

aLIEN dECEPTION



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jAMES wOODLAND

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Chapter One

“Life Hits The Fan”

By

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If at anytime confusion reigns, look in the glossary at the end of the chapter for a list of people, places, things and terms. If all else fails please contact ChinookBreeze at chinookBreeze.com or James Woodland at jameswoodland.com

aCKNOWLEDGMENTS

- All cellphone manufacturers for what their products will become in the year 3065
- Holographic Imaging technology
- Sensory Deprivation Technology
- Karl Jansky, pioneer of radio astronomy

dEDICATION

To all those who get it

aLIEN dECEPTION

Chapter One

Life Hits The Fan

Deep space. Cold, dark and deathly void of any kind of sound. Wow. Not much happening here.

Slowly a strange sound came up, randomly increasing in volume then calming down. A dark red and white probe with identification markings “Brooks S1” originally stamped on its side but now decayed and barely legible, floated listlessly, sending out a signal to anyone or anything that wanted to reply to it.

Inside the Brooks a blue light shone. Suddenly the blue light was replaced by a green blinking one. The original signal shut off. A new series of sounds came up. A different signal. A reply.

Contact?

Several weeks later a large shuttlecraft with the markings "McCall S1" came up on the Brooks. The probe's signal could still be heard as the McCall stopped beside it.

Inside the longe-range shuttlecraft Captain Kim Manners and Co-Pilot Mike Seaver looked over their control panels. “Secure dock,” said Kim, making sure the ship stayed beside the probe. Mike adjusted a few of the instruments in front of him and answered her. A rushing sound then a straight hum came from the rear of the ship. “Tractor beam on...dock secured”.

A large monitor to Kim’s left over her console showed the McCall slide next to the Brooks and drift with it.

Behind Kim and Mike Communications Officer John Wendon was completing a log entry that would be sent out to the shuttle’s main base, Starship One. This far out from home, he knew the message would take several hours to get there and several more to come back so he wanted to get an early start on it.

“Starship One Communications Control. This is shuttle McCall reporting in from probe “Brooks” rescue mission,” came his calm, soothing voice. He looked over various instruments on his operations computer then glanced at a chronometer giving the time. “It is now nineteen hundred hours and twelve minutes. How’s everyone doing? On

time and on schedule here.” He looked at Kim. “About to download the daily logs, skipper. Anything you’d like me to add?”

Kim didn’t look at John but answered him. She was too busy getting everything ready for deployment of the “Klien”, the new probe to put in place of the disabled Brooks.

“Tell everyone at Barkers to take out the stakes and put the beer on ice. We found the soup and we’re coming back with dinner.”

John chuckled to himself and went back to his console. “Will do.”

Suddenly a yellow warning indicator light accompanied by an irritating beeping sound went off on Kim’s console. She looked down at it. “What now?” She threw a switch and looked at information as it came up on a small monitor beside the light.

“What is it?” asked Mike. “Some kind of electrical interference...” Her words trailed off as she glanced at the monitor showing the Brooks.

Behind the probe a wall of jumbled machinery could be seen appearing.

“What the cran is that?” She managed to utter.

Whatever this structure was it must have belonged to something massive.



“We found the soup and we’re coming back with dinner.”

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Kim leaned over to a panel next to her and threw a switch.

Huge shielding covering portholes at the front of the ship slid away. Through the large rectangular windows an amplified version of what she saw on the monitor stood before her. It would appear the shuttlecraft was surrounded by it.

Mike looked at Kim then out at the massive array of technology.

John looked up from his console and saw what was outside the ship. He joined Kim and Mike and stood behind their chairs staring at it.

Shock and awe. Kim didn't know what to say so she said the only thing that came to mind. “This can't be good...”

Suddenly the lights in the shuttle cockpit and all equipment went out.

Hours later and thousands of kilometres away, the wail of klaxons and flashes of emergency lights were heard and seen on a computer console.

the voice of S1 Crew Member Sandra Loch could be heard above the noise. “Shuttlecraft McCall! This is Starship One Communications Control! Come in McCall! Notification imperative!” She threw a switch and punched in a code on her console, sending out the message.

The Main Communications Centre was a part of Starship One, more commonly called “S1”. S1 was a very strange spaceship constructed of a cacophony of massive square, round, tubular and triangular modules that made up the grand human social experiment that was colonization of another world. Crunch up a piece of paper in your hands then look at it. That would be the shape of this vehicle.

A six-hundred square kilometre wade of crumpled paper divided up into twenty thirty-kilometre sectors. All crowded with hundreds of thousands of “intelligent” specimens of the human race.

The Main Communications Centre was in a remote area of S1 Sector twelve. It was made up of a five story radio telescope dish that sat in a protective domed enclosure, pointing off to the heavens. Below the telescope through three metres of hyper-glass reinforced by a spider’s web of tubing, the massive Communications Centre was situated.

What a work environment for the thirty-five Communications Centre Personnel operating in the room: banks of computer stations against the walls surrounding several tables crammed in the middle with computer laptops, monitors and tablets. It was all topped off by a two hundred ton radio telescope, which, like the Brooks probe, was looking for someone to talk to.

And ready to fall into the room at any time. Incredible.

Also scattered on the tables and at the computer stations were food containers, endless cups of coffee and Ms. Lowe Energy Water. Always food and coffee. Most of the time Ms. Lowe. Anything to keep the Personnel in the room awake and active at this important time.

This extremely important time.

Commander Steven Berth, head of the communications centre, ran up beside Sandra. “What is it? What’s happened?” he frantically asked her.

“We’ve lost the McCall,” came Sandra’s reply.

“We’ve lost communications?!”

Sandra looked up at Berth with an intense, hopeless look. “We’ve lost the entire ship. It’s vanished.”

Weeks later, Anne Brown laid in a leatherback reclining chair in a Medicell in S1 Sector five wearing a body suit, clothing much the same as a twentieth-century swimsuit. She was in a deep meditative sleep.

Medi or “meditation” cells were cramped rooms with an extremely large hyper-glass viewing window situated in front of a very comfortable leather reclining chair. These chambers were for Crew Member relaxation. Lay back in very little clothing, relax, sleep or meditate while looking out on the vastness of the Universe and listen to the dulcet tones messaging you mind. A casual time to think... about anything.

“Anything” could most times be psychologically soothing but sometimes maddening. What does one think of when confronted by the unlimited vastness of the cosmos weighing down on your personal being? For Anne that would be complicated.

Short at five-foot-seven but tall in blood and strength physically, Anne was a Sergeant from security detachment twenty-one of S1 sector five.

She was also a Sergeant in the sector five security “Red Squad” that dealt with riots and lethal confrontations.

Within her sleep she talked to an unseen presence.

“Are you out there? Are you out there?”

Of course she got no answer but continued on anyway.

“For anyone listening my name is Anne. As plain as that. I am forty-five years old and one of Nine hundred Sergeants of the Central Security and Internal Safety department of the generational vessel Starship One sent out as an experiment twenty years ago from my home planet of Earth on stardate 3045 with a mission to colonize Gilese Three, a mid-sized planet roughly comparable to Earth in the Gilese star system. If you’re ever in the neighbourhood stop in and say ‘Hi’.”

Silence.

Soothing sounds of variable audio frequencies slowly increased in volume and mixed with Anne’s voice. Digital music to meditate by. And talk to yourself by.

“Who am I kidding? How are you supposed to hear anything coming from a Security Officer’s dreams? S1 has systems set up for probing for life we can communicate with but will we ever find you? Some say no because “Humankind is the highest intelligence in the galaxy” and has nothing to communicate to. If this is true then heaven help the galaxy.”

A pause. Reflection.

Anne's voice rose in angered pitch.

“Of course we're not the most intelligent species. How could we be? We kill each other for the sake of ideals as meaningless as power and control. We're capable of nothing but destruction and will eventually eliminate our own kind. It's in our nature.”

Another pause. She calmed down

“And yet, S1 was created to carry on this race I claim will one day self-destruct. Why? That's our contradiction. We're doomed to kill ourselves but the instinct for survival perpetuates our existence. I believe it's inevitable that we are a doomed race and if we can't complete the job ourselves then one day there will be a species we'll run into that will do the job for us.”

Unbelievable. What a fatalistic view of the future of her own People. Why is this person even on S1, let alone put in charge of protecting it? Clearly she had issues.

Fortunately for every living soul on the ship fear of those issues would serve her well in defending it from a species that would one day try to “do the job for us”.

Anne had almost melted into her chair in the cramped space that was the Medicell when an alarm above it, coming from a mesh cage with a dull red flashing light and speaker in it, went off. With eyes moving very quickly below closed eyelids she still had not come around.

Beside Anne her personal “Computer Holographic Interface” or C.H.I sat cross-legged, floating above the Cell’s deck. She had named it “Hector” and he wasn’t very patient when it came to getting Anne out of Medicell’s and back to reality. He never did like the concept of being in a compartment where you could easily lose your grip on reality and be trapped forever.

C.H.I’s were human in form and gender particular. A Female had a Male for one and a Male had a Female for one. In their infinite wisdom the Designers of S1 had deemed the system of data interplay between Crew and C.H.I’s be simplified in this way. Of course if desired this could be changed to suit the individual’s gender preference.

“Anne,” said Hector softly. Nothing. The rapid eye movement remained rapid. What was she dreaming about now? As if he didn’t know.

“Annie!!”

That did it. The realm of meditation that had enveloped Anne’s reality was suddenly stripped away. She opened her eyes in panic and blinked.

“Yea! Yea! What’s wrong now?! It’s not my fault!” Anne almost screamed.

Hector frowned as he got to his feet and stood on the deck.

Anne sat up in her chair and looked around, trying to get her bearings. She gradually calmed down. Yawning and stretching she addressed Hector but didn’t look at him.

“Time already?”

“Three hours in this coffin? Yes. It’s time to get to work.”

Anne slowly got herself out of her seat. The sound of the staccato alarm was starting to bother her.

“Shut the cran alarm off! I have enough pressure building up in my head!”

Hector didn't stop watching Anne as the alarm shut off.

Silence.

“Dreaming of him again?”

Anne didn't reply as she downed a few pills from a bottle next to the chair and took a drink from a plastic bottle of “Ms. Lowe” energy water sitting on the edge of a computer console. Next to the bottle was a half-eaten sandwich below a graffitied sign that read “No Food Or Drink In Medicells”. She ate what was left of the sandwich and held onto the bottle as she went about shutting down the chamber, turning off computer modules and engaging the shielding that protected the hyper-glass.

When she finally replied to Hector she changed the subject.

“Why do you always bring me back so soon? I'd rather keep in the dream.”

“You keep in the dream and you’ll die,” Hector said as he looked around the small room. “I hate these things.” Looking back at Anne, he became more philosophical. As much as an artificial image could become philosophical. “Besides, what do you dream of anyway? A past still haunting you that you medicate with pills and drink? Something gone and buried that you let affect you in the present?”

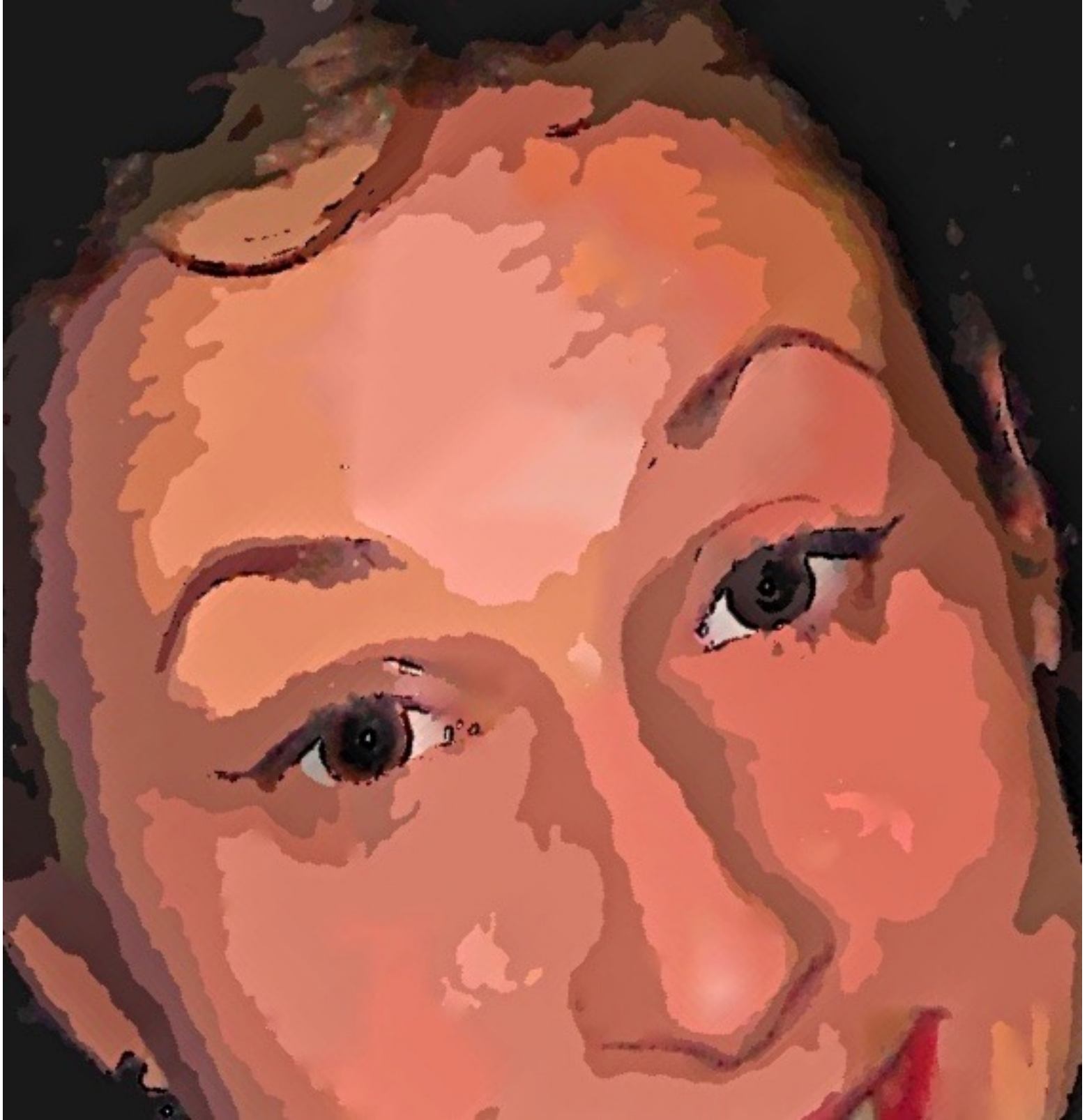
Anne groaned as she finished the drink and threw the bottle in a trash container. She put the bottle of pills in a pocket. “Lectures. Why is it always lectures from you?”

Hector was relentless. “You should be concentrating on where you are and what you have to do to get on with your life, not mope about something you have no control over that happened five years ago.”

Anne stopped and finally looked at Hector.

“My fiancée was killed when a plasma vent was foolishly left open. How can I get on with my life when I know I’ll never find the person who did it and bring everything to closure?”

“The loss of Joseph was a tragedy but the greater tragedy is that you can’t accept it. Every time you get nostalgic over him you get into this



“Shut the cran alarm off!”

piece of smack and escape into a dream world where you still have him.”

Anne refused to argue with an artificial image. She grabbed a towel from a shelf and picked up her “Data Block”. An orange light shone on it.

The data block was similar to a twentieth century cell phone. It held her C.H.I and other important data and was small enough to fit into the pocket of a jacket. She never went anywhere without it.

“You forgot the other dream,” Anne told Hector as she wiped her face and neck with her towel.

Hector sighed.

“The McCall.”

“It’ll find its way home and she’ll come back,” Anne said as she opened a hatch.

Holding onto the towel and her Data Block, Anne climbed out of the Medicell and into a changing area, more akin to a locker room. She closed the hatch behind her. Hector followed, walking through the wall.

The silence and solitude of the Medicell gave way to the crowded and noisy room. There were several half-clothed male and female Crew Members also coming out of Medicells while others were getting ready for work: putting on clothes, checking their Data Blocks while conversing with their C.H.I's, eating and drinking.

Anne and Hector had to talk slightly louder to be heard by one another.

“As far as you should be concerned the fate of your friend Captain Manners and her Crew should rest with that of Joseph.”

Anne was getting upset with Hector. This conversation was getting nowhere. She threw her small towel in a clothes bin as she walked by it. “Joseph is gone. Kim will return!”

Hector shut up. He knew when to.

Anne stopped in front of a locker designated “Sergeant Anne Brown. Section Five” and opened it up. She thought to herself as she spied a roll of Mrs. Lowe mints on a small shelf. “If I can dream about the past I can also dream about the future,” Anne mused to Hector as she took the roll of mints.

“You mean worry about it.”

Anne was just about to pop one of the mints into her mouth when she paused. “I worry about a lot of things.”

One of those "things" happened a month ago and would have just as much of an impact on Anne as the loss of Joseph.

In the main Communications Centre Commander Berth studied readings from a laptop computer sitting on the console of a larger computer station. Occasionally he would look up at a set of monitors giving out additional data.

Berth was similar to Anne in that he believed there were intelligences out in the Universe that S1 would eventually come upon.

Unlike Anne he believed that there was a high probability that any Alien Species S1 encountered would be able to assist them in getting to Gilese Three either more comfortably or quicker. The Crew of the ship just had to be looking and listening. He spent most of his time in the Main Communications Centre and the “Search and Scan Operations” section of the room doing just that: looking and listening.

Search and scan was absolutely a twenty-four hour room with Personnel gearing up for "Project Brooks", a manned rescue mission of a damaged probe called the "Brooks" that held valuable information for S1.

Or did it?

Berth got up from his computer console and walked down to the Search and Scan area. There he talked to Crew Member David Forsyth, sitting at another console. David was busily inputting data from a monitor to a computer laptop.

"David, anything new on the last series of anomalies?"

David didn't look up from his work. "Nothing drastic but I wouldn't be surprised if we had our ears rung when we switch over a few degrees this afternoon."

Berth glanced up at the radio telescope looming overhead then looked back at David. "I'll need your report before the switch."

"Working on it now. Have it for you in fifteen."

"Excellent."

Berth noticed Crew Member Sandra Loch drinking a Ms. Lowe.

"Sandra. Mind if I have another drink?"

Sandra looked up from a monitor she was studying and smirked. She glanced behind Berth and the smirk vanished. She handed him the bottle.

"Take the rest. You're going to need it," she said as she nodded to something behind him.

Berth turned around and saw Anne heading towards him, mad as hell. He picked up the drink and downed the entire half-bottle.

Still on duty, Anne wore her S1 Section five Sergeant's security uniform. If Berth didn't know the real reason she was here he would have thought he was under arrest. He took a breath and readied himself for a tornado as she approached him . He put the Ms. Lowe bottle down, turned away and walked back to his desk. Anne quickly caught up and walked beside him. Without looking at her he said "Talk to her. She volunteered."

Anne was so furious she found it hard to breath and talk. "Trying to talk a Pilot out of a flight like this is like trying to get blood out of a wrench." She paused, then "A tool I'd like to embed in your thick skull

for dreaming up this cran fool search for an inanimate needle in a haystack that should have been left for lost!"

Berth wasn't intimidated by this brooding mini-hulk breathing down on him. He replied without looking at her.

"Hardly inanimate. The Brooks was sent out in the first place because our sensor's detected signals that suggested intelligence but were too weak to fully analyze. It was very animate when it found something, recorded it and started to transmit it's information back when it unexpectedly shut down."

"That's smack! For all you know it could have started to transmit then been blown to pieces by any form of space debris."

"We'll go out to its last reported position, hopefully find it and bring it back. Then you can laugh at me for being wrong."

"Send out a tug!"

"A crewed shuttle is needed. A remote mechanical tug could develop the same problems as the probe. Something that can reason with and react to any circumstance has to be sent out, not a machine.

Furious with being ignored Anne swung Berth around in his chair.

“Leave it!”

Berth finally looked at Anne.

Several of the Main Communications centre Personnel close to the Two looked at them.

"The information the Brooks has could be vital to getting us to Gilese years or decades ahead of schedule. Or are you more worried about yourself and your friends than you are the rest of this ship?"

Anne took a step closer to Berth. Head to head and mere centimetres away she faced him and stared him down, ready to tear him apart. Berth was terrified but maintained his composure. Didn't this guy ever give in?

"I'd hate to think what would happen to your position should anything happen to me" he calmly said to her.

Anne thought about this then stood back. Berth stared at her for a few seconds, calming down and counting his lucky stars he was still in his chair.

"Saving the life of someone I care about is more important than any "position" I have."

Berth turned his chair to the computer station and went back to work.

“I’m trying to save the lives of everyone on this ship.” He closed the laptop he was working from. He got out of his chair and walked out of the room. Anne watched him then smashed her fist down on his computer console in frustration.

End Of Chapter One

Stay Tuned For The Next Exciting Chapter In The

“aLIEN dECEPTION” Saga!

Coming Friday, March 15, 2019, 4:15 PM PST:

Chapter Two

“The Little Diner In The Agridome”

gLOSSARY

People, Places, Things and Terms

A) People

1. Anne Brown

- S1 Security Sergeant for detachment twenty-one of sector five
- Sergeant for sector five Red Security Squad

2. Hector

- Anne's Computer Holographic Interface. He's a holographic image that supplies Anne with information and as much emotional guidance as he can

3. Kim Manners

- Shuttlecraft McCall Pilot an Anne's best friend

4. Mike Seaver

- Shuttlecraft McCall Co-Pilot

5. John Wendon

- Shuttlecraft McCall Communications Officer

6. Steven Berth - Head Of The Main Communications Centre

B) Places

1. Starship One

- S1. A generational ship carrying hundreds of thousands of colonists to the Gliese 581 planetary system twenty light years away from earth

2. Gliese 581

- A red dwarf star in the constellation Libra. S1's ultimate destination

3. Medicells

- Meditation chambers where S1 Crew relax

4. Security Detachments

- S.D's. Security hubs within each sector of S1

5. S1 Sector Five

- Home to Security Detachment Twenty-One

6. Central Security and Internal Safety

- C.S.I.S. S1 security and safety organization. All security detachments and personnel spread out through S1 are controlled from the C.S.I.S command centre

7. Main Communications Centre

- The M.C.C. Situated in S1 sector twelve

8. Search and Scan Operations

- The S.S.O. An area of the M.C.C constantly scanning for anything outside S1 that the ship may encounter

9. Long-Range Shuttlecraft McCall

- A large exploration shuttle sent out to retrieve a damaged probe called the “Brooks”

9. Shuttlecraft Bay Thirty-Six

- The bay the McCall is launched from

10. Shuttlecraft Bay Ready Room

- A locker room for Crew to prepare themselves for a shuttle mission

11. Barkers

- A roadhouse diner shuttle pilots favour as their own. Beside the massive shuttle repair bays and Pilot training rooms

C) Things

1. Data Blocks

- “D.B’s”. A device similar to a twenty-first century cellphone that data is kept on

2. Computer Holographic Interfaces

- “C.H.I’s”. Stored in a D.B And used for information and emotional support

3. Hector

- Anne's C.H.I. He's a holographic image that supplies Anne with information and as much emotional guidance as he can

4. The Brooks

- A deep space probe sent out from S1 to investigate possible intelligent signals picked up by S1’s Main Communications Centre

5. Long-Range Shuttlecraft McCall

- A long-range shuttlecraft sent out to retrieve the Brooks

6. Ms. Lowe Mints

- Candy S1 Crew Members love to chew on. Anne swears by them

7. Ms. Low Energy Water

- An energy drink S1 Crew Members enjoy

D) Terms

1. Smack

- Sh*t, Nonsense. B.S

2. Cran

- Hell, damn