

# Objects In Motion

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by Kyle Eggleston

## Two Lifetimes Ago

Nokev stood on the balcony of an alien world. He watched as the three moons were setting and the sun was rising. Life out on The Rim wasn't as glamorous as it seemed. Back home he had a steady flow of income, out here he had to fight for survival every day. Nokev wouldn't miss it for the world, it was truly a sight to behold.

It had been fifty years since he had left his home world of Shuka behind. Fifty years of exploring whatever was out there to be explored. Fifty years away from his wife and daughter, he assumed Norev was dead by now according to Shuka lifespans. Nokev had his run-ins with hostile aliens and the like, but always managed to find a way around them or through them.

The Rim was full of wondrous things to experience. There never was a dull moment for Nokev, he was always excited to see what was out there.

Feeling an arm wrap around him, Nokev smiled. She was awake.

"You're up early." Alicia said.

Nokev breathed in the sunlight and exhaled. "Yeah, I couldn't sleep. You know how it is on this planet. Hardly any rest when there are things to do."

Alicia laughed at the thought. "Things to do huh? Am I one of those things?"

Nokev turned to face her. "No of course not." He answered. "You are so much more than that my dear." He kissed her. Nokev didn't feel any shame in finding another mate, it had been fifty years as it was. He wasn't aging and couldn't be expected to be celibate for the rest of his life. He had to move on. Time moved on, why wouldn't he move on with it?

Alicia looked at Nokev. "So, you don't age." She said. "Why exactly is that?"

Nokev shrugged. "Some think it's to do with my FTL drive I designed. Others believe it has to do with a little known planet I stumbled upon years ago when I first came out to The Rim. I stayed on that planet for over ten years before leaving, something in their atmosphere slows the aging process, I think." He paused. "It doesn't completely stop aging, I do age. I just don't age like other aliens do." He shrugged again. "That's all I know."

Alicia nodded. "Makes sense, kinda. Maybe you should take me there sometime."

Nokev smiled. "Well that would be difficult to do, their sun went supernova around twenty years ago. Or so I hear. Could be a lie, could be true. I haven't been back to check. I'm too afraid of any radiation left over that might muck with my engines or my life. It's just too dangerous."

"I see." Alicia said frowning. "I get to grow old, and you just ... age slowly. I'll die before you know it just like your wife." She froze. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean it." Alicia raised her hands to her eyes to hide from her shame.

Nokev rubbed Alicia's back. "Don't worry about that. I know you didn't mean anything by it. She's been dead for a while now, I've been away for a while now. Nothings changed, I'm still the same man you met two years ago."

"You're like an object in motion." Alicia said. "Except then you met me and became an object at rest. My friction just got too much for you it would seem." She teased. "But now, you want to get back on the road as it were."

Nokev stopped smiling. Was he that transparent? He was curious by nature, he was a scientist turned explorer it would appear. Talk about an eye opener. What was he doing? He wasn't meant to settle down, not now. Nokev was out there to explore, to experience all The Rim had to offer.

"You could come with me." Nokev offered. It hadn't been the first time he offered such a solution to their problem, her wanting to stay and him wanting to go. He wished she *could* go with him and venture out on The Rim, but there was nothing he could do or say to change her mind.

"I have a small moon to run." Alicia said. "You knew this when you met me. It's how we met!" She exclaimed. Alicia remembered the day they met. Nokev was about out of fuel for his craft and was on a collision course with her moon. Luckily she had a tractor beam that slowed his descent and managed to stop him before he crashed. It took her a year to wear him down, but she finally managed to get him to like her. Well he obviously didn't like her enough, he wanted to leave. She folded her arms.

Nokev sighed. "Yeah I know how this conversation goes." He said. "Of course your moon has to come first, I understand that. But you know me, I can't stay in one place for too long. I have to get going."

Alicia frowned. "I thought we had something special." She said. "I thought that you had changed your mind about exploring The Rim. But that appears not to be the case."

Nokev scoffed at the thought. "You wanted to change me." He accused Alicia. "If you didn't like me for who I am, why not say anything?!"

Alicia was speechless. She stared at Nokev for a moment and then finally answered him. “Well I thought you would have wanted to spend the rest of your life with me.” Alicia frowned. “But I guess that’s not in the cards for us. When do you plan on leaving?”

Nokev ran his fingers through his hair and shook his head. “I don’t know yet.” He said. “Soon, I know it’s soon. I can’t stay here. I belong out there.”

Alicia shed a tear.

## One Lifetime Ago

Obshi was on patrol, it was daytime on Shuka. Prisoners were given a bit of a leeway during the day. They could go anywhere they wanted to within reason. But once curfew hit, they had to be indoors. It was way too early, so curfew wasn’t to be had for hours. He took his daytime to patrol the city borders, see anything new, keep track of things that didn’t make sense. Those kinds of things.

He had made a few friends along his journeys. Some of the Shukan people believed in the same ideals Obshi did. They wanted a free Shuka, a safe Shuka. A Shuka void of any Dubor soldiers always taking them away and killing them. If the Dubor soldiers had their way, there wouldn’t be any Shukan people left on the planet. They would have killed them all when they arrived. But their leaders had other plans in store for the population, killing only when necessary.

As Obshi walked, he passed by several shopkeepers. It had been over a since he had walked past them. He was surprised to see so many shopkeepers still out on the streets considering the conditions they were currently facing. Stopping at a fruit stand Obshi picked up a Aguti Fruit. It was sweet to the taste, he enjoyed the smells of fresh fruit.

The man attending tot he stand smiled at Obshi. “Obshi! Good to see you, haven’t seen you in this section in a while.”

Obshi returned the smile politely. “Quoth, it has been a while hasn’t it. I remember my mother visiting your stand on a daily basis. She would always bring home fresh Aguti Fruit. Those were some good times I tell you, good times indeed. Gosh I miss her.”

Quoth nodded his head. “I too dear friend. Your mother was one of a kind. A shame what happened to her. The Dubor will pay for their wickedness.” He paused. They would pay, how they would pay he did not know but knew it needed to happen and soon.

“We have been under their thumb for nearly one hundred years.” Obshi said. “I have an idea of how to get rid of them, but it will take much more than the likes of you and me. We are going to need an army.”

Quoth laughed at the thought. “What are you talking about? An army?! Where are we going to build an army?”

Obshi looked and gestured around him. “Everywhere my friend, from everywhere. We just have to gather them all up and arm them with any weapon we can find.” He paused. Yes this plan of his was going to work. “We just have to get the volunteers needed to make this work.” Obshi smiled taking a bite of the fruit in his hands. “I’ll be in touch.” He walked away.

## March 2247, Crimson Gamma

Obshi sat across from Norev. “That’s when I knew we had a fighting chance. That we could take down the Dubor once and for good. Eventually we made that dream become a reality.” He sighed. “Quoth was my best friend, I miss him.”

Norev took a sip of her tea and leaned forward. They were sitting in the officer’s mess. A place usually meant for officers and crew of the space station, but Norev enjoyed visiting there herself from time to time. “Sounds like a good friend to have.” She said. “The two of you were fighting for something good, something that needed to be accomplished and did it.”

Obshi nodded. “Yeah, we did.” He affirmed. “We defeated the Dubor and fought them back to their home world, well until now. They seem to have come out from their hiding place and want to start things up again.”

“Not with us supposedly.” Norev said, unconvinced. “Earth caused a treaty to come between them, and we are included in that new, I wouldn’t call it a friendship ... but it’s something new, that’s for sure.” She paused, would they really be safe as the Earthlings promised? Time would tell, that much was certain.

Obshi wasn’t convinced. “I’m not sure I feel comfortable with that. I know I won’t be sleeping easy at night if they are out there doing whatever they want. No treaty will stop that.” Obshi breathed in, he didn’t like thinking of the Dubor as anything but the enemy. They might change their ways, but deep down inside they were still the evil race that took over his home world. Once a threat, always a threat.

Taking a bite of her lunch, Norev thought about Obshi’s words. How could they trust anything the Dubor would say to them? The Dubor were the enemy, they could not be trusted. Words of truce meant nothing to Norev even though it was backed by paper and signatures all official like. Shuka’s history with the Dubor ran deep. Her hatred of the Dubor ran deep. There was one Dubor she did trust though, Captain O’Brien. Oh how she missed his presence on the station. But times moved on.

The new commanding officer of Crimson Gamma was a by the book no bullshit commander. If you didn’t follow the rules to the letter, you were left out to dry. There was a nasty rumor going around that he was actually General Tague’s lover at one point. But that could just be a rumor, who really knew what Major Travis Johnson was all about as it was. Norev didn’t have a clue how it would go down, but she wanted to know more about the guy who was running the place.

“Speaking of change.” Obshi said as though he was reading Norev’s mind. “How about that new Major that’s running things around here? I’ve heard some unpleasant things about him, and I’m not talking about which side of the war he was on. Let Earth have their Civil War, I don’t care for it much. All they ever do is talk about it like it’s still going on.”

Norev smirked. “Yeah, the humans do like to talk about the past a lot don’t they. Well so do we, we tend to talk about Dubor’s rule over our world. I don’t see how it’s any different.” She waved her hand. “So, what have you heard about Major Johnson?”

Obshi sipped his drink, it was something called coffee. He was rather fond of it. “What indeed.” He said. “Travis, as I like to call him.”

Norev laughed. “Well that *is* his name.”

“Right.” Obshi agreed. “Well Travis supposedly escaped the Earth Civil War. He didn’t even serve in it, he didn’t fight. I find that to be quite amusing. Seems he runs at the sight of trouble. We have a coward at the helm of this blasted station.” He laughed.

“Really.” Norev responded. “I wish that gave me some sort of comfort, but it doesn’t. If he’s not willing to face up to a fight and he’s supposed to protect us here, well that just won’t do if he *won’t* do anything about it.” She leaned back in her chair.

“Major Johnson to Obshi and Norev, I’d like to see you both in my office immediately.” Travis’s voice came over the comm unit.

Obshi looked at Norev and smiled. “The humans have a phrase, speak of the devil.” He said. “The devil just called.”

Standing from the table they left the Officer’s Mess and headed towards the nearest Transport Tube. They wondered what the major wanted of them. They would soon find out. They had been through three station commanders in the past year and a half and were growing tired of change. The Shuka people didn’t do well with change in general. It was their nature.

Moments later Obshi and Norev entered a dark office. Sitting at his desk basked in the glow of his computer screen was Major Travis Johnson. He watched as the aliens entered his office and frowned. They actually paid him a visit. Travis knew he had requested their presence, but didn’t really want to speak with either of them.

“Come in.” Johnson said. “I’d offer you a seat, but my predecessor wasn’t too keen on chairs it would seem. I’m in the process of fixing that.” He paused as he finished writing up a report. “So please come in and stand.”

Obshi and Norev walked further into the office and stood in front of the major’s desk.

Travis looked at them and cleared his throat. “The reason I’ve called you here is to tell you I know there are several rumors going around about me.” He said. “Some of them are quite nasty to be

honest, I've found some of them even quite amusing." Travis sighed. "Have either of you heard anything about me?"

Obshi and Norev shared a look. They were thinking the same thing. Do they tell the commanding officer of the station they're living on that they had indeed heard rumors about him? There were so many rumors they had heard, which ones would they choose to share with the major? Obshi cleared his throat.

"Yes, we have actually." Obshi finally said. "Both of us have."

Travis laughed at the thought. The ambassadors of the planet he was protecting had heard things about him. Good, this was good news. "Goes to show just how small of a station this is." He said. "I made those rumors up myself and had them spread around the station. None of them are true."

Obshi's mouth dropped open.

Norev stared the major down.

"You made them up." Norev repeated Major Johnson. "Why would you do that?"

Obshi folded his arms. "Yes Travis, why would you do that?"

Major Johnson smiled at the unsolicited use of his first name. None of his officers would ever get away with calling him by his first name. Ambassadors were on a different level though. They could basically do whatever they wanted, he was quickly learning this. Taking over a space station was a far cry from a space ship of exploration.

"Well, I just wanted to see how far they would go to be honest." Travis said. "I apologize if it put a sour taste in your mouths." He truly was sorry, to the outsider it would seem like an immature practical joke at best. "I wanted to see what I was up against when I took command of this station. That's all."

Norev turned around and stared out the window to the garden down below. There were some children playing in the garden. She smiled at the thought. So peaceful that they felt they could be safe there during all the chaos that was happening on the station. Oh to be innocent again, without a care in the world. Norev couldn't ever go back to that phase of life again. It was too late for her.

Obshi just stood there with a blank look on his face. How was he supposed to trust a man who cast nasty untrue rumors about himself around the station? "So you *did* serve in the Earth Civil War."

Travis laughed and shook his head. "No, actually that *rumor* is true. I was out on The Rim with my space ship exploring. I didn't even get word that there was an Earth Civil War until it was well over. You could say I've been out of the world for a good spell." He paused thinking about his time out on The Rim and the wonders he had seen. It couldn't be compared to anything he knew, it was a unique experience. "Before you ask, President Wilcox was in the right. President Cain was a complete ass hat and deserved to die."

Obshi smiled. He liked this new commander. He had a feeling Travis would be going places. Norev turned back around to face the major. She still wasn't sure about the man who was now in charge.

"I like you human." Norev said. "I think you're a good replacement in the interim until Captain O'Brien can resume his post here." Norev paused as she thought. It was possible Captain O'Brien might never return. Was she willing to accept that fate for him? Norev wasn't quite certain that would be the case.

"Ah, Captain O'Brien." Major Johnson said. He wasn't sure the captain ever would return. The Fresno was on assignment that was away from Crimson Gamma at the moment. There would be no way of telling *when* or *if* the captain would be returning to take command of Crimson Gamma again. There was red tape to be taken care of, he would have to become a major again. That was not an easy feat to be sure. One had to know someone high up to get that kind of advancement in rank and pay. Travis wasn't sure Jack knew anyone who could do that for him. Wilcox was out of the question, he had resigned from the presidency when his final term was up. Travis wasn't sure Jack had any other friends high up. "It was a shame when he lost his command and was demoted."

Norev nodded. "Yes it was." She said.

Tapping his fingers on his desk, Major Johnson smiled. "Well I just wanted you to know you can trust me. I know the last station commander wasn't well liked. She believed in Cain's ideals. I'm not her. However I can't say I'm much like Jack O'Brien either. I am my own ... monster." He grinned. "Okay monster is too rough of a word, I am my own animal. Yes I believe animal works better in this context." Travis paused as he thought about what he was saying. "But you can trust me. I'm nothing like Tague. She was pure evil."

Obshi frowned at the thought. He thought he had gotten through to Tague before she ended her life, but that couldn't be the case. She killed herself. If only he had the time to change things, but that was in the past. Change was too far away now. He couldn't do anything about it.

"I'd like us all to be good friends." Johnson said. "If we are to work together, I think it would be a good idea if we got along. Do either of you have any problems with that thought process?"

Obshi and Norev exchanged glances again. Finally Norev spoke. "No, I think that's a good idea major." She said. "We will work together better if we get to know each other. No more lies though, that part of the ... game is over."

Johnson nodded. "Agreed. Only the truth from here on out." He looked at his computer screen. "I have scheduled weekly meetings with my senior staff here on the station. Earth should be dispatching another star ship to help guard the station anytime soon I imagine. I haven't heard any official orders as of yet, but any day now they should be dispatching a vessel."

Obshi nodded his head. "Okay, good to know. Our world will be protected from any enemies."

“Yes, that’s the point of it all.” Johnson said. “Shuka must be protected at all costs. This treaty between Earth and Dubor could fail at any moment and I want to be ready for that possibility.” He sighed. War was not his thing. He wasn’t a fan of war, hell who was a fan of war? Maybe those in the War College back home were interested in war, but that’s what their training was all about. It wasn’t about exploration, but being ready for battle. What else was the military good for anyway?

## Dubor Home World, Orbit

Commander Bert McDuff sat in a large open room. It was quite different than his cold damp dark cell he had been in since the war began. Ketish had promised Bert he wouldn’t be harmed and was keeping his part of the bargain so far. As he wandered around the room, he wondered about his crew. Did they at least have a fighting chance or did they die a worthless, empty death. He hoped they at least had a chance to go out fighting.

Ketish entered the room. The light level was low to avoid from blinding him. His eyes were sensitive to high light levels as were much of the Dubor race. It was a genetic thing that started long ago with their ancestors. No one really knew the reason behind it all, just that they hated bright light.

“Amazing sight, isn’t it human.” Ketish said pointing to the ceiling. A large glass dome was the only thing keeping them from the vacuum of space. They were standing in a room on Ketish’s warship. Some called it an observation room, others called it paradise. Ketish liked to think of it as his private thinking room.

“Human.” McDuff repeated. “I do have a name you know.”

Ketish laughed. “Oh yes you sure do Bert.” He said. “I haven’t forgotten. Have you forgotten our agreement?” He hoped the human hadn’t forgotten what they agreed upon. It was central to his plan, if he was going to make it all work out in the end, he would need McDuff on board.

McDuff nodded his head. “Yeah I remember our agreement.” He said. “You take me home and I tell Earth how wonderful of an ally you are. I get them to trust you without question and then you somehow get what you want.” He paused. Ketish hadn’t told him what it was he wanted yet. That part remained to be seen. “Whatever *that* is.”

“That’s right.” Ketish said. “I have a captured Earth shuttle you will take back to Earth. It’s guidance system will be locked in so you can’t go anywhere else. Once you arrive at Earth you will teleport down to the surface. The White House has been destroyed, so you’ll have to find out where the current president is stationed. You will carry out your orders from there.”

McDuff nodded. “Got it boss.” He said. “You know, before I met you I hated all aliens. Now I just hate one less alien race, the Dubor. Why is that? What did you do to me?”



Ketish smiled. “Nothing.” He lied. “It was always your choice to consider us an ally. I am glad you decided to make that a reality. Without it, I don’t think we could accomplish this mission we are about to embark on.”

“Speaking of which.” McDuff said. “When do I leave?”

Ketish checked a time keeping device. “Your shuttle will be ready within the hour. I’m sorry my warship can’t accompany you to Earth. It would be a quicker journey that way, but well my ship is needed elsewhere in the Comeki Star System.” He smiled. “You’re going to do great.”

It wasn’t much of a pep talk. McDuff figured Ketish didn’t give many pep talks, it just wasn’t in his nature. He was more of a torturer than anything else. Certainly not a man to cross paths with in a dark alleyway on a cold dark night. Good thing Bert had been taught young not to explore the dark places of Earth at night. It was dangerous out there.

An hour later Bert McDuff was on a shuttle headed towards Earth. He looked out the window of the craft at Ketish’s warship. It wasn’t that ugly of a vessel considering its design and origin. There was another warship in orbit of Dubor, a Shukan warship. He imagined it was Obshi’s, the same one that had been all but destroyed by the Dubor defense grid. He wondered what it was they were going to do with it.

## Space Shuttle, En Route To Earth

As Bert watched the stars go by, he wished the shuttle had FTL capabilities. Anything that would make the trip quicker. He wanted to get back home as soon as possible. Being in a Dubor prison made him appreciate the small comforts of home that he now had to enjoy.

A wormhole opened in front of him. Bert braced for destruction. Wormholes were known for being unstable. They usually led to death of all occupants of a vessel. Bert hoped that wouldn’t be the case with him. As he held on for his life, he prayed to whatever God was out there that he would be safe.

The shuttle exited the wormhole on the far side of the universe near The Rim. As the shuttle stopped shaking, Bert was able to breathe. He looked at the star charts and matched them to the unknown stars that he saw. He was in awe. Confirming his position, Bert swore out loud. “Shit.” Wormholes were known to be dangerous, unstable, unpredictable and just a pain in the ass. Bert had never encountered such a phenomenon until today. Without FTL, it would take him *years* to get back to Earth. He was stranded.

Coming upon a small moon, McDuff found a place to set down. He needed to assess what damage had been done to his shuttle. See what it would take to repair it. “Hello, is anybody out there.” He said into an open comm channel.

The comm channel filled with static for a brief moment. Then it flooded with alien languages, languages Bert didn't understand. He didn't have a translation orb with him, and the shuttle wasn't equipped to translate anything but old Dubor dialects. However they planned on communicating with other species was beyond him. He tried every channel he could find. It was feeling hopeless.

After a moment, a voice came through loud and clear. A *human* voice. "Yes, we can hear you." They said. "Please identify yourself." It was the voice of a woman. She didn't seem amused that she had heard his message though.

Bert grinned big. Someone had heard him. He didn't care who they were, they were human or at least spoke english. That was a good sign for Bert. "This is Commander Bert McDuff of the United Earth Force Alliance ship Fearless." Bert said. "I found an unstable wormhole that brought me here, wherever the hell this place is."

"An unstable wormhole you say?" The woman asked.

Bert chuckled. "Like there's any such thing as a *stable* wormhole. Yeah it was highly unstable. Off the charts from what my scans indicate." He checked his readings again. "I'm lucky to be alive actually."

"The military." She said. "So you weren't sent on a mission to find me, track me down and take me back to Earth?" The woman asked.

Bert froze. What did Earth have to do with any of this? From the sounds of things this woman didn't want to go back to Earth, not by a long shot. "Yes I'm in the military." Bert said. "But I haven't been in command of a ship in ages. My last command didn't go to well and I was reduced to first officer of the Fearless."

The woman laughed. "Great, I finally find a human out here on The Rim and he's a nut job. Got it." She paused. "Oh well, I'm sure you'll do fine."

"Now it's your turn." Bert said. "What's your name?"

The woman sighed. "Alyssa, Alyssa O'Brien." She said. Not too many aliens on The Rim asked her name, and no one knew her last name. It wasn't famous where she was and she liked to keep it that way.

Bert checked his shuttle's readings. He was starting to run out of air and didn't have time for small talk, even though he started the conversation. "Look, I'm running low on air. Is there a place I can set down and we can talk further?"

There was silence for a moment. Then the channel crackled with static again. "Yeah, bay five is open. I'll meet you there." Alyssa said. Closing the channel, Alyssa looked to her friend. "No weapons, he's human. We shouldn't have anything to fear from him."

"Got it." Another woman said setting her gun down on a table. No weapons.

Twenty minutes later McDuff's shuttle landed at bay five where Alyssa had instructed him to land. Stepping out of the shuttle, he looked around. The moon base was nothing but a glorified mechanic shop. It was an impressive sight. Alyssa and another woman was waiting for him as he disembarked his craft.

Bert walked towards the women and held out his hand. "Alyssa." He said. "Any relation to Jack O'Brien? Ex wife maybe?"

Alyssa laughed. "Oh heavens no!" She exclaimed and snort laughed. "Kid sister." She paused, the word *kid* didn't really feel like it fit here. She was in her thirties, how much of a *kid* was she anymore. "He's never been married, that I know of. I mean we haven't spoken in years after he reenlisted in the military, that irked me."

Bert nodded his head. She wasn't a fan of the military. He thought. Check that one off the list. There were a lot of Earthers who didn't like the military. It came with the territory. Between the War College and the Military Academy there was enough hate to go around among the normal citizen.

Gesturing to her associate, Alyssa smiled. "This is Alice."

Alice shook Bert's hand. "Hello." She said. "So you're from Sol 3 too huh? That's neat."

Bert mused at her naming Earth Sol 3. It made sense, Earth was the third planet in the solar system, why not call it Sol 3. Yeah that made sense. He simply nodded. "Yes, yes I am." He said. "Was born in Miami, when the chance came to serve on a star ship came, I took it and have been in space ever since."

"I see." Alice said. "Well my races name is Nokeli, we are a short lived race only living around twenty years. I turn twenty next year and expect to move onto the afterlife." She paused. "If there is an afterlife."

Alyssa held Alice's hand and kissed her. "My dear we knew this day would be coming. But it's not here yet, so we'll live while we still have time."

Alice nodded. "Yes I know my love." She said as she kissed Alyssa back.

Bert looked around uncomfortably. He felt he was interrupting an important moment between two lovers and he was right. He didn't enjoy being on the other side of the known galaxy without a way of getting back. If this was his life now, he would have to get used to it.

"Do either of you know how to generate a wormhole back to Earth?" Bert asked interrupting the couple's kiss.

As their lips parted, Alyssa blushed as she realized what had happened. "My apologies." She said. "Wormholes are a natural phenomenon, there's no way to make one appear if that's what you're asking. To control *where* the wormhole leads is even further off the charts than generating one. I'm sorry, it would appear you're stuck here."

Bert sighed. Being stuck in the middle of nowhere was not his idea of a good time. He wished he could refuel his shuttle and get back on the road. He wasn't meant to stay anywhere in one place for too long. If Bert was going to achieve his goal of commanding a space ship again, he had to get back to Earth, back to the Sol Sector.

"There's no going home." Bert finally said. "I am not liking my choices here. One, there are no choices. I'm fracking stuck here. How did you deal with this Alyssa?"

Alyssa frowned. How on earth did he know she too was stuck there? There was no option for her to leave. Her FTL drive was broken beyond repair and she had no place to go. "Yeah about that." She said. "I've just accepted it over the years. My FTL drive is shot, I'd offer it to you but there's no fixing it and I can't do anything about that." She looked to Alice and smiled. "You just have to start a new life is all. I know it's not much to go off of, but well there's the writing in the sand."

## Dubor Orbit

Ketish stormed onto the bridge of his ship with a datapad in his hand. "What the groku is this?" He demanded throwing the datapad across the deck.

An officer stood at attention. "I'm sorry sir, his craft entered a wormhole that appeared out of nowhere and he just ... vanished from sensors." He said as he watched Ketish's reaction. It was not that of a happy man. No, Ketish was quite pissed off. "We tried to project his course, it would seem he went into uncharted space."

"The Rim." Ketish said. "You mean he ended up in The Rim." He formed a fist and slammed it against a subspace communications panel causing sparks to fly everywhere. "Get someone in here to clean up this mess!" He gestured to the shattered control panel all over the floor.

"Sir, we have an incoming transmission for you." The communications officer said. "It's text only."

Retrieving another datapad, Ketish frowned. "Transmit it over to my datapad. Authorization Ketish Alpha Six Two Seven." As he watched the data load onto the datapad, he sat down in the captain's chair and frowned.

Ketish, my lord, I have decided to seek out the Dorf. Captain O'Brien. I need him and he needs me. I do not know when I will return, but just know that I support you in whatever you do.

Signed,

Grilka

Ketish threw the datapad at the main forward viewer. It shattered as it hit the screen. How could she do this to him? She was running back to the hybrid, Jack O'Brien. Looking to his first officer he pointed a finger. "When was this message written? I know it just came in, but when did it originate?!"

The officer shook his head. "I uh," He checked his records. "It was written an hour ago, scheduled to come in at this time, sir." He turned his head from Ketish, he did not want another datapad thrown at him as he was only doing his job.

Ketish rubbed his bald head. None of his plans were coming together. He was going to use both McDuff and Grilka in an organized strike against the Fresno. Now they were ruining everything. He was losing control over his own masterful plans. Ketish slammed his fist against his command chair's armrest. What else could go wrong today?