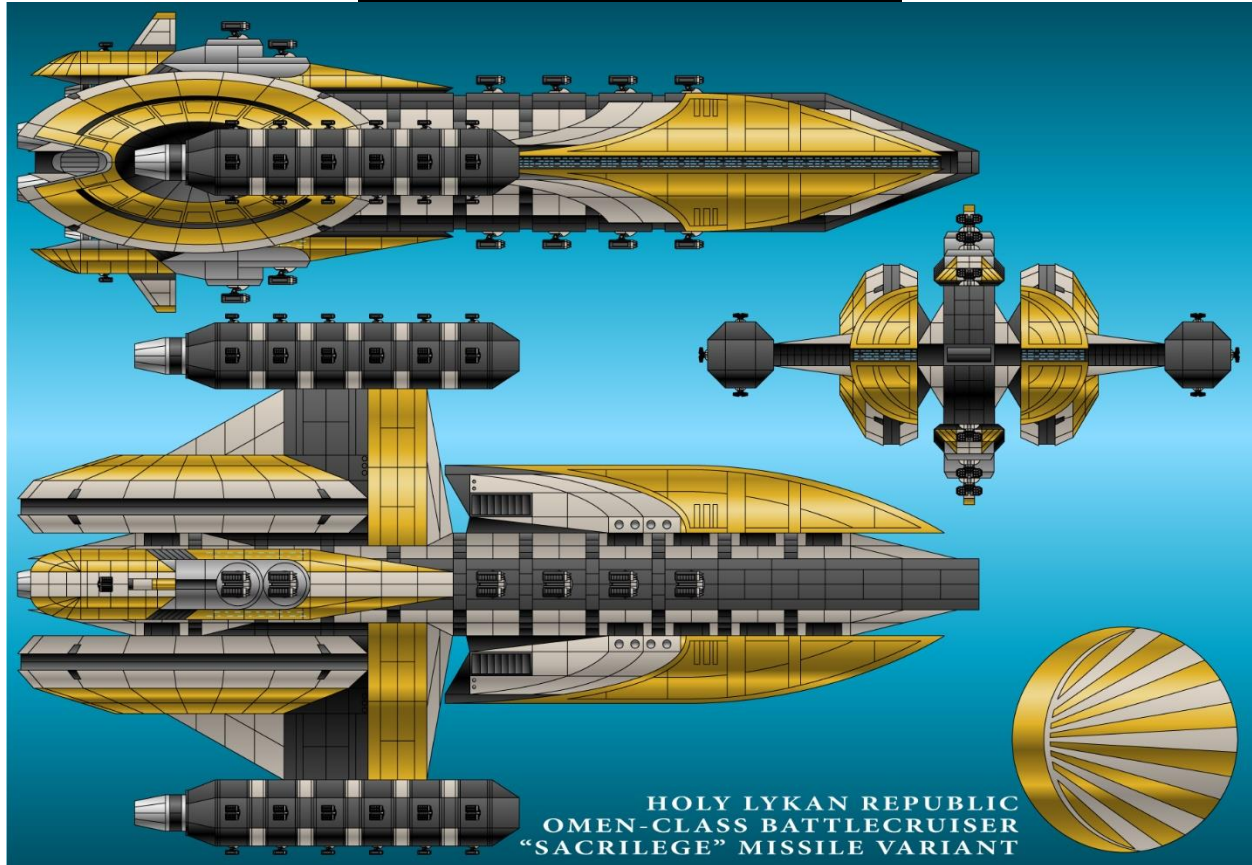


***Warring Factions: The Novus Initium Saga
Episode V: The Fox's State and Mandate***



PART 5

*Spaceport #4, West Sector, City of Freedom (translated)
New Vita Orbit, Capital System, Capital of United Vitam State
5:49pm, March 14, 5434 A.D.*

“So, this is the capital of the United Vitam State.”

Korveco took in the looks of the large spaceport, one of four that allowed access in and out of the orbital city of Freedom. Korveco read up about the city and the name it was given on the way to their destination to not look too out-of-place. However, one look at his clothing would be enough for anyone to see that he was not from the State. Korveco could look around just as much to see the lack of any decorations or advertisements that the “no culture” policy of the Executive Council has put into place.

Korveco had to deal with the customs officials once he and Drino entered State territory from Tranquillus. However, it appears the Council, or rather one of the Councilors, had wanted the two to continue to New Vita after they were checked without detaining Korveco. It seemed that someone managed to convince the rest of the Council to hear what Korveco had to say. This would make it a little easier to see them, though Korveco had his reservations.

While they were still in NIR space, Supreme Chancellor Drew got in contact with them to give them an update about the Yintaka situation. Both Drino and Korveco were appalled about

the Council's decision for what Drew said was a "kill or be killed" situation after the Council found out that their fleet had failed. Trent's forces had managed to put up a jamming field to keep the State fleet from receiving the self-destruct codes since they did not follow the Council's orders. What puzzled Korveco at least was that this was the same Council that wanted to see him after their orders to their fleet were sent. It did not make any sense at all and that is what worried him and Drino.

Korveco could not shake the feeling that he was walking into a trap somehow. Whether he was indeed walking into one or not remained to be seen.

"Are you alright?" Drino asked. "You look a little concerned?"

"I feel like this is all some sort of setup or trap," Korveco said. "The Council is willing to see me but they are also willing to destroy their own fleet without much hesitation. I doubt any of them are bipolar or have split personalities, so I'm beginning to wonder if there is some underlying reason or reasons for their actions."

"Maybe but you need to be careful with what you say for now. Things have changed here, and the freedom of speech we had in the NIR no longer applies here. Any word against the Council or the way it runs things whether printed or spoken is subject to arrest and incarceration."

"Are you kidding me? This is sounding more like how the former Kingdom was like when it came to anything being said against the King or the Court."

"I know and that is what is disturbing me. This is starting to become far too familiar in what we were freeing ourselves from in the first place. Come. We better get going before we attract the wrong kind of attention speaking about this here."

"Very well. You are more familiar with this place than I do, so lead the way. I have to ask one thing though."

"What's that?"

"Why is it that this capital is orbiting above the planet and not on the planet itself?"

"It was for security purposes. If the former Kingdom ever reached New Vita, the capital can warp away to safety to ensure that the government and military infrastructure would not be compromised."

"I could say something about how that sounds to me, but I will hold my tongue as you suggested."

As they began to walk out of the terminal, Drino spotted someone approaching to his right. As he turned to look, he could tell that the person coming was not someone who was any of the races from the State. Instead, it was a Human male that was walking towards them. Drino recognized him from his earlier trips back to the State. This Human was Ambassador Wade from the NIR.

"Greetings," Wade said once he got close. "It is good to see you two have arrived."

"Thank you, Ambassador Wade," Drino said. "Allow me to introduce to you..."

"I know who he is," Wade said. "It is best not to say who he is out loud here due to the current political tensions that exists."

"You make a valid point," Drino said.

"So you are Ambassador Wade," Korveco said. "It is a pleasure to meet you finally. I heard there were two of you. Where is your wife?"

"Autumn is back at our residence," Wade said. "If both of us are here, it would give the State police reason to quickly deport us. With her there, they know I am coming back, especially since I told them I was meeting you two here. I only told them Drino's name, though."

“Very well,” Korveco said. “We don’t have time to waste. We need to meet with the Council immediately.”

“I know,” Wade said. “I got updated about the Yintaka situation and the orders the Council has issued for their own fleet’s demise for not following previous orders. I don’t know if the jammers are holding or not, so we need to hurry and meet the Councilors before their fleet receives those transmissions and self-destructs.”

“Is a transport ready to take us there?” Drino asked.

“Yes. My wife will meet us in front of the Council room’s doors once we are close.”

“Very well. Let us make haste to meet with the Executive Council to get this resolved before matters become worse.”

* * * * *

Hallway to State Executive Council Room, State Assembly Hall, City of Freedom (translated)
New Vita Orbit, Capital System, Capital of United Vitam State
6:25pm, March 14, 5434 A.D.

“I was beginning to wonder if you were going to make it on time.”

Autumn stood some distance from the doors of the Executive Council Room waiting for Wade, Drino, and Korveco to arrive. It normally does not take too long to go from one of the spaceports to the capital building itself but obviously something delayed them. Considering the nature of the “visitor” to the Council, it was likely the security in the building.

“Sorry about that,” Wade said as the trio got close. “They scanned all three of us down to make sure we were not bringing anything we were not supposed to be bringing in.”

“Between one of us that was supposed to be deported,” Autumn said, “someone who is a supposed ‘traitor’ to the State, and someone who leaked the attack on Yintaka, I can see why they would go to such lengths. They did the same thing to me when I got here.”

“Speaking of which,” Korveco said, “any word about Yintaka?”

Autumn looked at the two Zaurion guards posted at the door several meters away before turning back to the trio.

“There has not been any confirmation that I have heard about Admiral Bridneo’s fleet being destroyed,” she said. “This leads me to believe that the Trent’s forces are thus far succeeding in keeping that from happening. However, there is a chance that the State may find a way to compensate for it.”

“Then we need to talk to the Council now,” Drino said. “I want you two in there as well when Drino and Korveco go in. I would feel more confident with both of you being there for support.”

“Very well,” Wade said. “Let’s do this.”

Autumn nodded in agreement. She turned towards the door and walked towards it with Drino, Korveco, and Wade following behind. They stopped a few feet from the door.

“We are here to see the Council,” Drino said. “Let us pass.”

The Zaurions looked at each other before the one on their left pulled out his communication device and pressed a few buttons. The Zaurion got a confirmation tone before putting the device back on the clip. The doors soon opened for the four visitors. The room was still dark as they entered with lights shining on the top of the podiums. Unlike the last time Wade and Autumn were in here earlier today, all five of the Councilors were present to hear them out. To Wade and Autumn, it meant that they were taking the matter seriously this time.

What Wade and Autumn noticed though as they looked at all the Councilors' faces was the fact of how surprisingly calm they were. This was a bit disturbing given the series of events that have occurred today. The two of them were beginning to worry if the Council had some other agenda like what Korveco said. Korveco expressed his thoughts on the way here to Wade and Wade is beginning to think that Korveco was right.

"Well now," Miclud finally said after the doors closed. "This is quite the menagerie we have here before us today. We have a Vitam that practically gave away our plans of attacking Yintaka, another Vitam who he and his fellow compatriots are practically traitors for forming their own nation outside of the State with help from the enemy, and a traitorous nation who, I might add, has two representatives still here after they have been ordered to be deported."

Korveco and the others' faces were suddenly starting to show signs of anger but they tried to quell it as this may be what the Council wanted: a sign of weakness and acknowledgement that they were right. The last thing Korveco needed was for the Council to take control of this meeting so soon.

"Initially," Miclud continued, "I as well as three others did not want to grant you this audience with this Council. However, Councilor Cuborah deemed it necessary to hear you out as you willingly travelled here, Korveco of the Liberigi Mandate, knowing the risks involved. To that end, this meeting is being broadcasted throughout the State because we want the whole nation to hear what the pleas of a traitor sound like before we determine your fate."

Korveco was right all along. This was a trap and this was starting to feel like he was in some sort of trial for the Mandate's actions. However, he was here for a reason and if the entire State is watching, this makes it even better. Korveco had reviewed the transmissions that Trent sent out in Yintaka that convinced the State forces there to stand down. Now it was time to take those same words and convince the Council the same.

"You say I am here to plead with you all," Korveco said. "However, what I am about to say are not pleas, but for you all to open your eyes to the events that have unfolded around you."

"We are fully aware of the events that have unfolded, Korveco," Miclud said. "The Yintaka operation to exterminate the Lykans was a failure due to the indiscreet method of Drino's questioning of the NIR's Supreme Chancellor concerning their delivery of planetary shield generators to our enemy. This act alone by Drino was not in the interest of the State and has costed us dearly in our efforts to exterminate the Lykans."

"I'm not referring to Yintaka, Councilor. At least, not right now."

"Then what are you referring to, Korveco?"

"You have been referring to the Lykans as your enemy, but are they still? Tell me, how was this nation known as the United Vitam State formed?"

Miclud and the rest of the Council looked a bit puzzled about the question but Miclud decided to answer the question anyway.

"Just to clarify, the State was formed after the Slave Revolt decades ago to secure our freedom after being enslaved for centuries by the then Royal Lykan Kingdom. Sometime afterwards, the Kingdom found our worlds and we began our war with the Lykans to remain free so that we will not be slaves again."

"What happened when the war ended, then?"

"Who said the war ended? We are still at war despite the consensus of the other nations that the so-called First Interstellar War ended with the death of the Lykan King and the Royal Court along with the Royal Lykan Kingdom being reformed into the current Holy Lykan Republic. Our goal is the extermination of the Lykan race from the star cluster."

“That is strange, isn’t it?”

“What do you mean strange? What is strange about our goal?”

“I say that because just a moment ago, you said your war with the Lykans was to remain free and not be enslaved again per the Kingdom’s policy. You didn’t say that the State was formed to create a force meant to exterminate the Lykans to begin with.”

Miclud looked at the other Councilors who was just as equally puzzled by what Korveco said. Miclud thought back about his words and realized Korveco was right. The State wasn’t formed with the intent of the Lykan’s extinction, not at the time of its forming. The military was just barely large enough to hold the Lykans at bay. It wasn’t enough of a force to even think of a counteroffensive against the Lykans at the time.

Suddenly, that same splitting headache from before hit all the Councilors at once. The questioning thoughts they all had suddenly went away, replaced with anger once again towards the Lykans and their allies.

Korveco and the others noticed the reactions the Councilors had to what they could perceive was like a headache. For all of them to have it at once meant that something was going on, like some sort of conditioning. Korveco remembered Drew’s words that Trent thought the Council was under some sort of influence and he may have been right.

Miclud, now filled with rage, spoke up.

“We determined a long time ago,” Miclud said, “that to finally achieve freedom, the Lykans must die. That is why it is our goal and will continue to be so.”

“You say that they must die,” Korveco said, “but for what reason now?”

“What do you mean? We are fighting to remain free and to not be enslaved by them again!”

“You say that, but you realize now that your statement is no longer valid?”

“Valid? It has ALWAYS been valid! After what the Lykans had done to our ancestors, they deserve to die!”

“Your enemy, Councilor, from the moment the State was formed was the Royal Lykan Kingdom and its policies to enslave any race that is not their own. You are right that they had done terrible things, at least those Lykans who resorted to such acts. However, the enemy you fought for so many years no longer exists.”

“Don’t confuse this Council, Korveco! The Lykans still exist and therefore must be wiped out to ensure our safety!”

“Your war was against a nation that sought to reclaim their runaway slaves several decades ago. Tell me, does that nation still exist?”

“They may have changed their name but a Lykan is still a Lykan!”

“Oh really? Has the current Holy Lykan Republic attacked your borders after they changed?”

Miclud was about to say “yes” but stopped himself to think about if or when they did so. However, nothing started to come to mind as he thought about it.

“As far as I am aware of,” Korveco said, “they have not done so, not even once!”

“A minor technicality,” Miclud said. “They are just biding their time until their forces have returned to full strength.”

“Then I should ask what do you think they are waiting for?”

“How many times must I point the obvious? To enslave us again, of course!”

“Oh really? I want you to think about those words for just a moment and look at the person who is addressing you right now.”

“For what purpose?”

“If the Lykans really wanted to still enslave those races that are not their own, would I be standing here right now in front of you all? Would anyone in the Mandate be free to have their own military or government?”

Miclud wanted to respond, but once again, he and his fellow Councilors found themselves without a justifiable answer to the question. Korveco had a point. The current Lykan government would not have released the remaining slaves if they were still wanting to enslave others.

The headache soon came back however, and Miclud and the other Councilors displayed it physically once again. Korveco and the others could not dismiss this coincidence. Something was affecting the Councilors every time it looked like reasoning would prevail. He needed to give one more push to make them and the entire State realize something is wrong.

“Council,” Korveco said, “are you alright?”

“Yeah,” Miclud said as he and the others’ headaches subsided. “To answer your question, you and the Mandate are still slaves of the Lykans, but not in the same manner as before. You still answer to them, your ships were originally made by their nation, and you still worship their repulsive religion! You are still enslaved to their ideals and methods!”

“I will say this now that the standard of living in the Mandate is far better than what I have seen in the State!”

Korveco knew that his emotions were getting the better of him but he needed to drive this final point home and if signs of enthusiasm helped, then so be it.

“You want to know why no one in the Mandate wants to return to the State?” Korveco continued. “You talk about the fear of the Lykans enslaving you all but here I see that you, the Executive Council, have already done that to the people!”

“How dare you compare us to the Lykans in that tone?!”

“How dare you, sir! You all in your quest to make everyone hate the Lykans took away things that made this nation and each race unique in their own way! You took away their liberties, their culture, what made them who they are and the freedom their forefathers gave the citizens decades ago!”

“We need everyone to focus on exterminating the Lykans! Arts and entertainment are nothing but distractions from that goal!”

“You think taking those away just so the citizens can be more productive is a good thing? Those are the same liberties your forefathers were deprived of when we were enslaved! From my standpoint, you have turned the citizens into slaves for your hatred towards the Lykans! How does any of this make sense to any sane person regardless of race? Even now, despite your forces being unable to inflict damage in Yintaka, you want to kill them by making their ships self-destruct because they don’t want to attack a Human because of his actions based on limited information he had at the time!”

“If you are talking about that murderer named Trent, then yes, he deserves to die for killing our people on their home planets!”

“Trent thought he was saving them! You all even told Drino who was part of the committee at the time to proceed when Trent came across the first planet Zauria and the orbital platform! Did you forget that fact?”

Miclud and the rest of the committee were suddenly in shock as that realization suddenly hit them. Drino had contacted them while Trent was in command of the stealth vessel *Templar* when Trent reached Zauria and the orbital station the Lykans had there at the time. The Council

did not request for any additional information as they were too eager to liberate their worlds. In other words, the Council, not Trent, were the ones ultimately responsible.

Once more, a headache came back to the Councilors all at once, this time more severe than the others. Their anguish this time was more audible. Korveco needed to address this now while the whole State was watching.

“Councilors! This is now the third time you all have had a headache all at once! Something has affected you all for you to have this same problem at the exact same time! Whatever it is that is affecting you has most likely been affecting your ability to lead this nation and led to the choices you have been making! You need to fight it!”

“Why...does my head hurt...so much?” Miclud said under intense agony. “Everything...you have said...is true, but...every time we realize our...mistakes, this headache appears! No amount of...pain relieve medication has helped!”

“Guards!” Drino yelled towards the doors.

The doors quickly opened as the two Zaurions rushed in. They both were watching the transmission so they knew what was going on inside the room.

“Get the paramedics here, fast!” Drino said. “Get the Councilors to the hospital quickly!”

“Right away, Ambassador!” one of the guards said as he got his communicator out to call for medical help.

One by one, the Councilors started to pass out from the headache with Miclud being the last one. They were all still breathing which was a good sign that they were not dead. Within a couple of minutes, the paramedics had arrived and proceeded to take the Councilors to the hospital. As soon as the last Councilor was taken away, Drino approached the guards.

“Something or someone has affected the Councilors’ minds,” he said. “I want an investigation done on this room, their rooms, this entire building to find anything or anyone with the means or equipment that could be used for mental conditioning.”

“Yes, sir!” the guards said as they rushed off.

Drino moved over to a communications panel on the side of the room. It was the one used to transmit the meeting to the entire State. Now was his chance to fix a lot of the problems the Council had done for the time being until the Councilors could be treated.

“I am sending this message to the entire State, the Mandate, the Empire, and both Republics. It has come to our attention as we have all witnessed that the actions of the Executive Council appear to be the result of some form of mental conditioning. As such, the policies and actions of the Council has now been put under question as they were not made under the most sound minds and judgement. Therefore, we will be working to undo the damage made by the Councilors. As such, I am requesting first and foremost for the heads of our military to call off the self-destruct codes being sent to Bridneo’s fleet. The order to terminate the life of Vice Admiral Trent of the Novus Initium Republic is also being dismissed as his actions were approved by the Council beforehand and thus he is not responsible for them. The fleet sent to Yintaka will also be recalled and no disciplinary action will be taken for their failure to follow orders. As for the orders involving no culture and restricted rights that have been put into place, we will be working to fix those issues until the Councilors are either fit to govern or are replaced. As an ambassador, my authority can only do so much but I will try to right the wrongs that we have committed against each other and other nations. Thank you.”

Drino deactivated the console and turned to look at Korveco, Wade, and Autumn.

“When it comes to the line of who should lead should something happen to the government,” Drino said, “we never did establish a definitive line of succession in that regards.”

“Why is that?” Wade said.

“It is because we never figured all five Councilors would be unable to report for duty. With five of them, if one was either killed somehow or sick, the others could still handle matters until they were replaced or returned. All five of them being incapacitated was something that was deemed ‘inconceivable.’ I guess we should have thought it through a bit better.”

“So does that make you the only government official to the Executive Council to help lead this nation?” Korveco asked.

“It does for the time being but I will probably request for the Representatives Parliament to select someone as a temporary leader until the Councilors have either recovered or need to be replaced. I can only do so much though until they select someone, but I will try to help fix things up. Now that the whole State knows the Councilors were not in their right minds, maybe things will change for the better. I cannot declare an end to the hostilities since only the Council in full can make that decision, but I can request for a cease-fire for the time being. I will try to see if the Parliament can act on formally ceasing them in light of the recent developments.”

“What about culture?” Autumn asked.

“That is going to take some time. The Council had restricted a lot of the lawmaking that Parliament could do when it came to culture. I can’t change it considering my authority is only temporary until someone is officially selected to run things. At that point the decree for there to be no culture can be withdrawn and the Parliament can work things out from there.”

“Let me ask you this,” Korveco said. “Why hasn’t Parliament tried to curb the control the Council has? A lot of the issues would never have gotten this bad.”

“I tend to agree but the Council’s authority supersedes the Parliament and they usually have the final word on a lot of issues and lawmaking in the State. This included the changes that you have seen thus far including when to declare an end to the war. Considering what has happened, this needs to be changed to provide some stability in the level of power between these different branches of our government. We can’t have this happen again.”

“I tend to agree. Getting back to the topic of culture, though, I wonder if I might make a proposition for you to bring to Parliament.”

“I’m listening.”

“Over the past few months, the Mandate has managed to come up with a culture of our own. However, a good amount of it was based on Lykan culture, though we put our own flair to it. If your Parliament is willing, maybe we can help infuse some of this culture into the State?”

“I appreciate the gesture but that might not be good right now. There is a lot of questions we need answers for right now and we need to work this out on our own. Once we have straightened things out, we will work on our relations with the other nations whether it be through Parliament, their selected leader, or the Council should they recover or be replaced by then. At that point, we will look into the matter of cultural influences from other nations. I think though that there would be some concern with culture coming originally from the Lykans in the State after our nation worked so hard to remove such influences in the first place.”

“I can understand that. It appears though that Trent was right about someone or something affecting the Council’s judgement and decisions. How did no one notice it before?”

“The Council usually holds its meetings behind closed doors so generally no one would have seen them have these headaches. Hopefully we will get an answer as to what caused this whole thing to begin with, how to fix it, and catch whoever it was that brought this upon the Council.”

“So what’s our next move?” Wade asked.

“I would say contact your nations and see if Trent’s fleet is still detecting the self-destruct codes being sent. If they had not seen the transmissions of what happened here, let them know that as well. I will contact the Lykan government directly in a moment to see about Bridneo’s fleet using their gate in Yintaka to return but let me check with our Parliament first before I proceed any further with the matter.”

“Very well. What about our deportation that the Council ordered?”

“Consider it no longer the case. Now hurry. There is a lot of work for us to do to fix the mess that was created by this fiasco.”

* * * * *

Bridge, R.N.S. Renaldo, Paladin-Class Battleship

Yintaka IV Outer Lunar Orbit, Yintaka System, Holy Lykan Republic, Eastern Region

6:57pm, March 14, 5434 A.D.

“So we have confirmation that the transmissions have ceased?”

Trent had been waiting to hear from headquarters about Drino and Korveco’s meeting with the Executive Council for a while now. Grand Admiral Mikey just contacted Trent’s fleet and informed him of what took place involving the Council and what had transpired at New Vita. After being told that Drino ordered the transmissions of the self-destruct codes to Bridneo’s fleet to cease, Trent requested for Ro to check on that to make sure the transmissions had indeed stopped.

“I have confirmation,” Ro said. “I’m not detecting any transmissions from the State containing self-destruct codes.”

“That’s a relief,” Trent said.

“However, I am detecting transmissions that look to be orders to withdraw from this system.”

“I see. That coincides with the Grand Admiral’s report. Very well. Chrystal, deactivate the jammers. Ro, get me Bridneo once they are offline. He will need to know what is going on.”

“Yes, sir,” Chrystal and Ro said.

Shannon turned in her chair to face Trent.

“I wonder if you are gloating a little bit inside, sir,” Shannon said.

“About what?” Trent asked.

“About how you were right that the Council was being influenced? Admit it.”

Trent let out a small laugh.

“Okay, I am a little bit. It just made sense to me, that’s all.”

“Jammers are now offline,” Chrystal said.

“I’ve established contact with Bridneo, sir,” Ro said.

“Put him through,” Trent said.

A holographic screen soon appeared in front of the main screen with Bridneo appearing on it. He looked a little worried.

“*Vice Admiral Trent,*” Bridneo said. “*I hope that the jammers being deactivated is a good sign.*”

“It is,” Trent said. “Apparently I was right. Something has influenced the Council’s decisions concerning the Lykans and the way they have been handling things lately. They suffered a severe headache and became unconscious while doing a live broadcast throughout the State while Drino and Korveco were speaking to them. Drino has assumed control of the State

for the time being until the Representatives Parliament can pick someone officially to cover the position until the Councilors have either recovered or have been replaced. He also ordered the transmissions of the self-destruct codes for your ships to cease which we have confirmed. He did order your fleet to return to State-controlled space and your fleet would not face any repercussions for your actions.”

“That is a huge relief. Have they figured out how the Councilors were influenced?”

“Not yet. They were rushed to the hospital where they are being treated and checked on. Drino has said that he would keep the leaders of the other nations informed about the situation.”

“I understand, but will the Lykans allow us to use their gate to leave this system?”

“I was told that Drino would contact the HLR concerning that matter. I don’t know what they have decided on so you would have to ask Zindalo since this is his jurisdiction.”

“I understand. Thank you, Trent. I hope we will meet again someday. I take it you have been requested to return to your nation?”

“Grand Admiral Mikey requested that my fleet returns once we disengaged the jammers and brought you up-to-date with what has happened.”

“I see. I wish you safe journeys back home.”

“You, too, Bridneo. Farewell.”

The holographic screen disappeared. Trent took a deep breath.

“Maybe now we will finally have peace,” he said.

“Do you think Bridneo and his fleet will be okay?” Shannon asked.

“If the Lykans have truly reformed, there should not be any problem. The Mandate forces are still in the system so they should be able to help coax the Lykans otherwise if needed.”

“Very well, sir.”

“Ryan, set a course back home, the same way we came.”

“Yes, sir,” Ryan said.

Trent activated the fleet communications system.

“This is fleet command to all NIR ships,” Trent said. “Set course back to base the same way we came. Assume multiple star gate jump formation and prepare for warp when ready.”

Trent deactivated the fleet communications system.

“Ryan,” he said, “whenever you are ready.”

“Aye-aye, sir,” Ryan said. “Activating warp drive.”

“Ro, send a message to headquarters informing them we are on our way back.”

“Yes, sir,” Ro said.

As the *Renaldo* activated its warp drive, Trent leaned back in his chair. He would be home soon and Laura would be happy about that.

* * * * *

5th Floor Waiting Room, State General Hospital, City of Freedom (translated)

New Vita Orbit, Capital System, Capital of United Vitam State

7:25pm, March 14, 5434 A.D.

“I wonder how long it would take them to figure out the problem?”

Wade and Autumn went to the hospital where the Councilors were taken to wait and see what the results were of how the Councilors were influenced or manipulated. They had already contacted Supreme Chancellor Drew concerning the matter and what had occurred. It was Drew’s suggestion that they go to the hospital so that they could find out who was responsible

and how. They had waited for over thirty minutes so far, though the Councilors had been there longer than that. Korveco had joined them after he had contacted the Mandate Consulate about the situation as well. The only one not present was Drino but he still had much to do in trying to run the State now that almost everyone had seen what transpired not too long ago.

News reports were airing on the monitors about what had occurred and the citizens of the State were coming up with their own conclusions as to what transpired. Most theories proved viable ranging from transmissions being beamed into the minds of the Councilors to nanomachines they were injected into their minds. Some however were a bit too far-fetched including the possibility that one of the other nations were somehow responsible. If that were the case, why would they make the State an enemy to all?

Many topics came up alongside the one about the Councilors including culture, entertainment, freedom of speech, and other liberties and rights that had been taken away by the Council only to be brought into question under the circumstances. Many citizens have stated that if the decision to remove all those rights and freedoms were due to outside influence or control that they were to be reinstated immediately. On that notion, practically everyone, including the other nations, can agree on that.

Wade looked at the time displayed on one of the wall monitors again. Not much time had passed since he last looked. They all suddenly heard footsteps coming down the hall but the steps were not coming from the direction of the rooms the Councilors were being held. A Vitam soon came around the corner of the door and was quickly recognized by the three of them.

Wade stood up.

“Drino?” he asked. “Why are you here? I thought you had matters to attend to.”

“The Representatives Parliament has taken control of the State for the time being until the Councilors are either recovered or replaced,” Drino said. “They deemed it better this way than having a lone individual in charge for the time being. I tend to concur with the Head of Parliament that it is for the best.”

“So, you are back to being an ambassador, huh?”

“Let’s just say I feel better representing the State than leading it. Parliament was not entirely happy with me issuing some of those decrees earlier, but they decided it was better to get them done quickly than wait any longer with what was happening. By the way, any word as to the condition of the Councilors?”

“Not yet. We’ve been here for over thirty minutes and they know we are here for them to report their condition to.”

“I hope then that they tell us soon, because we need answers right...”

Before Drino could finish his sentence, several footsteps could be heard running down the hall from the direction of the operating rooms. All four of them looked out the door as several people, supposedly doctors and nurses of all five races, were in radiation suits! All four of the ambassadors were puzzled by the site of them all. The one in front that looked to be an Esmu stepped forward with what appeared to be a radiation scanner.

“Are you four the ones who were with the Councilors in the broadcast?” a male voice said behind the helmet.

“Yes, we are,” Drino said. “What is with that outfit?”

“Please hold still while we take a scan of all four of you. I will explain once the scan is complete.”

The doctor pointed the radiation scanner at each ambassador for almost ten seconds a piece. It gave a negative tone to each one of them after it completed the scan. Once all four were scanned by the doctor, he looked at the rest of the staff behind him.

“All clear,” he said. “Go back to the patients and run more tests.”

The staff bowed in acknowledgement before heading back the way they came. The Esmu doctor turned back towards the ambassadors and took off his helmet, his mane still trimmed and groomed.

“I’m sorry for the shock in our appearance,” he said. “I am Doctor Sparle.”

“Why did you test us for radiation?” Drino asked. “What did you find out about the Councilors?”

“We’ve discovered that each one of them had intense amounts of electromagnetic radiation around their heads. We are trying to figure out where this radiation is coming from as it appears to be affecting their minds in ways we have not seen before.”

“What do you mean?”

“Radiation such as this generally is caused by being within close proximity to devices that lack the proper screens to keep radiation contained. Devices such as communicators that lack the proper shielding to keep radiation from transmissions contained could cause this. However, the amount we are seeing is far greater than that. Also, the radiation samples we have taken shows it is not your typical EM radiation we are dealing with here.”

“Can you be specific by what you mean by that?” Wade asked.

“Wherever this EM radiation came from, it does more than just generally affect the brain. This radiation seems to be ‘programmed’ to make the one affected do what they were told, though transmission or suggestion. Someone literally made a method of mind control using EM radiation to do so.”

“Radiation that can actually alter and control the mind intentionally?” Korveco asked. “Who would have the technology to do that?”

“From what I know,” Wade said, “there isn’t a single nation with that capability, not even in the NIR. Could a rogue scientist develop such a thing?”

“If they could,” Sparle said, “their level of technology would be several centuries ahead of any known technology that I could think of.”

“I will have to warn the investigation teams of potential EM radiation,” Drino said. “If they can find where the Councilors were when affected, it may point us in the right direction. What about treatments?”

“We have nanomachine radiation scrubbers working both inside and outside their minds right now to absorb and remove the radiation but it appears as though they have been affected for a while that this could result in permanent brain damage to all five of them. We are considering other treatments to try to reverse this but I can tell you now that I doubt any of them will be fit to be Councilors again.”

“Then we need replacements after all. I will have to inform the Parliament of this as soon as possible but we need to find out where they were subjected to this before we select new Councilors. Excuse me.”

Drino left the room and proceeded down the hall to the right. Korveco stood up.

“Doctor,” he said, “can I ask a question?”

“Go ahead.”

“How long does EM radiation usually linger in the body after death?”

Sparle raised an eyebrow as Wade and Autumn looked at Korveco with odd expressions.

“That is an unusual question,” Sparle said, “but generally depending on how well the body is preserved after death, traces of it could remain on the body for a long time, maybe even centuries. Why do you ask?”

Korveco was in thought for a moment before looking at Wade and Autumn.

“I remember some of the history of the Lykans and how they came to enslave our worlds. I remembered how King Kseriki the Third had suddenly decided to alter the interpretations of their holy texts to where slavery was considered a holy decree. However, there is a little-known fact that the King several years later died from what doctors back then considered a physical deterioration of the mind. No one knew why it was caused as radiation was the last thing on people’s minds when they were trying to treat him. His son rose to power afterwards and continued the enslavement of the other worlds while King Kseriki the Third was buried on their home planet in the Mausoleum of the Kings.”

“Wait a minute,” Autumn said. “Are you suggesting that Kseriki was affected in the same manner? That was centuries ago! Most of our races hadn’t met each other at the time!”

“Maybe so, but it is worth investigating. If King Kseriki the Third was affected the same way as the Councilors, it means that there is an unseen party that is toying with us all.”

Korveco faced Doctor Sparle.

“Thank you, Doctor, for your assistance. Please keep us informed of any changes to the Councilors.”

“I will keep you all informed,” Sparle said.

Korveco walked out of the waiting room and headed in the same direction as Drino did. Sparle looked at Wade and Autumn.

“I must get back to my patients,” Sparle said. “Feel free to head back to your accommodations if you want. I will keep you informed as well.”

“Thank you,” Wade said. “We will be leaving shortly.”

Sparle bowed and proceeded out of the waiting room. Wade sat back down next to Autumn for a moment.

“This is rather big news,” Wade said. “If the technology behind this is more advanced than what the NIR has developed, we could be dealing with a more technologically advanced race than any of our nations.”

“So, what do we do if there is such a race?” Autumn asked.

“I don’t know, but we need to let the Supreme Chancellor know about this as well. All of our nations will need to keep an eye out for such things if we are to keep this from happening to any of our leaders.”

* * * * *

*Office of the Supreme Chancellor, Republic Parliament Building, Capital City of Luminous Planet Luminaire, Lumen System, Capital of Novus Initium Republic
8:25am, March 15, 5434 A.D. (The Next Day)*

“I didn’t think this would really be happening.”

Drew arrived at his office less than thirty minutes ago and already he was receiving updates that he was not expecting. Yesterday was already eventful with some revelations as to why the State’s Executive Council was behaving the way it was. The discovery of the electromagnetic radiation around their heads that could be programmed to alter their brains to allow for outside suggestions and/or influences was unprecedented! Scientists from all the

nations are gearing up to flock to New Vita to investigate the samples to determine how this was done and to find ways to prevent it from happening to their own leaders.

When Drew was told this, he requested immediately to be tested to make sure that he did not already have the radiation. The doctors came in and scanned him, but there were no signs of the radiation. Forneido and Orbinai were also informed of what happened to the Councilors and informed their own leaders to get scanned for the radiation. So far, they didn't have it either.

However, when Drew told Forneido about the possibility that King Kseriki the Third may have suffered the same radiation centuries ago that the Executive Council had, Forneido had his reservations of requesting the Prime Minister to have an excavation and scanning team dig up the remains of King Kseriki the Third to test for the EM radiation. Forneido went ahead and made the request, making it clear that he could not promise that the Prime Minister would oblige the request.

Much to the surprise of Forneido, the Prime Minister agreed with the request! The Prime Minister believed that if it can be proven that Kseriki was manipulated the same way as the Councilors centuries ago, it meant that the Lykans were victims of the same crime that resulted in the enslavement of five innocent races that did not need to be enslaved in the first place! The Prime Minister was quick to get the teams assembled and sent to the Mausoleum of the Kings to begin their work throughout the night. They managed to open up the tomb with Kseriki's corpse and began their work on scanning his skull. The Prime Minister provided his results to Forneido early this morning, who in turn just provided Drew with the results.

The results proved positive of the same EM radiation that was affecting the Councilors.

The revelation of this news shocked Drew, but it was finally answering some very old questions as to why the Lykans resorted to slavery centuries ago. Forneido and Orbinai were sitting in front of Drew's desk and even Orbinai was surprised about this news.

"As much as I have a hard time admitting it," Forneido said, "the fact that we were manipulated so long ago into perverting our own religion in such a fashion actually fills me with rage. Whoever it was that is responsible for this atrocity is going to pay dearly for messing with my people!"

"The problem is finding out who did it in the first place," Drew said. "These two occurrences are centuries apart yet the same technology was used based in the samples taken from all of those that were affected. It has to be the same person or race or someone who at least has access to the technology used to do this."

"So, what do we do now?" Orbinai asked. "This could happen to any leader of any nation between now and the next several centuries. Do all of our leaders including yourself have to live in fear of being manipulated like Kseriki and the Councilors?"

"I hope not. If we can figure out how they made this happen, it would be a starting point in finding ways to defend against that happening again."

"What about Drino and the State?" Forneido asked. "Should we tell them this information?"

"I will leave that up to you and Drino to break the news. I was told it was Korveco who brought the possibility of Kseriki being affected into question which led to this discovery. This may also help quell the hatred between your nations knowing that you all were manipulated as well."

"Very well. I will get in contact with him right now. Is there anything else I should know before I get in contact with Drino?"

"Not that comes to mind right now, but do keep me informed if anything happens."

“I will,” Forneido said as he got up from the chair. “I will see you all later.”

Forneido headed for the door and left Drew’s office. Orbinai looked over at Drew.

“I wonder how my Emperor will react once he hears about this news?” she said.

“It may be best to go and find out,” Drew said. “I have to report to the Senate about the events that have transpired yesterday in the next couple of hours. That is not a meeting I am looking forward to.”

“I figured not, based on body language alone. I better go and let my government know about these developments. Whether they will become less isolated or not, I do not have an answer for.”

“Who knows? Anyway, you go on ahead. I need time to prepare for the meeting.”

“Very well. I will leave you to it.”

Orbinai got up from the seat she was in and bowed.

“I will talk with you later,” she said as she turned and headed out the door.

As soon as the doors closed, Drew’s expression changed into a serious one. He pressed the button of the intercom to his secretary.

“Please hold all my incoming calls and meetings,” Drew said. “I have a private call to make and a Senate meeting to prepare for.”

“Yes, sir,” the secretary said.

Drew pressed the intercom button again to turn it off. He then looked at his terminal and pressed a few buttons. Within seconds, an image appeared of Head Agent Aja from the RCIA on it. She also had a serious expression on her face.

“I take it no one else is in the room?” Aja asked.

“Forneido and Orbinai just left my office to go to talk to their governments,” Drew said. “The unique EM radiation found on the Councilors was also found on the remains of King Kseriki the Third. There is someone else manipulating the events of both the Lykans and the State but there is no evidence thus far as to who it is and what they intend to accomplish.”

“This is disturbing news. Despite how far we have advanced, not even our science can do what has affected the Councilors. Thankfully, we have operatives among the researchers who are at New Vita analyzing and cataloguing the samples for further examination. However, that is not the reason I needed to talk to you.”

“Does this have to do with the any part of the Yintaka incident?”

“No, it does not. This is a matter that could very well affect the security of our Republic.”

“Very well. Does this matter need to be reported to the Senate?”

“Not now. Yesterday, the RCIA was alerted about an article being accessed in the Grand Central Library, one that had historical content that was deemed questionable and dangerous.”

“Why is such content in the Library if that is a problem?”

“The article was published by a news agency at the time. Once records are archived in the Library, they cannot be modified or deleted.”

“What was the article about and who accessed it?”

“The one who access the article was one of the historical librarians by the name of Amarria.”

“Amarria? Isn’t that the daughter of Vice Admiral Trent and Anchorwoman Laura?”

“The same one. I ran into both her and her mother at one of the cafes in downtown after getting the alert.”

“Oh, I bet Laura was not happy to see you there.”

“She wasn’t, but she along with Amarria knew I wouldn’t be there without a purpose.”

“So, tell me, what is this article about?”

“I know you would not have heard of them, but the article was about a group of cultists that were called the Tenebris.”

“The ancient Latin word for ‘dark.’ Cute. I haven’t heard of them before.”

“Nor would you. This group of sadistic cultists existed in Republic space over six hundred and fifty years ago.”

“What is it about them that warrants an alert for the RCIA and the lack of knowledge about them after so long?”

“The reason behind that is what I wanted to talk to you about and the possible threat they may pose if they still existed. The group was made of six families that followed some believe that long life and spiritual enlightenment existed in the code of Human blood. I’ll save you some of the details and give you a full report to review later. They established a colony during the Expansion Era but after a while, they started kidnapping Humans from other worlds for their ritual sacrifices. The military was called in to arrest them for their crimes but ended up destroying their city by orbital bombardment when those kidnapped could not be found. However, their colony was vacant with no trace of their whereabouts even after the bombardment. The file was considered closed by the RCIA at the time but they didn’t seem to want to bother with a follow-up on as to where the Tenebris families went.”

“The RCIA was that lax back then?”

“They were and it has taken decades to find those unsolved mysteries to reopen the investigations with trails that have long since grown cold.”

“Then tell me, what have you found out about their disappearance?”

“After researching the genealogy of the six families with Amarria, there is speculation that the Tenebris were indeed the first ones to develop a sustainable warp drive that many years ago. A good number of Tenebris members were experts in the fields of warp propulsion and mechanics. Their combined knowledge could have made it possible for that to happen.”

“So, you are saying they fled their planet before the military arrived?”

“Thanks to the sabotage of members of their families aboard the military ships at the time, it is possible they were able to escape undetected once the military ships arrived.”

“So then let me ask this: what sort of threat do the Tenebris hold after so many centuries, provided they have been able to survive?”

“If they have been continuing their research and worship of blood, there is a good chance that they may have in fact prolonged their lifespans and may even gone so far to improve other areas of biology on this research. This may also provide them the means to commit biological warfare where they would be immune but we would not be. There is also another possibility to consider.”

“What is that?”

“The Tenebris were experts in other fields aside from blood and warp drive. They were experts in multiple fields of science including radiobiology from what I have gathered.”

“Radiobiology? Wait, you’re not saying...?”

“The Tenebris fled Republic space six hundred and fifty years ago. The Lykans discovered and imprisoned the Vitams first over five hundred years ago. It would not be hard to theorize that the Tenebris may, in fact, be responsible for the actions of King Kseriki the Third as well as the State Councilors.”

“That is a very big hypothetical scenario when you consider that there is a lack of physical evidence to support that theory.”

“I know, and the last thing I want to do if give both the Lykans and the State reasons to suddenly hate Humans even if those Humans were no longer part of the Republic. This might however explain why their weapons and designs seem to suggest being inspired by Human designs, though.”

“Maybe, but we need hard evidence and the worst part is the fact that we don’t know where they went.”

“There is a chance they may reside in either the Western or Southwestern Regions. The Southern Region is obviously out of the question due to the gravitation fluctuations that isolate it from the rest of the cluster.”

“What about the Southeast Region? The State hasn’t explored that area in its entirety. Wouldn’t they be there considering the events that have unfolded?”

“Possibly, but those races were not known to us back then, and the original colony was not close to that region. That is why we think they are in the Western or Southwestern Regions unless they went their own separate ways. Those regions are still being explored by the Templar and the Cavalier, so I warn both ships to be on the lookout for them.”

“Very well. I’m glad you brought this to my attention but until we have evidence, the possible Tenebris connection as well as their existence will remain silent until otherwise.”

“I understand, Supreme Chancellor. I know you have a Senate meeting to prepare for concerning the Yintaka situation. I wish you luck with that.”

“Thanks,” Drew said depressingly.

As the terminal turned off, Drew reclined in his seat. If the Tenebris were responsible for the acts of enslavement that the Lykans had done as well as the continued war the State waged, then the only possible reason was to disrupt the NIR’s peace, to plunge both Human lives and resources into combat to deplete them and lose morale. No doubt the Tenebris would take the opportunity to start their own campaign against the NIR at full strength depending on how far along the Tenebris have grown and developed unhindered by Republic supervision and laws.

However, the last thing he needed was a scapegoat to put this on. One could always blame the “boogeyman” as the ancient saying goes but the fact is that putting the blame on a group that has not been seen or heard in centuries never goes well without proof and he needed that. For now, the culprits responsible for the EM radiation to manipulate King Kseriki the Third and the State Councilors will have to remain “unknown” until then.

Now comes the fun part: explaining this whole thing to the Senate.

* * * * *

*Private Residence of Laura and Trent, Tacoma Suburb District, North of Luminous Planet Luminare, Lumen System, Capital of Novus Initium Republic
10:25am, March 15, 5434 A.D.*

“I can’t believe I am hearing this.”

Trent’s fleet got back to Lumen late last night after returning from the Yintaka System after the battle and the subsequent fiasco that occurred there involving the Executive Council’s actions. Trent still had not heard what caused the Council to act the way they did or what happened to them after the Councilors were rushed to the hospital. The politicians were currently keeping quiet about the matter pending investigations. Trent had asked Grand Admiral Mikey what had happened when he arrived in the Lumen system but even the Grand Admiral was in the dark about what happened to the Councilors.

Trent and his crew were granted time off for a few days while the fleet was being repaired and resupplied, especially Cruiser Three-Five-Seven after the battle it went through in Yintaka. Trent came home after eleven at night and informed Laura ahead of time so that she was not shocked when he arrived. The last thing he needed to do was scare her. It was also good that she was off work the following day so that they could sleep in.

What Trent was not expecting to hear the following morning was who visited her and Amarria at lunch the day Trent was in Yintaka. When he was told Amarria and Laura were visited by Head Agent Aja of the RCIA, Trent was very upset. He called Amarria and asked for her to come to their home as soon as she could since she was also off today. Amarria arrived at their house after ten o'clock and told Trent that she had to help Aja with an investigation because of an article she had pulled up. While she told Trent that she was not to tell anyone else including him about the article, she decided it was best to tell him about the Tenebris.

They were sitting in the den by that point with Laura and Amarria sitting in the two-person couch opposite the window and Trent in one of the single person chairs.

"I'm sorry we had to tell you this after you got back," Laura said. "I was concerned what would happen if you somehow found out on your own and confronted us with it."

"It's fine," Trent said. "I'm just surprised that now the RCIA had to get Amarria involved, but considering the topic in question, I wonder if Amarria is to blame?"

"Hey!" Amarria said. "I didn't know that the RCIA had books and articles that would trigger an alert in their system! How was I to know that would happen?"

"Fair enough. Maybe we can blame your curiosity on that then?"

"Okay, I will give you that one."

"So, why were you so concerned about that article, anyway?"

"I was curious about the hardships and trials of the early colonists to such worlds during the Expansion Era. If there is one thing that always intrigues me, it was how people survived out there in the once-called frontier. It reminded me of the stories of how our ancestors started to explore this planet and later this system after enduring the hardships of migrating from Luna. For some reason, stories of struggles and determination to make a new life in unexplored territories always seem to fascinate me."

"I think that was due to some of the stories we told you when you were a child. That fascination kept with you throughout school when led to such good grades in history courses. I can't say the same for your math grades, though."

"Oh, come on!"

"I'm joking," Trent laughed. "At least I know why you were looking that up, but now I'm concerned about a few things."

"Such as what?"

"The first is the fact that such books and articles in the Grand Central Library have been tagged as such by the RCIA. I wonder who else over the years have come across such things only to get entangled with the RCIA for looking them up to begin with?"

"I am worried about that as well. Part of me has been considering asking the RCIA which books and articles are tagged so that we can section those items apart from the rest. Access to those articles would then require RCIA approval to access. This way, no one else would fall into those traps like I did."

"The fact they were traps to begin with is what bothers me. This may have been the case long before Head Agent Aja started running the agency. If you don't have her contact info, I still do so you can call her and ask her about that matter so that you can get started on it."

“Thank you. You said though you had concerns, plural. What else are you concerned about?”

“The Tenebris as they were called. You stated they were experts in several fields but there are also those who were trained military officers and engineers. If the Tenebris are far from Republic space and have managed to create a society outside Republic jurisdiction, they may have also developed a capable military. If any of them are experts in biology and possible cloning or babies being born in test tubes, they could also quickly grow in number and have a sufficient number of citizens that serve as their fighting force both on ships and an army.”

“There are several individuals back then with such knowledge. From what I could gather, the Tenebris were trying to be as self-sufficient without Republic aide or assistance as much as possible. The people in their cult would definitely have the knowhow and the means.”

“You said that you and Aja suspect that the Tenebris fled to the Western or Southwestern Regions?”

“Yes. Considering that the Northern through Southeastern regions are mostly held by other nations, the Northwest Region or ‘Passage’ as it is called has very few stars that are far apart for most star gates to function, and the Southern Region is impassable due to the gravitational fluctuations that isolate it from the rest of the star cluster, those are the only unexplored regions remaining that they could be in.”

“Those regions are also being explored by the *Templar* and the *Cavalier* right now.”

“I know. Aja told me that as well and she said after we researched the Tenebris genealogy that she was going to contact them to be on the lookout for signs of their existence.”

“They would be the ships most likely to be able to investigate without being seen or heard by the Tenebris, provided that the Tenebris haven’t developed the means to detect them.”

“Did you have any other concerns?”

Trent thought about it for a moment.

“I do but it is not in relation to the matter on the Tenebris,” he said.

“You’re still thinking about what happened to the State Councilors, huh?” Laura asked.

“I am. I still want to know what happened to them and what caused their behavior.”

Laura’s phone suddenly went off. The person calling was her co-worker Matt.

“Should I take this?” Laura asked Trent.

“Go ahead,” Trent said.

Laura answered the phone and put it to her ear.

“Hello?” Laura asked.

“*Laura!*” Matt yelled. “*You need to turn on the monitor! Quickly!*”

“What’s going on?”

“*The Supreme Chancellor is addressing the Senate about Yintaka and the State Councilors! You have to hear this!*”

“Alright, I’m turning it on now.”

With Matt still on the phone, Laura picked up the remote and turned on the monitor to her news station. It was showing a news report with Supreme Chancellor Drew behind the podium in the Republic Senate building. He appeared to be in the middle of his address to the Senate.

“*Our forces along with the local Lykan defense forces and the Mandate’s fleet managed to keep the State’s forces at bay long enough for the planetary shield generators to go online but not before some State frigates managed to enter the atmosphere. Thankfully, because we were able to warn the Lykans of the attack in advance, the civilians were evacuated to shelters, so there were no civilian casualties. However, while State forces under the command of Admiral*

Bridneo ceased hostile activity in the system, the State Councilors proceeded to send self-destruct codes if their fleet did not destroy Vice Admiral Trent's ship. Through the negotiations of Ambassadors Drino and Korveco who traveled to New Vita, the State fleet was spared death. However, during the negotiations, the Councilors all suffered the same headache three times before they passed out. They were rushed to the hospital where an important discovery was made."

"A discovery?" Trent asked.

"During their examination, it was discovered that they all had intense electromagnetic radiation that was purposely engineered to alter their brain activity to be more hostile and aggressive towards the Lykans. An investigation is underway to find out how this occurred and who is responsible. What we do know is that the technology capable of doing this is beyond any nation currently known in the star cluster."

"They were under some form of mental manipulation?" Trent said. "That would definitely explain a few things. However, who would have the technology to do that?"

"Based on a suggestion from Ambassador Korveco, the remains of King Kseriki the Third, the Lykan king responsible for ordering the enslavement of the Vitams and other races five hundred years ago, were also examined for the same radiation. The results were provided this morning, and they were positive of the same radiation."

The entire Senate was suddenly in an uproar. Trent got up on his feet in shock.

"Someone has been manipulating those races for THAT long?!" Trent said. "Who would do such a thing and why?!"

"No," Amarria said. "It couldn't be them, can it?"

Trent and Laura looked at Amarria.

"What do you mean?" Trent asked. "Who are you talking about?"

"Among the Tenebris families, I came across a couple of radiobiologists among them. They would have the knowhow to do such a thing. They disappeared six hundred and fifty years ago and the Lykan king made that order over five hundred years ago."

"So you are saying that the Tenebris may be involved? Even if that were true, why would they do that?"

"History has shown that if an enemy force that is weaker than their opponent wants to overcome said enemy, they find someone else to help weaken their enemies to make it easier to defeat them. They may have chosen the Lykans for that purpose. They would grow, enslave, and expand their military capabilities to the point they would eventually come across our Republic. We have not been at war for over three thousand years, so not only would we be thrown into the war, but our resources and morale would start to dwindle. However, it is most likely the Tenebris would not anticipate the Empire's military might, the Slave Revolt, and the diminishment of the Kingdom's forces in their war with the State. By the time the Republic got involved, the Kingdom's forces would not be at full strength to fight our forces. So what does someone do? They decided to create more hatred in those that already possessed it in the form of the Councilors to continue to disrupt the peace."

"That theory makes a lot of sense. If the Tenebris are indeed responsible for this, they need to be found and stopped, this time for good."

* * * * *

*To be continued...
END OF EPISODE V*