

A world torn in two

Chapter 1 – Words of hidden treasures

The large doors opened, the hydraulics slowly but surely moved the giant bulkheads out of place. The lights coming out of the hangar bay of the station fell on his face. A young man with short clean cut hair stepped out of the elevator. His name was Nicho Caron a well experienced deep space explorer and member of the respected Deep Space Reconnaissance and Salvaging Corporation. Specialized in finding hidden signatures and other anomalies of which they sold the location to their clients for good money. They were a small corporation and had just purchased their first Helios class vessel and today it was the first time it would enter service.

Nicho slowly walked over to the ship which was lit by the dim spotlights of the station. At the back the probes were slowly loaded into the cargo hold by an heavy duty crane. A short figure was standing at the edge of the cargo hold with a remote controller guiding the crane's movements carefully.

"Yoru!" Nicho yelled to the short figure as he walked with strong paces to the backside of the craft.

The small figure was startled and the arm of the crane violently shot away almost hitting a pile of hybrid ammo charges which had already been loaded.

"Good morning Captain!" Yoru yelled back "I assume you have slept well." He pointed to a device mounted on his wrist.

Nicho laughed: "I wish I could sleep this long, the big guy called me over to his office."

"Sure" Yoru said on sarcastic tone with a big grin on his face as he looked back to his controller "You will be happy to know that we are almost ready to leave I am loading up the last scanning units and the guys on the bridge said they needed less than thirty minutes to load up."

"Excellent, I want to leave at 10.00 so make sure you have finished all the checks before that."

Yoru nodded "Do you want me to radio the guys on the bridge so they can open up the bridge access shaft?"

"Yes please if you could do that." Said Nicho as Yoru held his hand against the headset which was attached to the left side of his head.

"Yoru here, Nicho has just arrived. Can you open up the door for him?" Yoru looked up nodded and turned to Nicho "They're opening up now."

"Thanks Yoru, are you coming along on this one." Nicho said.

Yoru shook his head.

"Sorry but the big guy scheduled me for maintenance one of the old models has a leaking reactor again."

"Well I hook up with you when I get back then." Nicho said as he dashed off to the recently opened entrance.

Nicho arrived on the bridge. It was a small comfortable bright lighted round room with a few stations spread around the room.

"Welcome aboard Nicho." A girl with long brown hair and piercing blue eyes said to him sitting at one of the stations designed for the navigation of the ship.

"Good morning Sirka. How are we progressing?" Nicho asked as he sat down on the big chair of the center of the bridge.

"We will be ready in about 20 minutes if all pre-flight test go according to plan." She said while shuffling through a couple of windows on a virtual screen.

Nicho nodded and paused for a while when he got out of the chair again and walked over to Sirka.

"So how have you been Sirka, I haven't seen you in some time."

"Yes, that is right." She said with a sigh in her breath. "I have been given off some time by Mr. Hitoy after the Seyllin I accident, my brother lived at that colony."

She looked away at window of the ship.

"Hitoy informed me, I'm very sorry for your brother Sirka. He was a good guy. Just take it easy." Nicho said as he put a hand on her shoulder and smiled at her.

Sirka smiled back faintly.

"Thanks Nicho."

"I'm sorry but I am going to have to contact Hitoy before we head off, could you round up the senior staff for me after the ship is ready?"

Sirka nodded and looked back on her work.

Nicho walked off and went through what had happened the last few days. Sirka a good friend of Nicho's had stolen an Iteron class industrial out of the corporate hangar and had flown off to help out at Seyllin during the accident. Unfortunately she was stopped by CONCORD officials from entering the system. Driven to protect her brother she managed to get passed the blockade somehow and enter orbit of Seyllin I. Not long after she was boarded by Federation Navy officials and taken out of Seyllin and detained. She had been put into a Federation Navy cell and didn't speak for days. Her brother was never found again. When Nicho thought about her brother he suddenly remembered him the first and last time he met him. A young man just graduated from the university off to make it big, as he often claimed. He didn't know him too well but he somehow he recognized himself in Sirka's brother when he was young.

As he walked down the long slender hall of the ship leading up to the bridge Nicho arrived at his office. The door slid open soundless. Inside stood a desk with a terminal on it, a small table with multiple chairs and a big window viewing out on the back of the ship. Nicho walked around the desk and sat down on the chair. He activated the terminal and browsed through a few windows.

"Contact Hitoy." Nicho said to his terminal.

"Making a secure connecting with Hitoy." Aura repeated.

A bearded man with jet black hair and a small goatee appeared on the screen.

"Hello Mr. Hitoy you said to contact you as soon as I got aboard the ship."

"Nicho, yes I have something for you." Hitoy said "I am sending you the files I promised you this morning." The man grabbed a small flat square disk which disappeared just below the screen.

On Nicho's screen a constellation overview appeared with a red marker pointing at a system.

"This is the system you are being sent to, our long distance probes picked up a very unique signal and I want you to find what it is, you know what to do."

Nicho nodded as he tried to plot a route with his eyes on the screen.

"Oh and Nicho, keep an eye on Sirka." Hitoy said as he leaned over to the screen.

"I will sir."

"Good luck to you Nicho, if you complete this assignment with success I have big plans for you."

The screen turned off.

After a while Nicho had implemented the route into the computer through his aura interface and he had contacted the Federal Navy's local intelligence to plot a course.

He activated a link with the bridge and the face of Sirka appeared on screen.

"Sirka how far is the ship's preparation?"

"We have just finished Nicho do you want the senior staff to meet at your office now?"

"Yes come over please."

Her face disappeared again and Nicho checked the route a second time to make sure he didn't forget anything.

Moments later there was a faint sound as the door to his office opened and four people stepped in.

"Welcome all, please take a seat." Nicho said as he stood up from his chair and showed his guests to the meeting table.

"Now that we are all here let's see if everyone is present." Nicho looked around and started going down a list he had also received from Hitoy.

"Mr. Ravesch, Internal Security." A man with short cut black hair nodded.

"Mrs. Adrona, First Officer." Sirka nodded with a smile.

"Mr. Etoij, Engineering." An asian man with long dark hair combed back nodded.

"Mr. Worick, Reconnaissance." A slim man with a balding spot and piercing light eyes nodded.

"Seeing we are all here I will continue. I have not flown with most of you except Mrs. Adrona and Mr. Worick and I want you to know I always way any decisions we make on this ship with the senior staff. Now onto business. Mr. Hitoy has asked me to lead a expedition to an unknown signal of abnormal nature in the system Decon, a low security system that has drawn the interest of our clients and they want us to report about it. Decon has been noted as a very quite system and there hasn't been much traffic recently. We should have no problems from pirates. Now if you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask them but beware that this assignment is on a need to know basis. Is everything clear?"

He looked around at the table as all silently agreed.

"Ok we will be heading to the bridge for department." Nicho stood up and waited till everyone had left his office. He followed them out and closed down his office.

Moments later they arrived on the bridge and Nicho gave the command to start the reactor. The ship rumbled as the reactor core started up. Once they achieved full power Nicho contacted the station manager.

"This is Nicho Caron Captain of the covert ops vessel DSRS docked in docking bay level 28 bay 3C. Requesting undocking permission and waiting for your confirmation."

The front windows of the ship which also served as the main screen showed a man in a federal navy uniform.

"This is hangar manager Lerisch, I have received your request and I am now placing you into our queue."

The hangar manager was still on screen and was seen checking a terminal which was mounted to the side wall.

"Please stand by we are depressurizing your hangar bay make sure any personnel is out of the area and all loose equipment has been removed. I am starting the automated undocking procedure have a safe trip."

The screen disappeared and the windows showed the inside of the hangar bay again.

An orange safety light was flashing outside in the hangar and all exits to the station were closing down with giant steel doors. The gravity in the bay was disabled and the air pumped out. The orange flashing light turned down and the locks on the big hangar door started turning. The door slowly but securely opened and the ship was led out through to the main undocking hall.

They arrived in the undocking hall and starting flying towards the exit.

Their ship was dwarfed by the giant freighters, battleships and mining vessels coming in and out.

The small ship went through the security force field and entered space. When the ship had drifted a few kilometers the tractor beams guiding the ship shut down.

"Mr. Etoij, we are a safe distance from the station start the engine procedure."

"Engines will be hot within 30 seconds." Etoij said as he was sliding the engine parameters on his screen at his station.

The ship was pushed forward by the engines and they steered away from the main traffic aligning to the first stargate.

"We will be entering warp in 30 seconds." Etoij said as he monitored the warp drive powering up.

The vessel went silent.

A bubble formed around the ships which rippled the space around them.

In a split second the ship was violently pushed forward by a burst of energy and the ship started shaking as if it was falling apart.

Suddenly the rumbling stopped and the ship reached a tunnel which distorted the light around them. Wavelike patterns danced around the ship in the space surrounding them. The ships seemed to glide easily through space as if the vast distances of space suddenly didn't matter anymore.

A few hours later after traversing many solar systems the ship arrived at the Decon stargate.

"Ok I want full attention now people, we are about to enter a low-security system and who knows what we will find here so we need to be sharp. Mr. Worick I want the cloaking system primed." Nicho said while looking around the bridge.

The ship slowly moved towards the gate and requested permission from the automated system to jump. The permission was granted and the machinery activated. Instantly the space around them deformed and in a split second they arrived in the Decon system.

The gate was clear and the scanners displayed nothing.

"Mrs. Adrona, set course to our beacon and Mr. Worick activate our cloaking system."

The ship slipped into an invisible form as it prepared for another warp journey.

When the ship arrived at the beacon it was floating next near a big rocky planet around which some small wreckage orbited presumably from an old settlement but it seemed abandoned now.

"Mr. Worick I recon you can start the procedure?" Nicho asked as he turned to Worick standing behind a complex array of screens and equipment.

The ship uncloaked temporarily and shot out 4 scanning devices out of its launcher before quickly hiding again in the black shade of space.

While Worick and his assistants were busy guiding the scanning probes and analyzing the returning data the other part of the ship's crew were keeping check upon the system's activities until suddenly the signal of a ship appeared on their long range scanners.

They all froze and looked at it.

"Mrs. Adrona did the stargates report any activity?"

Sirka looked at her screen and busily tried retrieving the data. "There shouldn't be anything at all. No cynosural fields detected and the stargates haven't reported any activity since we came in here. There isn't supposed to be anyone."

Nicho sat on the front of his seat and now looked at the data Sirka had projected on the main screen.

Suddenly the signal disappeared as fast as it had showed up.

"What just happened?" Nicho directed to Sirka.

"I'm not sure... I am calibrating our sensors now. Hold on I'm receiving a faint signal from the same location but I can't tell what it is precisely."

"I will check up with the navy's intelligence they might know more."

Nicho tried contacting the navy's intelligence and on the screen a young man appeared.

"Yes, can I help you?"

"This is Captain Caron from the DSRS Recon 26-3 our scanners have report an unknown vessel going in and out in the Daron system but the system's stargates haven't reported any activity and there were no jump beacons in the area."

The young man waved to his older colleague who was seen working on the background.

They were seen discussing just a few paces removed from the screen so the ship's crew didn't hear them. The second man eventually paced off down a hallway.

"My colleague is going to get the supervisor he might know more about this."

The young man turned away from the screen but left the channel open.

Moments later a somewhat aged man with dark grey hair appeared on the screen.

"Hello, DSRS Recon 26-3 I will be taken over for now seeing as this is not a day to day problem. I'm going to enter the access protocols now and see what I can dig up for you. I'm sorry but I will have to mute our audio for a second."

The man was seen talking to the computer and a scan was made of his face.

"Ok I am checking the logs now... This is odd, the logs only show your entry and only a few other movements before you but there shouldn't be anyone before you. I will perform a system wide scan. Ok, the scanners pick up a very weak signal seemingly from a ship, maybe even a cloaked one. Captain Caron I need you to be my eyes for me."

The man spoke the last sentence with a deep concern in his voice.

"I'm Listening." Nicho replied laying his hand on chin.

"I need you and your crew to check out the signal we must know what it is, I know you have the equipment to do so."

"I know this is important federal business but we are here on a private investigation we do not have the time for this." Nicho replied fiercely.

"Captain Caron this is an order directly from the federal government if you do not oblige there will be consequences. I expect you to report to me in thirty minutes."

The screen went back to display the space around the ship.

"I guess there is not much we can do then." Nicho said to himself.

Nicho turned his head towards Worric and his team "How are you progressing so far?"

Worric looked up from his panel. "We have been closing in on our target captain but the signal is heavily distorted. I am trying to calibrate the probe's sensors to scan it properly. According to our current scanning results the weak signal we are picking up is somehow overlapping."

"Display your progress on the main screen please Mr. Worric" Nicho said with a soft calm voice.

An overview of the solar system appeared on the main screen with the locations of the probes on the screen. Worric walked to the main screen "This is how the probes are currently positioned and we seem to be getting multiple readings." A few spots appeared in the range of the probes. "We are picking up a strong signal but we can't pinpoint it. We have just finished calibrations to the probes and are ready for another scan." Worric nodded over to his colleagues.

The probes responded and suddenly showed a very strong signal.

"Finally! This is it!" Worric exclaimed with anticipation.

Nicho nodded towards Sirka who was ready at the navigational controls. The ship started to ready itself to warp to the location.

When the ship dropped out of warp the sight they saw was far from what the predicted. Nicho shot up from his chair and walked towards the window.

"Is this..."

"Yes this is... a wormhole."

The whole bridge went silent as they watched the black hole deforming and bending the space in front of them.

Next to the wormhole floated the hull of a ship, Nicho identified it as a Thorax class cruiser, It was torn in half and badly damaged.

"What happened here?" Nicho asked turning to Worric.

Worric activated a new window and he seemed to activate the ship's short range scanning array.

"The ship is broadcasting the same signal as the one we picked up with our long range scanners. It seems to be an automated distress signal. I will perform a status scan on the ship."

Worric locked the ship's computer onto the wreck and started a scanning procedure.

"The reactor seems to be active but unstable, the life support systems are down. No lifesigns. It seems to have been destroyed by heavy fire but I can't trace the origin of them."

Suddenly Worric's face turned into one of disgust.

"Look captain." Worric exclaimed in a gasping voice.

The camera drone moved towards what seemed to be a mangled body completely frozen and lifeless. Next to the body were pieces of debris and a slimy substance.

“Captain... we are not dealing with an ordinary crew here. This is a capsule pilot.”

The entire crew suddenly focused on the main screen displaying the shattered body.

“Haul the body onboard.” Nicho said with a ice cold tone “And get it to the medical bay.”

Everyone froze and tried to realize what they just heard.

“I just gave an order and I want it done.” Nicho repeated again on the same tone.

The body arrived in the medical bay and Nicho, Woric and Ravesch had joined him.

A tall man in a white coat with an eye augmentation stepped towards the table.

“Dr. Thiloc, is there any chance of possibly extracting any information from this corpse.”

Nicho asked.

Thiloc looked at the body and move the head on its side. The corpse was barely recognizable as a human as it had no hair and the color of the skin had faded to a grey tone.

“I can try and see if this pilot has any implants, if so I should be able to trace his capsule ID down and maybe even extract some memory.” Thiloc said inspecting the body.

Nicho gave the ok and Thiloc carefully grabbed a small precise pulsing tool with which he made a small incision in the head at the location of the frontal lobe exposing a small silver piece of circuitry. He pulled the implant out of the socket and took it over to a terminal where he plugged the implant into the terminal.

“I will try and distract some data out of this implant. I don't know how much I can extract out though. If the data is encrypted I'm afraid that there will not be much I can do.”

Thiloc entered the implants' databanks and looked up the pilot ID which he compared to a public databank.

“Nothing so far but there might just be a last hope I will check the criminal wanted list for a possible match.”

After entering the pilot ID a face showed up on screen with a wanted sign underneath.

“I have heard of this man.” Ravesch said slowly when read the name “He is reported to be working for the Serpentis corporation.”

“Tell me more.” Nicho said as he looked at the face of man.

“He is a high ranked Serpentis officer, one of the very few actually owning a capsule.” Said Ravesch. “He has been wanted for years but he always managed to get away.”

“What's this now?” Thiloc asked interrupting the conversation as he found a small data file in the implants databanks “Let me try and open it.”

An audio file started playing.

“We have aided with the evacuation of Seyllin I but our comrades have found an interesting space time fabric rupture. They seem to have found one of those wormhole. We know very little about them yet and high command might be interested. We are awaiting orders of command to see what they will do with this information. Until then we are helping with the evacuation of Seyllin I.”

...

High command has send out a small recon fleet to enter the wormhole, it is now being monitored 24/7 the location seems to be highly.....

...

We are to pull back partly from Seyllin I and investigate the wormhole, contact was lost with the recon group and we are going in with a small armada for a search and rescue mission. I have been assigned to lead the battleship wing. We are looking into the possibility of expansion into these new parts of space. Research on these wormholes is underway.

...

Something went horribly wrong after half my wing only jumped through. The wormhole has collapsed. I will report as soon as the situation has improved.

...

We have found the recon group, there are no survivors and they seemed to have been killed by something alien, these weapon marks are unknown to us and we are on the look-out.

...

We have managed to find an exit, another wormhole but who knows where it will lead. One moment, we have multiple ships approaching us on the scanner. I have given the order for everyone to scatter. Our ship is taking heavy fire and I am setting course towards the wormhole... Systems are failing... Hull is breaching... What are these things!?.....

.....

Log file corrupted”

Everyone in the medical bay was stunned by what they just heard.

“They were slaughtered. We wouldn’t even stand a chance if we went in there.” Ravesch softly spoke.

Nicho had his hand in his hair as he slowly paced keeping a look on the corpse.

“We are not going to do anything yet Mr. Ravesch. I am going to contact the navy, this is out of our hands.”

The senior staff had gathered again in Nicho’s office now joined by Dr. Thiloc.

A screen was projected on the window of the office and the face of the grey-haired man whom Nicho had recently spoken too appeared on the screen.

“This is Intelligence Officer Daro Solyia of the Federal Armed Forces, what have you found Captain Caron.”

Nicho stood up and started explaining their entire discovery which they had done so far. Solyia looked as concerned as ever after he heard everything that Nicho had told him.

He paused for a moment and let his eyes down.

“What you have found Captain Caron should be kept as secret as possible. We don’t want civilians to get any word of this. Send us the coordinates and get yourselves back to safe space this is federal business now. And Captain, under no circumstances enter the wormhole. Do you understand?”

The room went silent and Nicho stood before the screen with a lump in his throat.

“Understood.” He silently said.

“I expect you to hold you by your end of the bargain then Captain Caron.”

The screen vanished.

When everyone entered the bridge again the crew looked at the commanding officers.

Nicho sat down in his chair and didn’t move. He watched the wormhole dancing in front of him wondering what hidden treasures would lie within it. His exploration side caught up with and he had to know what was inside, the dangers didn’t seem to matter to him anymore.

“Set course to the wormhole Mrs. Adrona.” He spoke under his breath.

“But you heard what Daro Solyia said, under no circumstances enter the wormhole!”

Exclaimed Sirka.

“I know what he said Sirka.” Snapped Nicho “This wormhole it is enchanting and we are one of the first to discover one of them. I need to know what lies beyond this gate.”

“Nicho...” Sirka said as she left her seat and walked over to his chair. “We can’t do this it will only get us into trouble and danger we can’t handle. You are endangering the entire crew just for your curiosity!”

Nicho sighed and turned his head away from Sirka. “Let’s settle this the way it has always was settled, we will cast a vote. Everyone in favor of entering the wormhole raise your hands.”

Slowly a few hands went up until almost the entire crew for a few exceptions had their hands up, they seemed to share Nicho’s curiosity.

“It is settled then. Mrs. Adrona set course to the wormhole.”

Sirka sat down in her chair again and slowly the ship started moving towards the moving and bending space of the wormhole. Inside she knew she had a bad feeling about this.

In a split second the ship was sucked into the wormhole and cast out on the other side. The space seemed silent and alien, the system had two stars. The whole surrounding felt out of place.

"Mr. Woric I want you to check if you can find our location." Nicho said while looking at the spectacle of the two fireballs which flickered in the distance.

"The computer can't find us sir, I can't tell where we are."

The surroundings of ship were littered by a few wrecks of the serpentis fleet but the thing that had caused this ravage was no longer to be seen.

"Sir I am picking up a signal approaching us fast!" An officer exclaimed.

"Activate the cloaking systems and set a maximum velocity course towards planet III!"

The ship disappeared into thin air and seemed to be moving faster than usual.

"Why are we moving faster Mr. Etoij?" Nicho asked out of confusion.

"I don't know sir but the entire engine core seems more... manageable. It almost seems completely stable... But that is not possible..."

Before Etoij could finish his sentence a small weird looking craft approached the entry site of the wormhole.

"What the hell is this!?" Nicho spoke softly.

Everyone stared at the drone like vessel which silently floated by. It seemed to know that they were here. It was actively looking. Suddenly it started moving directly towards the cloaked vessel and only abruptly stopped right next to it until warping off again.

"Does anybody have any idea what that was!" Nicho exclaimed.

The room fell silent everybody was looking around to see if anyone had an explanation of what just happened.

"Please Sirka get us to a safer place."

The warp drive started to activate and they moved to a destination unknown.

When they arrived at planet II a signal was picked up.

"Sir we are picking up an emergency broadcast signal do you want me to play it?" Woric asked. Nicho nodded and an audio started playing.

"This is the Serpentis Corporation Megathron Vigilance we have come under heavy fire and are currently hiding out in a safe spot of space. We need emergency repairs. Most of our systems seem to be working but parts of the ship have buckled."

"Can you trace this signal to its origin Mr. Woric?" Nicho asked after the file started looping and Woric ended the sequence.

Woric frowned his eyebrows and slowly spoke. "Yes this should be possible. If I adjust a few scanning probes to pick up ship signatures it should be possible.

"Then I want you to find this ship for me Mr. Woric. I will be in my office is anyone needs me."

Nicho left the bridge and walked down the long hallway. He felt aggressive, something he did not feel very often but this time it had no explanation. He took a shower and hoped it would wash off.

Moments later the terminal went up in his office and Woric appeared on the screen.

"Sir it's best if you come to the bridge immediately."

Nicho sped as fast he could to the bridge and was stunned by what they had found on the screen. The screen displayed scan results and they were all over the system.

"I suspect that there are thousands of these machines, aliens or who knows what. Whatever they are there are lots of them."

The entire screen was full of signals throughout the entire system. One signal stepped out it was dead in the center of an empty spot.

"Is that the ship we are looking for?" Nicho asked pointing at the lone spot.

"I think so but we can't be sure." Woric said with his hand on his bearded chin.

"Let's check it out then." Nicho said "Get us in close Mrs. Adrona."

Sirka nodded quietly and the ship moved towards the signal.

When they arrived out of warp they saw exactly what they expected.

The Megathron was heavily damaged and one of the wings had broken off which was spinning close to the side of it.

“Get us in closer I want to have a look at this vessel.”

The giant battleship dwarfed the small covert ops frigate as they moved in closer.

“I am performing a scan of the ship. Reactors fully intact and working, the engines seem to be disconnected somehow. Life support system online. Weapons offline they have been overloaded and melted. This ship is going nowhere but it could still support a crew.” Woric said checking his data. “Do you want me to try and scan for life signals Captain?”

Nicho nodded. Woric started the scan.

“I am picking up life signals!” Woric said as he looked up to Nicho “Well one life signal. What should we do?”

Nicho looked at the giant wreck in front of them and spoke: “We need to save him whoever he is, we are going in.”

Chapter 2 –
Coming soon!