

TERRAN DESTINY

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Chapter One

"People often debate whether or not the future is fixed. Is fate what we make or predetermined before we were ever born? I submit to you that both points of view are correct."

- David Krell, 2077

The night was crisp and the sky clear, with a full Moon just now clearing over the tops of the mountains. Faluun was standing on a beach, the water stretched out to the horizon on his left. The water was sedate, with small waves barely deserving of the name lapping at the sand. In front of him he could see a large gathering of people, maybe a hundred, most of them keeping near a large staged fire in the center of the beach. There were several smaller groups congregating around open cooking areas and play areas set up for some sort of ball game. Children ran all around, laughing and chasing each other, occasionally spraying sand on adults lying on blankets. To his right he could see a city, bright with the light born of thousands of windows, streetlights, and automobiles. There was a walking path on the edge of the sand, and Faluun headed in that direction at a slow pace. He jumped back as someone on a two wheeled cycle raced through the spot he was standing, then shook his head, laughing at himself. He wasn't really there, and therefore couldn't be hit by the conveyance. The Humans couldn't even see him, but it was often easy to forget that.

Faluun recognized that his mind was wandering, and he doubled his focus to remain in the moment. Concentration was key. If he got too distracted the spirit walk would end. Refocusing his mind, he continued toward the city. A short walk across a road near the beach and he was in the outskirts of the city. The buildings along the beach area were quite tall, maybe ten or fifteen stories and his initial impression was that this was quite a large city.

When it happened, he noticed it only because he had turned to look back at the beach, and therefore his eyes weren't completely hampered by the city lights. The sky

momentarily, but unmistakably, got brighter almost like a pulse of light centered on the Moon. Confused, Faluun stared, unsure of what he was seeing. A trick of the light maybe? Then the Moon changed, somehow looking at first blurry and indistinct, then appearing to expand, growing larger before his eyes. What could only be described as huge cracks began to appear in its surface. People all around him stopped, staring up at the sky and pointing. As others saw this, they inevitably did the same. People were, for the moment, too confused to be scared. What were they seeing? Automobiles slowed and pulled off the road, stopping as their occupants exited to stare at the strange happenings in the sky. Several minutes past as more and more people stopped to stare with dread, as reality began to assert itself. What at first had looked more odd and confusing than anything, was now undeniably clear and terrifying. The Moon was beginning to break apart. People started screaming and crying. Automobiles simply stopped dead in the street. Faluun was momentarily distracted by several loud collisions nearby, and was sure the same was happening all over the city. All over the world. Even those parts on the planet where the Moon was not currently visible, would by now be hearing or seeing news reports. Faluun wondered what they said. His home planet had no natural satellites, so while he could understand the horror in the abstract, he had no way of understanding it in the same visceral way as the Humans. The Moon was a perpetual sister to the planet, always there, never changing. Luna, they had once named it. The Goddess of the night. No longer. What could cause such an event, Faluun wondered. It was highly unlikely to be natural, which left a synthetic explanation. The amount of energy required to split apart such a large body as the Moon would have to be massive. Well, astronomical really.

Suddenly, the shock wave from the event slammed into the Earth's atmosphere. People all around Faluun were thrown hard to the ground, trees and light poles bent or even toppled completely. Many trees caught on fire. Smaller, older structures began to collapse. As Faluun looked around, every human he could see was on the ground. Many weren't moving at all, the few that were conscious were rolling slightly, in pain, screaming. The scene began to take on a reddish tint and the ambient light increased so drastically it almost seemed like the sun was rising again. Faluun's gaze went to the sky again and it was filled with streaks of fire. Millions of them blanketed the sky, as the smallest pieces of the Moon thrown off from the explosion entered the Earth's atmosphere. Most of these initial pieces were so small that they burned up before

reaching the ground, but inevitably larger pieces would follow.

Suddenly a larger piece did follow, striking the top of a building right behind Faluun. Spirit walk or not, he jumped in fear and lost his concentration.



Faluun's eyes snapped open as he was shocked out of his meditation. His heart was racing, and he was covered in sweat. As he came back to himself he noted that he was crunched down into a ball, his head on his knees and his hands over his head. He had seen some disturbing things during spirit walks, but this had to be one of the worst. He took several minutes to calm his thoughts. The serenity of the sparsely decorated room aided with this. He was lying on a simple rug, in a small room lit only by diffused light from the station's simulated moon. The juxtaposition momentarily confused him. The station was set up to simulate Earth's environment, including simulating the planet's day and night cycle. The Wayfarers even used the Terran clock. It not only helped keep them in the right mindset, but made excursions to the planet easier.

He stood and walked over to the door, where a small wooden table held a pitcher of water and an empty glass. While he drank, he replayed what he had seen in his mind. He could recall nothing that would help him determine when the event had occurred, or rather, would occur. He didn't recognize the city, though the beach looked to be the kind you would find along an ocean, not an inland sea. He would have to go back, try to get more information that would help determine when the events he witnessed would take place. Now that he had *walked* there once, returning would be far easier, though he was in no rush to do so. He was still heavily shaken by the catastrophe he had witnessed. Could the Humans even survive such an event? Surely it would destroy cities all over the planet, killing billions. The Wayfarers would have to determine what caused this and ensure it never came to pass. The Humans couldn't very well unite the galaxy against the Kraylor as the prophesy foretold if their civilization were destroyed. He would need to speak with the Elders.



The Wayfarer station was located in deep space, far away from any charted travel routes. It was a perfect example of a destination that you could only get to if you

already knew the way. Its construction was fairly simple, essentially a sphere inside of a larger sphere. The outer sphere shielded the station both from physical harm as well as providing a high level of both active and passive camouflage. On the inside of that outer sphere was a complex system that simulated a sky with a single local star and a natural satellite. Not just any sky however, this one simulated Earth's sky and had anyone from that planet been on the station, they would be hard pressed to distinguish it from the real thing. The inner sphere however, with a radius of just several hundred kilometers, was far smaller than the planet. That inner sphere housed The Order of The Wayfarers, and had done so for thousands of years as the Terrans measured time. The station, and the Wayfarers, had been established long before the Kraylor even rose to power, with the singular goal of ensuring the Terran Prophecy came to pass.



This was the first time that Faluun had ever entered the council chambers, or even spoken to the council. As a young initiate it just wasn't common to interact with the elders. The chamber was quite large, at least a thousand square feet, but round. As he entered, he could see the council -- the full council -- seated in a semi-circle along a raised dais on the opposite side. Though the entrance was well lit, the chamber itself was dimmer, making it hard to see the elders clearly. As he reached the center however, the lights grew brighter, and one of the elders stood. He was quite old, taking a few moments to stand fully. Faluun stoppd walking as the elder gzed down at him. The elder looked Faluun over for a minute or two before speaking.

"Initiate Faluun. What news do you have for the council?"

"Elder, I have witnessed a great disaster. The Earth's own satellite torn from the sky. Desrtruction raining down upon their cities. It was horrible."

The elder's eyes opened wide, and he turned to the others. Low discussion broke out, but Faluun could not clearly hear what they were saying.

"Please elder, we must do something. Even if this event does not destroy them, surely it would set their civilization back centuries or more."

The discussion continued, and Faluun held his tongue. It was not his place, but after a few minutes he could not contain his words any longer.

"Please", he started.

The Elder turned back to Faluun. He seemed more alive, more attentive than before. As if an energy infused him.

"Initiate, you use the term event appropriately. Though with insufficient emphasis I think. What you have witnessed is in fact The First Event as written in the Book. 'A great cataclysm, which should destroy the saviours, will instead shield them from the seeking gaze of dominion.' The Event must occur, it can not be prevented."

Chapter Two

Colonel Mark Price quickly glanced up as he heard a car speed past him at an extremely fast pace in the left lane, rapidly cut back to the right in front of him, then drift over and down the highway's exit ramp, moving at least twice the legal limit. *Self drivers*, he thought, shaking his head. Glancing over at the large center display in his own vehicle he could see that he was twenty-two minutes from his destination, and the driver AI predicted no traffic ahead that would interfere with the journey. He stretched then diverted his attention back to the report he was reviewing on the tablet in his lap. Construction on the new research station would be completed by the end of the month, which meant that Price would be making the big move to Tycho Crater soon. He was looking forward to it mostly because he was tired of the commute. For some reason that no one seemed able to clarify, he was unable to billet directly at Patrick Air Force base, yet his work was too highly classified to allow him to live off base. As a result, he was put up temporarily at the Naval Warfare Center just outside Orlando and making the much longer commute from there to the Kennedy Space Center on Florida's east coast. Of course that commute was pretty trivial compared to the two hundred thousand odd mile trip up to the Moon and Tycho Station. That trip took nearly two weeks. Thankfully most of his work was done on the ground at Kennedy and he only made the hop up to Tycho once every few months. With the station nearing completion though, he would soon be living there full time.

Tycho station was to be the center of research for a completely new form of energy generation. It wasn't long after the existence of a larger multiverse was proven to be correct before scientists started looking at ways to exploit them in typical Human fashion. In this case one such universe discovered by a man named David Krell was shown to have physical characteristics that were in fact quite different from the universal constants in our own universe. Of most import was that the speed of light was substantially faster in what had become known as Krell Space. In the future that could possibly be exploited for faster methods of travel, but for now the thinking was that large amounts of energy could be extracted from Krell Space. With the theory out of the way, Tycho Station was being built as the first practical test. The consequences of actually creating a connection between the two universes were unknown however, so

it was thought prudent to place the facility off planet. The Moon was chosen due to some technical reason or another involving gravity and mass. Travel was certainly an issue however. The trip involved two space lift rides, with a short rocket hop in between, and a monorail trip at the end in order to finally arrive at Tycho Station. As a result, the originally proposed research station design had grown into a larger permanent outpost that could house the scientists and support staff for months at a time.

The whole project was incredibly expensive, not to mention a first of its kind engineering challenge, but the payoff was considered by all to be more than worth the investment. Price was very much looking forward to being among the first Humans to live on the Moon for an extended duration of time, and he knew that most if not all of the people joining him felt the same way.



David Krell was about as far as you could get from the stereotypical scientist. Six foot two, blonde hair and light green eyes atop a body accustomed to regular physical fitness, he looked more like a greek statue than a man with multiple doctorates in both theoretical and applied physics. Krell had paid for his first doctorate with military service, and the discipline imparted on him during that time remained. He was just stepping out of the shower after an early morning run when his phone rang. Fumbling a bit he rushed to pick it.

"Krell", he answered.

"Sir, the latest simulation on the shockwave propagation is complete. I was told you wanted to be notified right away."

"Yes, thank you. Have Ms. Cunningham get started on the analysis and I will be there shortly." He said, hanging up the phone.

It was starting to look like the subspace connection might be more violent than originally anticipated, at least initially until they learned how to tune it better, and Krell had concerns about what that might mean to the lab. It was probably nothing, but

when you were dealing with such immense forces it was wise to cover all your bases.

Twenty minutes later he was in the lab and looking over the results of the simulation with Jennifer Cunningham, one of his students, when Colonel Price arrived.

"Morning Doc. Jen. Good news. Looks like construction is a bit ahead of schedule. We should be able to start moving in upstairs by the end of the month.", Price said as he entered the lab.

The lab was getting pretty crowded, both with people and gear, and he knew that the team was looking forward to the move up to Tycho and the ability to stretch out a bit. Not to mention start actually working rather than running simulation after simulation. As he walked toward the team he noticed they were looking at the results of yet another one, some sort of structural study from the looks of it. Price had a background in engineering himself, and as he stepped up to the screen he could see some worrying information.

"Anything I need to know about here David?" Price asked.

"I just started reviewing the data myself, but we might want to consider drilling the subspace chamber even deeper than planned. It's looking like the shockwaves from the subspace connection might be higher than initially predicted. That should diminish once the connection becomes more stable, but we don't know how long it will take to stabilize it. This sim here was run with the worst case scenario but it clearly shows fractures in the substructure within a few days time. No sense spending billions to build the place only to wreck it within a week of moving in."

"No, that wouldn't be very responsible of us." Price replied, thinking. They were working on excavating out the subspace chamber right now, so it wouldn't be a problem to dig in deeper. Good thing they found out now though rather than in a couple weeks when it would be much more work. "Ok send me the data when you are done and let me know how much deeper. If we can get that too them today it shouldn't be an issue."

Price headed further into the lab, checking in with everyone briefly before heading to the stairs in the back and on up to his office on the second floor. He felt it was

important to be seen, but he didn't want his presence to interfere either. Some people just didn't work well with the boss hovering over them.



Price didn't rate an administrative assistant, nonetheless as he turned the corner and walked into his office there was an officer waiting for him. While the lab on the first floor had a secured entrance, there was unsecured direct access to the second floor mainly for administration reasons. Despite that the officer did catch Price somewhat off guard.

"Captain Heather Mason reporting as ordered sir.", The officer said, coming to attention. "I'm a little early."

"Early is on time Captain. Just give me a few minutes if you would.", Price answered, proceeding into his office. Once inside he punched the button to boot up his terminal - they were shut down every night for security reasons - and then started up the coffee machine behind his desk. He took a seat while waiting on the coffee and connected to the base mainframe, where he then checked his mail, scanning for anything urgent. Nothing caught his eye, and most of it was promptly deleted. He saw one note about upcoming maintenance on the space lift, but it wouldn't - or shouldn't - interfere with his time table. There was a message from David Krell regarding his concerns over the intensity of the subspace link, essentially what they had just discussed. Price noted that the message had been sent from the lab at just after three in the morning.

The coffee machine dinged, and he turned to pour himself a cup then called for the Captain to join him. As she entered the room, he was pulling up her personnel file. He had seen it before of course, but wanted it handy in case he needed to reference it.

"Have a seat Captain. Would you like a cup?"

"No thank you sir, already had my morning joe and I don't like to drink too much of it."

"Thank you for coming in. Your paperwork is all in order, but I just wanted to meet with you first. As you know this is a voluntary TDY. We will be taking one flight from the 45th with us up to Tycho Station to provide for security and law enforcement. You

would be in charge of that flight. This is a three month rotation and as you can imagine you will be quite a long ways from home. Tycho will be the most distant established Air Force base by quite a large margin." Price said with a smile. The US Air Force had established a zero-gee training station in low Earth orbit, 500km above the planet, five years ago. Captain Mason would have already gone through specialized training there. At an average orbital distance of 384 thousand kilometers though, the Moon was quite a distance farther, and would in fact be the first permanent Human settlement on a body other than Earth. Concerned about both the physical affects of working in the Moon's low gravity and the psychological affects of being away from the planet and family for so long, the current plan was for the base to essentially run on rotating crews similar to how the Navy handled its submarines. Each rotation would be three months long with a one week overlap for handoff. Price would command the Alpha team while his counterpart, Lt Colonel William Cole would command the Bravo team. In most cases support personnel were being drawn from the 45th Space Wing forces stationed at Patrick Air Force Base. Originally responsible for rocket launches in the late twentieth and earlier twenty-first century, the 45th Space Wing had grown a great deal when extra planetary operations became an official role of the US Air Force. In this case the base would be providing two flights of personnel from the 45th Security Forces Squadron to cover Alpha and Bravo base security and law enforcement.

"The distance isn't a problem sir. At least as far as I know. The shrinks say that no one can predict how we will handle being so far away from our home planet for longer periods of time until we do it, but I did the requisite month up at ZTAC without any problem." She replied, ZTAC being the common nickname for the Zero Gee Tactical Training School, "I'm single with no family of my own to worry about and my parents are used to not seeing me for long stretches of time. Three months isn't very long a period of time anyway to be honest. Truth is I was excited to find out I was selected for the job. I've always been a space nut, and it's the main reason I signed up with the Air Force to begin with. I'm really looking forward to this opportunity."

"Excellent. I'm finalizing our move now, but I would plan to be ready to ship out in three weeks, a month at the latest. The first detachment from the 45th security forces has already been picked, all volunteers like yourself. All of them have been through

zero gee training, but if you want to run through a one week refresher it can be arranged. They should be reporting to you this afternoon. You will find an empty office setup next door all ready for you. If you have any problems let me know. We're pretty informal around here without a lot of red tape. I don't even have a second at the moment, so you can come straight to me with any issues. Welcome aboard."

"Thank you Colonel!"