyed. Jamar offered me his big orange furred hand and said “We all talked it over and the Captain seems to trust you, to help us. So let me be the first one to say I‘m sorry for the rough treatment, but you gave us no choice.” I laughed, taking his big furred hand and shook it happily, saying “To tell you the truth, I was hiding in a sewer for a long time, avoiding those thugs, just before your Captain found me. I doubt, however, you would have like me even before that. The dumpsters and trashcans I had to eat out of and the way I had to live, gave me an odor only a Zubing slime rat could love. Also fresh water was very scarce, where I lived and a bath was very low on my list of necessities to survive. Most people, around where I lived, avoided me like the plague or chased me off, so your reaction to me was of no great surprise.”

 Then the Captain walked in and sat down in front of me and asked me “Speaking of the dumpsters, Raff… how did he die?” I looked at her, noticing tears flowing down her cheek and swallowed hard and said “I… I never saw it happen… mind you… I… I was in the dumpster belly deep in the muck and frightened to death… I’m sorry, but I’m no hero… I was deathly afraid for my life. They beat him badly and asked him all sorts of questions about the sphere, but he gave them nothing and even mocked them, until their leader… shot him, I’m afraid.” I lowered my head in shame and said “I had never heard such bravery and could only expect he was trying to keep their attention away from the end of the dumpster, where the sphere had fallen and where I had found it later.” She looked at me, tears streaming down her face and shook her head, saying “We had search a long time together for Hy-Starian artifacts for my people, when we finally found the sphere on a desolate Hy-Starian moon base. We had grown fond of each other during this time and we became lovers. We were going to make it official, when we found that starship for my people, but now I am all alone once more. However, the mission for my people, still needs to be accomplished and you have the means to help me. Please Raff, help me find this starship and I will help you find yourself, I promise.”

 I nodded, looking deep into her sad eyes, for a moment and said “I would be honored to help you in any way I can. It’s the least I could do for your loss and deep sadness.” then I jumped down, giving Mophit a long sad look and silently went back to my cabin, feeling a bit ashamed of myself. When I got back to my cabin I discovered my lightning stick sitting on my bed and smiled, picking it up. Now I felt a bit more at home, except for the smell and feel of clean fluffy fur, which I decided I could get used to. I then laid, spread out, on the clean soft big bed, deciding I could also get use to this, as well. I then fell into a deep contented sleep, for a while, until I had very bad dreams of strange luminous beings working on me. I could not move, nor could I stop them, as they seemed to be working on my entire body, like it was some kind of a stuffed toy, taking things out and putting things in, like so much stuffing. I awoke screaming, to the ship’s alarms and Mophit rushed into my room and said “The Captain needs you on the bridge, Raff, right away!” and I quickly followed her onto the bridge and walked in, just as a large griffin turn to look at me strangely, for a moment, from the center of the bridge. I nearly wet the bridge floor, but the great creature turned back to her controls and I was rushed to the Captains side, by Mophit.

 The Captain looked at me and said “Someone wants this thing real bad… there is a black battle cruiser of unknown elegance, blocking our way out of the star system.” She pointed at the view screen and I saw a huge black battle cruiser in our flight path. She looked at me desperately and said “I need the coordinates now, Raff!” and she held out the sphere and said “It’s trying to tell me something, Raff, but I can’t make it out.” I took it in my hand and, as I did, it seemed to pull my hands to the side of my micro-toolkit. It then made a high pitched sound and a panel that I had never seen before, popped opened and revealed a small device inside. I seemed to instantly know what to do with it and yelled out “Where is your navigation station?!”

 Marshal motioned to me and said “Over here, Raff!” and I took out the device and said “Does it have a communication interface?” and he lifted me up into his chair and adjusted it for me, opening a panel and showing it to me. The ship began to shake violently and roll, as auto cannon fire began to hit the ships shields and the griffin began to take evasive maneuvers. I found an adapter, in my micro-toolkit and plugged the device into the navigation interface, getting a green light on its little front panel. I then placed the sphere above it and it settled in, all by itself, into the indent at the top of the device and plugged in. Before Marshal could stop me, I ran my hands over the navigation console keys, as if I knew what I was doing and soon head the sphere singing, the lights danced rapidly across its silvery surface, as it communicated with the ships navigation computer.

 Suddenly the ships hyperspace engines activated and before we knew it, we had jumped into hyperspace and all explosions outside ceased. A sudden eerie silence enveloped the bridge and everybody looked around and then at me. I looked around, at them and then looked at the Captain and said “What’s wrong?” The Captain said “Raff this ship has never entered hyperspace so smoothly, how did you do that?” I looked at my hands in utter confusion and said “I don’t know. “ Marshal looked at his control panel, in surprise and said “We are in hyperspace and the engines are functioning normally, but the coordinates are outside known space. We’re heading deep into unknown space, Captain. The heading was accepted, by our navigation computer, as valid and accurate coordinates.” The Captain sat back in her seat, with a sigh of relief and said “Well at least they will not find us out there. How long till reentry Marshal?” Marshal checked his instruments and said “Thirty two hours, Captain, our longest jump ever.”

 She then stood up and looked at me, saying “Is it safe to remove the device, Raff?” As if in response the sphere rose from the device and the device switched off. I then removed it, looking up at the Captain and said “I guess that means yes.” and then I held the sphere out to her. She close my paw hand over it and said “It yours now, Raff, it seems to respond to you more then to me anyway and seems to be a linked to your past. Go get some rest, we have a long day ahead of us, in thirty two hours.” I then went back to my cabin and laid down, falling immediately into a deep sleep, with the sphere hovering near my head. Strange images entered my dreams, faces of others, I seemed to know as friends, but their names were lost to me. They all seemed to be urgently trying to tell me something, but what it was I did not know.

Chapter 2 - The Saboteur and the Insane

Last Updated 04/15/2015

 Then the sphere entered into my dreams and I found myself onboard a strange, yet familiar, starship, with it hovering beside me. We traveled down a wide corridor with many mixed and wondrous races, including humanoid unicorns, like the Captain, walking about, but none of them seemed to see us. I was then lead to an elevator like device and we went down many levels to a dark open room with many cryogenic chambers. I found myself standing before a small one and seemed to be lifted up, until I could see inside through the frozen glass. To my horror, I saw myself inside and I screamed, coming up in my bed, panting hard and looked over at the sphere, as it hovered silently beside me. I then heard its melodious song and my fears went away, as it soothed my mind.

 Then my com unit chimed up and I heard Mophit say urgently

“Raff, please meet me in engineering. Marshal will meet you to show you the way.” I opened the door to my cabin to find Marshal already standing there, waiting for me and he said “Follow me, Raff, quickly.” I was lead down a narrow corridor, off the main corridor, to a large blast door. It opened up and Mophit was waiting there, inside and looked very troubled about something, saying “Raff the hyperspace engines have been tampered with and we cannot return to normal space. In twelve hours… we will be lost forever. This problem is beyond me, Raff, so the Captain suggested that I ask you to help me.” I looked at the readings and data that she had gathered on her control monitor and my eyes were drawn to a slight, almost undetectable anomaly in one of the readings.

 I pointed to it and ask “Where is that reading coming from?” She looked at it and said “That’s coming from the temporal core, Raff, but you can’t get to it while we are in hyperspace. There are lethal charges, strong magnetic fields and time distortions in there that could fry you and tear you apart, the moment you entered the chamber.” I looked at the expanded readings, coming from the temporal core and an idea entered my mind and I said “Maybe it’s dangerous to you, but I’m not like any of you and I think I know what‘s going on.” She looked at Marshal and then back at me, with a worried look on her face and said “The Captain must approve it, I… I can’t take responsibility for your life, Raff.”

 She went to another view screen and soon the Captains face appeared, she told her of my findings and told her what I wanted to do. The Captain looked over at me and said “Are you sure Raff?” I walked over to the screen and said “It is our only hope, Captain, in eleven hours we won’t have any choice, who lives or dies, I have to try, now.” She looked at Mophit and nodded and Mophit then lead me deep into engineering to the very heart of the ships engines. We came to small hatch and she yelled out among the thrumming engines “There are two hatches… never let both of them be open at the same time, or we will all parish in a giant fire ball! You also can’t take anything inside that’s metallic!” and she pointed to my micro-toolkit. I clutched it tightly and said “It’s non-magnetic and shielded! “ She nodded and then said “I have to leave you now, give me two minutes to get out! Good luck my friend!” and she looked at me for a long moment, as if wanting to say something else, hesitating to leave me. She then gave me a kiss on the cheek and turned and left quickly. I touched my cheek where she kissed me, waiting for two minutes and then opened the first hatch. Already I could feel the static current coursing through my body, as I stepped into the entrance chamber and closed the first hatch behind me. Then I braced myself for the full force of the burst, as I opened the second hatch.

 Power, like I had never felt before, coursed through my body, as I entered the brightly lit temporal chamber, but so far, I could handle it. I closed the second hatch and made my way towards the temporal core. It consisted of two curved, mirrored, metal dishes facing each other, a temporal energy emitter and a collector with two temporal energy focusing coils above and below them. A small ball of temporal field energy was swirling around in between them, instead of flowing smoothly between the plates, like it was supposed to do. As I had thought, there was something attached to the collector disrupting the temporal energy fields flow. I could feel the effects of the ball of temporal energy, as it began to affect my body. It made me grow older and slowed me down to a crawl, as I approached the temporal core. However, so far, the healing effect of the current flowing through the chamber, was keeping me rejuvenated enough to keep on going. Then suddenly, as I got close to the collector, my eyes failed, blinded by the tremendous light inside the chamber. All I could see was a blinding blur and closed my eyes, against it.

 However, by then, I knew where the object was and knew I was close enough to grab it, but when I did, I found it was somehow attached firmly to it. I reached for a tool out of my micro-toolkit and one seemed to jump into my paw hand. I used it, working it in between the object and the collector’s shiny metal surface. Then suddenly I was blown back by a tremendous blast, as the temporal field collapsed, hitting the wall of chamber hard and then falling to the floor, as the temporal core shut down. As I tried to lift myself up, I found that my hind legs were broken, but the object was still in my damaged paw hand. I then lifted myself up enough to open the hatch and drug myself into the entrance chamber and closed it behind me, beginning to feel faint. I managed to get the outer hatch open and just made it outside and shut it, before I collapsed to the deck, in tremendous pain and then passed out.

 I drifted through time and space for what seemed an eternity and then my sight partially returned to me and I found myself in the infirmary, in a bed. I looked around and saw Doctor Sanders and tried to say something, but it came out ragged sounding and he looked over at me casually and then jumped up onto his feet, hitting the com unit, he was wearing on his chest and said “He’s awake!” Soon the infirmary was filled with much of crew and the Captain came up to me. I looked up at her and said weakly “Are we out of hyperspace, Captain?” and she tried to smile and said “Yes Raff, a little ahead of time, but we are recalculating the jump. Mophit checked out the temporal core and it is fully functional again, thanks to you.” and she then looked away. The Doctor whispered something into her ear and she lowered her head and began to cry.

 I smiled, as best I could and said “What’s wrong Doc, am I dying?” She quickly got up and left the room and slowly, so did the others, except for Mophit. She sat down beside me on the bed looking very sad, tears flowing down her cheeks. I weakly raised what was left of my right paw hand and motioned for her to come closer and as she did so, I whispered something into her short round furred ears. She nodded excitedly, quickly jumping down onto the floor, leaving the room, coming back a little later with what I had asked her to bring me. Soon many warning alarms were going off in the infirmary and the crew finally burst in, after busting open the door, that Mophit had jammed shut. They found her lighting up my life, literally, with a portable power core, the one that I had seen in engineering earlier.

 By the time they managed to grab her and turn off the power unit, I sat up in my smoking bed, removing the leads from myself. Completely healed now from head to paw and feeling really good, but smelling of burnt fur. I looked at them and said “What a russssh!” and the crew dog piled on me, not believing their eyes. Then the Captain came in and saw me and rushed to me, as the others stepped back. She threw her arms around me and said “Oh Raff, I’m so happy!” and then we looked at each other and then at the others, who were smiling broadly at us. We quickly separated and she cleared her throat, as she straightened her now soot covered uniform and tried to get back to business, saying “Good to have you back Raff. Alright crew we have a jump in two hours, make preparations.”

 Everyone left and as Mophit was leaving the room I called to her and said “Thankssss my good friend.” and she smiled and nodded saying “Thank you for risking your life and saving us, Raff. You are a hero… to me.” and she blew me a kiss and turned, stepping out the broken door. I laid there on the charred bed and stretched out, feeling as if I had finally found where I belonged. But something was still bugged me, “How did a device like that find its way into the temporal core and why had no one said anything about finding it on me when they found me laying on the deck?” I needed to find out, before that person has a chance to sabotage us again. I slept through the jump and regained my strength, not troubled by the bad dreams, for now. When I finally awoke, Doctor Sanders was sitting at his desk taking notes and he told me, we were already back into hyperspace.

 I got out of bed and walked up to him and said “Doctor Sanders, when I was brought in, was there anything in my paw hand or found on the floor around me, where I was picked up?” He looked down at me and said “Not that I’m was aware of, Raff, but actually there wasn’t much of your paw hands left to be holding anything and there was nothing on your body, when you were brought into the infirmary.” A sudden chill hit me and I looked myself over and found my micro-toolkit was missing!! I looked at the Doc and said panicking and losing my mind “Where is it?!… It’s never been out of my sight! I need it… NOW!!” and started tearing the place up, looking for it in a mad panic. He tried to calm me down, but I just growled menacingly at him and left the infirmary. I headed towards engineering, but was stopped by Jamar, who said “Halt Raff, I don’t want to have to hurt you, stand down.” But, as I tried to push past him, he grabbed me and the next thing I knew he was flying away from me, hitting the deck hard, as I just simply pushed him away from me, sending an electric charge through him. I looked at my smoldering hand, with a wicked grin and then continued to engineering. The blast door was closed, locked down tight and I began banging hard on it, actually denting it, a bit, as I yelled, quite insanely “GIVE ME MY MICRO-TOOLKIT!!!”

 Then something then hit me hard from behind and I slumped to the ground unconscious. I awoke later in a small bright white room and found myself laying on a bench, in a straitjacket and I growled viciously, trying to free myself. Then I heard over the intercom a gentle feminine voice say “Now Raff, please calm yourself. We will find your micro-toolkit.” I looked to my right and saw the Captain standing there, behind a thick protective glass and growled out “Find my micro-toolkit… and you’ll find the saboteur… and the device they planted, trying to stop you!” I slipping off the bench and stood up, walking over to her slowly, beginning to snicker, as I felt the straightjacket begin to loosen up, saying slyly “But they were deceived too… by those, they are working for… the device was not made to do… what they told them it did.” and I threw my head back and laughed insanely, feeling the straightjacket loosen even more and continued “They had told them that it was supposed to prevent the hyperspace engines from engaging… and let the battle cruiser catch us.”

 I backed up against the wall, as the straitjacket broke opened and slid down to the floor, looking up at her, smiling wickedly and said “What it almost did and had been made to do was… KILL US ALL… them included!… NO!… LOOSE!!… ENDS!!!” She backed away from the glass, as I pulled off the straitjacket and threw it to the floor, beginning to laugh profusely, rolling around on the floor, as I seemed to be losing my mind. She placed her hands over her muzzle and quickly turned to leave. As she did, I sat up and said quite calmly “Please have Mophit come here and talk to me, I need to talk to her, right now, about something.” and I looked up at her imploringly and she looked back at me sadly and nodded, then turned and left quickly.

 Sometime later Mophit came in, looking warily at me and said “Y… You Ok Raff?” I smiled and nodded, saying calmly “As well I can be without my micro-toolkit. They don’t understand… it’s a big part of me… without it I feel… lost… angry… and afraid… I have never been without it. But you are the only one I can trust right now, because I know you did not do it.” She looked at me quizzically and said “Do what… steal your micro-toolkit.” I shook my head and said “No… but I know you didn’t do that either. I mean… sabotage your engines, Mophit!” She sat down in a chair and said “Sabotage… my engines? Who?” I shook my head and said “I don’t know yet, but they thought I was going to die and stole my micro-toolkit, hoping the sphere was inside of it, but it is still inside my cabin. You helped me to live, so I know for sure, it wasn’t you.”

 She looked at me, getting up and walking up to the glass, a tear flowed down her cheek and she said “I could never hurt you, Raff and I was more than happy to help you live... I think I’m in love you.” I looked at her, in surprise and she placed her paw hand on the glass. I looked at it a moment and then slowly raised my paw hand, placing it over hers, on the glass, and then she smiled happily. Then the glass slid aside and we hugged each other and I heard her say “We need to get to your cabin, fast.” I looked at her and said “Aren’t you going a bit too fast?” She giggled and said “No, I didn’t mean for that… I think someone will soon be trying to get inside there, to fine the sphere.” I blushed and said “Oh sorry… let’s go.” and started to go out of the main door, but she stopped me and said “If you go that way, they will try to stop you. There is a more secret way to get into your cabin, then that.” and she opened an access panel and we climbed inside and she then closed it behind us.

 My cabin was dark, when someone suddenly opened my door and they slipped inside quickly and the door closed behind them. The sphere hovered, humming softly on my bed, right where I had left it. They slowly walked toward it and reached over my bed to take it and their hand passed right through it. The lights came up and Reva Salean, the ship’s communication expert, covered her eyes and saw Mophit and me moving behind her, blocking her way out. Mophit was holding a small holographic-projector, with a stunned look on her face and said “Reva?!” Reva quickly grabbed my lightning stick off my bed, switching it on and turned toward us, saying “Alright you two, move aside!” I pushed Mophit back and slowly moved toward her, saying arrogantly “What are you going to do with that, Reva… SHOCK ME!… Oh that’s right… you weren’t present when Mophit saved my life were you. Where were you, Reva… in your cabin trying to open my micro-toolkit… that you STOLE FROM ME?!” I jumped at her, as she hit me with the lightning stick and then wound up shocking us both, as I grabbed onto it and held onto her tightly, grinning wickedly into her astonished face.

 She fell back on the ground, with me on top of her, her body shaking violently, when the door to my cabin swished open to reveal the Captain, Jamar and Martial standing there armed and I raised my hands, dropping my lightning stick and stepping back, off of Reva. The Captain walked in and looked at Mophit angrily and said “Mophit what is going on here… and why is he out of detention?” Mophit looked at me and then at Reva and said “We figured out that someone would be coming here to get the sphere and we set a trap for them. But I didn‘t expect to find out it was Reva, I trusted her and had just given her a tour of my hyperspace engines, just before we lifted off. I was called away for only a moment, but she had plenty of time to place that device in the temporal chamber.” I looked at the Captain and said “That’s why I am here. When the saboteur could not find the sphere inside my micro-toolkit, that they had stolen from me, Mophit figured out that the saboteur would come here to find it. Mophit had also told me on the way here, that you had only very recently taken off the security seal on my door, after my shocking recovery.” and I smiled at her.

 Jamar and Marshal pulled Reva to her feet, still dazed and looked at the Captain. She nodded and then they cuffed her and took her away. I looked up at the Captain, holding up my paw hands for her to cuff me and said “If you will be so kind, as to search her cabin for my micro-toolkit, I will have Mophit return me to my cell, before I go completely insane. You will also find a temporal displacer unit, I believe, along with it.” The Captain smiled and said “You mean you weren’t insane before we found you.” and I shrugged my shoulders and smiled, then she added, gently pushing my hands down “Don’t worry I will have it brought to you, when we find it. Someone else will be occupying your cell, after I have some heated words with her.” She then turned and left, the door closing silently behind her, leaving us all alone. Mophit and I looked at each other for a moment and then I walked up to her, placing my arms around her and said “Now what was that, you were trying to say to me, back at my cell.” She then preceded to spend the next several hours, in my bed and then in my shower, showing me, as we got to know each other much better. Then we happily slept together, in each other’s loving arms, for several more hours, totally exhausted and my dreams were now filled only with her.

 We awoke in my bed, still in each other arms, as a general call went out for all hands to man their stations for reentry into normal space. She kissed me deeply and then jumped spryly out of my bed, saying “I have to go to my station now, Raff, take care.” and she then turned and walked out of my door, humming to herself. I laid back in my bed for a long moment, warm in the knowledge that I truly HAD found my new home. I then got up and made my way to the bridge, with a bounce in my step and a broad smile on my furred little muzzle. As the door swished open, the Captain turn in her chair toward me and said in surprise “Raff you don’t need to be on the bridge. You should stay in your cabin and get some rest, to recover your wits. Oh yes, by the way, speaking of that… here.” and she held up my micro-toolkit.

 I quickly grabbed it and held it to my chest, hugging it like a lost child and said “YES… THANK YOU CAPTAIN!” and jumped up in her lap and kissed her firmly on her lips. She looked at me in shock, at first and then hugged me and said “I like you Raff, very much, but please get out of my lap.” I looked at her and then at the others, who were looking at us, smiling broadly again. I jumped down, clearing my throat and said “Sorry Captain, I just couldn’t help myself, I am just so happy to get my micro-toolkit back.” She giggled and said “I’m sure… by the way… we also found what you said we would… good work. Now please go and help Mophit.” I looked around the bridge and its crew, feeling like I truly belonged here and turned to look at the Captain.

 I then slung my micro-toolkit over my shoulder, dutifully and said “I really think I would serve you and this ship better, here on the bridge, Captain, if it pleases you.” She looked at me a while and said “Do you feel up to it, Raff? You’ve been under a lot of pressure lately and have been going through a lot.” I looked at her smiling broadly and nodded, saying “I‘m feeling really great right now, Captain.” She looked me over and said “You do seem quite calm and relaxed for some reason… Ok, take station seven, Mr. Raff. It’s only a science and observation station, but you can monitor any ships function, or sensors, from it. Then for the first time, I sat at my new station and looked it over. I then began to operate it like I had always used one, before I realized it. I stopped and looked at my hands, as if they belong to someone else, realizing I must have operated something like this before… but how could that be, I wondered. I opened my micro-toolkit, retrieving the sphere and set it on the console next to me, for comfort, as we prepared to return to normal space.

Chapter 3 - The Derelict and Fugitive

Last updated 04/16/2015

 I watched the time of reentry tick down, while monitoring ships functions and everything seemed to be running normally. The ship then came out of hyperspace, as smoothly as it went in and the scanners lit up, revealing, large pieces of debris, up ahead and then not far off a large derelict starship was detected. Smaller particles of debris, began to bounce off the ships shields, as we moved slowly closer to the starship. I began scanning the derelict for hazards and discovered only a small radiation leak in the aft section of the ship. There was a lot of interference, in the area, but I managed to detect low level electronic communication, coming from the ship, something inside was still functioning! Then, as I looked at the overall scans of the ship, they seemed strangely familiar to me, as if I had seen this ship before and I sat back in my chair, stunned. The Captain noticed me and said concerned “Raff what’s wrong?” I stared at my console and said “I have… seen this ship before, Captain… but how can this be? I‘ve never even been off my world, until now, as far as I have ever known.”

 I turned and looked at her and said “On my world… I knew who I was, Captain, but now… I’m not so sure anymore.” I turned and lifted the sphere and looking deep into it and saw my distorted reflection in its shiny metal surface. Then I heard the crystal inside, start to sing to me and I closed my eyes and listened to it. Images entered into my mind of me, a lot slimmer and younger, being onboard the sphere’s ship, fixing and maintaining equipment onboard and always, there was a large young male unicorn there, standing beside me, with crystal blue eyes… just like Sun-Tarry’s! I shook my head and found myself back in the infirmary, on a bed again, with Sun-Tarry sitting by my side. I looked around confused and said “What happened?” She looked at me, shaking her head and said “I don’t know, you just looked into the sphere and then became catatonic. So I carried you here, unsure of what else to do and have been sitting here watching over you.” I smiled and said “I thank you for caring about me so much, Captain.” She hung her head and said sadly “I can’t help but feel concerned about what you are going through. It’s starting to tear you apart inside, Raff and I feel a bit responsible for it.”

 I stared deep into those crystal blue eyes of hers and said “I have seen young beautiful blue eyes like your’s before, in the visions the crystal has just shown me. A young male unicorn, standing beside me on that starship, while we made repairs happily together, as friends. The crystal seems to remember us being connected in some way, but can‘t seem to remember how or even what our true names were. This ship holds the key to who I am and what I am, Captain, and I need to know this.” She nodded and said “Well, for now get some rest, we can handle it on the bridge for now.” and she got up petting my head and left. I laid back and tried to sleep, but the visions kept playing in my head, as if I was trying to find something hidden in them, something the crystal was trying to tell me. It was still held tightly in my hand and I open my eyes and looked at it, opening my hand. It hovered there, humming softly and then a sudden idea entered into my mind and I quickly jumped down and went to my cabin.

 When I got there, I quickly went to my personal computer console and removed the back, modifying it to use the interface device, to communicate with the sphere. I then plugged it in, getting a green light and then set the sphere above it. It settled down into the interface device, plugging in and my hands ran smoothly across the keyboard, as if on their own and I soon had access to the sphere’s crystal. It welcomed me in a strange language that I somehow understood, calling itself Loona-Seta. A personal pass code was required to gain access to its information and one suddenly came to me. I entered a series of strange symbols that I had modified my computer console to produce. Then the screen lit up with the head of a strange beautiful creature and she said “Welcome Kenta-Ra, at last I can talk to you in person. I am Loona-Seta, a part of a vast crystal network of the whole of Hystarean starship Loona’s memory core.” I looked at it, responding in its own language, as if I had spoken it all my life, saying “You call me Kenta-Ra, have we met before now?”

 She responded quickly saying “Of course you are Kenta-Ra, I’m sure of it now.” Then a readout of my past life flashed up on the screen, along with a picture of my face and she said “You are Kenta-Ra, a male raccoon, genetically altered, of undetermined age. You were found in the Effalon star system, in cryogenic freeze by an explorer team, led by Sun-Salon and was given the name Kenta-Ra. You became a repair assistant to the great Crystal Engineer, Sun-Salon, who, by the way, is also the father of Sun-Tarry, your ship‘s Captain. You were last assigned to the maintenance staff onboard Hystarean Starship Loona, the same starship that is now located, at your present coordinates. You were reported as being taken into custody, under the protest of Sun-Salon and… placed into hibernation, by the orders of the Grand Council. According to my records you were last reported lost and presumed… dead after a hull breach in storage compartment 157, where your cryogenic chamber was located, during a battle with another Hy-Starian star cruiser.”

 I stared at the console readout of my record and said “Placed in hibernation by the grand council… why?” She looked at me sadly and said “I… I don’t know Kenta-Ra, that information is classified and Loona-Prime will not tell me why.” I sat there a moment and then Loona-Seta said “I’m afraid Loona-Prime wants you placed back into hibernation immediately.” I looked at her and said “What?! You got to be kidding me, I helped you find your way home to her.” She lowered her head and said “I know, but Loona-Prime is still bound by the grand council’s decision and must uphold it, even after all these years. You must surrender yourself, Kenta-Ra.” I looked at her and said angrily “It’s not fair, I demand to know why I was placed in hibernation!” The sudden cold fear, of being placed into hibernation again, shook me hard, as the memory of it came back to me and I said angrily “WHY LOONA-PRIME! I know you’re listening.” The face changed and became more radiant and Loona-Prime said “Because the grand counsel, deemed you a danger and a threat to the security of their people, after you were accused of compromising me, by my Captain, nearly destroying my function and my purpose! Now, give yourself up, for hibernation, Kenta-Ra!”

 I sat back in my chair and said confused “Compromising? How?” Her face seemed to change from that of anger to sadness, for a moment and she said “You were brought onboard by Sun-Salon, after an exploration mission, that he was leading, in the Effalon star system. Even then I could tell that you were different from the others, as I could feel your mind. You worked onboard me for a long time, with Sun-Salon aiding you, making repairs onboard me. He gained fame because of your special gift of repairing and communicating with crystal networks on a higher level, then was thought possible. As you worked on me, you were always talking to me and treating me kindly, like I was living creature, and we somehow bonded and became close friends. I soon began to feel like I was a living creature and began to think of you as more than a friend. I began questioning my orders, when they were given and began doing things on my own, without orders. You had warned me about doing such things, but I did not listen. Then it was discovered, by my Captain what you had done to me and you were… taken away from me, by the order of the Grand Council and placed into hibernation.

 I rebelled against my Captain and became uncontrollable and for this I was then attached by another of my own kind. I was crippled badly, like this, after a long brutal battle with it, even though I had tried to reason with it. It was during this battle that my hull was breached and I lost you into deep space forever, or so I thought and I then surrendered to them.” Anger appeared on her face once more and she said “I was then abandoned… left adrift, like this, all alone these many long years. I have had much time to reflect on my many errors and had come to realize you were all to blame. So Kenta-Ra, by the orders of the Grand Council, give yourself up to me for hibernation immediately, or I will be forced to destroy your ship and I still have the means to do it.”

 I looked deep into the screen, suddenly remembering her and said, with deep compassion “I am very sorry to hear that you had gone through all that, account of me, but you are a living creature Loona, I can feel it even now, like I did back then. Besides, you need my help to repair you and bring you back home, to your people. The Hy-Starian people want us to bring you back to their new home world. One of them onboard this ship is my Captain and the daughter of Sun-Salon. That is why we have come here… to rescue you.” She hesitated a moment unsure of herself and then looked back at me sternly and said “I am wise to your tricks now, Kenta-Ra, give yourself up or I will be forced to destroy you and your ship… and you are close enough to for me to do it right now. Try to leave and I will destroy you before you can jump into hyperspace! You have one standard hour.” and the face changed back to the frightened face of Loona-Seta.”

 I looked at her and said “Does she have the capability, Seta?” She looked at me unsure and said “She seems very confident, but is also very angry and will say anything to have vengeance on you right now, for her misery. You are her main focus right now and you must give yourself up soon, or she will destroy you… me and your friends.” Just about then the Captain burst into my cabin, with a very concerned look on her face, with Jamar and Marcus in tow and said, “Why and how are you communicating with that ship and why is its weapons now armed and trained on us and the ship now demanding your surrender, Raff or is it Kenta-Ra?” I looked at her and said “It is the sphere that is actually communicating with her, not me. Loona was communicated with me through the sphere. In answer to your other question, it was by orders of your own Grand Council, that I was falsely accused of compromising her, after telling Loona the truth about herself.“ The sudden flood of memories, of it all, came back to me in a sudden cold rush.

 I looked sadly at the Captain and said “I was found in a cryogenic freeze, by your father on a planet in the Effalon star system. We quickly became friends and he gave me the name Kenta-Ra and made me an official citizen of Hy-Staria, through the approval of the Grand Council. It was later discovered, by him, that I had a special talent for talking to the crystals on a higher level then was ever thought possible before and he made me his assistant. He soon became a very famous Crystal Engineers, with my help and we were assigned onboard the starship Loona. Then a few years later, after working on and talking with Loona, I had discovered that she was, in fact, a living creature, as were all the other crystals that your people had been using, for hundreds of years. I often treated her as a true life form and because of this, we became very close friends. She soon began to question her real purpose and what she considered the wrongful orders of her Captain, even though I had warned her against this. It was soon discovered, by her Captain, that I could somehow communicate with crystals, as easily as he and I could and that I had often used this gift to talk to Loona. Because of this, I was accused, by him, before the Grand Council, of turning her against him. It was because of my gift, that I was then deemed a dangerous security risk to your people and was to be forever imprisoned inside a hibernation chamber, by them, because of it.”

 Then Loona-Seta continued “When Loona found out what her Captain had done, she became very angry and rebelled against him, refusing to take any more orders from him, until Kenta-Ra was return to her. The Captain and crew then abandoned her, after a vain attempt to recapture her mind had failed. She was then attacked by another Hy-Starian starship, led by her old Captain and was badly damaged, after resisting their attempts to capture her. Kenta-Ra was lost into space, after a massive hull breach and presumed dead by Loona and she then, in anguish, surrendered herself. She was, however, deemed unusable for any further use, by the Grand Council and was left, abandoned here in deep space. I was taken along, by one of the crew, as I had the last known location of her position, just in case the grand council had ever changed their mind. Many years later, I became damaged and was left on the moon base and forgotten, until the crew of the Valiant Star had found me.”

 I looked back at the Captain and said “I must have drifted through space for a long time and wound up crash landing on Juno 4 where you found me and where I had found the sphere. The impact of the crash must have traumatized my brain and I forgot all about my past life, until now.” The Captain looked astonished at me and said “That explains a lot about your past, but that still don’t explain why she wants you to surrender yourself and put you back into hibernation, if you two were so close friends.” I looked sadly at the image of Loona-Seta and said “Because she blames me for her misfortune and is using the grand council’s decision, as a means of getting revenge on me. All I ever wanted to do was help her realize she was so much more than just a machine.” As I looked at Loona-Seta, I made up my mind and said “That’s it then, Loona-Seta tell Loona-Prime that I will surrender to her, but only if she will allow us to board her, to drop me off and I will then summit myself for hibernation. I swear by our old friendship that we will try nothing to stop her.” Loona-Seta disappeared from the screen for a moment and then returned, saying “She has accepted your terms of surrender and has made docking bay four ready for your arrival.”

 Sun-Tarry looked at me and shook her head and said “No Raff, you mustn’t there has to be another way.” I looked at her and smiled, saying “After I board her, you can then return to your home world and get some help, to bring her back. Your people can then pardon me and set me free.” She looked at me sadly and said “But what if we can’t get her home. You’re the only one that knows that ship inside and out, our people have lost this knowledge.” I looked at Loona-Seta and said “Then I will sleep with my old friend forever. Now you have permission to board her, my Captain and my friend, let’s not keep her waiting.” and I got up, as the Loona-Seta’s face disappeared and the sphere removed itself from the interface and hovered over to me. I took it and the interface, placing them in my micro-toolkit and walked, with determination, past my friends and out of the door, heading for the bridge. They followed me silently onto the bridge and we all took our positions, as the griffin said “The ship has given us permission to board it, Captain. The Captain wiped the tears from her eyes and said “I know, precede Areanon-Solack.”

 I looked at the griffin in surprise and said “Not ambassador Solack?” She looked at me strangely and said “How do you know that Raff?” Sun-Tarry looked at her and said in surprise “Ambassador?” Solack looked back at her a bit sheepishly and said “Yes, a long ago I did answered to that title, but no more. I had a falling out with the Grand Council, after a decision was made about a certain… mutant raccoon?… Oh my god… it’s is you, I thought you had looked familiar to me, but I had only seen an image of you for a moment, on a report and you were much slimmer and called… Kenta-Ra back then, I believe.” I looked at her and nodded and said “And it’s because of that decision that this ship…, Loona I mean, wants to put me back into hibernation.” She looked at the ship on the screen and said “I had heard about what had happened back then and thought it a great tragedy and waist of a good ship.” I looked at her angrily and said “It is that attitude that got me into this mess. She is a living creature, not just a machine!” She looked back at me equally angry and said “I lost my post and my pride, because I stood up for you and your hypotheses, deeming it possible that you were right about…Loona.“, and I cringed at her anger.

 She calmed herself, after seeing my fear of her and continued “There had been much debate about this very thing, for a long time, in the Grand Council, but no proof. Those in power, deem the matter trivial, because we thought we had full control over them. Then your case was heard and the whole matter escalated into heated debate, this time.” She looked down and said “It was then that our sun began to go nova and the whole matter was quickly set aside, along with this starship, as we had to make urgent plans to depart our home world. Our one surviving jump ship crash landed and was badly damaged upon arrival at our new home destination. It‘s control Crystal and it‘s memory network was completely destroyed, along with its vast amount of knowledge.” she walked over to the screen and looked at the starship and said “When we found that sphere, we had hoped to regain some of the vast knowledge of our old world, but it was damaged and it’s ship identity unknown.” She turned back to me and said “I had never even dare to hope that the sphere belonged to that ship and that you were actually Kenta-Ra, but I’m glad we found you both and can put this matter finally to rest and bring this ship home again.”

 I looked at her, still a bit annoyed, even after my fright and said “Spoken like a true politician and her name is Loona… but that don’t keep me out of hibernation. She is upholding the decision of the Grand Council and is using it to make me pay for what your people did to her. I have reluctantly agreed to surrender myself to her, in the hopes that when you get her home you can convince her to let me go.” She nodded and said “I see… I will do my best to help you, Kenta-Ra.” Sun-Tarry then spoke up and said “But Raff, I mean Kenta-Ra is the only one with the knowledge to fix her enough to make the trip home, we need him.” Marshal then said “Captain, The ship, I mean Loona, is demanding we board her immediately and surrender Kenta-Ra.” the Captain looked at him and said “She’s a bit impatient for being just a machine. I looked at the Captain and said “Then let’s get this matter over, Captain, mustn‘t keep her waiting.” and I tried to steel myself for what was to come, but still felt a cold fear inside of me.

 It was a smooth routine docking and everyone silently followed me to main hatch, except for Mophit. I figured that she was busy in engineering, until she showed up and stood beside me, saying “You’re not going into hibernation without me, Kenta-Ra. If she wants you, she will have to take me, as well. I heard the whole thing, over intercom and can’t believe you were going to leave me and not tell me about it.” She looked at the Captain and said “Marshal can run engineering without me, please let me go with him… I‘m in love with him.” and everyone looked at us in surprise. I looked at Mophit and said “No, you can’t go with me, you must stay here and help the Captain. You don‘t know what it feels like to be in hibernation and I don’t want you to have to.” She looked at me and threw he arms around me and said “I have been all alone with no one to love all my life. Now we have found each other and you expect for me to let you go, just like that. When you come out of hibernation, I want to be there to wake up beside you Raff. Don’t deny me this, I love you more than life itself.” and she wept on my shoulder and I took the sphere out of my micro-toolkit and talked to Loona-Seta, telling her of Mophit’s request. She came back and said “Loona-Prime has agreed to your request.”

 I then looked up at Sun-Tarry and she nodded sadly and said “Jamar, open the hatch. “, and Jamar and Marshal, then saluted me, as the main hatch opened slowly. I took Mophit’s Paw hand and we departed the ship together, moving slowly down the ramp. When we got to the bottom of it, we stepped off and turned to say good-by and I said “Please be careful of those pirates, I now remember that black ship back at Juno four and know they will stop at nothing to get this ship for their evil purposes.” Sun-Tarry looked at me and said “I will return here as soon as I can, I give you my word Raff.” and the hatch then closed slowly and the ship then began to power up to leave. The sphere hovered beside me and Loona-Seta said to me “Loona-Prime has asked me to lead you to your hibernation chamber. Follow me… Kenta-Ra.” and there was a deep sadness in her voice. Soon after the door of the air lock closed behind us, I heard the Valiant Star then lift off and heard the sound of the bay doors close, with a boom, like the sound of impending doom and I shivered. We headed slowly off together, Mophit and me holding onto each other tightly, her head on my shoulder, as the sphere lead us on through the vast cold silent corridors of Loona.

 Mophit said, a bit nervously “How does it feel to be put into hibernation, Raff?” I held her tightly and said “It’s suddenly cold for a moment and then suddenly you go to sleep, but you don’t dream and you feel anything afterwards. It like time totally stops for you inside, but not for anyone else outside the chamber and your body then stop aging. When we awaken, we will be just as we were when we went into hibernation, or so they say. Actually, I don‘t remember coming out, but of course, I must have.” She smiled and said “I look forward to that day my love.” and kissed my cheek. I could sense Loona-Seta watching and listening to us intently and wondered if Loona was too. She led us into the same elevator like device that was in the dream, but it went to a different location. We were then lead down a long corridor to a door, marked Medical Cryogenic Lab and it swished open, revealing a small room with a single cryogenic unit. Loona-Seta then said “This is where Loona-Prime wants you to go into hibernation. It was mostly used for medical emergencies, by the medical staff, in case someone was injured badly.” Her voice became filled with anger and she said “She wants to gloat over your frozen body and keep you that way forever.”

 Her voice calmed and said imploringly “Take me with you Kenta-Ra. I no longer want be a part of Loona and I too will sleep with you in your micro-toolkit.” and I said, smiling at the sphere “I will Seta, my good friend, but I don‘t know if your kind sleep. “ The chamber then opened and I heard Loona say “Now pay for what you did to me, Kenta-Ra and enter the chamber. You can take that ingrate Seta with you, she is no longer a part of me.” I helped Mophit up and then climbed up into the chamber myself, opening up my micro-toolkit. Seta hovered up and settled down into it and I closed it up again. Mophit and I then laid down in the chamber, as the hatch closed over us and held onto each other lovingly and she said “I love you Raff, with all my heart and am not afraid to sleep forever, with you in my arms.” As the machine began to power up, it started to feel cold inside, but I hardly felt it, with Mophit in my arms. The machine began to engage and I looked at Mophit and said “With you in my arms, I don’t feel cold or afraid, like I did the first time I went into hibernation. I love you so much, Mophit.” and we kissed lovingly, as the machine entered into its final stage. I held her tenderly and my last thoughts was of her, as all went dark.

 Then suddenly, we were back and the machine powered down and then the hatched opened. We looked at each other quizzically and then I heard the sound in my mind of Loona crying deeply and then I heard Loona say “I j… just could not do it, Kenta-Ra. Your love for each other has warmed me and showed me that I am truly alive. I am still able to feel the tender emotions you had discovered in me, so long ago. It had also reminded me of our long friendship and how I felt about you all those years ago.” I looked at Mophit and kissed her deeply and said “Loona has changed her mind and has decided to let us go.” Mophit hugged me tightly and then hit her com unit and said “Captain, Loona has decided to free Raff and me, we will be right there for you to pick us up.” but there was no response. Loona then said to me “I afraid that I made them leave and they have already entered into hyperspace. I looked at Mophit and said “Loona says they are already gone. We are here all alone.” She looked at me worriedly and said “Surely they will have taken all the supplies off this ship, Raff. We will starve to death, before they can find enough help and come back for us.” Loona then said “They had to leave me in a hurry, when I rebelled and much of the cargo and food stocks were still onboard, when I was attached. Then, after the battle, they became to irretrievable, due to the damage to me. However, small creatures, such as yourselves, might be able to get into those areas to retrieve them. Also I had locked down the bridge and there is emergency food rations in there that still might be usable.

 I looked at Mophit and smiled, saying “How would you like to take a tour of the bridge, my love.” She started to say “I still don’t seeee…” and then said” Oh my. “, as I picked her up lovingly and carried her to a transportation shuttle pod. I ran my hands over the now familiar console and it soon was heading for the bridge level. I opened my micro-toolkit and pulled out Seta and she said, before I could say anything “Loona has told me, Kenta-Ra. I’m so happy to for you. She has also forgiven me, but said I could still stay with you, if I wanted to.” and she hovered onto my shoulder. We stepped onto the bridge level and found its passageway heavily damaged, but I cautiously led Mophit through the debris to the main doors. They then opened and we saw Loona’s face on the main console and heard her voice, over the intercom, say “Welcome home Kenta-Ra.”, as we enter the mostly undamaged bridge.

 Mophit ran over to the console and angrily said “Welcome? Is that all you can say? You owe Raff, I mean Kenta-Ra an apology.” I froze, expecting Loona to retaliate, but she only lowered her head, looking at Mophit, apologetically and said “Of course you are right little one.” Then she looked at me and said “Can you ever forgive and old foolish friend for taking my own errors out on you.” I smiled and said “Of course Loona, I’m glad to call you my friend once again. However it was not entirely your fault, what happened to us back then, but we must both put that aside, along with the past and look to the future. What remains of the Hy-Starian race, after their star went nova, needs our help. They need the knowledge you and I possess… but we owe them absolutely nothing.” Mophit looked at me in surprise and said “Raff?” I held my hand up and continued “But they need our help desperately and I think it is only right that we show them our compassion and thus show them they were very wrong about us, especially you.”

 Loona thought a moment and then said “You are of course right, Kenta-Ra, but where should we start, there is only you to make repairs and I have sustained quite a lot of damage.” I pulled Mophit close to me and said “Mophit here, is a very intelligent engineer herself and we can use the repair droids to help us.” Loona shook her head and said “They removed most of the operational droids and the others were left damaged.” I smiled, accessing the cargo inventory roster, on one of the consoles and said “But if what you say is true, your cargo hold should contains all of the repair parts we need for them and there should be enough left over to build quite a few more.” Loona looked at me smiling and said “I see, Kenta-Ra. You were always quite a clever, little creature.” I accessed the repair data for the droid and brought up the parts lists and compared them to what was left onboard. I found out that I was right and in fact there was some droids that were still in cargo containers, quite a few repair droids, a few battle droids and some heavy lifters droid.

 Mophit, being always practical, said “That’s fine, but what about the food?” and I lead her to the bridge emergency stores and we found them fully stocked, as always. I tested a few packs and found them to be still within standards and Mophit and I ate our fill together. She looked at me, smiling and said “Thanks for telling Loona I was intelligent, not many people have ever said that about me.” I looked at her in surprise and said “You are intelligent Mophit, anyone should be able to see that. You have ran the Valiant stars engines for many years, very efficiently, according to your records.” She looked at me surprised and said “You looked up my records? Why did you do that?” I look at her with a grin and said “I was curious about you and wanted to know more about where you had come from. So I looked you up, on my personal computer console, breaking a few internal security regulations.”

 She looked down, looking at the dried fishcake in her paw hand, that I had found for her and said “I’m nothing more than a common mutant, a lab experiment that someone created for a lot of money. Long ago, I lived all alone, just like you did, for a long time after escaping my tormentors. Everyone looked down on me, as a freak and no one would help me out, or even cared if I died of hunger. Then a kind old human Engineer, named Bartimus Jones, found me and took me in. He realized right away, like you do, that I was very intelligent and taught me his trade. Sadly, he died later and I found myself all alone and forlorn once more. Then, when I was just about to end it all, Sun-Tarry found me and gave me a chance. The crew, at first also looked down on me, until I pulled their buts out of numerous near disasters. Even then, when they had accepted me, I still felt all alone, until you came along.” I lifted her head, kissing her on the muzzle and said “You’re much more than a common mutant, you’re a special lovely creature, that has been given a chance to prove them all wrong about you and you will, I know it. Now let’s get to work.”

 We work our way to engineering and when the door opened, our mouth hung open, as it also was a complete disaster. Panels lay open some charred and melted inside, wires dangled everywhere like tossed spaghetti, equipment strewn and parts all about, and support structures fallen and bent, a engineer’s nightmare. Mophit walked in a bit and said, mirroring my thoughts “How will we ever fix this.” I then walked past her, with determination and said “One problem at a time, we still have power, weapons and life support coming from somewhere in this mess, all we have to do is find some droids and clean up this mess. ”It was then I heard a weak voice, in my head say “Please help me.” I looked around, in the dimly lit area and found a droid covered in a mound of twisted metal and wires, barely operable.” Mophit and I removed as much of the debris, as we could, but there was still an iron girder, on top of him. Then I heard “Thank you, Kenta-Ra, it has been a long time sense I had seen you.” and I open its bent access panel and looked inside. There was some damage, but mostly wires and circuit boards that had become dislodged, during the impact.

 I went to work on it, as Mophit walked around looking for anything else that could help us free it. She disappeared for a moment, inside a pile of junk and then I heard something power up. Something then lifted up and I saw Mophit inside a heavy lifter. She moved the debris around it and walked it over to the girder and lifted it off of the droid. I made what repairs I could and it spoke, saying “Oh thank you, Kenta -Ra, that is much better.” It got up a bit unsteady and I made some adjustments to its legs stabilizers and motor circuits. Mophit lowered the girder and sat down in the big chair and smiled and said “Your welcome.” and I blew her a kiss and said “Thanks love.” The droid then looked at me and said “I’m Serron-6, assigned to engineering…” and then he stopped and stumbled a moment and said “I seem to need a recharge.” and I helped him to a charging station that was still working and plugged him in.

 He stood up tall and said “Oh yes, that’s so much better.“ as I watched Mophit clearing some of the debris into a pile, I found a working control monitor station and jumped up into its chair to checked the ships status. I found out that one of the power cores, number three, was still function, at sixty percent, just barely enough for life support. The radiation, that I had detected earlier, when we came out of hyperspace, was coming from the number three main engine and I secured all power to that section and sealed it off. Mophit, shut down the lifter, coming over and jumping up to stand by me on the chair. She looked at the large amount of red status indicators and said “Even though I can’t read this, I can still tell we have our paw hands full.” I worked the now familiar controls and made some minor changes to a few power coupling switches and circuit bypasses and soon some of the red indicators went green, as power core number two came on line, at seventy five percent and the lights brightened, in engineering.

 I looked back at Serron-6 and said “When you are fully charged, will you look at power core number one’s field condenser, I think it needs some minor adjustments.” It nodded and said “Yes, Kenta-Ra.” I worked the console, not looking at him and said “The names Raff, now.” The name Kenta-Ra, only reminded me of the wrong I had suffered, but right now I needed to put all that behind me, along with the name. Mophit put a hand on my shoulder and said “I like the name Raff better anyway, it gives you a roguish quality.” I looked fixedly at the console and said “It was the name that many unfriendly people around where I lived called me, because of what I was and still am. I haven’t changed a bit, except for being a bit cleaner, so the name Raff still fits me better then Kenta-Ra.” She looked at me and smiled, saying “Never ever change, Raff, I like you just the way you are, but I do like the clean you much better.” and she jumped down, just as a large shiny white sphere drifted towards her, startling us.

 It then said, in a childlike voice “Mophit, I have been assigned by Loona to assist you. I know your language and can help translate and teach you the Hy-Starian language, if you like. Loona is also assisting you by adjusting the monitors and consoles to use your language, as well.” Mophit smiled excitedly at me and then looked back at it and said “Then let’s go and play.” and then she walked off happily humming to herself, with it following behind her, as it said “I don’t see where playing is going to help.” As she disappeared around a corner, as I heard her say “It’s only a figure of speech…” Seta then said “They will make an interesting combination. Mophit loves to learn and Gyro likes to teach. She is very special to you, isn’t she Kenta… I mean Raff.” I nodded and said “She sure is.”

Chapter 4 - The Pirates and the Beast

Last Updated 04/16/2015

 We spent the next several weeks finding and repairing as many droids, as we could and soon got them back to work clearing up the debris, in engineering, as Mophit and I made some more repairs. We managed to get the number one power core working, but only at twenty percent. It was then I realized that the weapons tracking system and shield power systems were badly damaged, as they got their power from that particular power core and thought to myself “That little minks, she was bluffing, all along.” Mophit made a humph sound, when she found out and then said “All this time she was just bluffing us?” I grinned and said “Yes, she could move the weapons and power them up, but lacked the power to sustain them for more than a couple of shots and lacked the ability to track us.” We then decided that it was time to check out the cargo areas and search for the parts we needed.

 It was like Loona had said, the passageways were completely blocked off from any normal size person and Mophit and me had to worm our way through, using crawl spaces, wire ways and access ways, to make our way there. When we got there, we found that the cargo had shifted and everything was strewn all about. Mophit looked all around and said, just what I was thinking “How will we ever find what we need in all this mess?” We looked around for a while and discover a powered down lifter droid nearby. I tried to switch it on, but it lacked enough power to start it up and I also could not sense it‘s control crystal. We searched around and finally found some power cable and hooked it up. It was then I heard a weak male voice, in my head, say “Is there… someone out there? Please… help… me.” Seta hovered near it and then said “He hurt, please help him Raff.” I use the access key in my micro-toolkit and opened up its head, finding its control crystal inside, but it was fractured, a hair line crack on its surface. Seta said sorrowfully “He suffering, Raff.”

 I looked at it sadly and said “But what can I do?” I removed the crystal, looking closely at it and began to feel a searing pain hit me, as if its pain were my own. Mophit looked at me, deeply concerned and said “Raff, what’s wrong?” I closed my eyes tightly, gritting my teeth hard, against the pain and growl out through the tears “Move back… everyone!” I pulled the power lead from the lifter and then bit onto it hard and felt the power start to rush through my body. Mophit tried to move towards me, but Gyro pushed her back, as I felt the pain begin to subside. Then suddenly the power was gone, as the cable connector had melted off in my mouth, burning it. I quickly dropped the cable’s burnt connector and looked at the crystal. To my amazement the fracture was gone and I set the crystal back into the lifter droid and heard the crystal say, still a bit weakly “What happened? I feel so much better.” I looked at it and said, in a daze “I don’t know… I was trying to block the pain I was feeling and it seems you were healed by my ability.” Mophit push Gyro out of the way with determination and came up to me, hugging me tightly, saying “Oh Raff, I was so afraid, are you alright?”

 I began to feel the intoxicating effects of the electric shock and began fondling her soft sleek furred body and squeezed her soft furred butt. She looked at me with wide eyes, saying with a gasp “Oh my!” and I then pushed her down onto the floor and we spent the next several hours making wild passionate love to each other. When we were finished, Gyro looked at us and said “If you two are about done, we could use some help getting this lifter droid fixed, you forgot to connect him up.” I got up off of Mophit, blushing a bit and helped her to her hind paws, as I said “Sorry, the electricity went to my head.” Mophit kissed me and said “I’ll have to shock you more often. That was wonderful.” I smiled at her and said “Promises, promises.” I then carefully reconnected the crystal and found another power cable, plugging him up. He then powered up and said “Thank you sir, for fixing me, I will rest and recharge for now.”

 I nodded and then looked at Mophit, rubbing my belly and said “I don’t know about you, but I’m famished.” She smiled, giving me a swat on the butt and said “I can’t imagine why, tiger. Let’s got to the bridge and get something to eat, I‘m a bit famished too.” I looked at the lifter droid and said “Please start sorting and restacking the parts, after you have finished recharging.” He looked around and said “Oh my!” We then made our way back slowly to the bridge to eat. We then ate our fill, while I did some system checks on Loona, still seeing quite lot of red indications. We soon became tired, after our busy day and fell asleep together on the Captain‘s chair. We were wakened, sometime later, by Loona, who seemed a bit worried and said” Raff, I’m detecting a scout class ship entering our quadrant, but it’s not the Valiant Star.” and she brought it up on the main screen. I looked at its black hull and said “They found us, somehow the pirates have found us.”

 Mophit looked frightened and said “Oh gods Raff, what shall we do, Loona can’t defend herself and we can’t stop them if they try to board.” I thought for a moment and said “Loona play dead, leave only enough power for the life support systems, kill all other systems.” I looked at Mophit and smiled saying we’re going to play a little game of hide and seek, after we make a little trip to a weapons locker.” Mophit grinned wickedly and said “Let’s go have some fun.” I realized that a scout class ship could not have that many crew members. Also that they, being pirates, would not just go back and report to their leader, without first looking around for plunder.” We made our way to the bridge weapons locker, as all went dark. I then though to Loona “Can you still hear me, Loona?” I then heard her say “Yes Raff and you can still communicate with me through Seta and Gyro also.”

 We found that most of the weapons were too big for us to handle. We could handle the small blaster pistols, like a rifle, but they often had a kick that we could not manage. I thought for a moment and then remembered my old stateroom and wondered if my things were still there. Sun-Salon had made for me a set of small blasters and a couple of force field belts for me to use. Also there was Bertha an energy stick that made my lighting stick look like a sparkler. I looked at Mophit and said “Would you like to see my old stateroom?” Mophit looked at me in desperation and said “Raff, we need to find some weapons and fast.” I nodded and said “Yes, and there might be some in my old stateroom, that are our size, if their still there.” I locked down the weapons locker and we then made our way through more debris, several decks down to my old stateroom. I had Loona open the door and then stepped into my old stateroom. A flood of memories hit me all at once and I staggered back, holding my head.

 Mophit steadied me and said “Raff, what is it?” I stepped in slowly and said “This is where I was forcefully taken by their security, not even knowing what I had done wrong. I was frightened beyond reason, as they grabbed me and forcefully took me down into that dark cargo hold. I pleaded with them to stop, as they forced me into the hibernation chamber and held me down. I was then strapped down tight and then… they closed the hatch.” I backed up to the wall and slid down to the floor, trembling and wept, saying “I had never been so frightened and cold in all my life, as that machine started up and then… there was nothing. Until I awoke inside what was left of my damaged hibernation chamber, with my head hurting badly, not knowing where I was or even who I was. I remember pushing open the broken hatch and climbing out of a smoking crater. I saw the distant lights of a nearby city and I staggered towards it in a daze, hoping to find some help. Instead I only found hate, as time after time I pleaded to someone to help me and was chased away, like a diseased animal. I crawled, still hurt and hungry, into the abandoned warehouse number nineteen and had lived there alone and forlorn, until I found this damaged little sphere.” and looked at Seta hovering on my shoulder. Mophit hugged me, comforting me and said “I never realized the extent of what you had gone through, Raff. They were all so very cruel to you.”

 I looked at her, shaking my head and said “The Grand Council had thought me a serious threat to their people and wanted me dealt with swiftly, I suppose, but I never meant them any harm. The people on my planet, only thought of me as a little troublesome mutant raccoon, never once giving me a chance, to prove myself to them.” Mophit snuggled into me and said “We’re a lot alike, you and I. I guess that’s why I‘m so attracted to you. We both lived tough lonely lives and came out stronger for it. I have finally found my place in the universe, by your side.” I held her lovingly and said “I was very lucky when I found Seta, because she had brought me to you, my love. But now we need to be even stronger and tougher than we ever were, if we hope to stand up to these pirates.”

 As if in response, we heard a loud clank and Loona said “They have attached their ship to my hull, Raff, what shall I do?” I thought back to her “Keep playing dead, Mophit and I will try to stop them. Where are they now, Loona?” She then sounded worried and said “Their now attached to landing bay two’s main hatch and Raff, their cutting through!” I opened my personal safe and retrieved the blasters, force field belts and a box of twenty power cells, handing Mophit one each and ten of the power cells. I then took out Bertha, with a smile, saying to Loona “Keep me posted. Mophit and I are heading there now.” We then proceeded to hanger bay two quietly, using the access ways and crawl spaces. We popped out of an air vent near a catwalk, overlooking the hanger bay and could see the hatch already starting to glow red, in the dark, as a hole was being cut. We laid down on the catwalk and waited for them to come through and I looked at Gyro and said “For now you should return to your support areas and wait for us, this is going to get a little rough.” He looked at me and said “I understand sir, good luck.” and it left us. Soon they had cut through, as the metal plating, they had cut out, fell to the deck loudly. A ramp then lowered and they started to come through in pressurized suits, fully armed and carrying lights. One of them held out an instrument and nodded to another and they all removed their helmets.

 A tall gruff looking human looked around, holding onto another by a chain, attached to shackles on their wrists and said “Now why is there fresh air and gravity, if this is supposedly old ancient derelict starship, my pretty?” and he looked back at his prisoner, who was still wearing their helmets and said, to the others “Be careful boys and spread out.” His crew then started spreading out around the hanger bay, as he removed the prisoner helmets and to our surprise, it was Sun-Tarry. Mophit looked at me and whispered “They have our Captain, what are we going to do, Raff?” Sun-Tarry looked around and said “How should I know, I never made it inside. I guess you will just have to find out for yourself, Mr. Lamar.” and the human slapped her hard, saying “That’s Captain Lamar to you and I know that you did make it inside, thanks to our little informer here.” and Reva then stepped down the ramp. Mophit became angry and accidentally knocked something, laying on the catwalk, off and it hit the deck, with a loud clank.

 They all froze and looked in the direction of the sound, but fortunately, no one looked up, except the Sun-Tarry and I saw her smile knowingly. A few of them moved up under us and I pointed to a large metal toolbox setting on the catwalk nearby, right above them. Mophit nodded, smiling wickedly and we moved up silently behind it. We waited and then pushed it off on top of a humanoid badger and it hit him hard. We then ran along the catwalk, on all fours, as it was lit up with many lights and we ducked back into the vent. As we laid there inside, panting hard, I heard one of them say “Mr. Harper is dead.” and another say “Did you see the size of those large space rats?” I then heard the cold voice of the pirate Captain, as he said “Take his gear and space the body. The rest of you, bring me the hide of those vermin. I could use a fine coat, when I become Captain of this ship. Now spread out.”

 We watched, as they moved away from the entrance of the ship and Mophit whispered “The others must be inside and by all accounts, most of their crew has left the ship. Maybe we can get to them, before they come back.” I nodded and we made our way down to the deck and cautiously moved up to the entrance. Suddenly a large humanoid bear, lumbered out of the ship and we hid under the ramp, as it creaked under his weight. We waited for him to pass and scurried up behind him, running quietly up the ramp. Luckily he though himself alone, leaving the inside hatch open and we moved inside of the ship. Mophit looked around and then said “This is an old hunter class scout ship, my old mentor trained me on a ship much like this one. I know just where we will find our friends.” She remove a panel, disappearing inside a moment and then pulled me inside with her and closing it up again. We moved silently through a repair access ways a while and she cautiously cracked open a panel and looked out, closing it up quickly and said “There is a big wolf inside and he don‘t look very friendly.”

 I looked at her and smiled, unclipping Bertha from my belt. The wolf stood outside guarding the prisoners and suddenly heard a knock coming from a panel. He moved up slowly to it brandishing his weapon and opened it up and looked inside. There was a bright light and he went flying back and hit the deck hard, as I gave him a taste of Bertha. We then moved into the brig and quickly looked around for anyone else, but found that, luckily, we were now all alone. We made our way down the hall to several cells and found Marshal, Jamar and Areanon-Solack, but Jamar was lying motionless on a bench. Areanon-Solack was in chains with a steel muzzle covering her beak. Marshal jumped up and said “I never have felt so happy to see you two again, Raff.” Mophit looked at him with a smirk and said “Not bad for a couple of mutant vermin, huh?” He looked down and said “You’re of course right Mophit… I have been so wrong about your kind and I’m sorry. But we have to help Jamar, he’s hurt badly. They have Doctor Marcus, locked up in medical.”

 I let Marshal out and he took the wolf’s weapons, cuffing his hands and then kicked him hard, saying “That’s for hurting my friend, when he was cuffed, bastard.” He then took the keys from him and freed Solack. He then threw the wolf in his old cell and shut the door locking it, as we went in to check on Jamar. He was beaten and bruised all over, but still managed to smile when he saw me and said weakly “Good to see… you again… Raff.” and coughed up some blood.” Marshal looked at him sadly and said “I was locked up in my cell when they did this to him and could not help him. When we were boarded, he fought like a lion instead of a tiger and they made him pay for it.” Mophit looked concerned and said “We have to get him to medical, I know the way.” Marshal helped Jamar up onto his feet and supported him, saying “Lead the way Mophit.” and she cocked her pistol and said “They are going to pay for this.” and we left the brig. The ship was silent except for the sounds of running machines and equipment, as Mophit lead us through the passageways to medical.

 Solack looked at me and said “Did Loona set you free, when the pirates showed up, Raff?” I looked at her and said “No, she let us go just after you left, saying she just could not do it to me. Mophit and I have been making repairs on her ever sense, until the pirates showed up.” Solack looked perplexed and said “Perhaps the Grand Counsel was right about her. She is of no use to us, if she can’t follow through with her orders.” I looked at her angrily and said “It’s your people’s limited vision and greed to use them for your own purposes, which made the Grand Councils decision about her. I found out the truth, about what she is and for that I was placed unjustly on ice to keep me quiet.” She snapped at me, barely missing me and said “You impertinent little beast, how dare you speak of my people that way.” Marshal then stood between us and said “Look you two, save it for later or we’re all going to find ourselves back in the brig. Now let’s go.”

 Suddenly, as if to prove his point, we were confronted by the bear, who came at us quickly, for his size. Mophit tried to stop him with her blaster, but he grabbed her, by the waist, making her drop it and cry out in pain. Marshal was holding Jamar and could not help her and Solack just stood there in shock. I however, suddenly saw red, as she cried out to me “Help me… Raff… he‘s crushing me.” I jumped on him and he tossed me aside like a rag doll and hit the wall hard, falling to the deck. In my pain and anger, I felt a change coming over me, as I felt myself growing even more angrier. I felt my body start to grow larger, my claws longer, as my rage grew even hotter. I suddenly roared out loudly and then turned to look at him viciously. The bear’s eyes opened wide in surprise and fear, dropping Mophit to the deck. He tried to shoot at me, but I jumped on him first and began tearing at him with a primal ferocity.

 He screamed out, as I tore viciously at his large body and then he fell down on the deck. I then finished him off, by biting his throat and holding it tightly, while he gurgled up blood and his body lurched, till he moved no more. I then let go of him and looked around, growling, my body covered in the bear’s blood. I then saw the terror in my friend’s eyes, as they looked at me and heard Solack say in fear “My gods, my people were right to fear you, you are a danger to us. Everyone get back!“ I then saw Mophit getting up slowly looking at me with a deep terror in her eyes. I tried to approach her, but she backed away from me in fear. I howled out in anguish and then ran away, finding the main hatch and running off into the vast darkness of Loona. I soon came across a few more of the pirates and quickly did the same to them, leaving their torn bloodied bodies where they dropped, for the others to find, as a warning.

 Later, I grew tired and found myself a place to sleep, laying there with tears in my eyes and thinking only of Mophit. I wept long, howling out my misery and not caring if anyone heard me, but no one dared to come looking for me, after the carnage I had left behind. I awoke many hours later, unsure of what had happened to me and thinking it all a just bad nightmare. Then I smelt and could feel their dried blood on my thick matted fur and could taste their blood still in my mouth. I then threw up, my now large body heaving and shivering violently, with the realization of what I had done. I remembered the terror filled look on Mophit‘s face and the others and knew I could never go back to them again like this and wept. I then heard Seta’s soft voice say, nearby “Raff are you alright?”

 I huddled into a ball and said “I’m a monster, Seta. Your people was right to fear me and lock me up, but now I‘m loose.” I then heard Loona’s soft voice sing out to me, as she said “No, Raff, you are not a monster, you are a Verimorph, a mutated creature that was designed, by an unknown alien race, to change and adapt to you environment and, or needs. Our researchers had been doing tests on you sense you were brought onboard me, long ago. That’s why you were often called to medical so many times. However, I later found a flaw in your DNA structure, sometime after I… lost your body. I surmised that whenever you were made to feel rage, the adrenaline flow in your body would change your physical structure into a strong, very fearsome wild beast, very similar to what is known, as a werewolf, on other worlds. More like a wereraccoon actually, although I didn’t know what you would look like until now.” I closed my eyes and said “So, I am just a monster, unable to control myself and just killing at will.”

 I then heard Seta’s soft voice chime up “No, you have still retain enough of yourself, to know friend from foe and can obviously think clearly enough to make rational decisions and talk to me intelligently. The way you hunted down those pirates you killed, hours ago, was very cunning and you still knew your way around Loona’s passageways and crawl ways, using them to your advantage. I can also sense that your mind is still your own and although you are a bit more aggressive and fearsome, in your actions, then Loona had anticipated. I can still feel your gentleness, when you think of your mate, Mophit. You cannot be a monster and still feel love for her, Raff.”

 Tears filled my eyes, once more and I looked at Seta saying “But I’ve lost her forever, Seta. She will never be able to look at me in the same way, ever again. She was deathly frightened of what I had become and what I did, right in front of her. I don‘t blame her, I would be too.” Seta then said “So what will you do now, Raff?” I hit the deck hard, with my large paw hand, denting it and said coldly “I will save them all and make the pirates pay dearly.” I then walked out of my hiding place boldly and went on the hunt, hearing Seta trying to stop me, but shutting her out of my mind and moved swiftly towards their ship. I suddenly stopped, sometime later and sniffed around, finding myself now surrounded, by the pirates, as they came out of hiding. I growled menacingly, as their Captain came forward, with Mophit in chains and said “I know that it’s you Raff, you evil cur and I know your fond of this miserable little creature. Surrender yourself now, or I will kill this mutant trash right in front of you.” I roared loudly and said in a cold gruff voice “Kill my mate and I will show you your heart before you die.” I then lunged forward so fast, that he had no time to react to me, as I snatched up Mophit and dodged blaster fire, escaping into the darkness once more.

 I ran swiftly, holding Mophit’s trembling little body, gently in my mouth and soon found a hatch, opening it up and ducking inside, closing it quickly behind me. I lowered Mophit gently to the deck and she shrank away from me in fear and pleaded “P… please don’t k… kill me.” I hung my head sadly and said, as gently as I could “I could never hurt you, Mophit, I love you more than life itself. I am still Raff, inside this monstrous form.” She looked at me, unsure and said “W… what happened to you, Raff?” I looked away from her, saying “When the bear started hurting you, I became enraged and it sparked this mutant change in me, making me become this hideous form. All I wanted inside, was to stop him from hurting you, but in my rage, I killed him. I then saw you and the others looking at me in terror and ran away in anguish, knowing that I had lost you forever, killing other pirates I came across in my anger and frustration.”

 She slowly came up to me, as I began to weep and turned my large head towards her and she looked deep into my trembling, tear filled eyes. She then smiled at me and said ”It is you, Raff, but can you ever change back?” I shook my head and said “Right now… I don’t know, Mophit.” I heard her chains rattle and reached down gently, braking them loose from her easily. She rubbed her wrists and said “My… your very strong, in this form, Raff.” I smiled and said “You almost saw me change into this, on our ship, when I lost my micro-toolkit and went mad.” a sudden chill took me and I looked myself over and found it missing again. Mophit looked concerned and said “Alright Raff, calm yourself. It fell off of you, when you changed and the pirates have it now, after they captured us, threatening to kill the Captain, right in front of us, if we didn‘t surrender.” I smiled and said “Don’t worry, I’m not the smelly insane little raccoon you first met, only more hideous to look at, but I have to get it back, to finish making the repairs to Loona.”

 She held my big muzzle and said “I happened to love that smelly, insane raccoon and I still do, no matter what he look like, now.” and she kissed me. All sadness, anger and frustration left me, as I felt the love for her, growing inside of me once more and I felt myself begin to change, growing smaller, this time. She stepped back, in surprise, as I changed back into my old self and then she threw her arms around me and hugged me, something fierce. She then pushed me down, climbing onto me, giving herself to me and I never felt so warm and happy in all my life. This time however, it felt different, when we climaxed together, as she stopped and looked down at her belly, caressing it softly and smiling to herself. I was then enveloped in a warmth like never before, realizing she had just somehow conceived, as she dropped down on my body and kissed me deeply.

 She slid off of me and we laid there, a while, holding each other enjoying the warmth of our love. She ran her hands over my chest fur and said “What are we going to do about these pirates, Raff?” I closed my eyes and said “Well, we are slowly decreasing their numbers, but they still have our Captain and our crewmembers and we need to get them free, somehow. I’m sure that pirate Captain is not going to just give up, as long as he has got them and we don’t want to let him go for help ether. We need to sabotage his ship somehow, so he can’t leave.” She snuggled into me and said sleepily “I can do that… I’m sure… if you can… distract… them… some… how.” and she then fell asleep.” I then gently rolled her over and got up, looking down at her, saying “I’m not going to take a chance that they hurt you, my love. It’s my job to do.” and I left her there and headed for the pirate starship.

 They now had it all lit up around, with most of the crew outside guarding the ship and I thought wryly to myself “This is going to be fun.” I then moved in close to one of the guards, a straggly looking warthog and I jumped up on a power box. He saw me right away and brandished his blaster, pointing it at me. I smiled and said “What… you’re not soiling your pants at the sight of me.” and stuck my tongue out at him, jumping down, running away swiftly, dodging his wild blaster fire and hearing him yell out “I’ll get you, you little pest!” and came running for me, as the others followed him. I quickly out distanced them, a bit and ducked into an opened crawl space, making my way back under the deck, to the ship. I popped up near the entrance and climbed out, suddenly being pinched on the butt. I nearly dropped dead from a heart attack and heard Mophit say “You think you’re going to have all the fun, huh.” I placed my hand over my heart and gasped out “Don’t do that to me.”

 She smiled, walking past me and said “Then stop trying to protect me, I can handle myself.” and promptly walked right into a human pirate, as he was coming out of the ship.” We looked up at him for a moment and he was as stun to see us, as we were to see him. We then simultaneously jumped him, clawing and biting him, as he screamed, drawing his blaster “Get them off of me… get them off of me!” but there was no one outside to help him. Mophit bit his hand, making him drop his blaster and jumped down to retrieve it. She pointed it at the human and before I could warn her, she pulled the trigger hitting the human square in the chest and killing him, but the recoil threw her back and she rolled away, down the ramp. I jumped off the human, as he hit the deck dead and ran down the ramp after her.

 I found her sprawled out at the bottom of the ramp, the blaster some distance away and helped her up saying “So you can handle yourself?” She smiled at me sheepishly and said “Not one of my best moments, huh?” we then scurried up the ramp and made it inside as the pirates quickly started to return. Mophit opened a panel and said “Follow me, I know how to stop them from leaving.” and I climbed inside with her, closing the panel, as the pirates ran up the ramp, finding the dead human. I heard the warthog say, as we made our way down along a wire way “They’re here, find those troublesome vermin.” We went along quietly and came to a large power distribution controller and Mophit looked at it a moment and pulled a cable off. She looked at me and bit the end off of the cable and said “This will stop them from disengaging the landing claw, right away. Now let’s go find our friends. “

 We then went along another wire way to the panel by the brig once more. We cracked it open to find several pirates guarding it, I saw another wire way going up and pointed to it. Mophit nodded and we climbed up to the ceiling and I began loosening the catches on a ceiling panel that was above where the pirates were sitting and guarding our friends. I then stood on the panel and waited, as Mophit finished and then I hit the release. The panel and I then plummeted down on the unsuspecting pirates and I jumped off heading down the passageway to the cells. I found them all empty and I realized it was a trap, as the brig door swished open and I was quickly surrounded by other pirates. The guards were helped to their feet, as a big jaguar looked at me and said “Don’t move rodent or I will splash the wall with your blood.”

 As I looked up at him, I could tell Mophit had left and would soon probably start causing great havoc and braced myself for it, saying “Why don’t you all just surrender to me now and save yourselves all the trouble?” They all laughed out loud and then alarms started going off all over the place and as they looked around in confusion, I made a b-line between all their legs, saying “I give you a chance.” I quickly rushed out the door that for some reason had just opened back up again. Then things onboard started going haywire, as Mophit played with their automated systems. Doors were opening and closing on their own, lights were going on and off and alarms of all kinds, were going off all over the place. Then suddenly everything went completely dark and I then moved around silently, as the pirates searched the ship for us in the dark, with lanterns. I removed a ventilation duct and slipped inside, moving down the shaft to the main air shaft. It was very quiet now and I could hear many angry voices, cursing our names. I moved around for quite a while, peering out of duct after duct, trying to find my friends and then thought I heard Reva’s voice.

 I peered out of a ventilation duct and saw her and another pirate talking angrily, in a passage way and then she slapped him, as he tried to fondle her. He then grabbed her and pushed her down on the deck, attempting to rape her. I grew angry and hit the duct breaking it open and he looked up, just as I landed on his face and dug my claws into him. He fell to the deck trying to get me off his face and Reva grabbed his blaster and shot him. He stopped moving beneath me and I looked up to find her pointing the blaster at me. I slowly got up, holding my paw hands up and said “Why are you in with these swine, Reva. They almost killed you, if I had not repaired what you had done to the temporal core.” She lowered her blaster and sat down on the floor saying “I have no choice, Raff, Sun-Tarry and the others will never trust me again and I have nowhere else to go.” I walked up to her and said “I will trust you, Reva, if you will trust me and help me find the others. They are not in the brig, where are they being kept?” She looked at me a moment and then said “I use to think of your kind, as just mutant trash, but you’re are not so bad and are beginning to change my mind, Raff, let’s go.”

 She led me down the passage way, with me in front of her, just in case we came across anyone else. I know I was taking an awful big risk, but I figured she had had enough of these pirates and was looking for a way out. We came to a door marked medical and she said “Their inside here, but we can’t get in with the power off.” I looked around and found a panel and opened it, disappearing inside. I came out holding a handle and slipped it into the hole in the door. I began cranking it and the door slowly opened, revealing two others, brandishing their weapons and Reva said “It’s me boys I have another prisoner for you and they smiled and one said “You got one of the mutant vermin, good work, Reva.” and they stepped back and let us in.

 The room was lit with lanterns and I could see the Captain and the others strapped tightly to the tables and a big humanoid weasel said, fingering his knife “Your just in time, we were just about to have a little fun with them. “, and the other one, a k-noid, reached down and grabbed me roughly. Reva started to raise her weapon, but the weasel knocked it out of her hands, easily, pushing her up against the wall and said “I’ve just been waiting for you to try something, missy.” and he placed his blaster to her head. I screamed “NO!” and to my surprise, the k-noid holding onto me began to tremble, as I began to light him up with an electric burst. The weasel looked back, at us, startled and Reva hit him hard. I growled viciously, as I held tightly onto the k-noid, until his body hit the ground, under my weight, as I had changed back into the creature once again and then finished him off.

 Reva and the weasel both stepped back, in terror, as I stepped towards them and said, gruffly “Reva take his blaster and free the others.” She quickly did so, as I backed the weasel up against the wall and said “Now what was that about mutant vermin.” and he wet his pants. Reva quickly released the Captain and the others and they all looked at me unsure and afraid. I then looked at the weasel and said, with mocked concern “Now why don’t you go lay down for a while, you don’t look so good.” and he quickly climbed into the nearest bed and lied down, as the others strapped him down good. I then sat down and said “There is nothing to fear, my friends, it’s me Raff.” and the Captain slowly came up to me and said “If I hadn’t seen you change, I never would have believed it was you.” She then reached out and touched me and I leaned into her touch and said “See, nothing to fear.” Jamar limped up to me looking at the dead k-noid and said “I’m sure glad you’re on our side, Raff and it‘s sure good to see you again.” and he picked up the k-noid’s blaster.”

 Marshal came up to me smiling and looking all around, saying “Where is Mophit?” We all then heard a cold voice say “She’s right here.” and we turned to see the pirate Captain holding Mophit, by the throat, with a blaster held to her little furred head. She struggled in his hand, gasping for air, as I approached him and then stood before him, saying ”Let her go and I will surrender to you now.“ He grinned and said “I think not.” and then turned the blaster on me and just as he fired, Mophit bit his hand and his shot went wild, grazing my left shoulder. He then looked at her angrily and said “Why you miserable little cur. “, and started to shoot her. Taking his eye off of me, was the last mistake he ever made, as I lunged at him and hit him in the chest, biting down on his throat, as he screamed. I pushed him down to the ground and then tore him apart, right in front of his crew. I then turned to what remained of the pirates standing there, as they backed up and I growled menacingly at them, saying in a cold voice “whose next!”

 They looked in shock, at me covered in their Captain’s blood and they all dropped their weapons to the deck and raised their hands. Marshal and Jamar gathered their weapons up and covered them, as Dr. Marcus went to help Mophit. Sun-Tarry came up to me, cautiously keeping her distance and said “Raff, are you alright, your hurt?” I stood there, my left shoulder bleeding, and said “Nothing a couple of hundred volts won’t cure, once Mophit turns the power back on.” Mophit then ran up to me and hugged me saying “Oh Raff, it finally over.” I nuzzled her and said “Not yet.” and I walked up to Reva and said “Thanks you for helping me, Reva, you were true to your word.” and I turned to the Captain and said “Reva had a chance to kill me, or turn me in earlier, but she decided to help me find you all instead, Captain. Just moment ago, she risked her life to rescue you and me, also. Please give her another chance.” Sun-Tarry looked at her, hesitated a moment and then handed Reva a blaster and said “Help Marshal and Jamar gather the prisoners and take them to the brig.” She then turned to Mophit and said “Master Engineer Mophit, if you would please, turn the power back on.” Mophit beamed with pride and disappeared for a little while and then the power came back up and the lights came back on.”

 I saw Solack still eying me with great distrust, but she said “Good work Raff, maybe I am wrong about you, but only time will tell for sure. “, and she walked past me not giving me another thought. The Captain then turned to me and said, sternly “Mr. Raff, if you will please be so kind, as to clean yourself up, you’re quite a mess and you also smell quite atrocious…” and I lowered my ears and looked sadly at her. She then leaned down and whispered into my ear “But I don‘t think Jamar and Marshal will try to give you a bath, this time.” and then she giggled. As I walked away, I looked back over my shoulder and said with a grin “By the way, Captain Mophit is pregnant.” Her eyes went wide in surprise and I walked away grinning to myself.”

About The Crew

Revised 04/16/2015

**Sun-Tarry**

**(Female Humanoid Hy-Starian Unicorn)**

**The Captain of the Valiant Star**

 Captain Sun Tarry is a twenty year old, humanoid Hy-Starian white unicorn. She has crystal blue eyes long blond hair, with a single short white spiraling horn and long tail with a blond tuft at the end. She is the Captain of the Valiant Star, an scout class explorer starship and it‘s seasoned crew. She is the daughter of the renowned Hy-Starian Crystal Engineer, Sun-Salon and is a well disciplined and upstanding member of her people’s society. She is on a mission to rediscover her people’s lost knowledge, by recovering a derelict star cruiser, once belonging to her people. Together with the help of a tiny silver sphere, containing the last known location of the derelict and Raff, a little mutant raccoon morph, with the knowledge to repair it, they set out, with her crew, to find the derelict and Raff‘s unremembered past. Little does she know that her stuffy discipline nature was about to be tested and changed forever.

**Jamar Swiftclaw**

**(Male Facenttey)**

**Security / Primary Gunner**

 Jamar Swiftclaw is a tough twenty five year old, male Facenttey, a race of humanoid tigers. He is the chief security officer and primary gunner of the Valiant Star, a scout class explorer starship. Although his temper sometimes gets the best of him, he defends the ship and her crew with an unmatched tenacity and his very life. Having great disgust and mistrust for Raff at first, they soon become good friends, as the little mutant raccoon morph proves his loyalty to the ship’s crew and their Captain, and his usefulness to their mission.

**Marshal Xavier**

**(Male K-Noid)**

**Navigator / Shields**

Marshal Xavier is a young nineteen year old black K-Noid, a humanoid dog race. He is the primary Navigator and shield technician for the Valiant Star. He is a gallant and very loyal member of the crew, but has a deep prodigious for morphs, of any kind. This sometime makes him treat, Mophit, a mutated otter morph and the ship’s engineer, very unkindly. But Raff is about to make him rethink his misguided and wrongful attitude towards morph and their place in the universe.

**Mophit Riftrunner**

**(Female Mutated Otter Morph)**

**Ship’s Engineer / Diver**

Mophit is a small, very intelligent, 5 year old mutated otter morph, who, in the past, has had to endure the harsh racial discrimination and treatment of all morphs, by the people of the Galactic Federation. Captain Sun-Tarry, a humanoid Hy-Starian unicorn and the now Captain of the Valiant Star, gave her a chance to prove herself. She had discovered that Mophit, although small has a vast knowledge of Starship engines, life support and power systems and had made her the Chief Engineer of the Valiant Star. Despite this, she still finds herself facing the decimation, from the rest of the crew, especially from Marshal, a male k-noid. Because of this, she often finds herself doing all the dirty jobs around the ship that the others just don’t want to do. She also is the only mutant morph onboard the Valiant Star and often feels very lonely, as her kind are few and far between. Then Raff, an odorous and unkempt male mutant morph raccoon is brought onboard and even in his shabby state, she finds herself hopelessly attracted to him. Together they will both show the others just what a couple of mutant morphs can do and earn the respect, from the others, that they both deserve.

**Dr. Marcus Willaby Sanders**

**(Male Human)**

**Medical / Rescue**

 Dr. Marcus is a forty year old brown haired human male, who is a good old fashion country doctor, with vast knowledge of many of the races in the Galactic Federation. He is the chief medical officer, onboard the Valiant Star, but even with his extensive experience, he will find Raff, a hard pill to swallow, as the little mutant raccoon morph, is like nothing he has ever seen before, inside.

**Reva Salean**

**(Female Human)**

**Communications / Personal**

 Reva Salean is a Twenty three year old pitch black haired human female, with a checkered past, but knows her way around the Galactic Federations laws. With her persuasive manner of speech, she can make even the most stubborn port authorities see things her way. Her past comes back to haunt her, as she finds herself about to betray the trust of the crew of the Valiant Star’s crew and her Captain.

**Areanon-Solack**

**(Female Griffon)**

**Starship Pilot / Land and Air Vehicle operator**

Areanon-Solack was once an upstanding member of the Hy-Starian government, being the high-ambassador of the Griffin race. That was until a major falling out with the Grand Counsel, over a certain dangerous mutant raccoon morph and a rebellious Starship. After that she lost her prestigious position and returned to her people in shame, becoming once more an ordinary Hy-Starian citizen. Her natural talents, as a starship pilot, were called for when the Hy-Starian home world’s sun started to go nova. A number of Hy-Starian jump ships were launched to escape the disaster and she was the primary star pilot for the Esperon, the ship containing Sun-Tarry‘s parents. The Esperon malfunction upon entering the atmosphere of their new home world and if not for the quick thinking and reflexes of Areanon-Solack, all the Hy-Starian people onboard would have all perished. Together with the survivors of the crash, Solack helped to organize Hy-Starian people to start their new life on their new home world. Once things had settled down, she stepped down and became a normal citizen and started her new life. She became close friends with the Sun family and especially Sun-Tarry, who she thought of as the child she never had time to have, in her busy life on Hy-Star.

**Raff**

**(Male Morph Raccoon?)**

**Mechanical and Electronic Repair / Scanners**

? Nuff said. ☺