

***Warring Factions: The Novus Initium Saga***  
***Episode VIII: What Was Left Behind***



**PART 2**

*Bridge, R.N.S. Renaldo, Paladin II-Class Battleship (refit)*  
*New Unity Government Communications Relay D102, NW-035 System, Northwest Region*  
*1:27pm, November 13, 5434 A.D.*

“Why are there Lykans in this region?”

Shannon could still not believe her eyes. To see a Lykan this far away from the Eastern Region was still a shock but how they got there needed to be addressed. There was also the fact that this Lykan or someone on board was speaking English without the need of a translator. At least the accent was explained due to how their mouths’ shape compared to a Human’s, but that needed to be explained as well.

The Lykan on the view screen had a puzzled look on his face as he looked at Shannon on his end.

*“I am Commodore Sutherland of the Union Navy Cruiser Mogami,” the Lykan said. “I do not know what a ‘Lykan’ is, but I am a Wolf. I want to know how or why there are Humans in this star cluster?”*

Now Shannon was even more puzzled. This being called himself a Wolf instead of a Lykan. Shannon had remembered stories of animals called wolves that once resided on Earth thousands of years, but none of them were on Luna when it transitioned into the star cluster. This “Wolf” was also using Human names for both himself and for his ship. It was very evident that there was no translation being done through the screen as the lips synced with the words. What

Shannon could not understand is why this being was asking why there were Humans in the star cluster? Humans have been in the star cluster for more than three thousand years. Why wouldn't this Wolf or Lykan know that at this point?

"I am Rear Admiral Shannon of the Novus Initium Republic's Eleventh Fleet," Shannon said as she realized she had not introduced herself yet. "Humans of the Republic have been in this star cluster for more than three thousand years. What I'm trying to figure out is why your kind is this far away from the Eastern Region?"

The Sutherland was even more puzzled in his expression.

*"More than three thousand years?" he said. "That's not possible. Animality has been in this star cluster for less than three thousand years and any Humans that traveled with us were spaced for their actions in bringing us here. Also, what do you mean our kind is far from what you call the 'Eastern Region'? What are you referring to?"*

The conversation was even more confusing than Shannon had anticipated. Things were already not making any amount of sense and this Commodore, a rank that would be the same as hers if the Republic had implemented it as such, was not helping to clarify the situation.

"Let's back up for a moment," Shannon said as she rubbed the sides of her head to prevent a possible headache. "You are saying that what you are calling 'Animality' has been in this region of the cluster for almost three thousand years?"

*"That is correct, Rear Admiral," Sutherland said. "You Humans gave us a different name a long time ago that we shed off. You used to call us 'hybrids' before we came to this star cluster."*

"Hybrids? I've never heard the term before."

*"What are you talking about? Has your kind done something to our brethren after so many years?"*

Sutherland looked to be getting upset over something that Shannon could not understand.

"I'm sorry," Shannon said. "I don't know what a hybrid is or what you are referring to. After our ancestors came to this star cluster on a moon called Luna, we had not come across anyone like you all..."

*"Whoa, whoa, WHOA!" Sutherland said with both his hands up acting like he was stopping a moving object, and surprise on his face. "Let me make sure I heard you correctly. Did you say that your ancestors came to this star cluster on Luna?"*

The fact that Sutherland said "on Luna" instead of saying "from your moon Luna" puzzled Shannon even further about what was transpiring in front of her. Did this Wolf know something about Luna somehow?

"Yes, I did," Shannon said. "Luna arrived in a star system we called Lumen in the middle of this star cluster. They were lucky that the system had a habitable world as Luna was on the outermost reaches of the system. The Republic is made up of Humans who descended from those people and takes up the entire Central Region of the star cluster."

Sutherland looked to be in shock as he put his hands down and leaned back in his chair.

*"I can't believe it," he said. "You all have been here this whole time and we never expanded far enough to find you."*

"You knew about us or at least our ancestors before this day?"

*"Of course! Though, if you all are from Luna, then that explains a few things why you have not heard the term 'hybrid' much less 'Animality.' If I may, I would like to send over our history to you promptly for you to catch up. Can you please provide us with your history as well so that we may also catch up with events in your nation?"*

“Of course. This may help to resolve the confusion that we are experiencing in this matter. We will have it ready for you in a few minutes.”

*“We will as well. Our histories will make for some interesting reading. If possible, please start from the time Luna came here and we will do the same.”*

“Why from that point and not our full history?”

Sutherland raised his right furry eyebrow.

*“You’ll understand once you read our history,”* he said. *“Let us know when you have read it. Once we both have read our histories, we can talk without a lot of the confusion.”*

“Very well. I look forward to talking to you again soon.”

Sutherland nodded in agreement before the small screen disappeared. Shannon turned to look at Ro.

“Ro, send them the requested history. Send them everything including the First Interstellar War as well as about the Federation and the former Dominion.”

“But Admiral!” Ro said as she turned to look at Shannon with a shocked expression on her face. “If we send information about what his kind did in the war, it may cause them to be aggressive!”

“Maybe it will, but it seems that he is not aware of his kind in the Eastern Region. Hopefully, their history can shed some light on that matter as well as why they know about Luna and what happened involving our kind. There are a lot of questions we need answers for, and I am quite certain they need answers as well. Send their history to the Ready Room once received.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Ro said as she turned back towards her station.

Maeve turned towards Shannon.

“Can I join you?” Maeve asked. “I want to read up on their history as well.”

“Very well,” Shannon said as she began to walk towards the Ready Room. “Ro, inform the fleet that we are exchanging histories with the locals and that they will be updated on the situation shortly.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Ro said.

Shannon reached the controls to the Ready Room and opened the door. She walked in with Maeve following close behind her. After the doors closed behind Maeve, Shannon walked over to her desk and sat in her seat, activating the terminal. Shannon got out a data tablet from the desk and placed it on the opposite side of the desk towards the seat to her left.

“Have a seat,” Shannon said, directing Maeve to the seat the tablet was placed in front of.

Maeve sat down in the seat, picking up the tablet and turned it on. As they waited for the history that the Wolf was sending over, Shannon could see that Maeve had a thought on her mind, if not a problem.

“Something on your mind?” Shannon asked.

“The way that Commodore knew of our race but not of the Republic,” Maeve said, “talking to us like we should already know who they are aside from the Lykans we have encountered thus far. The fact that they think we know them as ‘hybrids.’ Why do I have this strange feeling that Humans, after our ancestors came to this star cluster, made Animality? I mean, why would we be calling them ‘hybrids’ to begin with? What are they a hybrid of and are these ‘wolves’ the only race among them?”

“I wondered about some of that as well. It would fit with how that conversation was going but we need to wait and see what their history tells us. They said they have been here for

less than three thousand years. The history of the Lykans does not go back that far due to their wars before they were unified. There has to be an explanation for all of this.”

Shannon’s terminal began to beep. She looked and saw that the history from the Commodore was received and being transferred to her terminal. Shannon accessed the file and forwarded a copy to the tablet that Maeve was holding.

“Time to see what this is all about,” Shannon said as she began to read the history file.

*“According to history, when Luna was drawn into a wormhole for ‘unexplained reasons’ to an unknown region of space, the Earth was thrown into chaos in several ways. The Humans of Earth were in a panic over the loss of Luna that it affected the global economy severely, families of relatives and loved ones on Luna wanted answers as to where they went and how to get them back, military ships that were not drawn into the wormhole scanned the area to find anything they could to figure out what happened, and scientists from around the planet were quick to fear the effects of what Luna’s loss would bring to the Earth. Scientists from centuries ago who predicted those effects were accurate in their assessments. One of those effects was the loss of significant high and low tides. While tides still existed based on the pull of the sun, they were not as high as they once were, resulting in several species that relied on high tides dying out. However, the more significant change that occurred to the Earth was the reduction of time it takes for Earth to do a full day’s rotation. Luna served as the gravitational pull that slowed the Earth’s daily rotation down to twenty-four hours. With Luna gone, the time it takes for the Earth to do a full rotation was reduced to six-hour days! The rotation increase caused clouds to look more streamlined much like those found on gas planets found within the Sol System.”*

“I guess this information puts to bed all of those theories that scientists in the Republic had as to what happened to Earth after Luna was pulled away,” Shannon said.

“I heard of such possibilities,” Maeve said, “but I was hoping that the effects would only be minor. I think the next part tells us what happened to Humanity afterwards.”

“I’m wondering how come this nation has such a history record of our ancestors. There is no way they could have come up with all of this on short notice.”

“Let us keep reading, ma’am. Maybe there is an explanation in here as to the connection between Humans and Animality.”

Shannon looked back at her terminal to keep reading.

*“Earth was no longer capable of supporting life that became used to a natural standard of living when the moon was present. Humanity resorted to using transports to ferry the Human population along with various animal species off Earth and towards Mars as the second home of Humanity, using the same terraforming process that was used on Luna. However, while this helped to move most of Humanity off Earth, Mars was not large enough to support thirteen billion Humans along with any wildlife that could be taken from Earth. This resulted in Mars quickly becoming overpopulated, and artificial colonies being built in orbit. For more than a hundred years or so, living space for any Human was at a premium as accommodations were no bigger than college dormitories. This resulted in a decrease in the growth of the population due to limited space available.”*

“So, Mars was used as a new home for Humanity after they evacuated Earth,” Shannon said. “However, I am not at all surprised that there was overpopulation involved considering the smaller size of Mars.”

“What has my attention is the mention of transporting various animal species off Earth,” Maeve said. “It’s interesting that such a detail was mentioned in these records.”

“You’re thinking there is still a connection?”

“I do, and somewhere in these texts, there may be an answer as to who these people are and how they relate to the Humans left behind in the Milky Way Galaxy.”

Shannon was beginning to wonder if Maeve was grabbing at straws reading these texts, but the fact that this nation who is occupying the Northwest Region has this information means there was some connection. Whether she is right or not remains as Shannon continued to read the historical file.

*“However, during that time, scientists had continued to advance the capabilities of the warp drive systems, originally used for interplanetary travel, to make interstellar travel possible to colonize distant worlds. After nearly three decades, the Direct Anti-Matter Injection Warp Engine, or DAMIWE for short, became a reality. Building the first few ships designed to utilize DAMIWE, Humanity began to expand past the Sol System into neighboring star systems for planets that can be colonized. After five years, two planets were found and subsequently terraformed. Humanity began to move from the cramped conditions of Mars and its colonies to the more spacious planets. As the move to colonize more worlds and the subsequent explosion of Humanity’s population occurred, a new democratic government was formed to govern Humanity across the various star systems. The nation was called the New Unity Government and its constitution was ratified in 2683 AD.”*

“Well,” Maeve said, “that explains the antimatter readings we were getting and the name of the nation here at least.”

“True,” Shannon said. “They used this DAMIWE to travel to other systems to ease the burden of overpopulation. It took them over three hundred years since the disappearance of Luna to form an interstellar nation, but at least they were doing better now by that point.”

“Wait a moment. Uh, Admiral? You may want to read the next paragraph.”

Shannon was wondering what suddenly got Maeve’s attention in the history files. She continued to read it.

*“While Humanity was able to adapt to their new habitats, many species of animals that came from Earth were found to not be able to adapt as quickly as Humans to the new environments on other worlds and in space. To prevent these animals from going extinct due to their inability to adapt quickly, plans were introduced to combine animal and Human DNA into a new race of anthropomorphic beings that would allow their DNA to continue despite them being hybrids. While many animal rights activists were protesting such actions being taken, the government approved of the process to prevent any further extinctions of Earth-based animals. The first ‘hybrids’ were born in labs and their numbers had grown within twenty years to become a sizable part of the NUG population. To prevent any form of conflict from happening in the future, these hybrids were given the same rights and privileges as Humans in the New Unity Government, including education and being able to speak English, the dominant language of Humanity.”*

Shannon’s eyes widened upon reading that portion.

“I knew it!” Maeve said. “So that is why they were called ‘hybrids’! They are part animal and part Human!”

“I cannot believe this,” Shannon said in disbelief. “Wait a minute. Could it be?”

“What is it?”

“That Wolf looked exactly like the Lykans we have met so far. It cannot be! Is that why?”

“Don’t keep be out of the loop, Admiral! What is it?”

“When we first met the Lykans, we were surprised that many of the diseases that Humans are immune to are the same ones that the Lykans were immune to as well. Wait a minute. They

were not the only ones either! The same could be said for those in the State and the Empire as well. Is it possible they ALL came from this nation?!”

“It’s certainly an interesting theory, but I would ask why those races are not only out so far from this region, but have no memories or texts about their origins? Also, how did these ‘hybrids’ even get here?”

“There may be answers to those questions if we keep reading. Let us keep going and see if they are in here or not.”

Shannon and Maeve turned back towards the texts to keep reading.

*“While Humanity knew the reason why they left the Sol System, there were those who have yet to find answers as to how or why Luna disappeared through a wormhole at that time. However, some fanatical Human scientists had learned that the crystals found on Luna were responsible for the creation of the wormhole that took Luna away. The only crystals that remained in Humanity’s possession were stored in a secure facility in the nation’s capital in the Vega star system. One of those scientists managed to get access to those crystals, stating they were for scientific purposes, and transported them to a newly built colony vessel bound for a new world that was recently terraformed. As the colony vessel consisting of over two million people consisting of all hybrids was about to use its warp drive, the scientist and his few associates energized the crystals in the hope that they would be transported to where Luna was located. The wormhole formed in front of the colony vessel with the hybrids on board beginning to panic, knowing that it was the same type of wormhole as the one that pulled Luna away from their history books, yet not knowing why one was forming in front of them. However, while many tried to get to the escape pods, none could be launched by the time the wormhole drew the colony vessel in. The colony ship was successfully transported to a remote star cluster, but the scientist and his associates ran into two problems.”*

“Well,” Shannon said, “that explains how they got here.”

“A fanatic Human scientist,” Maeve said. “No wonder they were surprised to see us here. I wonder why this scientist was so eager to find Luna and where it went?”

“It doesn’t say any names. His name was either removed from the record or he never provided it. I can only assume that either he was hoping to restore Earth to normal by returning Luna and being a scientific genius or he had a family member or members on Luna that he wanted returned. It is hard to say what the reasons are from what we have read thus far but by this point, it was more than three centuries when Luna disappeared. He wouldn’t have known anyone personally under the circumstances.”

“Whatever the case was, I don’t think the hybrids on board that colony ship was all too thrilled by what would seem a mass kidnapping of so many colonists. We may want to continue.”

Shannon nodded in agreement and turned back towards the text to continue reading.

*“The first problem was that the colony ship ended up in the least dense region of stars compared to the rest of the star cluster. That means that there was no evidence that the colony ship was in the right location or not to where Luna would have been transported to. The expanse between the region they were in and the center of the star cluster had natural interference from gravitational disturbances with only two exit ways out of the region they were in at opposite ends. These ‘exits’ have not been reached to this day due to the time it takes to travel to them.”*

“I find it odd they ended up here rather than where Luna was,” Shannon said. “If these crystals were attracted to this star cluster, wouldn’t they have brought them to Luna and the Lumen System instead?”

“It’s possible that since the crystals were activated in a different star system in the Milky Way that the exit point may have resulted in being in a different location as well,” Maeve said. “That means that connections over vast distances run parallel rather than meet at the same point.”

“An interesting theory and one that would fit the facts. The fact that they ended up here, however, is unfortunate. If they had ended up in Luna, we would have found these answers a long time ago and they would not have been alone out here the whole time.”

“If their exit point was the first problem, I wonder what their second problem was according to the text?”

Shannon was curious as well and continued reading the text.

*“The second problem facing the scientist and his associates was the realization that for all intents and purposes he just kidnapped over two million unsuspecting and unwilling hybrids for this experiment. None of the hybrids were thrilled when they found out he and his associates, the only Humans on board, were responsible. With the crystals disintegrating after the jump that the scientist had not anticipated and with no means to return to the Milky Way Galaxy, the hybrid colonists were fortunate that they jumped to a star system that contained a habitable planet to colonize with little need to terraform. However, the scientist and his associates would never set foot on that world as they were ‘spaced’ for their actions, a term used to describe being ejected into space without the protection of a space suit. The hybrids found the scientist’s logs afterwards which made it clear he acted alone and not under orders from the NUG or the Humans specifically.”*

“So,” Shannon said, “that is what Sutherland meant earlier when he mentioned about the only Humans they knew no longer being alive.”

“They spaced them?” Maeve said. “What a horrible way to go.”

“I know. Still, when you consider the size and scale of his crime, not to mention the circumstances of what they were dealing with when they arrived, I could see that as a possible punishment in their situation. The scientist had no way to undo what he had done since the crystals disintegrated once they arrived. Granted, we don’t do that in the Republic fleet as that form of punishment is outlawed, but these colonists didn’t have a viable government at the time from what I can tell once they arrived.”

“I’m surprised you sympathize with their actions.”

“You have to look at the situation from their perspective while being impartial. They were suddenly alone out here, and they were angry with that fact, but we need to move on and see if we can find answers to the other questions we had.”

Maeve hesitantly nodded in agreement and went back to reading as Shannon did as well.

*“The planet that was colonized was named Sakura due to the large number of pink-flowered trees resembling old Japanese cherry blossoms near the site of the colony ship’s landing. As a requirement for all colony ships, the hybrid colonists had an established government and databases with knowledge in all fields of studies and careers. This knowledge included propulsion systems like the DAMIWE system but lacked information relating to weapons and defenses as those were to be handled by the NUG military rather than colonists. While the hybrids could have named and created their own unique nation, they chose to retain the New Unity Government in name and government structure, appointing the pre-selected governor as their president instead. The rest of the governmental structure was reorganized to be more in line with the central NUG government from the Milky Way. The new capital city of Atlantis was formed around the waterfront near the colony ship which has since been redesigned and remodeled into an artificial island, resulting in the use of the mythological name for the city.”*

*Any references of Humans were used in historical texts as there were no Humans that remained after the scientist and his associates were killed for their actions. The term 'hybrids' also disappeared at that time, replaced with the names of the animals they were combined with when being identified individually but collectively, they became known as Animality."*

"So," Maeve said, "they DID have a government when they came here but restructured it to me an independent nation."

"I get where you are going with this, Maeve," Shannon said. "Maybe the scientist was tried for his crime and this was the punishment they reached. We cannot change that fact. At least the colonists were lucky to be in a system with a habitable world. The planet itself sounds like a nice destination location."

"I will give them that. I am surprised they kept the name and structure of the government, though. I figured with their newfound independence that they would have come up with something else instead."

"It isn't easy to create a new government with new laws from scratch. They went with what was established and would modify it based on their new location. I don't want to even guess how long it took for our ancestors to create the government we know as the Novus Initium Republic, much less the constant changes and additions involving laws after all of this time."

"I will get a headache if I ever get into politics. We better continue and see what else Animality has done since they arrived here."

Shannon nodded in agreement, then turned back to her terminal to continue reading.

*"The New Unity Government of the star cluster managed to quickly build its own society, modeled as close as it can to the society they were forced to leave behind in the Milky Way. The New Unity Government in the Milky Way established a military force to protect Humanity and the hybrids from possible threats in the galaxy. The NUG of the star cluster is no different in that regards of protecting Animality, though how they do so is different from their original counterparts. A planetary military force was quick to mobilize using existing handheld 'slug thrower' guns and bladed weapons, developing additional weapons based on those they were provided. It is when Animality began to develop an interplanetary and later an interstellar military force that the NUG military began to differ greatly from their original Milky Way counterparts. The NUG in the Milky Way Galaxy managed to create defensive energy shields to defend their ships and stations from 'foreign objects' like rocks and debris. The NUG of the star cluster had made improvements to those shields in anticipation of possible combat in their new home. This included shield strengtheners that reinforce continuously and automatically. The ships are also heavily armored in case the shields fail. While handheld slug throwers still exist for use in small arms, the NUG deals with limited resources resulting in the quick development of laser-based energy weapons. The laser weapon systems on Union ships can burn a hole through a defenseless ship after a few shots depending on the target's armor. These are powered by multiple capacitors that are charged by the DAMIWE system and allow for continuous fire. Current NUG doctrine is to stay at long-range to engage a target with lasers. Short-range or close combat is primarily handled by a ship's missile launchers."*

"Well," Shannon said, "that's surprising. I wasn't expecting them to include any texts about their military capabilities."

"We did in our that we gave them," Maeve said. "Sutherland may have read up on that by now depending on his pace."

"Well, then we will know what each other's ships are capable of. It sounds like their laser turrets, while larger and more powerful, are lacking in close-range combat such as our pulse laser



mode on our guns. Their shields, however, appear to boost themselves once active. It sounds like a passive system than an active one like ours. It is not bad, but I would rather not test them in combat. If those missile launchers are for close combat according to this, that would be a problem for us if we ever fought each other. However, I think our defenses would hold out better than theirs would.”

“Between our shield boosters, armor repairer system, and thick armor, I would agree. We also have the drones in our favor which may be enough to overwhelm them. However, we are not here to fight, or we would have already done so. While this answers the question about what their ships are capable of, it still does not answer our other questions yet. Let us keep reading.”

Shannon was still bothered by the fact that Sutherland would send this bit about their combat capabilities to them. It may have been possible that he sent that over in case he thought that the NUG had superior combat capabilities to the Republic. She wondered what Sutherland must be thinking if he got to the point of reading the military capabilities of the Republic. Hopefully, he was not going to feel threatened, but he will know for certain what the blisters are on the Republic ships of her fleet when he does read about them.

She continued to read the historical text.

*“For over a thousand years, the NUG expanded across Sakura and throughout the NUG’s capital star system of New Sol, which was named as on short notice and due to the lack of pre-existing names for the stars. During their exploration of the New Sol System, the NUG found more of the purple crystals like those used to force the original colonists to jump into the star cluster. Calling the crystals ‘Purple Devils,’ the NUG gathered and quarantined the crystals wherever and whenever they were found as they cannot be destroyed or disintegrated by any available means other than being used. When the NUG decided to use the DAMIWE system to explore other star systems to colonize, more of the ‘Purple Devil’ crystals were found in those star systems. This was in contrast with the ancient records that showed that no such crystals existed in star systems colonized in the Milky Way Galaxy. Scientists began to hypothesize that the crystals found on Luna were ‘attracted’ like magnets to the crystals found in the star cluster. If this was true, it means that Luna may have ended up in the star cluster as well after being drawn into the wormhole. However, there is currently no physical proof that this occurred with Luna and the NUG had only just started to explore their region of the star cluster at that time. If Luna were anywhere in the star cluster, it would take an awfully long time before the NUG would ever find that moon and the Humans who inhabited it if they survived the transition. However, there are those among Animality who also believe the crystals were ‘planted’ on Luna by someone or something. As to who that was and if those responsible lived in the star cluster, this remained unknown to Animality. The ban on the ‘Purple Devils’ was not enough to stop a few members of Animality from testing them without authorization. Up to ten groups of Animals disappeared within the following years before the Union, a shortened term to describe the NUG, had scanners installed on any ship or structure to detect the crystals before they are used and detain those that wished to use them. No other unauthorized usage of the crystals has occurred since that implementation. This means that NUG ships rely strictly on warp drives to travel between star systems and not the crystals of some alien influence or creation.”*

Shannon was almost floored with a lot of what she just read. She almost laughed with the “Purple Devils” part of the information, knowing that the NUG does not use them at all for interstellar travel. The fact that they thought Luna might be in the star cluster was also another surprise as the Human scientist that brought them here thought the same thing. However, the lack of any evidence to that possibility meant that there must have always been a debate between

those that thought Luna was here against those that thought otherwise. Of course, after this encounter, those debates would easily be put to rest.

However, that was not what surprised her the most.

“Ten groups of Animals used the crystals without authorization,” Shannon said aloud. “There are ten ‘alien’ races in the star cluster that we know of.”

“I see the list of the races that used them,” Maeve said. “Wolves, Foxes, Horses, Snakes, among others. These are describing all the races in the Holy Lykan Republic, the United Vitam State, the Camino Star Empire, and the three found in the Federation. Combined with the information we have that all these races have the same immunity to diseases Humans have and that there is possibly Human DNA in their blood, this means that none of us here in the cluster are aliens to each other. We all came from the same place: Earth.”

“How are we going to explain this to all of the other nations? Granted, I was wondering why they had no fact-based history more than two thousand years old, but I wasn’t expecting to see anything like this.”

“We have to tell them the truth. If the NUG is officially announced, the truth would come out just the same. However, knowing that we all came from Earth originally will change the relationships between all of us in the process.”

“I know. Knowing that connection is going to lead to some interesting developments, but the one thing that is not explained here is why these ten groups of animals left the NUG behind? If the NUG does not have any documentation about these groups and their motives, and these groups do not have any history of their departure from the NUG at the time, we may never know the reasons for their departure.”

“We will deal with that matter when the time comes, but we still have more to go through. I am just as shocked that we have such answers now, but there may be more that we are not aware of yet. Let us continue. We don’t know if Sutherland has finished yet, but I would rather not leave him waiting if he has finished reading our historical texts.”

“You’re right, Captain. Let us continue reading.”

Shannon did not know whether she could focus on what remained or not. The whole revelation that the “aliens” of the star cluster were not aliens at all, but humanoid versions of Earth-based animals was a complete shock. However, if there is more to this story than what is known, she had to continue. She could only hope there was not anything more shocking than what she has read thus far.

*“While the NUG has been exploring other star systems for almost two thousand years, the nation has been rather slow in colonizing other star systems within the region. While star systems within the region are spread further apart compared to other regions in the star cluster, this was not the cause of the NUG’s slow expansion. Because of the fewer number of star systems in the region, the number of habitable worlds is fewer still. Many exploration vessels sent to investigate new star systems for worlds to colonize often come up empty with no existing habitable worlds or any worlds that could easily be terraformed. To make up for this in the face of an ever-growing population, large space habitats such as colonies and space stations are built in planetary orbit and in deep space to serve as habitable locations and centers with nearly a fifth of the total population taking residence in them. Some of these stations and colonies serve as transfer points and trade centers between star systems as well as resource gathering and manufacturing. They can also serve as a port-of-call for a locally assigned fleet. The New Unity Government continues to slowly expand to other systems but now covers over forty percent of the sparsely populated region. However, the Union has not stopped expansion efforts and continues*

*to explore the far-flung systems in hopes of finding new worlds to colonize and alleviate the strain of resources on space stations and dense planet-side population centers.”*

“Could this be what they meant about underwater cities being constructed in that news report we overheard?” Maeve asked.

“It could be,” Shannon said. “None of the other nations has faced such a problem due to the multitude of star systems that are close by, not to mention habitable or can be made habitable. The fact that twenty percent of the population live in artificial habitats is surprising. I would have figured that number would be higher than that.”

“Do you think that they put some form of population control in effect to minimize the strain of overpopulation?”

“There could be one and we haven’t read up on it yet. However, if they are now able to build underwater cities, that may help substantially on any overpopulation.”

“Unless, of course, they want to move to other locations in the star cluster once they are known to the other nations.”

Shannon rubbed the sides of her head. Maeve had made a valid point. Once they are known and made a part of the star cluster society at large, their means to expand to other areas would allow them to finally leave the region to newer and less constrained prospects. This may not go over well with other nations if the NUG suddenly claims systems that are either already claimed by another nation or are about to be claimed.

“I’m going to continue reading,” Shannon said, looking back at her terminal.

*“The cultures and religions of individual races of Animality were brought with them to the star cluster, but they would end up blending into a single culture and religion over the past three millennia. While the population grew at first once the NUG explored other worlds, this has since been put into check to reduce the number of children a couple can have to a maximum of two to decrease the burden of over-population. Any further conceptions were subject to a government-funded mandatory abortion, the exception to this is if the mother is having triplets or more but are subject to additional taxes. While any possible outsiders would find this practice appalling, the NUG finds it necessary due to limited comfortable living conditions.”*

“Appalling is right!” Maeve said. “Mandatory government-sponsored abortions? That’s taking it way too far to control their population!”

“It may be so,” Shannon said, “but see it from their point of view. If they do not enforce such a thing, they would be overpopulated. The resources needed to keep them fed and sheltered would be either stretched to their maximum or there would not be enough for everyone at all.”

“I understand that, but this is still grotesque to think that their government sponsors such an act! If they do expand, it would at least put an end to this action they have been taking.”

Shannon quietly agreed with Maeve’s statement. She was not fond of abortion either. However, even in the pro-life thinking of the Republic, abortion is only used when the life of the mother is at risk due to either a complication or an existing health problem. Rather than debating that topic with Maeve any further, Shannon continued reading.

*“The military culture of the Union over time developed and embedded itself in the everyday life of the nation. While there is no required mandatory military service term, many had viewed enlistment as the means to protect the nation and to remove themselves from the ‘cramped’ living conditions found on some worlds or space stations, though the only truly spacious accommodations on a ship are for officers only, a goal many who enlist strive for. While the military was originally created to protect the nation from those responsible for the creation of the crystals millennia ago, it has since grown in terms of the number of ships available for*

*multiple roles including the defense of the nation. This is primarily caused by the fact that the accommodations of a Union Navy officer on a ship are generally larger than most one-bedroom apartments that single civilians use. Many of those that know of this fact along with the appeal and prestige of being a Navy officer comes with enlist to serve in the Navy in large numbers contributing to the size and number of ships available in the fleet.”*

“That makes me wonder about the size of the Union Navy after reading that part,” Shannon said.

“That’s not the part that I would be focusing on,” Maeve said.

Shannon looked at Maeve with a serious expression on her face.

“Are you talking about the crystals being artificially created?” Shannon asked.

“It was mentioned earlier in the text. There were no more crystals in the Milky Way aside from those found on Luna, yet they are in abundance here in the star cluster. If someone has made those crystals, they may know how to keep them from functioning which would put a halt to our nation’s transportation capabilities until the Republic implements the portal system among our existing star gates.”

“I know. I read somewhere once before that the crystals’ structure looked to be artificial in nature. However, after three millennia, not many people give it a lot of thought now because it is considered the norm after so many years using them. Even I had such thoughts for a long while. The fact that this is being brought up now is making me feel a little uneasy, even as it would appear the NUG may not be responsible for the radiation that alters minds either. They were not aware of our presence in this star cluster and their drives make long-range travels out of the region difficult at best.”

“You realize what that means, right?”

“I do. The only region left where the culprits of that radiation could be coming from is the ‘inaccessible’ Southern Region. I should say, though, that it is inaccessible to us at least.”

“Are you sure about that much? With the Portal Drive, we may be able to traverse it without that gravitational field that separates it from the rest of the cluster getting in the way.”

“And how do you suppose we test that?”

“There is a similar field between this region and the Republic. If we can use the Portal Drive directly from here to get back to Republic space, then we know it will work to get into the Southern Region. The last possible bastion for the perpetrators would then be accessible to us and we can finally bring them to justice.”

“Settle down there, cowgirl. Let us take things one step at a time and deal with the NUG situation first, okay?”

“Sorry, ma’am. I guess I was getting a bit too enthusiastic about the situation. Maybe more reading will calm me down. It looks like we are almost finished with the texts.”

“Looks like it. Let us wrap this up and see where we go from here.”

Shannon looked back at the terminal to read the last paragraph in the historical text.

*“To distinguish Union vessels from different divisions, they are painted in different colors. Union forces that use a gloss finish of orange and black belong to the central defense fleet known as the Alpha group which is assigned to the core sector of the nation including New Sol. Alpha group holds the largest number of ships including battlecruisers. They also take priority when it comes to receiving the latest updates to the ships as well as elite officers. The Union Navy uses a camouflage paint scheme on their ships for the remainder fleets divided into four groups: Beta, Delta, Gamma, and Epsilon. While this paint scheme serves no practical purpose in space, the paint scheme is used more to identify the fleet the ship is assigned to. The*

*Beta group's jurisdiction covers the systems that are towards the 'right' of the core sector if looking towards the star cluster's 'center'. Their paint scheme is the water camouflage style. Gamma group's jurisdiction is in the systems towards the 'left' of the core sector. Their paint scheme is the desert camouflage style. The Delta group's jurisdiction are the systems between the core sector of the nation and the 'void' that separates the region from the center of the star cluster. The paint scheme used is the urban camouflage style. Lastly, Epsilon group's jurisdiction is the area between the core sector of the nation and the edge of the star cluster. The paint scheme used is the forest camouflage style."*

Shannon raised her right eyebrow in mild surprise.

"I'm surprised that the text ended with that part about the paintjobs of different divisions," Shannon said. "At least that explains why they are painted like that, but I would have figured that there would be other prominent information in there such as a major event or a notable individual being mentioned."

"I would think so, too," Maeve said. "However, there looks to be a listing of different species of Animality in the New Unity Government than just the ten that we know that make up the known nations in the star cluster."

Shannon looked and noticed there was another file with a list of species as Maeve mentioned. Shannon looked them over and was familiar with most of the species mentioned. Cats, Dogs, Mice, Lions, Elephants, Rabbits, among other mammals. There were also various birds as well as a few reptiles and amphibians listed. There was one species that surprised her, making her wonder why Humanity made it. She had heard stories about this species much like the others listed but had never seen one before.

The species listed that surprised her was Skunks.

"Why in the star cluster would Humanity in the Milky Way make a Skunk hybrid?" Shannon asked.

"Skunks?" Maeve said. "What are those?"

Shannon looked at Maeve with surprise on her face.

"You never studied ancient Earth animals?" Shannon asked.

"No, I didn't," Maeve said. "I recognize some of these animals as we have them as pets like dogs and cats when Luna came to the star cluster, which will be odd when it comes to a reunion when you think about it. The others I do not recognize, though I have heard of their names somewhere before. Skunks, however, I have not heard of at all."

"Give me a moment," Shannon said as she looked up skunks in the ship's database.

When she found the entry, she forwarded the information to Maeve's tablet.

"Read that," Shannon said.

Maeve looked over the information that appeared on her tablet about skunks. Shannon noticed Maeve's eyes widening when it was obvious why Shannon would be surprised about skunks being among the NUG. Soon a look of disgust came over Maeve's face before she looked at Shannon.

"Now I know why you said that!" Maeve said, still disgusted. "That's ridiculous!"

"I know," Shannon said. "However, they are there, and we have to learn to cope with them somehow. Now that we have read over the entire file sent to us, let us get to the bridge and inform Sutherland that..."

Before Shannon could finish, the speakers in the Ready Room activated.

"Captain, Admiral," Ro said over the speakers. "*Commodore Sutherland is contacting us. He says he has finished reading our history and wishes to speak with you.*"

“On our way,” Shannon said aloud, the speakers cutting out immediately afterwards. “What do you think he’s going to say about our use of the crystals and the other nations?”

“Who knows?” Maeve said. “I’m not about to guess what he is going to say after what we have read. I hope he isn’t expecting us to deport them back to their territory.”

“I severely doubt that. They already have enough problems with overpopulation. Let us get to the bridge.”

Shannon and Maeve got up from their seats and proceeded out of the Ready Room. When they walked out of the door onto the bridge, they noticed that the small holographic screen with Commodore Sutherland’s face was on it. He was not showing much emotion on his face, which concerned Shannon as she did not know what to think. Shannon walked over to her seat and remained standing as Maeve sat in her seat.

“Commodore Sutherland,” Shannon said. “We have read over your history as I am sure you have read over ours. While it goes without saying, I’m very sure that we found a lot of surprises in our texts to each other.”

*“Surprise is an understatement, Rear Admiral Shannon,” Sutherland said. “As you have no doubt read, we of the Union have issues in using the crystals we call ‘Purple Devils’ which you call Salire Purpura crystals. However, I do understand that both the situation and the circumstances called for their use in your star gate system. We also see that your military capabilities are better in most areas to ours and the recycling programs in place are just as effective. I am surprised with how many of you there are and the space you occupy in what you all have designated the Central Region. The name of the regions makes it a lot easier for us to identify areas.”*

“I must say as well that you all have done well for yourselves despite where you all ended up after transitioning to the star cluster,” Shannon said. “What happened after Luna arrived here to those our ancestors left behind and how you all came to be amazes me.”

*“If only those in the Milky Way knew what happened to our civilizations, they may be impressed with what we both have accomplished.”*

“I can tell you are leading up to something, though. I know you want to address the elephant in the room, figuratively speaking in this case.”

*“You knew I was going to bring them up, didn’t you?”*

“If you didn’t, I would have been very surprised.”

*“I guess you would be. Well, let us address the issue then. We have several groups of Animality spread throughout the star cluster. These belong to the ten groups of Animals that disappeared more than two thousand years ago. Apparently, you fought one of them called the ‘Lykans’ which explains why you called me by that name.”*

“You also know that since we were unaware of their origins among your kind, we considered them as well as the others ‘aliens.’”

*“Fair enough, but I want to know why they didn’t tell you their origins? I don’t mean just the ‘Lykans,’ but those that make up the United Vitam State in the Southeast Region, the Camino Star Empire in the Northern Region, and the three that reside in the Draco Federation south of our current position.”*

“None of them appear to have any texts about their origins nor any of the advanced technology until the past few centuries. The only explanation I could come up with based on these facts is that their ancestors who jumped those ships away decided to abandon technology to grow and develop separately from your Union. Do you have any records of those people and what would make them do something like that?”

*“Unfortunately, no. None of those records exist. Someone had their personal records wiped but we kept the knowledge about their disappearance in case we ever came across them.”*

“If you continued towards the Northern Region, you would have met the Caminos by that point, though who knows how developed they would be once that occurred.”

*“You mean the Salamanders as we call them? Your records do not go into too many details as to their ships’ capabilities or for any of the nations for that matter. I have read that they tend to keep to themselves for the most part though unless their interests are threatened, or it involves their interests in some fashion.”*

“That’s correct. However, I will let you know that the ships of the Holy Lykan Republic, the United Vitam State, and the Camino Star Empire are quite large, advanced, heavily armed, and heavily defended, not to mention their territories are far larger. If you had any aspirations of trying to make them rejoin the Union...”

*“Don’t get me wrong. If they managed to become as advanced as they have after abandoning technology more than two millennia ago, we do not want to go picking a fight with them either. However, the fact that they do not know their origins or that they were made up their history frankly has me rather disturbed. Is there any way we can be put into contact with them as well as your nation and the Draco Federation?”*

“The gravitational field that separates this region from our Republic makes any direct communication impossible. That includes the Holy Lykan Republic and the United Vitam State. However, relays that can go around the field will allow you to communicate with those nations. We would have to speak with the Draco Federation, however, to disable the jammers they installed in one of the systems that is on the border with this region.”

*“Why did they install jammers?”*

“They did not know what to think when they started receiving transmissions, though garbled, that had English in them. To prevent being detected and to mitigate the knowledge of your possible existence, they installed the jammers. The transmissions were only in audio, so they thought there was another Human colony that made their way out here.”

*“I see. Why didn’t they make contact or at least attempt to do so?”*

“Since they thought it was another Human colony out here, they felt it was better for a representative from the Republic to come out here and make contact. Clearly, that was not going to be the case.”

*“Well, it was the case when you think about it. It was better to get the information about what happened to the Humans from Luna directly than through another nation. The question now is where do we go from here?”*

“Well, this ship is capable of jumping directly to the Republic capital world of Luminaire in an instant. I would like to report my mission to my superiors as I am sure you must report to yours as well. Either my fleet or another will return to this system once the report has been made to let you know how my government wants us to proceed. Can you let us know how your President wants to proceed as well once we return?”

*“I will. My fleet is assigned to this system, so we will be here when you return. Please use this channel to contact us again, though. I would rather you not get our attention again by scanning the relay in this system. There were a lot of citizens that rely on that relay to provide them news and entertainment purposes.”*

“I apologize for that. We were trying to get information on your nation discreetly but that obvious did not happen. We will be in touch.”

*“Very well. We will see you again soon. Sutherland out.”*

The screen with Sutherland's face disappeared from the main screen. Shannon took a deep breath before sitting down in her chair.

"That went better than I had anticipated," Shannon said. "This is going to make quite the report to headquarters and the Chancellor."

Ryan looked in Shannon's direction.

"Should I prepare the Portal Drive?" he asked.

"Yes, Ryan. Can you do a direct jump from here to Lumen?"

"A direct jump from here? I can try, provided the gravitational field doesn't impede the system in any way."

"Do it. Captain Maeve and I want to test a theory."

"Yes, ma'am," Ryan said as he turned around to his console.

Shannon pressed the button on her chair to activate fleet communications.

"This is fleet command," she said. "We will be jumping back to Lumen directly. Prepare for transit. Command officers will be briefed upon arrival at headquarters with a copy of the communications and texts from the local forces. Fleet command, out."

Shannon deactivated the fleet communications.

"This was a rather short trip," Maeve said. "Here I was, concerned it would take longer than a day."

"Maybe not," Shannon said, "but we had no idea what would be out here when we found the relay. At least your anxiety about being out here in this region won't last for much longer."

"I'll appreciate that."

"Portal Drive ready," Ryan said. "Activating now."

A portal soon appeared to the starboard side of the *Renaldo* in the direction of Lumen. The planet Luminaire could be seen through the portal.

"Looks like it is working," Shannon said as she watched the fleet proceed towards the portal. "That means that the Portal Drive is unhindered by the gravitational field."

"That's something else you will have to report to headquarters about now," Maeve said. "They may send a fleet to investigate the Southern Region once you report this."

As the rest of the Eleventh Fleet entered the portal and the *Renaldo* began to enter it, Shannon was soon beginning to worry. Armani Draco was subjected to the mind-altering radiation, or MAR as it was abbreviated to now, prior to the formation of his Dominion. If the ones who were responsible for the radiation are in the Southern Region, why did they allow the Dominion to create a drive system that can circumvent the gravitational fields that served to protect them this entire time? What would be the reason in doing so? She had seen the report that despite Armani doing what they said, he was killed by a SAGAT who was also ordered through the MAR to kill Armani. Whoever created the MAR appeared to have a change of heart around that time, but not before the drive was made. Where is the logic behind such actions?

Shannon felt like she was getting a headache trying to understand the logic and the motives of still unseen culprits with hidden agendas. As the *Renaldo* proceeded through the portal which closed behind them, Shannon knew that she would have to give her report to the Admiralty and the Supreme Chancellor once she arrived on the planet. She knew that once they are told about the New Unity Government, they will want to proceed carefully in informing the other nations whose ancestors came from the Union about their origins. There may be mass panic and anger among those people, but at least the Union is not looking into wanting them back. The other nations are far too powerful for that to happen.



She was more concerned about how the Chancellor will want to proceed with exploring the Southern Region and who the Chancellor will send.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Office of the Supreme Chancellor, Republic Parliament Building, Capital City of Luminous Planet Luminaire, Lumen System, Capital of Novus Initium Republic  
2:45pm, November 13, 5434 A.D.*

“That concludes my report, sirs.”

Shannon was nervous having to come in person to deliver her report to Supreme Chancellor Drew but also to Grand Admiral Mikey. She had expected to give her report to the full Admiralty as well as the Supreme Chancellor. Instead, she was ordered to only give her report to these two. In some cases, she felt better reporting with a smaller audience as she had never reported to the Admiralty in full before. Maybe Drew and Mikey were aware of that fact?

She told them everything and gave them her report on the Union, including the origins of those that form the Lykan Republic, the State, the Empire, and the “aliens” of the Federation. The Mandate would be included as well, though they are the same races as those in the State. She also reported that they came to Lumen directly from the system they were in when they made first contact with Commodore Sutherland using the Portal Drive. They looked intrigued about the fact that the Portal Drive was unhindered by the gravitational fields. No doubt they were already thinking about sending a fleet out to the Southern Region to investigate. Hopefully, it will not be her fleet that has to go there right now.

“I must say,” Drew said, sounding rather somber in his tone, “I was not expecting such a development to occur in the Northwest Region.”

“Every race we have encountered is a Human/Animal hybrid,” Mikey said, “created by Humans in the Milky Way to save Earth’s wildlife. How do we break this news to these other nations that their origins are the same as ours?”

“I will have to be the one to break that news when the time comes. Rear Admiral, thank you for your report. I am going to speak with President Shea about deactivating the jammers and to install relays to allow for communications with the New Unity Government. I will have your fleet jump back to the system where you met Commodore Sutherland’s fleet once preparations are complete, though this will take a few days.”

“May I ask a question, Supreme Chancellor?” Shannon asked.

“Of course. What is it?”

“Knowing what we now know about the capabilities of the Portal Drive, am I to assume that you will be sending a fleet out to that region to investigate?”

Drew looked over at Mikey who exchanged glances as well. Drew looked back at Shannon as she was now concerned about his response.

“We are going to wait to send a fleet into that region,” Drew said. “We need to settle the matter with the Union before we start jumping into another region and possibly a hornet’s nest. It may take more than a week or so, but I want us to be prepared for anything once we jump there. Does that answer your question?”

“Yes, sir,” Shannon said.

She knew that he was delaying the inevitable for now but at least he was erring on the side of caution by waiting instead of rushing a military force into the unknown. That gave her some relief, but she was still concerned about who he was going to send. She would only hope it was not going to be her.

“Before I forget,” Drew said, “I’m ordering you to not speak about this matter with anyone else outside of your fleet for the time being. I don’t want word to get out prematurely where it may get back to the ambassadors and cause a lot of problems.”

“Understood, sir,” Shannon said, knowing she will have to put a gag order on the fleet when she got back.

“You are dismissed, Rear Admiral.”

Shannon saluted before bringing her arm down and heading for the door. After she left the room, Drew leaned back in his chair and let out a big sigh. Mikey looked over at Drew.

“We’re finally getting some answers to questions we needed them for,” Mikey said. “Now we need to know what to do with this knowledge.”

Drew looked over at Mikey.

“The knowledge that Humanity and various wildlife survived the absence of Luna is comforting to say the least,” Drew said. “They managed to expand and thrive up to the point Animality got here. What I am trying to understand is why these ten groups of Animals left the Union behind and wanted to start anew?”

“The answers to those questions may never be found,” Mikey said. “If the Union does not have any records for those groups’ reasons and those same groups rewrote their history when they arrived on what they call their home planets, the motives for whoever was responsible has been lost to time for over two thousand years. How they will react to this news is going to be a problem once word of this gets out.”

“There will be riots due to the lies about their origins and their religion that it will be pandemonium in all of the nations. We have to handle this matter very delicately.”

“I don’t know how. The Union government will no doubt try to find a way to establish communications with these nations before we install the relays. With the jammers still active in the Federation, they could manage to find a way to contact the Empire and then all heck will break loose. We need to inform them that contacting the other nations until we have a chance to formally announce the Union’s existence will do more harm than good.”

Drew took a deep breath.

“I will have to call an emergency session of the Senate,” Drew said. “This will have to be a private session. I need to get their approval for the installation of those relays which will force me to disclose what we know right now. Hopefully, they will understand the need for discretion in the matter. Once they approve, I will contact President Shea and let her know the facts as well. She will have her own problems with the three races in the Federation who originally came from the Union when this information gets out.”

“Is that why you told Shannon that we were going to take time before sending a fleet to the Southern Region?” Mikey asked. “Is it because you knew we would have to deal with the situation involving the Union and these ‘splinter groups’ before we address that matter?”

“You would be correct. Imagine what would happen if we were in the position like these other nations. Wouldn’t you be angry and upset that you were lied to throughout your life by historians and religious leaders when the truth comes out? I’m concerned about possible backlash in the process.”

“I’m trying to look at it from the perspective of certain races. The Lykans enslaved the races that now form the State. How do you think those same races in the Union will take to that information if they do not already know? At least in the case of the races of the State, they are no longer alone and that there are more of them than they ever knew. The Caminos are really going

to be difficult to read. There was a reason they have an isolationistic view on matters and for all we know it stemmed from their ancestors' time in the Union."

"I would be more concerned if they all actually managed to form an alliance. Great Maker, they would hold more territory than we would in that regards."

"That would depend on how they reconcile with each other. Regardless, this is a difficult situation and who knows how it will play out."

Drew knew that Mikey's concerns were justified. The Lykans, the Empire, and the State have waged at least two wars between them and those in the Union may not be happy to know their brethren in those nations were killing each other in this manner. There were too many possibilities as to how the situation would unfold. These divisions between them all was beginning to feel too like how the Dominion and the Federation separated from the Republic. Those reasons were religion-based and for all Drew knew, that might have been the reason the current Lykans left the Union. Who knows what the reasons were after so many years, but the fact remains that these divisions may cause another possible war to erupt.

Drew then thought of something he had not before. Not too long ago, the Lykan Prime Minister had brought up a cooperative measure to ensure peace. This initiative would lead to the development of the Novus Initium Peacekeeping Department headed by the Nature Restoration Zone's Oversight Committee. It was not the initial thought for use by an agency, but it was a start. Now that Drew knows that every known nation and race in the Novus Initium star cluster was originally from Earth, there was no reason for these divisions to exist. The Milky Way's New Unity Government had no such divisions in their government, even after the introduction of the so-called "hybrids" in their society. They needed to model themselves after the ideals that their ancient brethren in the Milky Way managed to establish.

They all needed to become one nation. There was no longer a reason to fight each other.

"Mikey," Drew said, "I had a revelation. You might think I am crazy, but I want you to hear me out on this one."

\* \* \* \* \*

*South Entryway Courtyard, Republic Parliament Building, Capital City of Luminous Planet Luminaire, Lumen System, Capital of Novus Initium Republic  
2:58pm, November 13, 5434 A.D.*

"Those are our orders."

Shannon sat on a bench in the south courtyard, more than thirty meters away from the doors. She needed to make sure she was far enough away from anyone so that her conversation with Captain Maeve who was still on the *Renaldo* was not overheard. Shannon continued to look around while on the phone with Maeve to make sure there were no eavesdroppers.

"So," Maeve said, "*we can't speak to anyone at all about the nation in the Northwest Region until the Chancellor has discussed it with the Senate first? How long do you think that will take?*"

"Maybe a few days at best," Shannon said. "They have to bring in all of those senators and go over what they plan to do about not only addressing the introduction of the NUG but how to bring them up with the other nations. There is a lot on the line when you tell people who have believed that they came from their home planets that their 'truths' are false and that we are related by coming from the same planet. People are going to be angry and upset. It is going to be chaos when this comes out."

*“Well, they better not keep the lid on this for too long. The fleet’s commanding officers were already briefed about what happened. How long do you think it will take before someone slips up and discloses that nation to a Lykan or a Vitam?”*

“Believe me, I know. That is why no one can leave the ships for the time being.”

*“You’re blocking everyone from disembarking?”*

“Call it an order from the Supreme Chancellor. We cannot risk this information getting out until the government is ready to do so.”

*“I’ll get the word out as quickly as I can, but it was only the commanding officers that know what happened, right?”*

“I made it clear to them that they can only bring it up with their bridge crew but to use discretion in doing so, knowing that it may not be disclosed until the government is ready to announce what we found. Same goes for our ship as well, considering our bridge crew witnessed the conversation we had with Commodore Sutherland.”

*“Alright, then. I will let the entire Eleventh Fleet know to stay put for now. Is there anything else I should know?”*

“Not right now. I will be back up there in a little while. I have another call to make before then to check up on someone and run a possible errand depending on how that call goes.”

*“Understood. See you soon, Admiral.”*

Shannon disconnected the call and took a deep breath. These next few days were going to be stressful to say the least, holding back from telling anyone about the Union. However, there was one other person that needed to know, and this person was particularly good at keeping secrets. Besides, it was best that he knew what he was about to get back into.

Shannon looked up Trent’s number among her contacts and called his number. Shannon put her phone up to her ear as the phone rang. After two rings, there was an answer.

*“Shannon?”* Trent said on the other end of the phone. *“What is going on? I thought you were on a mission today?”*

“I was, and I completed it. Are you home right now? I’ve got a few things to talk to you about that you are not going to believe.”

\* \* \* \* \*