

SPACE QUEST 2

HIDDEN PLANET

Chapter 6

by James Gelsey

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Yalcof and the cadets spun around. A man wearing a torn black jacket and ragged black pants faced them. The man's tired-looking brown eyes studied Sivah, Zale and Bey. Just as he took a small step forward, Leep rolled between him and the cadets.

A small smile appeared to grow across his face.

“Don't worry, I'm not going to hurt anyone” the man said. “I just wanted to see if you were real. The dimming light in here has been playing tricks on my eyes. My name is Levet. Druis Levet.”

He held out his hand, which trembled slightly. The cadets stared at something on his jacket and remained frozen. He glanced at the silver Navan'od insignia dangling from his frayed collar.

"I'm not one of them," he said. "I ran an outpost in the Qotonian sector. When the Navan'ods attacked, we were no match for them. We became their prisoners."

Sivah took a deep breath, reached out and shook Druid's hand.

"Cadet Sivah Benjamin," she said, introducing herself. "From Endio."

"Nice to meet you, Sivah," Druid said

warmly.

"Zale Gyre," Zale said with a nod.

"Bey," said the third cadet with a wave.

"And this is Leep."

"And this is Yalcof," Sivah said. "He's the leader of the Huheets."

Druid walked over to Yalcof and looked him straight in the eye.

"I'm sorry for this," Druid said, pointing to the green cube. "The Navan'ods forced me to set up this generator."

"They told me they didn't find what they were looking for," Yalcof said.

"They lied," Druid replied.

“I knew it!” Zale exclaimed.

Sivah angrily walked up to Druids.

“Do you realize that it’s stealing the energy from the planet?” she asked. “That it’s making the planet go dark and causing the Mok-Ri to take over?”

Druids nodded.

“Then why can’t you shut it down?” Sivah asked impatiently.

“Because the Navan’ods booby-trapped the generator in case I decided to be that brave,” Druids said. “If I tried to deactivate it, a delayed-action timer would signal the generator to use its stored energy to blow up

the planet from the inside out.”

Yalcof’s eyes widened as a horrible image ran through his mind. Druids read the concern on the Huheet’s face.

“I don’t mind risking my own life,” Druids said. “But I couldn’t do that to the Huheets. So all I can do is watch the generator suck the light out of the planet and plan for the Navan’ods to return.”

This bit of information caught the cadets by surprise.

“You mean they’re coming back?” Zale gasped. “When?”

“The generator will automatically send

out a signal when its fuel cells are full,” Druis answered.

A gentle breeze glided across Druis’s face. Everyone else felt it nudge aside the intense heat being given off by the generator.

“What a strange breeze,” Druis said, closing his eyes. “I haven’t felt anything like this in all the time I’ve been locked in here.”

“Opening the cavern door probably let in some fresh air,” Zale said.

“And a Mok-Ri!” Bey said, pointing up.

Sure enough, another Mok-Ri flew around the cavern, pounding the air with its powerful wings.

“This way!” Druis ordered. Everyone followed Druis into a cave as the Mok-Ri shrieked and swooped down. It soared over the generator and then out over the crystal pool. The creature looped around twice and took off for the top of the cavern. Its three claws grabbed onto one of the crystal hourglass pipes. The Mok-Ri perched itself there and hung upside-down.

Inside the cave, Zale was growing antsy.

“Listen, I don’t want to wait around here for the Navan’ods to come back,” he announced. “We have to do something—now!”

“What can we do, Zale?” Sivah asked.

“The generator will blow up if we try to stop it. And even if we could figure out a way to turn it off, the Mok-Ri will attack us if we step foot out of this cave.”

The cadets stewed in an uncomfortable silence.

“Instead of trying to solve each problem separately,” Bey suggested, “maybe we can get the two problems to solve each other.”

“What do you mean?” Zale asked.

“I mean we should use the Mok-Ri to help us stop the generator,” Bey said.

“Won’t that trigger the explosion?” asked Yalcof.

“You said there was a delay in the timer, right?” Bey asked Druid.

“Yes. About thirty seconds,” Druid replied.

“Then that’s how much time we’d have to release every last dagoreem from the generator,” Bey said.

Zale looked puzzled.

“The device is wired to use the energy in the fuel cells to power the explosion,” Druid said. A smile danced across his face as he finally understood Bey’s plan. “If we empty the fuel cells, there won’t be an explosion.”

Bey slowly nodded his head. “We can do

it,” he said. “But we’re going to have to act fast and work together. And I think I know how.”

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