

SPACE QUEST 2

HIDDEN PLANET

Chapter 8

by James Gelsey

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The dagoreems flooded the Huheet city crystal pool. Rays of light burst from the waters and illuminated the drab walls. Within moments, the crystal cavern sparkled. As Yalcof, Sivah, Zale, Bey, Leep and Druis entered the city, the Huheets erupted into a chorus of cheers and applause. They rushed forward and swept the heroes up into the air.

Yalcof quieted the Huheets, then turned to address the cadets and Druis.

“All Huheets join me in thanking you,” Yalcof said. “You saved us from a terrible fate. We shall be forever grateful for the

circumstances – whatever they were – that brought you to our planet.”

I never imagined anything good could come of our being pulled through a stellar vortex, Sivah 'patched Bey and Zale.

Yalcof took a crystal from his pocket and filled it with water from the pool. He handed it to Bey.

“Take these dagoreems as a token of our thanks and eternal friendship,” Yalcof said. “You are welcome to stay with us as long as you please, but I know that you must be eager to continue on your journey. Remember, you will always be welcome here. Hail the heroes!”

The Huheets joined together and shouted, “Layu-rah! Layu-rah! LAYU-RAH!”

As the Huheets cheered and celebrated, Zale leaned over to Sivah and Bey.

“When can we ask him about the fuel cells for the space ship?” he asked.

“Right now,” Yalcof said with a smile. He held a box in his hands. “Inside you’ll find four crystal-powered fuel cells. But I must warn you. They are significantly more potent than anything you are used to. You’ll also find a vial of orange crystal slivers. They have wondrous healing powers. One is all you need.”

“Thank you, Yalcof,” Sivah said.

“No, thank you, all,” Yalcof said. “You truly saved us.”

The cadets, Leep and Druis Levet returned to the Quest the way they came. The tunnels were much brighter now, and they found their way back to the space ship with ease.

“I’d never thought I say this, but am I glad to see this pod!” Zale said. He gave the space ship a friendly tap and climbed up the ladder. Sivah, Bey and Druis followed, leaving Leep all alone at the bottom.

“Leep, how are you going to get up here?”

Sivah called.

“Not to worry, Cadet Sivah,” Leep replied. She reached out and grabbed the bottom rung. “Ladder up,” she instructed. The ladder started rising up into the doorway, pulling Leep up with it. As the last rung was pulled into the ship, Leep flipped herself over and up through the door.

“Engineering is down here,” Zale said. He, Bey and Druis climbed down to the bottom deck to install the fuel cells. While they worked, Sivah retrieved a small silver rectangle from her bag.

“What’s on that data wafer, Cadet

Sivah?” asked Leep.

“My parents’ expedition journals,” Sivah answered. “If Druis really worked in the Qotonian sector, my parents may have known him. I want to see if he’s mentioned anywhere in here.”

Sivah slid the data wafer into a slot on the main console and the small screen popped up. She entered Druis’s name into the computer and one match came up. Sivah tapped the screen, and a man and woman appeared. They were dressed in simple clothes, as if they had just finished a stroll in the park. The man’s face bore some

resemblance to Sivah’s.

“On our way to Qoton, we stopped at a small outpost nearby,” the man said.

“It was smaller than small,” the woman interrupted with a smile. “But the owner, a fellow named Druis Levet, was very nice.”

“And talkative,” the man added. “He kept talking about how the War was disturbing the natural fabric of space. And he wouldn’t stop talking about stellar vortexes popping up as a result of all the laser blasts.”

“He showed us a data wafer full of space charts he drew,” the woman said. “The charts showed how the vortexes enable you to travel

great distances in mere seconds.” Sivah heard the others coming up the ladder and quickly slammed the screen down.

“All done,” Bey announced. “And Druid gave us a quick lesson on how to do it ourselves.”

“I have a question, Druid,” Sivah said. “You said you worked in an outpost in the Qotonian sector and that the Navan’ods took you prisoner. How did you get here?”

“The same way you did,” Druid responded. “Stellar vortex.” He carefully removed one of the orange crystals from the vial.”

“How did you know?” gasped Zale.

“The Endio Academy wouldn’t send its cadets this far from home on purpose,” Druid said as he touched the crystal to the crack in the view shield.

“You know where Endio is?” asked Bey.

“Let’s put it this way,” Druid said. “I know where it’s supposed to be. And I know the only way to get there is through another stellar vortex.” Druid and the cadets watched the crystal intensify. A moment later, the crack was gone.

“But the problem isn’t just finding a stellar vortex,” Druid continued. “The trick is

to find the right one.”

“How do we do that?” Zale asked.

Druis smiled and shrugged, “If I knew that, I wouldn’t be here. “

“Then come with us,” Sivah said with a warm smile.

“That would be blastin!” Zale agreed.

Druis shook his head. “Thanks, but I have to get back to the Huheets,” he said. “I want to be able to help them if and when the Navan’ods return. Thanks for everything back there.” He looked at Sivah and smiled. “Your parents would be proud. All of them.”

Leep activated the ladder again. As

Druis stepped on, Sivah ran to the door.

“Wait! What do you know about my parents?” Sivah called.

Druis took something from his pocket and tossed it to Sivah.

“This may be of some help,” Druis explained. “I’m not going to need it anymore.”

As Leep closed the door, Sivah grasped the object tightly. It was a data wafer.

“Are we ready to leave, cadets?” Leep asked.

“Ready!” Zale shouted as he jumped into the captain’s chair. He began commands into the console across his lap.

Bey jumped up. “Shouldn’t we let the Huheets open the—” But before he could finish, the pod’s engines roared to life and the Quest shot up into the air, bursting through the crater door.

“WHOOOOAAAHH!” Bey and Sivah were thrown back in their chairs.

“Look!” Sivah said. She pointed to the thousands of glazed Mok-Ris dotting the planet’s shimmering, crystal surface.

“Blastin!” Zale exclaimed as the pod rocketed beyond the planet’s atmosphere.

“Automatic systems fully operational,” Bey reported. “Navigational scan indicates a

rapidly approaching object.”

“It’s not a Mok-Ri, is it?” Sivah joked.

“No, it’s some kind of planetoid or comet fragment,” Bey answered. “And it’s going to pass us right... about...now.”

As if on cue, a giant, shimmering comet soared past the Quest. The object was far enough away to avoid hitting the tiny space ship, but close enough to catch the pod in its powerful wake. As the pod got dragged along, the cadets didn’t notice something else join the parade of space junk behind the comet. It was a small, black, Navan’od cargo cruiser.

“Hey, where’re we going?” Zale asked as

the pod picked up speed once again.

Bey smiled and said, “Wherever this
runaway comet takes us!”

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