Mars Adventure 3000

Part One

The Only Hope

By

Jonathan Burton Peters Jr

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Writers Bio

Jonathan Burton Peters Jr is an American Fantasy And Science-Fiction author that was born in Mobile Alabama on February 19th 1990. He grew up reading Fantasy books and soon developed a passion for book writing and Fantasy.

His first unsuccessful book was Salem And The Sphinx, which ended up being a failure with too many errors and serious errors to fix so he ended up deciding to scrap the entire book and started a new one to replace it. That book would become Salem And The Sphinx War, which ended up being a hit. That book in turn started a series, the Dragon Friends Of Delmore Series. After that he started on the sequel to that book, Book 2, Salem And The Legends Staff and finished it.

Positive online reviews are very helpful to starting authors. If you enjoyed "Mars Adventure 3000," please consider posting a brief review on Amazon and Goodreads. If you didn't like it, well, forget that I mentioned it.

Sections List

Prologue:	**P. 7**
The Catacombs Of Mars	**P. 8**
Learning How To Contain Raidem	**P. 49**
The Martian Council	**P. 54**
Preparations To Go To Earth	**P. 63**
The First Journey To Earth	**P. 78**
Earth, the Blue Planet	**P. 121**
Contacting The Council	**P. 162**
A Taste Of Battle	**P. 175**
A Bad Night's Sleep	**P. 190**
Preparing For Malia	**P. 197**
The Arrival Of Doctor Burg On Earth	**P. 220**
The Story Of Nibiru	**P. 236**
Sequences Before The Return To Mars	**P. 242**
The Coming Problem	**P. 249**
The Return To Mars	**P. 257**
Mars Gone Bad	**P. 277**
Rebirth Of The Deathray	**P. 322**
The Niburian Spy	**P. 335**
Discovery Of The Hercules 1	**P. 349**
Back To Planet Earth	**P. 379**
The Package On Mars	**P. 397**

Prologue

300,000 years before the rise of advanced life on Earth, Mars stood as a beacon of potential and hope, a vibrant world brimming with life and possibility. It was during this epoch that Zara Vega, a rookie pilot, along with a small group of survivors, made their fateful escape from Venus. The inhabitants of Venus had inadvertently unleashed a catastrophic greenhouse effect, transforming their once-hospitable planet into an inhospitable inferno. In a desperate bid for survival, Zara piloted their evacuation vessel away from the dying world. Their journey ended with a crash-landing on Mars, a planet more hospitable than the young, tumultuous Earth of that era. Mars, with its lush landscapes, offered these wayward travelers a sanctuary and a chance to forge a new beginning, unknowingly setting the stage for the dawn of human life on this promising new world.

Millennia passed, and the descendants of Zara Vega and her fellow survivors flourished on Mars, creating a sophisticated and harmonious society. With time, they harnessed their innate curiosity and intellect, driving technological innovation and cultural advancement. Their civilization, built on principles of unity and sustainability, soon reached a point where they could look beyond their own planet, venturing into the cosmos with dreams of exploration and discovery, eager to uncover the mysteries of the universe and perhaps reconnect with their ancestral home.

However, this golden era was not to last. As Mars' core began to weaken, its once-thick atmosphere gradually dissipated, leaving the planet exposed and vulnerable. The future of life on Mars grew increasingly uncertain, and the Martians faced a critical juncture—either devise a way to save their beloved home or make the heart-wrenching decision to abandon it in search of a new haven elsewhere in the universe.

This journey eventually led the Martians to Earth, a planet that at that time boasted diverse animal life but lacked any advanced lifeforms. As their own world faltered, the Martians saw Earth as a beacon of hope, a fertile ground where their civilization could take root once more. With their advanced technology, they embarked on a monumental migration, bringing with them the knowledge and culture of their once-great society. Upon arrival, they adapted to their new environment, integrating with the existing ecosystems while preserving the essence of their Martian heritage. Over millennia, the Martians gradually evolved, their civilization merging with the natural world of Earth, setting the stage for the rise of what would eventually become humanity.

The Catacombs of Mars

Franz Mar Leir

Early Monday morning at 5:00 AM, in the year 3000 M.T. I received a message from the Chief of Mars that stirred me from my sleep, so I had no choice but to get up. As I rubbed my eyes, I couldn't help but wonder what Chief Drangard wanted at such an ungodly hour. With a groan, I sat up in bed, feeling quite aggravated to be awake. I would have just liked to have gone back to sleep, as 5:00 A.M was far too early to be getting up. As I usually got up around 9:00 A.M, which for me, was a much better time to wake up. 'The message had better be important,' I thought to myself, as I begrudgingly got out of bed and prepared to face whatever awaited me.

I dragged myself out of bed, letting out a yawn as I made my way to the windows. Peering through the glass, I saw the clouds below, a familiar sight for a Martian. The sun was just starting to rise, casting a gentle glow over the horizon. As I prepared myself for whatever Chief Drangard had in store for me I looked out at the horizon. As usual, I noticed the familiar reddish tint, a constant reminder of life on Mars. Gone were the days of blue skies that I remembered from when I was a boy. The glow of the rising sun on the crimson landscape was a sight that had become second nature to me, a symbol of the world we called home. The cause of the reddish tint in the Martian skies has remained a mystery for the past 30 years, leaving scientists and inhabitants of Mars puzzled. Despite numerous studies and research, no definitive explanation for this phenomenon has been found. As well, despite this mystery, one thing we knew for certain was that it seemed to have no significant impact on our breathing. It was a peculiar aspect of life on Mars, but one that we had grown accustomed to over the years.

Our houses were suspended high in the air due to the thick smog that blanketed the ground level of Mars. The air pollution was so severe that spending more than a couple of hours at ground level would result in a noxious smell that was unbearable. As a result, we had to live in elevated structures to escape the pollution and maintain a breathable environment.

Every so often you could see a hover car go whizzing past the outside of the windows of our houses, but they never seemed to crash into anything though. The advanced technology and navigation systems ensured smooth and safe travels, even amidst the chaotic traffic in the skies of Mars.

I then gave a thought about what actually caused the smog. One key factor was the numerous factories scattered across the planet, essential for manufacturing goods but also notorious for emitting pollutants around the clock. Additionally, extensive mining activities contributed significantly to the problem, releasing dust and degrading the planet's surface. This combination of industrial emissions and mining dust created a dense haze that enveloped the landscape, forcing us to adapt our living conditions to high-altitude residences. Despite these environmental challenges, the economic benefits of these industries kept them running, as they were vital for sustaining our way of life.

However, we had noticed that this smog seemed to be heavier than most air, sinking close to the surface and creating a thick, oppressive blanket that was difficult to navigate. Yet, despite its density, it was possible to survive within it for short periods, though doing so was never recommended due to the health risks associated with prolonged exposure. Strangely enough, the smog had an elusive quality, occasionally becoming nearly invisible to the naked eye, making it even more treacherous for those who dared to venture into its depths without the proper equipment. You could breathe fine within it for a couple of hours, but if you remained too long, the fumes would become unbearable. The smog's effects were gradual, starting with a slight irritation in the throat and eyes, eventually escalating to a suffocating sensation that forced even the bravest souls to retreat. This made it crucial to keep track of time spent outside and always have a clear escape plan in place.

It was not uncommon to see people on the surface with masks in hand, a precaution that had become a basic necessity of living these days. These masks were specifically designed to filter out the harmful particulates in the smog, allowing people to navigate the murky atmosphere for longer periods without succumbing to its adverse effects. Despite the inconvenience, the masks became a symbol of adaptation and resourcefulness in the face of environmental challenges. Ultimately, though, we were the ones who caused our predicament, driven by the relentless pursuit of progress and economic gain. Our insatiable appetite for resources and industrial expansion had led us to this point, and now we were left to deal with the consequences of our actions. While attempts were being made to mitigate the pollution through technology and regulation, the path to a cleaner Mars was fraught with obstacles, reminding us of the delicate balance between development and environmental stewardship.

Though, if you weren't going to be on the surface for long, or if you were traveling in a vehicle, a mask wasn't necessary. The air inside vehicles was naturally filtered, providing a safe haven from the smog's harmful effects. This filtration system allowed for brief excursions onto the Martian landscape without the burden of protective gear, offering a reprieve for those who needed to move quickly or conduct short tasks outside. Vehicles had become an essential part of daily life, serving as both transportation and refuge from the oppressive atmosphere, ensuring that people could continue their work and exploration without undue risk.

Ultimately, despite the smog, oxygen was always present on Mars, ensuring that life could continue albeit with some discomfort. To date, there have been no known fatalities directly attributed to the smog, which was primarily a nuisance rather than a deadly hazard. While the haze could make outdoor activities unpleasant and sometimes challenging, it was more of an inconvenience than a critical threat to one's life. The presence of oxygen meant that even in the thickest smog, breathing remained possible, and the main issue was the irritation caused by the particulates rather than a lack of breathable air. This reality provided some reassurance to people, allowing them to focus on long-term solutions to improve air quality without the imminent fear of life-threatening consequences. As society adapted to these conditions, the collective effort to reduce pollution and innovate cleaner technologies continued, driven by the hope of a future where the Martian skies would once again be clear.

I then listened to Chief Drangard's message, and my heart sank as he confirmed my suspicions. The air on Mars was indeed becoming thinner and harder to breathe. It seemed that our breathable environment in our elevated homes was not as secure as we had once believed. The Chief urgently requested my assistance in finding a solution to this escalating crisis. As I pondered Chief Drangard's request, a nagging thought entered my mind: perhaps the thinning air was not solely due to the pollution, but rather a symptom of a larger issue plaguing our planet. Could there be something happening to Mars, something far more sinister than just the smog alone?

There was another part of that thought that scared me even more: I knew that if things continued to worsen, the human race could face extinction. Mars, once a beacon of hope and a symbol of humanity's resilience, was now teetering on the edge of becoming uninhabitable. Our home planet, which had supported us for generations, was undergoing changes that we could barely comprehend, and it felt as though the very ground beneath our feet was slipping away. This shift was not just a threat to our current way of life; it held the potential to erase all of our achievements and existence from the universe.

However, at the moment, I couldn't be certain of the true cause of our predicament. Despite my growing fears, I needed to hear confirmation from Chief Drangard himself to be sure of what we were truly facing. The thought of our world unraveling was terrifying, overshadowing every other concern, yet I knew that clarity was essential before any action could be taken. The uncertainty gnawed at me, and I could only hope that our worst fears would not be realized.

I then heard the last part of the Chief's message and I gulped. He wanted me to come to the Martian Civil Institution on the surface immediately. Being summoned by the Chief for a briefing on the surface was an ominous sign. It wasn't something that happened every day, nor was it a task taken lightly. Could it be that the situation was more dire than I had imagined, and we were indeed facing a catastrophe of unprecedented proportions?

After the Chief's message had finished, I quickly got dressed and hopped into the sky-tube to ride down to the surface. The sky-tube was a vertical transportation system that functioned like an elevator, allowing the residents of the elevated district of Mars to descend hundreds of feet to ground level in seconds. It was a crucial means of transportation for those who needed to travel between the elevated structures above and the surface of Mars below.

As I rushed out of my home and descended in the sky-tube, the thought of grabbing breakfast slipped my mind. With the urgency of Chief Drangard's request weighing on me, I decided to forgo breakfast and head straight to the Martian Civil Institution on the surface of Mars. All I knew was that Chief Drangard's summons must have been far too important to warrant a thought for breakfast. The urgency of his message, coupled with the early hour, indicated the gravity of the situation. As one of the best pilots on Mars, my skills were often called upon in times of crisis. There had to be a pressing reason for his urgent need to see me, and I couldn't shake the feeling that it had something to do with the very survival of our home on this planet. The idea that our atmosphere was failing us filled me with a mix of dread and determination as I made my way towards the Martian Civil Institution.

As soon as I reached the surface, I hailed a passing taxi and quickly climbed inside. I instructed the driver of the vehicle to take me to the Martian Civil Institution, where Chief Drangard awaited my arrival. The taxi smoothly navigated through the bustling Martian streets.

The Martian Civil Institution of Mars was located in downtown, close to the old village. At one time, the streets were kept up better, with clean pathways and well-maintained structures that reflected the pride of the Martians. However, over the last couple of decades, a lot of the old village had really gone downhill. The once-pristine streets were now dirty, littered with debris and signs of neglect. Many of the structures seemed to be starting to crumble, their facades marred by cracks and decay. The vibrant spirit of the area had faded, replaced by a sense of abandonment and decline.

As the taxi navigated through these streets, I couldn't help but feel a pang of sadness for what had been lost, but I quickly refocused on the critical mission ahead. I knew why everything looked this way though; it had a lot to do with the state of our home planet these days and the catastrophe we were starting to go through. It was like Mars was losing its life force, and the environment was deteriorating at an alarming rate. If we had some sort of generators to produce clean air, perhaps we wouldn't be in so much trouble right now. But the technology needed to sustain such a system was beyond our current capabilities, and so we had to make do with what we had.

Many of the buildings had been made out of a very dark kind of marble, almost black, and many of them had an industrial design to them, even if they were apartments. The architecture was imposing, with large, angular structures that loomed over the narrow streets, creating a sense of both grandeur and foreboding. As I looked out the taxi window, I could see remnants of this once-impressive design through the layers of grime and neglect. The dark marble facades, though now cracked and chipped, still bore the intricate carvings and motifs that spoke of a time when Martian craftsmanship was revered. The contrast between the majestic past and the current state of disrepair was stark, and it only reinforced the importance of the mission I was about to undertake.

The towering, angular structures, and their intricate designs were not just architectural choices but reflections of Martian spirit and resilience. These buildings were constructed to symbolize the strength and ambition of the Martian people, who aimed to reach for the stars both literally and metaphorically. Before the environment turned harsh and unforgiving, Mars was a planet filled with lush greenery, vibrant skies, and a thriving ecosystem. The tall buildings were designed to integrate seamlessly with the natural landscape, providing stunning views of the Martian horizon and fostering a sense of unity between the urban and natural worlds. Each structure was a testament to the Martians' ingenuity and their deep connection to their planet, a connection that, even in its current state of decline, inspired a sense of hope and determination to reclaim their lost glory.

At the height of its prosperity, Mars was a marvel of technological and environmental harmony, bustling with activity and innovation. You could sit around almost all day and see saucers coming in for a landing and taking off to space, their sleek forms gliding effortlessly against the backdrop of deep blue skies. The architecture was awe-inspiring, with buildings that shone like polished stone, their surfaces reflecting the lush greenery that once carpeted the landscape. The Martian surface was a tapestry of verdant hues, a testament to the thriving ecosystem that embraced every corner of the planet. Gentle breezes carried the scent of exotic Martian flora, creating an atmosphere of tranquility and vitality. It was a world where nature and technology coexisted in perfect harmony, each enhancing the other to create a truly extraordinary environment.

When the taxi had nearly made it all the way to the Martian Civil Institution, I steeled myself for the news I was about to receive, fully aware that it could determine the very future of our survival on Mars. The fact was, Mars' core had always been a critical component in sustaining our atmosphere and the magnetosphere, its geothermal energy helping to maintain the fragile balance that made our planet so green and breathable. But recently, something had changed. Though I didn't know the exact cause, the signs were unmistakable—flora that once thrived was now wilting, and the air seemed thinner, less invigorating. Scientists had speculated about various possibilities, from seismic shifts to unseen pollutants, but no definitive answers had emerged. Our planet was losing its beautiful green color, turning into an imposing, rusty red as our flora slowly died. We hadn't yet lost all of our vibrant vegetation, but I knew that if something wasn't done, the day would come when Mars would be stripped of its last green leaf. The transformation was not just a visual tragedy but a sobering reminder of the fragility of our environment and the urgent need for action. The once lush landscapes were now dotted with patches of desolation, and each passing day seemed to bring us closer to a point of no return. The sense of urgency was palpable, and the weight of our mission grew heavier with each breath of thinning air. This uncertainty gnawed at me, compounding the urgency of my meeting with Chief Drangard. I wondered what he would have to say to me about what we were facing, and if there was any hope whatsoever.

While we rode I thought about why humans didn't live on Earth yet.

I asked the computer, “Computer, why don't humans live on Earth yet?”

The computer answered, “Mainly because of the temperature being warmer, and how much brighter it is on Earth. Other than that, it could be achieved. Mars has always held a special place in the hearts of us Martians. It's where our ancestors first came into being and built a thriving civilization. This planet has always been an integral part of our identity, culture, and history. While Earth may offer certain advantages, such as a warmer climate and brighter sunlight, our connection to Mars runs deep. We have grown accustomed to its unique environment and have developed technologies to adapt and thrive here. The core reason is, Mars is our home, and it holds a special place in our hearts that cannot be easily replaced.”

I knew that as a species, our development and adaptation to the environment that Mars offered has shaped our identity and culture in profound ways. The connection we have with this planet is not easily replaceable, and settling other planets doesn't hold the same significance for us. Mars is more than just a place to live; it is our home, our history, and a symbol of our resilience and ingenuity.

That was why we didn't want to set foot on Earth, a planet that may have been green and filled with oceans, but it wasn't the place we called home.

I said to the computer, “That's why, isn't it? The humans of Mars just don't want to live on another planet, such as Earth, as moving away from Mars seems too far fetched to them?”

The computer answered, “That's correct. It's not that humans are unable to live on Earth, but rather they have chosen not to.”

Mars played a crucial role in the development of intelligence in us humans. The unique challenges and opportunities presented by this planet pushed our ancestors to develop advanced technologies, foster innovation, and adapt to extreme conditions. Without the presence of Mars, humans may not have evolved into the intelligent and resilient species we are today. If humans had developed on Earth, we could have been far different. The unique environment and challenges of Mars played a crucial role in shaping our intelligence and resilience. Without the influence of Mars, we may have ended up as just another species without any significant intellectual development.

16

…Some Time Later...

When I finally made it to the Martian Civil Institution I remembered about why I had been called. Last I heard is that lately the air on Mars seemed to be getting thin, and hard to breathe. As I entered the building, I realized just how little I actually knew about what was going on. It was strange, to say the least. When I was younger, it hadn't seemed this difficult to breathe at times, and it was like everyone on Mars was short of breath. I hoped the briefing would shed some light on the situation. For one, sports had to be canceled long ago, as the thin atmosphere made it impossible for anyone to run or engage in physical activities without experiencing extreme difficulty in breathing. The once vibrant Martian sporting events had now become a distant memory, leaving the residents of Mars longing for a solution to the ongoing atmospheric crisis.

I then walked into the building by pulling on a level and the door slid open with a screech. As I struggled to pull on the lever, I could feel the resistance in my muscles as the mechanism groaned in protest. It was clear that the door had seen better days and was in desperate need of repair.

Once inside I mentioned to the Chief, “Someone needs to repair the door Chief Drangard.”

He looked at me and said, “That doesn't matter at this time, Franz,” the Chief replied with a grave expression. “As of today, we have more important matters to discuss. We've received reports of an increasing number of oxygen leaks across Mars, and if we don't find a solution soon, the entire population could be at risk.” He then looked at me and continued, “Franz, you're the best pilot on Mars,” the Chief said, his voice filled with urgency as he locked eyes with me. “And there is a reason I called you here today. We need you to embark on a mission to locate the source of these oxygen leaks and find a solution before it's too late. The fate of the entire planet rests on your shoulders.”

I asked him, “What do you think is wrong with Mars?”

“It's the core of Mars. The atmosphere is being stripped away,” the Chief replied, his voice filled with concern. “We believe that the core of Mars has become unstable, causing the loss of its protective magnetic field. Without this magnetic field, the solar wind is eroding the atmosphere, leading to the thinning air and oxygen leaks. We need you to find a solution to possibly stabilize the core and prevent further damage to the colony, if at all possible.”

I pondered over the Chief's words, trying to grasp the full gravity of the situation. 'If at all possible' echoed in my mind, a phrase laden with uncertainty and the weight of our dire circumstances. It was clear that even the Chief, with all his knowledge and experience, had no definitive answers. The task ahead seemed almost insurmountable—how could we possibly stabilize the core of a planet? This was uncharted territory, a challenge that required not just skill and bravery, but perhaps a stroke of unprecedented ingenuity or luck. As I stood there, the enormity of our mission loomed large, leaving me with a mix of determination and doubt.

I then asked, “So it's not just the smog?”

He answered, “No, it's not just the smog. While the smog contributes to the overall deterioration of the atmosphere, the main issue lies with the unstable core of Mars and the possible loss of its protective magnetic field. This has allowed the solar wind to erode the atmosphere, leading to the thinning air and oxygen leaks. It's crucial that we focus on stabilizing the core to prevent further damage to the planet.”

The Chief then continued, “Mars might be on the verge of losing its magnetosphere completely. The disturbances in the core are causing fluctuations that could soon result in the total collapse of the planet's magnetic field. Without the magnetosphere, Mars will be fully exposed to the relentless solar wind, accelerating the erosion of the atmosphere and rendering the planet uninhabitable for us. Time is of the essence, and we must address this core instability immediately if we are to have any hope of saving our home and future generations.” “If we cannot stabilize the core and save Mars, we need to buy enough time for the evacuation of the entire population.” The Chief's voice trembled with a mix of desperation and determination. “Fortunately, there is another planet called Earth, with a young but viable environment. If necessary, we can relocate the people of Mars there to ensure their survival.”

I said with shock, “That would mean, abandoning Mars?”

“That would be our last resort, Franz,” the Chief replied solemnly. “Abandoning Mars is not something we want to do. But if we can't find a way to stabilize the core, we have to prioritize the survival of the people. Our primary goal is to save lives, even if it means leaving behind the planet we've called home for so long.”

He then said with a melancholy look on his face, “Franz, you must remember, Mars is not just a planet to us; it is our cradle, the very soil on which humanity took its first steps. We evolved here, thrived here, and built our civilization from the dust of this land. It's painful to even consider abandoning it, but we must face the harsh reality that if Mars dies, so do we. Our connection to this planet runs deep, but our survival instincts must run deeper. We need to be prepared to make the hardest decisions to ensure the continuation of our species, even if that means leaving behind the only home we've ever known. However, I have full confidence in your piloting skills, Franz,” the Chief said, his voice filled with unwavering determination. “You will navigate through the narrow passageways of Mars, using the exploration star ship on the south side of Mars. I believe in your ability to reach the core and find a solution to stabilize it. The fate of the entire world rests on your ability to make it to the core and save Mars.”

“But time is of the essence, Franz,” the Chief's voice conveyed a sense of urgency. “Our initial estimates suggest that we might have a window of approximately three years to repair Mars before it becomes too unstable to support life any longer. Your quest for now is to find out what's wrong with the core and explore every possibility to fix it. The fate of the entire population and the future of Mars depend on your determination and resourcefulness.”

I asked, “If it's needed, how fast is this ship? Can it reach warp 9 or 10?”

He answered, “If needed, the star ship is equipped with advanced propulsion technology that allows it to reach speeds comparable to warp 9 or 10. However, for now, your mission is to remain close to Mars and focus on stabilizing the core. Speed will be a secondary concern compared to the critical task at hand.”

I then said, “Also Chief, please call me Mar if possible.”

He laughed, then said, “Of course, Mar,” the Chief chuckled, momentarily forgetting that I preferred to be called by my middle name. “I apologize for the oversight. From now on, I'll make sure to address you as Mar.”

I preferred to go by my middle name, Mar, because it felt more unique and suited my personality better than my first name, Franz. Franz always reminded me of a more traditional and conservative identity, whereas Mar allowed me to embrace my individuality and stand out among my peers. It was a name that resonated with my true self, and I didn't much care for being called Franz.

Having trained to be a fighter pilot for most of my life, I practically grew up at the controls of a star ship. However, the one who raised me was the Chief, as I lost my parents at a young age. It was his influence and guidance that led me to join the academy of Mars and pursue my dreams of exploring the cosmos. As the circumstance would have had it, at the time I barely even knew my parents. Frankly today, I really didn't remember what they were like, or what they looked like. All I knew is my home on Mars, which was now in danger.

I then asked him, “Do you think there's something missing in the core? An element that helps to keep the core strong. If so, do you think it could be found on another planet?”

He answered, “If there is indeed a missing element in the core, and it is the reason Mars is dying, it is possible that it could be found on another planet. We can plan an expedition to explore the planets near Nibiru, as they might hold the answer we seek.” “However, we must approach this mission with caution, as Nibiru is home to our enemies, and they will not hesitate to attack if they perceive us as a threat. We need to be prepared for any potential confrontations and prioritize the safety of our crew. Our primary objective remains stabilizing the core of Mars, but we must also be mindful of the challenges and dangers that await us on Nibiru.”

I asked him, “Would it be possible to make it to a planet as far away as Nibiru and make it back in time, within three years?”

“While it is theoretically possible for a ship to make it to Nibiru and back within three years if it can maintain speeds as fast as Warp 12, it would require significant updates and modifications to the saucer in question.” Chief Drangard acknowledged.

I said, “So we would in fact have to use a saucer?”

He answered, “Yes, that's correct. The saucer's design allows it to withstand the extreme pressure and strain on the hull during such long-distance journeys. It's the only type of ship that would have a chance of surviving the journey to Nibiru and back within the given time-frame.” “As of now, Nibiru is approximately 3400 years away from us. It would require the ship to travel at extreme speeds, no slower than Warp 12, to make it there and back within our chosen deadline. Additionally, Nibiru takes approximately 3600 years to complete a full orbit around the sun, further highlighting the urgency and challenges of our mission.” “But we must also remember that time is not on our side. The longer we wait, the less time we have to complete the mission. By the time we are able to initiate the search for Raidem, there is a high chance that we may not have three years to spare. Failure or not being able to make it to Nibiru and back in time is a very real possibility that we must be prepared for.”

I said, “So ultimately, do we really need to move the population of Mars to a backup planet first?”

He answered, “That decision will ultimately be up to the Martian Council. However, considering the potential dangers and uncertainties of the mission to Nibiru, it may be wise to at least consider the possibility of relocating the Martian population to a backup planet as a precautionary measure, such as Earth.”

As I pondered the situation, it became clear to me that given the potential perils of the mission to Nibiru and the uncertainties surrounding Mars' stability, it was highly likely that the Martian Council would lean towards relocating the population of Mars as a precautionary measure. Realizing this, I knew that our best course of action for now was to start preparing for the monumental task ahead.

He then said, “On your current ship to make it to Olympus Mons you will have a small crew of five, so ultimately with yourself included you will have a crew of six, Mar. This, as I had mentioned, is a small vessel you'll be captaining.”

I questioned, “Captain?”

He answered, “Yes Mar, you're being promoted to Captain. Perhaps later you might also receive the position as Captain on a much larger Martian saucer as well.”

I said, while questioning, “A Martian saucer?”

He said, “You've earned it, Mar. A Martian saucer is a much larger spacecraft that can travel farther into the cosmos, allowing for more extensive exploration and missions. It's a position of great responsibility, but I have no doubt that you are up for the challenge.”

I asked, “Why do we build saucers anyways, and not another kind of star ship?”

He answered, “Well, Mar, the design of Martian saucers is influenced by our human nature and physiology. The saucer shape allows for better distribution of gravitational forces across the spacecraft, reducing the physical strain on the crew during long-duration space travel. Additionally, the saucer design provides a stable and balanced platform for conducting scientific experiments and observations, ensuring that our human senses and abilities are optimized for exploration in the vastness of space.”

“Furthermore, the laws of physics also play a role in the choice of a saucer-shaped spacecraft. The circular design allows for better aerodynamic stability and maneuverability, making it easier to control in the vacuum of space. Considering the limitations and capabilities of our human bodies, a saucer provides the optimal balance between functionality and adaptability for our space exploration missions,” he continued.

I then asked, “How am I to access Mars' core in this exploratory craft?”

He answered, “To access Mars' core, you will need to navigate through the treacherous terrain of Olympus Mons. This massive volcano serves as the gateway to the core, and it is a challenging path to navigate. However, with your piloting skills and the advanced technology of your ship, I believe you are more than capable of successfully reaching the core and carrying out our mission of finding out what's wrong with Mars' core.”

I then looked outside the window at all of the Martian buildings, and the grass that grew on Mars. Most of the Martian buildings stretched towards the sky, with towering structures that featured sharp, angular points and a multitude of tight corners that seemed to come to a knife-like edge. Amidst this architectural marvel, lush green grass and an abundance of trees added a touch of natural beauty to the Martian landscape, creating a harmonious blend of human ingenuity and the potential for life.

These buildings stretched out as far as the eye could see, forming a sprawling metropolis that seemed to defy the very limits of the Martian horizon. The city itself was absolutely mind-boggling in size, a testament to human perseverance and ingenuity. As the early morning sun began to crest over the horizon, the structures shimmered with a radiant glow, casting intricate patterns of light and shadow across the landscape. This was our home, this was Mars, a planet transformed by human hands into a vibrant oasis amidst the stars. And yet, as I gazed upon this marvel, I couldn't even begin to imagine Mars without any buildings on its surface—a barren, desolate world devoid of life. The mere thought was haunting, a reminder of the fragile beauty we had crafted on a planet that could change in the blink of an eye.

I then asked him, “What would happen if Mars was to lose all of its atmosphere?”

He answered, “If Mars were to lose all of its atmosphere, the Martian buildings would become uninhabitable and eventually collapse due to the pressure from space pressing on Mars' surface. Simply, the weight of space pressing on Mars' surface would cause immense pressure, leading to the collapse of the Martian buildings. Without the support of the atmosphere, the structures would be unable to withstand the external force, resulting in their eventual destruction. As well, the grass and trees that grow on Mars would wither and die without the necessary air, water, and nutrients provided by the atmosphere. Mars would become a barren and inhospitable planet, devoid of life as we know it. And it would also become cold, deathly cold. It would seem like a completely different planet.”

I asked him, “What would that cold be like?”

He answered, “If this future were to happen, it wouldn't be the home we remember. The cold temperatures on Mars, without its atmosphere, would be unforgiving and relentless, as cold as the vacuum of space itself. It would penetrate every crevice, freezing everything in its path and leaving an icy, lifeless landscape in its wake.” “All the progress we've made, all the signs of life and civilization, would be erased as if they never existed. It's a haunting thought, Mar, to imagine a planet once teeming with life reduced to a desolate wasteland. That's why it's crucial for us to protect Mars and ensure its continued stability, so that future generations can thrive and build upon what we've achieved.”

I then asked, “Well, could we survive on Earth, despite how bright it is?”

He answered, “Surviving on Earth would definitely be challenging due to its proximity to the sun and the intensity of sunlight. Our eyes are not adapted to handle such brightness, and prolonged exposure could cause severe damage. However, with advanced technology and protective measures, it would be possible for humans to adapt and live on Earth if we had to abandon Mars. We would need to develop specialized eye-wear and create shaded habitats to shield ourselves from the intense sunlight and ensure our survival on our new home planet.”

He then continued, “As you know, Mars is further away from the sun compared to Earth, so it isn't as bright even during the day. Our nights do get rather dark. As we live on Mars, we have adapted to the lower levels of sunlight and have evolved for this type of light level. However, it would still require careful planning and adjustments to adapt to the much brighter conditions on Earth if we were to relocate. As well, the temperature on Earth is a little warmer than what we're used to, so during some of the seasons on the planet the temperatures could rise to uncomfortable levels.” He then stated, “But, if we had to evacuate the entire population of Mars to Earth, these are just some of the challenges we would face, as it's not completely like home.”

The Chief's words left a heavy weight on my heart, as I contemplated the immense challenges and adjustments we would face if forced to leave our beloved Mars and make Earth our new home. From what he'd told me, Earth seemed daunting and filled with uncertainty. As well as not to mention, temperatures that we weren't used to. Ultimately, I knew that it would be difficult to adjust to a new kind of life on Earth.

He then said, “As well, if we had to move to Earth, it probably would be best if we hide our technology away from the ingenious people that already live there. But as far as we know, there might not be any people living on Earth. However, if there are, it would be necessary for us to hide our advanced technology, in order to avoid any potential conflicts or misuses.”

I asked him why, and he answered, “Blending in with the inhabitants of Earth would be crucial for our survival and integration into their society. Revealing our advanced technology could disrupt the natural progression of their civilization and potentially lead to conflict or exploitation. It is important that we respect their culture and ensure a peaceful coexistence, even if it means temporarily suppressing our technological advancements.”

“There is also a chance that we would have to destroy our star ships as well,” he said, “Which would leave us stranded on Earth. It's a sacrifice we would have to make to ensure our integration and peaceful coexistence with the inhabitants of Earth. We would have to find new ways to adapt and thrive in our new home, even without the means to return to Mars, or our technology.”

I said, “So, we should hope there aren't any people already living on Earth?”

He answered, “Yes, that would certainly simplify things for us. If there are no people on Earth, we wouldn't have to go to such great lengths to hide our technology and blend in. We could potentially maintain our star ships and continue to rely on our advanced technology for our survival and development on Earth.”

The next morning, I was down at the star ship docks preparing the ship for the journey to the core. Beside me sat an Android crewman, whom was my copilot in the other seat. As I glanced at the Android crewman assigned as my copilot, a mix of surprise and confusion washed over me. He had the appearance of a man, but there was an unmistakable artificial quality to his features and movements. It was a stark reminder that technology had advanced to the point where androids could seamlessly blend in with humans, blurring the lines between man and machine.

“Check your readings to see how strong our shields are before we take off. We will need every bit of our shields for the journey into Olympus Mons,” I instructed Android Tarla, my copilot. The towering volcano was known for its treacherous atmospheric conditions, and our survival depended on the integrity of our shields to withstand the harsh environment.

He tapped on the glass and said, “Captain, I'm getting some fluctuating readings here. It seems that the shields are not responding consistently. There might be a malfunction or a potential vulnerability in their functionality.”

I knew that he understood the gravity of the situation, knowing that without fully operational shields, our journey into Olympus Mons could spell disaster for our mission and the survival of our crew.

I looked over at the gauge, and turned a knob, then gave the entire control panel a hard slap. All at once the shield generator sprung to life. Then I said, “Tarla, let's make a note to inform the Martians about the condition of our star ships. It's concerning that they are so old and dated, and we need their help to repair them. Our survival depends on having reliable and up-to-date technology for our missions.”

I then instructed him, “Check your readings again. Does it seem like the shields are finally coming online?”

He looked at the gauge and responded, “That did it, Captain. The shields are now fully operational and responding consistently.”

I then asked the ships computer, “Computer, how are the engines?”

The computer responded, “The engines are functioning optimally, Captain. All systems are go for departure. We are ready to embark on our journey to the core of Olympus Mons.”

I then took the speaker tube into my hand and spoke into it, “Engine room, provide enough power for liftoff.”

The engine room called back on the speaker tube, responding, “Captain, we have allocated the maximum power available for liftoff. All systems are green and ready for departure. We've been working tirelessly to ensure the engines are in optimal condition. We're confident that they will provide the necessary thrust for a successful journey into Olympus Mons,” Engineer Yatzar reported with a hint of relief in his voice.

I then turned several knobs on my control panel and flipped the needed switches to activate the anti-gravity liftoff and the ship floated off of its landing platform. By adjusting the anti-gravity control knobs and flipping the necessary switches, I activated the ship's anti-gravity system, allowing it to gradually lift off the landing platform. The ship began to float effortlessly, defying the pull of gravity from Mars, as we prepared to embark on our journey into the heart of Olympus Mons.

As we prepared to soar towards the core of Olympus Mons, I couldn't help but ponder the irony of our situation. The beings from Nibiru, once our allies, had turned against us due to their belief that our technological advancements would pose a threat to their dominance. Little did they know that our star ships, though old and dated, were equipped with modifications and upgrades that put us on par with their own advanced technology. If not for the impending demise of our planet, our technological advancements would have indeed made us a formidable adversary to Nibiru. Our modified and upgraded star ships, combined with our determination, could have posed a significant challenge to their dominance. Alas, our focus now lies in saving our civilization rather than engaging in interstellar conflicts. Our main concern at the present time was trying to repair Mar's core and stop the atmosphere from being stripped away from the planet.

As the engines came online and we rose higher and higher into the air to penetrate the barrier into space I could see a shadow looming high above us. And I said to my copilot, “Do you see that? That must be one of our saucers.”

He looked out his window and said, “Yes, Captain,” my copilot replied in awe. “That saucer is massive, far larger than anything I've ever seen before. It's one of the saucers, and the only way to travel in space. It's a testament to the scale and power of our civilization.”

I then said, “Alright, initiate the jump through the barrier, warp 5, if you please Mr. Tarla.”

“Yes, Captain,” replied Mr. Tarla, his voice filled with excitement. “Initiating the jump through the barrier, warp 5 in progress.” As he pulled back the lever, I heard the low hum as the warp drive came online, propelling us towards our destination with incredible speed and power. Despite how much older this exploration vessel was, at best, it felt a little rudimentary compared to the saucers. I knew that in truth, this vessel was a lot older than them, and I wondered if it was really wise to try to take this ship to the center of Olympus Mons.

With further thought, I knew that the warp drive was essential to escape the atmosphere without burning up because the immense heat generated by the ship's engines and the friction with the atmosphere would have been too much for the ship to withstand. By initiating the warp drive, we were able to create a warp bubble around the ship, effectively bypassing the atmospheric pressure and allowing us to safely transition into the vacuum of space.

Once free from Mars, Tarla pushed the lever forward again and we pulled out of warp. Through the windows, I could see into space forever. The vast expanse seemed to stretch on endlessly, extending far beyond the limits of my vision. It was a breathtaking sight, a reminder of the infinite possibilities that awaited us in the uncharted realms of the cosmos.

I then stood up and walked to the back side window and looked out towards Mars.

I said, “Mr. Tarla, hold your position here.”

“Captain, holding position,” replied Mr. Tarla in his calm Android voice. The view of Mars from the window was mesmerizing, with its reddish hue and the intricate patterns of its surface. As we hovered in space, I couldn't help but feel a sense of awe and anticipation for the discoveries that awaited us beyond the boundaries of our home planet.

The interior of our ship was surprisingly spacious despite its smaller size compared to Martian saucers. The triangular shape allowed for efficient use of space, with compartments neatly organized. The control room, where I stood, was lined with advanced technology panels and holographic displays that illuminated the room with a soft blue glow. It was a testament to the ingenuity and craftsmanship of our civilization, even in the face of the awe-inspiring Martian saucers.

I then told Tarla, “I'm going back to check on the engine room before we proceed to Olympus Mons.”

He said, “Of course, Captain. I'll maintain my position here and monitor the ship's systems while you ensure everything is functioning properly in the engine room. Proceed with caution and take all necessary precautions. We don't want any surprises on our way to Olympus Mons.”

Before going to check on the engine crew in the engine room I first walked into my briefing room on the aft section of the bridge where I could have some privacy. I then turned on the computer, and contacted the chief. When I saw him on the screen I said, “Chief, we're preparing to set off into Olympus Mons to try to figure out what's happening to Mars' core.”

He said, “Captain, we're aware of the urgency and significance of this mission. Our team has been working tirelessly to analyze the data we've gathered so far and develop potential solutions. We believe that exploring Olympus Mons will provide valuable insights into the core's condition and help us determine if repairing it is a feasible option. Proceed with caution, Captain, and keep us updated on any developments.”

He then asked, “How are your shields Captain Mar?”

I answered him, “Chief, I must admit that we had some trouble with the shields before takeoff. I had to give the control panel a good slap to get them to come online. However, I've run a diagnostic since then and everything seems to be functioning properly now. I'll keep a close eye on the shield systems during our journey to Olympus Mons.”

He then said with worry in his voice, “Captain, I understand the importance of this mission, but based on your statement about the trouble you had with the shields and the potential risks involved, I strongly advise aborting the mission for now. Bring the ship back to Mars immediately. I repeat, do not venture into Olympus Mons. Our priority is the safety of the crew and the integrity of your ship.”

I understood the Chief's concerns and knew that the shields needed to be repaired. However, I also knew that the mission to explore Olympus Mons was crucial in understanding the condition of Mars' core. With caution and constant monitoring, I was confident that we could proceed safely and gather the valuable information needed. I knew that if we weren't able to gather this crucial data about Mars' core, we might not have a planet to return to in the future. Moving to Earth and abandoning Mars was not a desirable outcome for me, so I was determined to proceed with caution and ensure the safety of the crew while collecting the valuable information we needed.

I then told the Chief, “I'm going to have the Chief engineer run some diagnostics on the shields before proceeding into Olympus Mons.”

The Chief responded, “Thank you, Captain. I appreciate your understanding and commitment to the mission. Let's prioritize the safety of the crew and the integrity of the ship above all else. Once we have the results from the diagnostics, we can reassess the situation and make an informed decision about proceeding into Olympus Mons. Keep me updated on the progress.”

I then asked the Chief, “Chief Drangard, exactly why do I have to have an Android serving as my copilot? I mean, he's not even a human, he's a machine?”

The Chief answered, “Captain, I understand your concerns about having an Android as your second officer. However, Tarla is equipped with advanced artificial intelligence and is specifically designed for space missions. His programming allows him to process vast amounts of data quickly and make split-second decisions that can be critical in emergency situations. While he may not be a human, his capabilities make him an invaluable asset to your crew and the success of this mission.”

I then told the Chief thanks, and signed off from the conversation. I didn't exactly like how they were thrusting a machine into my lap and telling me to use it, but I suppose that I had no choice in the matter.

I then asked the computer, “Computer, how deep is Olympus Mons? Can it actually get us to the center of Mars?”

The computer answered, “Olympus Mons is the tallest volcano in the solar system, reaching a height of approximately 13.6 miles and a diameter of about 370 miles. While it is not possible to directly reach the center of Mars through Olympus Mons, exploring the volcano can provide valuable insights into the geological structure and composition of the planet, which in turn can help us understand the condition of Mars' core.”

I asked, “Computer, so in theory, we can figure out a possible way to repair Mars' core by venturing all the way into Olympus Mons, as the Chief believes?”

The computer responded, “Repairing Mars' core by venturing into Olympus Mons is an interesting hypothesis, Captain. While it is true that Raidem is a valuable material for the planet's core, further research and analysis would be needed to determine its exact role in the core's stability and the feasibility of repairing it through this method. I can assist you in gathering more information and conducting simulations to evaluate the potential effectiveness of such an approach.”

I then said to the computer, “Alright computer, do a simulation in which the planet is running out of Raidem in the core, and tell me, would the planet eventually die? Would this also cause Mars to lose its magnetic field and not be able to support life anymore?”

The computer responded, “Captain, based on results from the simulation, if Mars were to run out of Raidem in its core, it would indeed have significant consequences. The loss of Raidem would result in the weakening of Mars' magnetic field, making it more vulnerable to solar radiation and potentially unable to support life as we know it. However, further analysis and research would be needed to fully understand the long-term implications and potential solutions to this scenario.”

I stated, “So, if we are unable to find more Raidem, Mars will indeed die?”

The computer answered, “Captain, while it is true that the depletion of Raidem in Mars' core would have severe consequences for the planet's ability to support life, it is important to note that the concept of a planet 'dying' is not as straightforward as it may seem. Mars would still exist as a celestial body, but its potential to sustain complex life forms would be greatly diminished without a stable magnetic field. Finding alternative solutions to replenishing Raidem or mitigating the effects of its depletion would be crucial in ensuring the long-term habitability of Mars.”

I told the computer, “I suppose that the best thing we can do for now is to go deep into Olympus Mons and scan for Raidem in the core? I suppose that's why the Chief wanted the ship to travel to the deepest part of Olympus Mons, to get as close to the core as possible.”

The computer answered, “Captain, your assumption is correct. Going deep into Olympus Mons and scanning for Raidem in the core would indeed be the best course of action. By getting as close to the core as possible, we can gather valuable data and assess the availability of Raidem, which will be essential in determining the feasibility of replenishing it and safeguarding Mars' magnetic field.”

As I pondered the potential consequences of Mars losing its magnetic field, memories from my childhood flooded my mind. It felt surreal to think that I had spent my entire life on Mars, and the thought of having to abandon it and relocate to Earth in the event of mission failure seemed like a nightmare. Time had flown by so quickly, and the weight of the responsibility I carried as captain weighed heavily on my shoulders. As I reflected on my journey as captain and the potential fate of Mars, I couldn't help but feel a deep sense of gratitude for Chief Drangard. If it hadn't been for his guidance and mentor-ship during my teenage years, I may have never had the opportunity to attend the academy and eventually lead this mission. It was a humbling reminder of how interconnected our lives are, and how the actions of one person can have a profound impact on the fate of an entire planet.

I then got up from my chair and headed back onto the bridge, and then turned and went through the sliding metal door to head to the engine room. As I entered the engine room, I was greeted by the familiar hum of the ship's machinery. The compact layout of the ship made it easy to navigate, with the engine room conveniently located right behind the bridge. In our small vessel, there were no cabins for the crew members or captain's quarters, but we made do with the limited space we had. The reason for the compact layout and limited space on this vessel was because it was designed as an exploratory craft, meant to be docked within the space-dock of a much larger saucer. This allowed for seamless transition between the two vessels and facilitated efficient exploration missions on Mars. Fortunately, our vessel was equipped with artificial gravity and a reliable air source, eliminating the need for spacesuits while on board. These were the only luxuries we had, but they made a significant difference in our day-to-day operations and comfort during the long duration of the mission.

As I walked up to face the lead engineer, I could see the other three engineers diligently working around the engines and the warp core. The hum of their activity filled the room, accompanied by the occasional spark of electricity. Meanwhile, the shield generator stood tall and sturdy, its protective force pulsating with a reassuring glow. However, I noticed that every so often, the glow of the shield generator seemed to flicker, cutting out for a couple of milliseconds. It should have remained a solid color, providing constant protection, but instead, it seemed to restart itself sporadically.

I thought to myself, 'That is odd. It shouldn't be doing that.'

I was convinced that there might be something wrong with our shields, but I couldn't completely put my finger on it yet. The lead engineer would need to run some tests to diagnose the issue. I approached him and pointed out the flickering, expressing my concern that it could compromise our safety during the mission.

I asked him, “Engineer Yatzar, what is the condition of the shield generator after our trouble with it earlier?”

He answered, “Captain, I believe the problem with the shield generator earlier might have been due to a faulty switch on the bridge. However, I have thoroughly inspected it and it appears to be in perfect working order now. Just to be safe, I will run some diagnostics on it to ensure its stability throughout the mission.”

I said, “Please do so. For now I'll be in my briefing room on the bridge. Contact me when you know more about the shields.”

He said, “Aye, captain. I understand the importance of having fully operational shields before we proceed to Olympus Mons. I will run thorough diagnostics and ensure that the shield generator is stable and functioning at one hundred percent. I will keep you updated on any developments or concerns regarding the shields.”

An hour later, the lead engineer, Yatzar, walked into my briefing room looking a little terrified. He had a concerned expression on his face, and I could sense that something was amiss with the shield generator despite his earlier reassurance. He said, “Captain, I apologize for the earlier false reassurance. Upon running the diagnostics, I discovered a critical fault in the shield generator. If we proceed to Olympus Mons with the current state of the ship, there is a high probability of shield failure, leaving us vulnerable to any potential threats in the volcano. I strongly advise against continuing the mission until we can resolve this issue.”

He then stated, “I noticed the anomaly when I saw the shield's energy readings fluctuating unexpectedly during the diagnostic scan. At first, I thought it was just a minor glitch, but as I delved deeper into the system logs, I realized that the shield's power modulation was compromised. The energy surges were causing short, unpredictable flickers in the shield's integrity. It was as if the generator was trying to compensate for a significant internal fault but failing to maintain a stable output. Even a brief lapse, as you know, could expose us to immense danger, especially with the volatile conditions within Olympus Mons.”

I knew that if we did have shield failure while deep within Olympus Mons, we would quickly burn up in the intense heat and pressure. The ship itself would be disintegrated almost immediately, leaving us with little chance of survival. This was nothing to play with at all; the stakes were far too high to gamble on a malfunctioning shield generator. The ship, our only refuge for the mission, could not go into the volcano in its current state. We needed to address the issue and ensure our safety before proceeding any further with the mission.

I then contacted the Chief on the computer and asked, “Chief, what do you advise we do? There is a critical fault with the shield generator, and most likely, this ship won't get us into Olympus Mons.”

He responded back, “Captain, I have already dispatched another ship to rendezvous with you. Your new ship! As I mentioned earlier, it's a much larger saucer. You will transfer to this ship, and we will store the exploration ship in the space-dock on board. This way, we can ensure your safety and continue the mission without risking shield failure.”

However, I couldn't shake the nagging doubt in my mind about whether the larger saucer would be able to navigate through the narrow catacombs of Olympus Mons. The volcanic tunnels were known for their tight passages and unpredictable layouts, which would be a challenge for any spacecraft, let alone a considerably larger one. I just hoped that the new vessel, despite its size, had the maneuverability and precision required to make it through the treacherous terrain without incident. The safety of my crew depended on it, and the success of our mission hinged on the new saucer being able to handle the complexities of Olympus Mons' labyrinthine structure.

I asked the Chief, “You mentioned that the saucer is much larger than this current vessel. Will it fit through the catacombs of Olympus Mons to get close to the core of Mars?”

He answered, “Captain, while the saucer is indeed large, it was designed in the past to fit within the parameters of Olympus Mons. Back when the EX1 Saucer was conceptualized, we made sure to consider the dimensions and constraints posed by the volcanic tunnels of Olympus Mons. Extensive simulations and structural adjustments were carried out to ensure the vessel's maneuverability in such challenging environments. Rest assured, we will be able to get close to the core of Mars with the new vessel without any issues. The engineering team has meticulously planned for this scenario, and you have my full confidence that the saucer will handle the complexities of Olympus Mons' structure. Our mission's success hinges on these preparations, and I'm certain they will hold up under the extreme conditions you'll face.”

I then asked, “What does the designation, EX1 mean?”

He answered, “EX1 is an abbreviation for 'Explorer 1.' It was the first saucer design that was among the Explorer class of saucers. This class was specifically engineered for the most demanding missions, including deep space travel, high-risk exploratory missions, and even battle scenarios. The EX1 was built to endure extreme conditions and navigate through challenging terrains like the volcanic catacombs of Olympus Mons. Its robust design and advanced technology make it ideal for our mission, ensuring that we can achieve our objectives safely and efficiently.”

About an hour later I saw a giant saucer rise up from Mars. Its size completely dwarfed this smaller exploration vessel. As I watched the enormous saucer rise up from Mars, I couldn't help but feel a mix of awe and excitement. The magnitude of the ship was truly impressive, and I couldn't wait to see what capabilities it had in store for our mission to Olympus Mons.

We then watched as the space-dock door at the bottom of the saucer opened. And I leaned over to Android Tarla and said, “Gently edge us inside and set her down Mr. Tarla.”

“Aye, Captain,” replied Android Tarla. “I will carefully maneuver the ship into the space dock and gently set it down. Rest assured, I have been programmed with precise docking protocols to ensure a smooth and safe transfer to the saucer.”

Once we had landed I got my first look at the space dock in the saucer. The inside of the space dock was a marvel to behold. It was a vast expanse of gleaming metal and sophisticated technology, with rows of docking stations lining the walls. As I stepped out of the exploration vessel and onto the docking platform, I could hardly wait to explore the rest of the ship and uncover its secrets. The walls of the space dock gently curved inwards, giving the impression of a seamless transition from the docking platform to the interior of the saucer. As I looked around, I noticed that even the corners of the space dock were rounded, adding to the overall sleek and futuristic design of the vessel.

“So this is my new ship,” I muttered, unable to contain my amazement at the sight before me. The advanced design and state-of-the-art technology of the saucer were beyond anything I had ever seen, and I couldn't help but feel a surge of pride knowing that this extraordinary vessel would be our means of reaching the core of Mars.

Another crewman stepped up from behind me and said, “Eye Captain.”

I turned around to see the crewman and he said, “Welcome aboard Explorer 1, Captain Mar.” The crewman's voice echoed with excitement and respect. “This is the pinnacle of Martian exploration, and we are honored to have you leading us on this historic mission.”

I asked, “Where's the bridge?”

He answered, “Directly above us. You will take the turbo-lift all the way up to the very top of the saucer. The bridge is situated there, commanding a panoramic view of space. You'll be able to oversee our mission to Olympus Mons from there, Captain Mar.”

He then turned to the Android and saluted, then said, “Second Officer Tarla, you will proceed to the bridge with the Captain.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Android Tarla with a crisp salute. “I will accompany Captain Mar to the bridge and ensure a smooth transition of command.” Tarla's voice carried an air of efficiency and professionalism, instilling confidence in the crew and reinforcing the seamless integration of human and artificial intelligence aboard the Explorer 1.”

However, despite Tarla's evident competence and professionalism, I found myself grappling with the concept of having an android as part of my crew. The idea of working alongside a machine, no matter how advanced, felt foreign and unsettling to me. It would undoubtedly take some time before I could fully adjust to this new dynamic and trust Tarla as I would any human crew member.

We then entered into the turbo-lift and the doors shut afterwards, enclosing us in. And in all truth, I had no idea about what I was looking at, how to even use it in the first place. The complexity of the controls and the advanced technology of the turbo-lift were overwhelming, making me question my ability to effectively navigate this incredible vessel.

I asked Tarla, “Do you know how to use this contraption? What do all of these buttons do?”

“Indeed, Captain Mar,” replied Android Tarla in a calm and reassuring tone. “The turbo-lift is a sophisticated vertical transportation system that uses advanced technology to quickly transport individuals between different levels of the spacecraft. These buttons control the desired destination and speed of the lift, ensuring a smooth and efficient ride. Rest assured, Captain, I am fully equipped with the knowledge and expertise to operate this turbo-lift and guide us to the bridge safely.”

He then showed me which button was meant for the bridge, and I pushed it. I then felt us start to be lifted up as the entire thing rose to the top of its shaft, the hum of the machinery filling the small space. As we ascended, I couldn't help but marvel at the intricate engineering that allowed this vessel to seamlessly navigate the vast expanse of space.

After a brief ascent, the turbo-lift came to a stop, and the doors opened, revealing the bustling activity of the bridge. Stepping out, I was greeted by the sight of crew members diligently attending to their stations, their focus undeterred by the grandeur of the stars that could be seen through the windows.

I then looked around the bridge, at the windows that seemed to surround the entire deck. I could see Mars behind us, and the entirety of space stretching out as far as the eye could see. I could also see Olympus Mons out in the distance, nearly on the other side of Mars. I had to say that the windows were a marvel of engineering, designed to provide an unobstructed view of the cosmos. They were made of a special transparent material that offered both protection from cosmic radiation and enhanced visibility, allowing us to witness the wonders of space from every angle. There were a total of twenty-four windows, each strategically positioned to capture the breathtaking beauty of the universe. The windows themselves curved seamlessly from the sides of the ship and arched gracefully into the ceiling, creating a continuous panoramic view. Among the twenty-four windows, there was a giant round window positioned near the turbo-lift, serving as a focal point and offering an even more expansive perspective of the vast cosmos. And in the center of the bridge towards the front stood a pedestal with a glass ball in the very center of it. I walked over to the pedestal, and asked one of the crewmen, “What is this?”

“That, Captain, is the ship's neural interface control system, also known as the helm,” the crewman replied with a smile. “It allows you to control the entire vessel with your thoughts. Simply place your hand on the glass ball and visualize your commands, and the ship will respond accordingly. It's state-of-the-art technology that enables seamless and intuitive control, putting you in complete command of this magnificent spacecraft.”

I then asked him, “And how can I control this ship while standing up?”

He answered, “Captain, our spacecraft utilizes advanced artificial gravity technology to simulate the sensation of gravity, allowing you to stand and move around as if you were on Mars. While the ship is in motion, the artificial gravity system maintains a consistent downward force, eliminating the effects of inertia. This means that you can control the ship while standing up without any concerns about being thrown off balance or experiencing discomfort.”

I asked, “How fast can the ship go?”

“The ship can reach speeds of up to Warp 13,” the man replied with a hint of excitement in his voice. “With this advanced propulsion technology, we can traverse vast distances in the blink of an eye, allowing us to explore the farthest reaches of the universe and beyond.” He then continued, “But I must say, I completely forgot that I hadn't introduced myself yet. I'm the Science Officer, Officer Jefferson.”

I then asked, “Does this ship have a briefing room off of the bridge?”

He answered, “Unfortunately, Captain, there is no specific briefing room on the bridge. However, you have access to a computer in your quarters that allows you to communicate with the Chief and anyone on Mars. This way, you can conveniently conduct briefings and discussions without leaving the comfort of your own space.”

He then said, “Anyways, Captain Mar, the Chief wants you to contact him as soon as you're able to. You will find your quarters on the next floor beneath the bridge, which is Deck 6. The crew chambers are located on Deck 5. It's all designed for maximum efficiency and ease of access, so you should have no trouble finding your way around. If you need any assistance, don’t hesitate to ask.”

I said, “Thank you, Officer Jefferson. I will make sure to contact the Chief as soon as possible. I appreciate the information about my quarters and the crew chambers. I look forward to exploring the ship and its capabilities.”

After that, I once again got into the turbo-lift, and this time I believe that I knew enough of what I was doing to make it to my Captain's quarters floor. As the turbo-lift came to a stop, the doors slid open to reveal a spacious hallway stretching out before me. On either side, I could see two other cabins, likely for the crew members. At the far end, I spotted a door adorned with the Captain's Quarters sign, beckoning me to step inside and claim my space on this interstellar journey.

As I stepped up to the door, it slid open smoothly, revealing my Captain's Quarters. Inside, I found a cozy bunk for rest and relaxation, as well as a spacious desk equipped with a state-of-the-art computer. This setup would allow me to comfortably work and communicate with the crew and Chief while exploring the vastness of space. As I settled into my Captain's Quarters, I quickly realized that the chair at my desk was likely the only seating option available to me on the ship. It dawned on me that this chair, while functional for computer use, was not designed with comfort in mind. I would have to make do with this less than ideal seating arrangement during my time aboard the ship.

I couldn't help but wonder what the other Martians on board did for comfort. It seemed like most of them were always standing up, with no comfortable seating options available. Did they have their own creative solutions for finding moments of relaxation in this space-bound environment? And then I realized, most likely they never took much time to relax, or really enjoy any sort of comfort. Aside from taking time to sleep, the demanding nature of their duties and the constant need to be alert and vigilant in the vast expanse of space left little room for leisure or indulgence in comfort. Either way, I knew that this ship was not my home on Mars. It was a vessel designed for war, equipped with functional but uncomfortable furnishings.

As I pondered about the ship's purpose, I couldn't help but speculate that the Niburians saw us as a threat due to our advanced technology and potential for interstellar dominance. We had become a formidable force in the galaxy, capable of defending ourselves and challenging their dominance. Our advanced technology and strategic alliances had kept them at bay for over 2000 years, and it was clear that they saw us as a threat. As I reflected on this realization, a sense of pride and determination washed over me, knowing that we were the reason they had stayed away from our side of the solar system for so long. I knew that, possibly, if it hadn't been for us, the Martians, even some of the life that currently existed on Earth would have never begun. Our role in shaping the destiny of the galaxy was profound, and it was a responsibility I carried with both awe and humility.

I then sat down at the computer and contacted the Chief. He asked, “What do you think of the saucer, Mar?”

I answered, “I think the saucer is an impressive piece of technology, Chief. Its sleek design and advanced capabilities make it a formidable asset in our mission. However, I can't help but feel that it lacks the comfort and practicality that we Martians value. Perhaps we could look into making some modifications to enhance both functionality and comfort on future vessels.”

He said, “Well, if we can save Mars, that could be a possibility. As you know, if it's possible to repair the core, then it could be possible that us Martians would be able to stay on our home planet.”

I then asked him, “Chief, why are the Niburians our enemies?”

He answered, “They are a war-loving race, Mar. The Niburians have a long history of conquest and domination in the galaxy. They see our advanced technology and potential for interstellar dominance as a threat to their own power. Their aggressive nature and desire for control have led to a conflict between our two civilizations. It is a battle for survival, and we must remain vigilant in order to protect our home planet and ensure the future of our species.”

He then said, “It's just lucky for us that their planet Nibiru takes 3,600 years to orbit the sun, and theirs. That's one reason they haven't made an appearance in 2000 years. But I fear that they could be coming back. Our advanced technology and strategic alliances have kept them at bay for so long, but we must remain prepared for their return and continue to strengthen our defenses. That's why we must see if there's a way to repair Mars' core. And hopefully stop our atmosphere from being stripped away. If we can save Mars, we can continue to thrive and protect ourselves from Nibiru. Our survival depends on it.”

I then asked, “What would happen to the people of Earth if we were to disappear as a species? If there are any people living on the Earth.”

He replied, “If we were to disappear, the people of Earth would face tremendous challenges. Without our protection, they would be vulnerable to the aggressive nature of Nibiru, and any other hostile space faring civilization. Their lack of advanced technology and strategic defenses would make it difficult for them to defend themselves. There is a high possibility that they could be wiped out, and both Mars and Earth could be destroyed in the process.”

I then asked him, “Chief, have the Martians ever been to Earth before?”

He answered, “Yes and no, Mar. We Martians have indeed visited Earth, but we have never actually set foot on its surface. Through our advanced scanning technology, we have observed that people might inhabit Earth, although they are not as technologically advanced as us, if there are any.” “As I said though, this is only a speculation, as we are not completely sure if there are any people on Earth. This is a theory that hasn't been proven yet, and we can't be sure at this time.”

I then asked him, “Chief, how do these saucers work anyway?”

He answered, “Well, Mar, the saucers operate on advanced gravitational propulsion technology. The spinning of the rings generates a powerful gravitational field that allows the saucer to manipulate the space-time fabric around it. This manipulation creates a warp bubble, enabling the saucer to achieve speeds that surpass the limitations of conventional propulsion systems. It's a fascinating combination of advanced physics and engineering, allowing us to traverse vast distances in the universe.”

I then asked, “If that's the case, why can I look out my window and see Mars clearly, even if the entire saucer is spinning?”

He answered, “You see, Mar, the saucer itself doesn't spin; it's only the rings that rotate. The inner structure, which houses all the decks and compartments, remains stationary. This design allows us to maintain a stable environment inside the saucer, providing comfort and clarity for the crew. When you look out your window and see Mars, you're viewing it from a stationary vantage point within the saucer's non-rotating core. It's a common misconception that the entire craft spins, but in reality, it's the rings' rotation that generates the necessary gravitational field for our propulsion system.”

I asked, “Well, what about the ship's shields? Do you have to physically activate them before every battle, or how exactly do the ship's shields work?”

He answered, “As the shields are always powered on while the saucer is in space, all you really have to do is monitor them. You won't have to turn them on, as they should be active during the entire voyage.” He then elaborated, “Just ensure the shield generators maintain optimal output, and you'll be protected from any volcanic activity. Additionally, it is important to navigate cautiously and utilize the saucer's advanced scanning technology to identify any potential dangers or unstable areas within the volcano.”

He then said, “In theory, once you reach the core of Olympus Mons, you should be deep enough in Mars to use the saucer's scanner to examine the planet's core. By scanning for any missing material, such as Raidem, we can assess the strength of the core and the integrity of the magnetosphere. This information is crucial for understanding Mars' long-term stability and the potential impact on the planet's overall habitability.”

A couple minutes later I was back up on the bridge after a long talk with Chief Drangard via the computer in my quarters. I then explained to my Science Officer Jefferson about what the Chief had told me and he said, “I understand Captain, I will closely monitor the shields during our descent into the volcano to ensure their integrity and make any necessary adjustments to keep us safe.”

I said, “Alright, well, when you're ready I'll do my best to take us into the volcano. Prepare the shields.”

I had never used this kind of control interface before, so it might take me a bit to get used to it. The neural interface was completely new to me, as I had been accustomed to the more primitive standards for steering a vessel, which relied heavily on manual controls and physical feedback. As I stood at the helm and placed my hand on the control crystal, the neural interface began to sync with my thoughts, and I could feel a slight tingling sensation as it established a connection. I could only hope that figuring out how to actually control this saucer would come naturally to me, as the stakes were high, and the last thing I needed was to fumble with the controls during such a critical mission. My mind raced with possibilities and potential maneuvers, and I took a deep breath, focusing on the task ahead, determined to master this advanced technology.

He said as he turned several dials on his control panel, “I have configured the shields to operate on a rotating frequency, which should provide optimal protection against the extreme conditions within Olympus Mons,” Science Officer Jefferson explained. “However, it is crucial that I closely monitor their performance throughout our descent to ensure their effectiveness. Rest assured, keeping us safe is my top priority.”

I then looked at Android Tarla at the right hand council and asked, “Well, are you ready Mr. Tarla?”

“I am ready, Captain,” Android Tarla replied with a calm yet determined voice. “I will closely monitor the gauges and provide you with real-time updates on our speed, depth, and hull temperature throughout our descent into the volcano. Rest assured, I will do everything in my power to ensure a safe and successful mission.”

I said, “In theory, as long as the shields do their job correctly, we shouldn't notice any change in hull temperature. Is that correct Tarla?”

“In theory, that is correct, Captain,” Android Tarla replied confidently. “The shields are designed to regulate the hull temperature and provide insulation from extreme heat. However, I will continuously monitor the gauges to ensure that the shields are functioning optimally and that the hull temperature remains stable throughout our descent into Olympus Mons. And now that I think about it, Captain, I don't believe the other ship would have made it. Being a smaller vessel, its shields would have been weaker and may not have withstood the extreme conditions within Olympus Mons. We are fortunate to be in a saucer with advanced shielding technology.”

I knew that Tarla was correct, and I was now starting to realize why the Chief wanted my Second Officer to be an Android. The Chief's decision to have an Android as the Second Officer was not just for convenience or efficiency. It was a strategic move to ensure the safety and success of the mission. With the advanced shielding technology and Tarla's ability to closely monitor the ship's vital signs, we had a much higher chance of surviving the extreme conditions within Olympus Mons.

Then with one final gulp, I touched the crystal ball in front of me and we took a plunge into the volcano as the ship dove in. As we descended into the volcano, the ship's engines roared to life, filling the air with a powerful hum. I could feel the vibrations beneath my feet, a tangible reminder of the immense power at our disposal. Through the reinforced viewing windows around the bridge, I watched in awe as the lava and magma cascaded around us, effortlessly repelled by the invisible force field that surrounded our ship.

As we descended further into the depths of the volcano, a strange sensation washed over me. It was as if my consciousness merged with the ship itself, and I could perceive the surroundings as if I were the vessel. My senses expanded, allowing me to see through the ship's sensors and navigate effortlessly through the intricate maze of lava tubes within Olympus Mons. As I marveled at the newfound connection with the ship, I couldn't help but wonder if this was how one truly perceived the world through neural integration. It was as if my senses had merged with the ship's sensors, granting me an unparalleled understanding of our surroundings within the intricate maze of lava tubes in Olympus Mons.

As we dove deeper into the volcano, the scorching temperature of the lava and magma didn't faze me in the slightest. It felt like being under a warm blanket, comforting and serene. Through my neural integration with the ship, I could sense that the advanced shielding technology was working flawlessly, providing us with the protection we needed in this treacherous environment.

Then, all at once, I knew that we had reached the end of the catacombs. The ship came to a sudden stop, and I could sense that we were as deep in Mars as we would be able to make it. The mission had brought us to the heart of Olympus Mons, and now it was time to begin our exploration of the core of the planet.

I quickly pulled my hand away from the crystal and my perspective went back to how it usually was.

I then looked over at Tarla and said, “Start the scan, Mr. Tarla. Scan for Raidem in Mars' core,” my voice echoing through the control room. Tarla, the android crewman, immediately responded, “Understood, initiating the scan for Raidem in Mars' core.” The room fell silent as the advanced scanning technology hummed to life, its sensors reaching deep into the heart of the planet, searching for any trace of the elusive element.

I noticed that as the scans continued that Tarla's expression went from good to bad, and I knew that something was wrong.

He then said, “Captain, what I'm seeing here is not good, not good at all. The scans are showing very little trace of Raidem in Mars' core. I will continue scanning, but based on the current data, our chances of finding a substantial deposit of the element seem bleak.”

The Science Officer Jefferson said, “If Mars' loses all of its Raidem, that would certainly cause the atmosphere to be stripped away and the magnetic field to fail.”

I then asked, “Can we mine Raidem from another planet?”

Jefferson said, “Yes, theoretically, we could extract Raidem from another planet, but it would have to be a planet devoid of any life. Mining Raidem from an inhabited planet would be ethically and morally unacceptable. However, finding such a planet with abundant Raidem deposits may prove to be a challenging task.”

I asked, “What happens to the life if the Raidem is taken away?”

He answered, “Without Raidem, the core of a planet weakens, leading to a loss of the magnetic field and protection from harmful solar radiation. As a result, the atmosphere gradually erodes, making the planet uninhabitable for life forms that rely on a stable environment. The delicate balance necessary for sustaining life is disrupted, leading to catastrophic consequences.”

I then asked, “How do you think Mars' core got like this?”

He answered, “The depletion of Raidem in Mars' core is likely a result of natural processes over time. Just like a star consumes its fuel to sustain its energy, a planet utilizes its Raidem to maintain its magnetic field. As Mars' core gradually used up its supply of Raidem, the magnetic field weakened, leaving the planet vulnerable to the eroding effects of solar radiation.”

I asked, “So we have to mine Raidem from an uninhabited planet?”

He answered, “Yes, but Raidem acts like dark matter, it's not so easy to transport. So we have to mine Raidem from an uninhabited planet with abundant deposits of the element. However, locating such a planet and developing the technology to extract and transport Raidem will pose significant challenges.” He then continued, “The containment of Raidem is a delicate task. Even if we manage to extract enough for another 10 billion years, the challenge lies in transporting it safely. If the ship carrying Raidem were to be destroyed and the element ignited, it would trigger the formation of a black hole, similar to dark matter. This makes the transportation process extremely risky and raises concerns about the long-term sustainability of Mars.”

He then stated, “If we were transporting Raidem and were attacked by an enemy vessel, we must prioritize surviving at all costs and ensure that our ship carrying the element remains intact. The consequences of a destroyed ship and ignited Raidem are far too catastrophic to even consider.”

“From what I'm seeing in the scanners, there is only enough Raidem to last for another three years, or less. After that, Mars will die if the Raidem isn't restored,” warned Tarla, confirming the Chief's concerns about the dwindling supply and the urgent need to find a solution.

I then said, “I suppose it's time to leave Olympus Mons, then I'll contact the Chief on my computer and tell him.”

Jefferson said, “Sounds like a plan, Captain. I'll start preparing the ship for departure from Olympus Mons immediately. Once we're in orbit, you should contact the Chief and update him on the situation with the Raidem supply and our urgent need to find a solution.”

I asked, “What shape are the shields currently in to get us back out of here, will they hold for a while longer?”

He checked his gauges and controls, and said, “Captain, the shields are currently at 78% capacity. While they should hold for a short while longer, I would advise against any unnecessary delays. We need to prioritize our departure from Olympus Mons to ensure our safety immediately.”

I then again touched the control crystal and I felt the ship take over just like last time.

About thirty minutes later we had left Olympus Mons and was once again in orbit. However, I knew that the ship would need some modifications before we would be able to set out into space to find more Raidem.

What we had learned while deep within Mars' core was not good at all; in fact, it was frightening. The readings indicated that the core had been failing for potentially decades, and the rate of decline was accelerating. As I stared out into the vast expanse of space, I couldn't help but wonder just how long the core had been struggling, and how many years Mars had left before it became a barren wasteland. This grim discovery underscored the urgency of our mission and the dire necessity of finding a new source of Raidem.

It seemed like the state of the core, and the loss of our blue skies were definitely connected; this explained the rusty red skies that had been plaguing Mars for the last 30 years. The once vibrant and promising Martian environment had been deteriorating at an alarming rate, and the red skies were a daily reminder of our planet's slow death. The lack of Raidem in the core was directly linked to the failing atmospheric conditions, causing dust storms to become more frequent and severe. As these thoughts weighed heavily on my mind, I knew that our mission to find a new source of Raidem was not just critical for the survival of Mars, but also for the hope and future of all its inhabitants.

I knew that most likely, our first step was to find a new home; the Martians had to be transported away from Mars. We would probably have to move to Earth, at least for the time being, to ensure the survival of our species. It was time to think about our future and our survival, making sure the human race would endure to see the future. The situation demanded immediate action, and we had to prepare for the colossal task of relocating an entire population. Our mission was no longer just about finding Raidem; it was about securing a future for humanity. The urgency of the situation was clear. We had to act swiftly to find a new home and ensure the survival of our species. The future of humanity depended on our ability to adapt and persevere in the face of this unprecedented challenge.

In the threads of time, change has always been an inevitable force, one that sweeps across civilizations, reshaping destinies and rewriting history. As the sands of Mars shifted beneath our feet and the skies glowed with a relentless crimson hue, it became clear that we stood on the precipice of such a trans-formative moment. This was not the first time in the annals of existence that a species faced extinction, nor would it be the last. Throughout history, the resilience of life has been tested repeatedly, and each time, survival hinged on the ability to adapt, to embrace the unknown, and to forge a path forward even in the darkest of times. Now, with the fate of Mars hanging in the balance, we found ourselves called upon to rise to the challenge and ensure that, in the grand tapestry of the universe, our thread would continue to weave its way through the fabric of time.

Learning How To Contain Raidem

I then quickly rode the turbo-lift down to Deck 6, and once I made it to my quarters and sat down at the computer I quickly contacted the Chief, and told him, “Chief Drangard, you were right. The Raidem is running out, and it is currently at dangerous levels. We have only enough supply to last for another three years, if that. We must find a solution immediately to ensure the long-term sustainability of Mars and the survival of the people of Mars.”

He said, “Bring the ship back to base Captain Mar. You will need to tell me more about it in person.”

I said, “Understood, Chief Drangard. It is crucial that we discuss the situation in person and devise a plan to address the dwindling Raidem supply. I will ensure our return and provide you with a detailed report of the urgency of the matter.”

Roughly an hour later when we landed at the dock on Mars a transport was already waiting for to take me to see the Chief. After I left the saucer I quickly climbed into the hover car and the driver stepped on the accelerator. It was important for me to see the Chief as soon as possible because the state of the Raidem supply deep within Mars posed a significant threat to the long-term sustainability of our planet and its future. Immediate action and a plan were necessary to address this urgent situation, leaving no time for personal stops or delays.

The hover car was sleek and futuristic, with a streamlined design and a metallic silver exterior. It glided smoothly over the surface of Mars, effortlessly navigating the Martian streets. As we sped through the city, I marveled at the architecture of the Martian buildings. Towering structures made of transparent materials stretched towards the sky, their surfaces shimmering under the sunlight. These buildings, designed to withstand the harsh Martian environment, were a testament to human ingenuity and adaptation.

When the driver finally came to a stop I jumped out of the hover car, and quickly rushed into the building to see Chief Drangard. Once inside he asked, “Tell me everything about your report, Captain Mar. And how your mission to the core of Olympus Mons went.”

“Chief Drangard, the situation at the core of Mars is dire. Our mission to the core of Olympus Mons revealed that the Raidem supply is depleting rapidly, and without a solution, life on Mars is at stake. If we can't find a fix for the core, most likely, we would have to consider abandoning Mars and relocating the population to Earth, as you had previously mentioned,” I explained urgently.

He said, “Until we find a way to repair Mars' core, I believe myself that it will be best to start sending some of the population to Earth on our other saucers. However, to be able to do so, we will have to approach the Martian Council about their plans in the matter, as we can't proceed forward without their permission.”

I said, “Chief Drangard, why do we have to have the Martian Council's permission to begin the evacuation? Given the urgency of the situation and the potential threat to the entire population, shouldn't we prioritize immediate action over bureaucratic procedures? Our survival is at stake, and waiting for their approval could cost us precious time that we simply don't have.”

He answered, “Captain Mar, as you know, the Martian Council has ultimate control when dealing with matters of Mars and its people. Their authority is absolute, and any major decision, especially one as significant as a mass exodus, must go through them. While I understand your frustration and share your sense of urgency, bypassing the Council could lead to political turmoil and chaos. We need their endorsement to ensure a coordinated and orderly evacuation, which is essential for maintaining stability and ensuring the safety of our citizens. Trust me, I will push for immediate action with the Council, but we must proceed within the established protocols.”

He then said, “Meanwhile, we need to figure out how to transport Raidem, and how to mine it.”

I then asked him, “Chief, why is Raidem so hard to mine anyways?”

He answered, “Captain Mar, Raidem is a highly unstable element that poses numerous challenges in the mining process. Its volatile nature makes it difficult to extract and transport safely, as any mishandling could result in catastrophic consequences. We must proceed with extreme caution and devise a specialized mining technique to ensure the safety of our crew and the success of our mission.”

I asked, “Exactly what is Raidem anyway?”

He answered, “Raidem is a rare and powerful element that is the main source of fuel for planets, it plays a crucial role in the process of nuclear fusion within a planet's core. It is a highly reactive element that releases an immense amount of energy when properly harnessed. This energy is essential for sustaining the planet's internal heat and magnetosphere, which are both vital for the survival of any potential life forms on Mars. However, due to its instability and scarcity, extracting and utilizing Raidem poses complex challenges that require innovative mining techniques and careful handling.” He then said, “The most difficult part will be transporting the Raidem, since when it's stored it's a lot like a bomb ready to go off. If the ship is destroyed it would certainly ignite. As well, if it isn't handled correctly when transporting, it can ignite.”

“W-what precautions can we take to ensure the safe transport of Raidem, Chief Drangard?” I asked, my voice trembling slightly.

He thought, then answered, “We will need to consult with our scientists on Mars. Perhaps they will have some ideas. But first, we will need to update all of the systems on your ship, including the weapons.”

“Understood, Chief Drangard,” I replied, my voice filled with determination. “We will prioritize updating the ship's systems and consulting with the scientists on Mars to explore innovative solutions for the safe transport of Raidem. Our crew's safety and the success of our mission are our top priorities.”

I then asked, “What about using a shield to transport and contain the Raidem?”

He answered, “Captain Mar, using a shield to transport and contain Raidem is a viable option. A specialized shield with advanced technology can help contain the volatile element and provide an extra layer of protection during transportation. However, we must ensure that the shield is robust enough to withstand any potential explosions or leaks that may occur. It will require thorough testing and engineering expertise to develop a shield that can effectively contain Raidem's energy and prevent any catastrophic incidents.”

He then said, “But first we will have to focus on the updates to Explorer 1. For that we will have to seek permission from the Martian Council anyway.”

I asked, “Why is that?”

He answered, “Unfortunately Captain, seeking permission from the Martian Council is crucial because they control the allocation of funds and labor for such projects. Even if Mars is facing imminent collapse, they have the authority to deny the updates for the ship. It is essential to navigate the political landscape and secure their support to ensure the success of our mission.” He then said, “Unfortunately, they might prefer the idea of abandoning Mars and moving the population to Earth before we can attempt to do anything with Mars' core.”

I asked, “But why? Mars is our home, we have to do whatever we can to save it.”

He answered, “Captain Mar, the Martian Council might prefer the idea of abandoning Mars and moving the population to Earth because they may see it as a more viable and sustainable option. With the imminent collapse of Mars, they might believe that relocating the population to Earth would offer them a chance at survival and a better future. However, it is our duty to convince them of the importance of preserving Mars and finding a solution that allows us to safely transport Raidem while also ensuring the survival of our home planet.”

I then said, “We can offer them a deal, we can help to transport some of the population to Earth, in exchange for the funds, and labor to update the ship to try to collect Raidem.”

He said, “Captain Mar, that could work. By offering to transport some of the population to Earth in exchange for the necessary funds and labor to update the ship, we can present a mutually beneficial solution to the Martian Council. This approach not only increases our chances of securing their support but also demonstrates our commitment to the survival of both Mars and its inhabitants. Let's prepare a persuasive argument and present our proposal to the Martian Council as soon as possible.” He then said, “For now though, we'll focus on the idea of using shields to contain Raidem. It seems like the best idea anyways. But for it to work it will need its own emitter, so as not to be connected to the ship's shields.”

I nodded in understanding, fully comprehending the Chief's intention. It was clear to me that he wanted to ensure the safety of the Raidem by having a separate emitter for its containment, independent from the ship's shields. This way, any potential risks or malfunctions with the ship's shields would not compromise the containment of the Raidem.

He then continued, “As well, the Raidem will need its own scientist to remain in the hold and monitor it, in case it needs to be ejected from the ship.”

This meant that not only would a separate emitter be required for the containment of Raidem, but also a team of dedicated scientists who would remain in the hold to closely monitor its status and be prepared for any necessary actions, such as ejecting the Raidem from the ship if needed. This level of caution and expertise was crucial to ensure the safe handling of the Raidem throughout the journey.

I asked, “Are there enough quarters on board for extra crew members?”

He answered, “Aye, Captain. Saucers usually carry a crew of 48 people, but we can certainly add extra bunks to the crew's quarters to accommodate the additional team of scientists required for the safe monitoring of the Raidem. We'll make the necessary arrangements to ensure that everyone has a suitable living space for the duration of the journey.”

...End Of Sample...