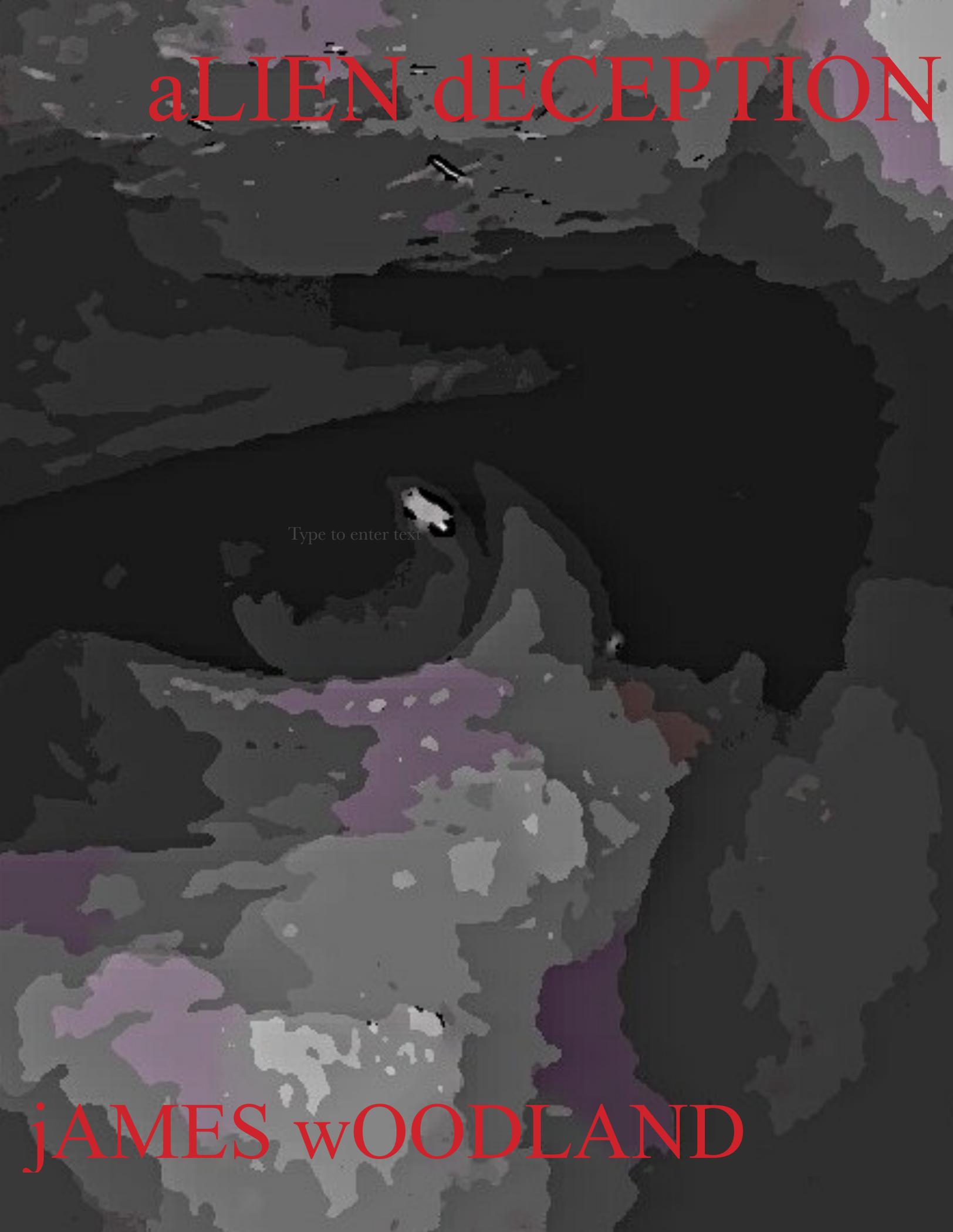


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Chapter Four

“Into The Hole”

By

James Woodland

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

aCKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Vehicle blockade technology
- Walter Scott, pioneer of the roadside Diner
- Vehicle maintenance technology
- SinkholesThe inventor of the gang plank
- Multi-coloured energy shielding

dEDICATION

To all those who get it

tHE sTORY sO fAR

The space colonization ship “Starship One” (S1) cruises through deep space towards a new world for its inhabitants.

About to go on duty for the day, Sgt. Anne Brown and her Red Security Squad are called to the riot at the Plowshare Diner in the agridome "Lethbridge".

A signal is received in the Main Communications Centre. It's discovered to be from the missing exploration shuttlecraft McCall! The shuttle "Arden" is prepared to go out and tow it in.

Anne and her Red Security Squad get to the Lethbridge and join another Squad as they prepare to quell the riot at the Plowshare.

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Chapter Four

Into The Hole

Patty Reed sat beside Craig Howard as she drove a maintenance truck crowded with Workers on the road to the Diner. Slowly she began to see something ahead of her.

"What the smack is that?" said Craig. He was talking to someone in the back seat. He looked forward as the truck came to a stop. The road was blocked by a large amount of vehicles scattered on it leading down to the diner. A large crowd of People could just barely be seen in front of the building.

Patty quickly got out of the vehicle, followed by the Others. "This is as close as we're going to get!" she yelled.

The others got out of the truck and the Group ran past the vehicles in a flurry of anger.

In front of the diner a Farmer was thrown out of the last of its glassed windows. He landed on another Farmer and the Two fell to the ground

amongst many bruised and bloodied bodies. All around was yelling and screaming, incredible anger and pure rage.

Patty, Craig, and the Others soon joined the melee as they ran in off the road.

In shuttle bay sixty-four Ken Danners closed a maintenance hatch inside the deep space shuttle Arden and got to his feet. He threw a few switches and tried to start up a computer console but it came on for a few seconds then shut down. "Perfect," he said in a quiet voice to himself. "You're not going anywhere."

As Ken came out of the shuttle the technician he had been talking to earlier walked up to him. "I checked with shuttle maintenance. No work was supposed to be done with communications today..." the Technician said.

"Oh, wrong day," Ken replied apologetically as he tried to walk off.

The Technician wasn't buying his excuse. He stopped Ken. "What were you doing in there? Who are you?"

Just as the technician was about to grab his data block, Ken touched him on the shoulder and pinched. The Technician's eyes glazed over and he froze. "I was never here. Everything's fine. Go back to work," Ken softly told him. He then took his hand off of the Technician's shoulder. The Technician blinked his eyes as he came back around and walked off. Ken glanced at him and walked off in the opposite direction.

All was pandemonium at the Plowshare Diner. Maintenance Workers fighting Farmers and Illegals with anything they could get their hands on, even themselves.

Suddenly a green electrical sheet of energy spread out in the sky over the area and rained down to the ground creating a cage. Several combatants, including Maintenance Workers Riza and Chris stopped fighting and looked up at it. The crunching sound of metal-on-metal came up as something was approaching them. Suddenly the cars and trucks on the road were tossed aside as huge burgundy and cream coloured security vehicles approached the diner. The reinforced frontends were doing their job very efficiently.



“You're not going anywhere.”

"Security!!" yelled Riza but before she could move a wooden board came down on her shoulder, dislocating it. Arm dangling but adrenaline flowing she got back into the fight. Others ran but with the shielding up there was nowhere to go.

A moment later the security vehicles tossed the last of the cars and trucks in their way to the side and blocked off the front of the diner. Anne's two trucks were joined by Wayne Kilgallen's three.

Doors opened and Security personnel poured out. Anne and Wayne joined up. "I'll take the left, you take the right! Spread them out!" yelled Anne.

Wayne nodded and ran off.

Thirty minutes later, in the Main Communications Centre, all was gotten ready for the launch of the shuttle Arden to fetch the McCall but something was wrong. Very wrong.

Ken quickly walked into the room. He slipped into a chair down from the Search and Scan Operations and listened in on the conversation

there. Commander Berth and the Search and Scan Personnel were feverishly working on something. He smirked.

"Get all the data transferred over fast!" He paused, looking over data on a monitor then "Damn these machines! The Winning will have to go out instead!"

The smirk faded from Ken's face as he realized what was happening. "What?" Another shuttle was being sent out in place of the Arden! "No, no, no..." He said as he quickly made to Berth, pushing past Personnel in his path. He finally got to him and stood beside him.

"I thought the Arden was going out after the McCall..." said Ken, confused.

"We've been informed the Arden is down. Where have you been?"

"I, uh, guess I wasn't listening when the word came in but the Winning isn't flight ready!"

Berth glanced up at Ken then went back to the console and kept working.

"And how would a Communications Crewman know the status of a shuttlecraft?" he asked him.

Berth glanced back at Ken but he was gone. A Search and Scan Crewmember walked up to him.

"Is that true? Aren't you putting Pilots at risk if the shuttle they're taking isn't flight ready?"

Berth didn't look up at the Crewmember.

"This department doesn't have time to wait for complete repairs. This signal could fade at any moment. The Winning isn't fully checked out but it'll have to do!" He paused. "Our lives could depend on the information the McCall has!"

At the Plowshare Diner bare knuckles were no match for metal body armour and wooden planks pulled off of a building no match for electrical prods and mace. Slowly, the riot was put under control as the Farmers were separated from the Maintenance Workers and the Illegals from S1 Section Five Sector Nine. Many of the combatants were taken care of by Security Team Personnel doing the work of Medics. Because the shielding surrounding the Diner was still in place proper medics were called but not allowed in yet.

The Diner itself was in a mess. Windows were smashed, doors torn off, and assorted chairs and benches were smashed into pieces and scattered everywhere. Sections of the building were also wrenched off and used as weapons. The electrical refuelling pumps were destroyed.

Anne talked to Alice and Earl as the Two sat slumped on a bench outside the building, bloodied, beat up and in shock.

Ted, Riza, Chris, and Kyle, along with Lester and his Friends were brought up by Kilgallen and his Security Squad. Everyone looked like they just came out of a meat grinder.

Anne nodded her head and walked away from Alice and Earl and directly to Ted and Lester.

"What happened?" she asked Ted.

"We just came to pick up lunch and get something to eat."

"It's never that simple."

"No, it's not."

Anne looked at Lester. "And you're the smack disturber who started all this."

"I didn't start anything! He struck first!" complained Lester.

"And why would he do that?"

"Hole blasting hempwad! If he would have fixed it proper in the first place we'd be pulling in the crop now!"

Anne didn't understand a word Lester was blathering on about. She turned back to Ted.

"What the smack is he talking about?"

"Four water tanks collapsed when a filtration tank overheated in the middle of his wheatfield causing a hole we're trying to repair. I guess that's what he was angry about."

"So you thought you'd end the argument by starting one of the largest fights my detachment has had to deal with so far this year?"

"When members of my Crew start to get thrown around I generally do something about it."

Anne Was about to say something but the ground suddenly shook below her. Everyone froze.

Down from Anne and the Others Patty and Craig looked around at the ground.

"Tell me you fired up the stabilizer shielding before we ran down here." Craig said to Patty.

Patty thought. A guilty expression came across her face. "In all the confusion maybe I forgot."

Craig looked at Patty. "'Maybe you forgot'?!"

Patty didn't want to look at Craig. "There was a lot of smack going on.... We had to get down here..."

Craig started to get worried. "If another filtration tank blows it could start a chain reaction that-"

Slowly, a rumbling sound came up from below them. Seconds later another tremor shook the ground! This one was more violent than the first.

Craig viciously hit Patty in the shoulder. "You starpen! Why didn't you secure the hole before we left?!"

Patty hit Craig back just as hard. "Don't hit me! You were down there! You should have known if the stabilizers were on or not when you came up!"

Down from Patty and Craig, Anne and the Others were becoming agitated.

"What the cran is going on?!" Anne yelled as she looked around.

Ted had a good idea what was happening but he didn't like it.

"Concussion explosion!" He looked at Riza, Chris, and Kyle. "Who the cran was in charge of the stabilizer shielding down in the hole?!" he yelled at them.

The three looked around.

"Reed and Howard were heading the Team!" called Chris.

The three stopped looking when they spotted Patty and Craig. The Two were pushing and shoving each other while they argued.

Ted took a step towards Patty and Craig but he didn't get far. A large chunk of the Diner suddenly collapsed across from him! Seconds later the ground below him and the Others disappeared and they all fell into a massive sinkhole!

In shuttlecraft bay fifty-two of S1 sector five the long-range shuttlecraft "Winning", like the McCall a month earlier, was bathed in a soft white light. Beside it stood Pilot James Khan, Co-Pilot Shona Weekes and Communications Specialist Marf Sutherland, looking over their equipment, laughing and joking as they waited to board the ship.

The same verbal and physical interplay that took place between pilots and Crew of the McCall in Shuttlecraft Bay Thirty-Six was virtually duplicated here. Hot shot Pilots all.

"You made sure you said goodbye?" said Marf to Shona, teasing. Shona replied "Every time I go out I have to say goodbye. Sometimes the boyfriend thinks I'm not coming back," Shona replied.

James smiled. "Don't they all?"

A Voice came from behind James.

"It always surprises me how cavalier you Pilots are about going out into an environment where you could die in seconds from an errand shot of micro-debris breaching the hull of this little can you're going to be squeezed into."

The smiles faded slightly as James, Marf, and Shona turned to Sal, a Sr. Technician who had walked up behind them.

"Thanks for the encouragement, Sal."

Two Technicians walked off the shuttle carrying equipment. They passed James and the Others.

"She checks out. Ready to go. Take it easy and come back in one piece, will you?"

"Afraid we'll come back in a couple of 'em?" Shona joked.

"This isn't just a flyby looking for exterior damage to this ship's hull-"

James cut Sal off.

"You worry too much. We go out, rescue some rookies and come back. Then it's Barker's for all of us." He shoved a thumb to his chest. "Dinner on the best pilot you ever saw."

The white light of the bay was suddenly thrust into red as the sound of a klaxon and the flashing of several emergency lights came up. Time to fly.



“We go out, rescue some rookies and come back. Then it's Barker's for all of us.”

Sal had nothing more to say. He shook the hands of the Trio and walked off. James watched him for a few seconds as Shona and Marf got into the shuttle. His smile had completely faded. He didn't want to show it to anyone but he was just as worried as Sal was about what he and his crew were going to be doing.

He quickly turned around and walked into the shuttle.

A few minutes later, outside the shuttle bay Ken Danners ran up to the hatches leading into the ready room and the bay itself. He tried to get into the bay but the hatches had closed and locked in preparation for the launch. "No! No! This isn't supposed to be happening!"

Ken quickly stepped to a small computer console and punched in a few commands. A view of the shuttle bay and the Winning leaving came up. He took out a small device from his pants pocket and turned it on. A yellow light came up. He put it on the top of the console and typed more commands into the computer. The yellow light turned red.

"Captain of the shuttle Winning!" yelled Ken into the communications outlet on the console. Nothing could be heard. "Captain of the shuttle Winning! You have to stop the mission!" Suddenly the red light on his

device turned back to yellow and a warning came up on the computer console's monitor, "Illegal communications. Security protocols enacted."

Ken grabbed his device and yelled at it as he held it in his hand. "Now you break down?!! NOW?!!" He was about to throw it away in frustration when he heard a sound coming from down the corridor. "One thousand years of running around. AGAIN!" he said to himself as he put his device back in his pants pocket.

The sounds from down the corridor started to get louder. He looked down it then ran off.

Hours later Anne woke up with extreme pain in her left ribs. With great pain she managed to lift her upper-body and slowly looked around, trying to peer through the darkness.

Emergency lights, or what was left of them, gave a faint glow to the area. All around her was massive destruction, as if a tornado had cut a path through a major city. Debris was everywhere.

She found that she had come to rest on a huge pipe, her feet dangling off of it and over what looked like a bottomless pit. She slowly lifted her feet up and onto the pipe and rested. It was hard for her to breath.

After getting her bearings she took off her helmet and let it fall into the abyss. "Hello!" she called out.

A moan came from above her. Someone was moving.

"When I get my hands on those two starpen..." came a weary voice Anne recognized.

"Hey! Hey! Are you alright?" she called up to Ted. Silence.

"Yea. I'm okay." came Ted's reply.

Anne tried to get up but she couldn't. She talked to Ted as she painfully dragged herself from the pole onto what was left of a maintenance ledge.

"Where are you?! I'm going to try and make my way up!"

Suddenly Ted dropped down onto the ledge, scaring the cran out of Anne.

"Don't bother." He said.

“Son-of-a...” Anne let her voice trail off as the pain from her ribs erupted. Ted was by her side in a second.

“Relax. By the look on your face I’d say you’re hurting pretty bad.” he said as he looked Anne over.

“What happened? Why did the ground explode?” she asked him.

Ted touched the left side of Anne’s upper body. She flinched. “I thought so. You probably got a few ribs dinged. From how far we’ve fallen I’d say they’re broken.”

“Forget my ribs! We’ve got to get out of here before this whole place comes down on us!” said Anne as she tried to get up.

Ted pushed her back down. “Relax! We’ve got to take time to think. We can’t just go wherever we want.” Anne calmed down. “One false step and we could be killed.”

The Two looked around.

”There’s Light coming from above so we at least have a slight bearing...” said Ted.

Anne talked more quietly, the initial shock and fear of what has happened calming down a little. “Then what are we waiting for?” she said.

“We move around we could dislodge any amount of debris that could hurt us.” came the answer.

“We can’t just stay here...” Anne argued.

Ted got to his feet and looked around. Endless expanses of rubble stretched out in all directions around him. He looked up and thought then turned to Anne.

“Okay. There may be others who may need our help anyways. We’ll work our way up and hopefully come across some lifts or walkways that will get us to the surface.”

Anne started to take off her flack jacket but Ted quickly stopped her.

“Leave your jacket on. It’ll keep your ribs tight. We’ll take this off.” He helped Anne take off her flack vest. He took a belt from it and wrapped it around Anne’s jacket.

“Watch the chest, hempwad! I don’t even know you.”

Ted tied off the belt and prepared to tighten it. “Your chest is going to be the last thing on your mind when we get this tightened up.”

Before Anne could say anything Ted gave a pull on the belt. Anne cried out in pain as he secured it.

“That’ll keep your ribs from moving around. Let’s get you to your feet.”

Ted started to help Anne up but Anne belted him across the face! He fell back and landed on the deck of the ledge and shook his head. The Two looked at one another.

“You deserved that.” said Anne. Ted got to his feet.

“Maybe I did.” He looked down at Anne. “Help you up?”

Ted helped Anne up. In terrible pain Anne shook him off once she got to her feet.

“I can stand!” she said.

“Can you walk?” Ted said as he went off. Anne slowly went after him.

In a small maintenance area fifty metres above Ted and Anne, Riza slowly pulled herself up and sat against a computer console that was sparking as it shorted out. There was glass from monitors and other debris everywhere. She was not in good shape.

“Where the cran am I?” she said to herself. She tried to get up but the pain in her hips and right leg wouldn’t let her do it. At first.

With all the strength she could muster she pulled herself up to the computer panel and fell back into the chair in front of it. She looked over the panel and discovered it was still working!

She found a working screen and punched in coordinates to the nearest lift to the surface. A map with her location was hi-lighted. That of a hopefully functioning lift was also high-lighted. She managed to crack a smile but it faded as she saw the calculated distance from her location: two hundred meters. She looked up and barely squeaked out “Smack!”

Suddenly a voice came from behind her.

“So what do you have to be smacking about?”

Riza turned as far as she could and looked at Ted standing before her. Anne was slowly coming up a ladder behind him.

Riza smiled. “Hey dad,” she said in the best voice she could muster. A spark erupted from the console. Riza painfully turned around as quickly as she could and pounded a fist down on a button a split second before the whole console went dead.

Ted rushed to Riza as she was about to fall from the chair. He gently brought her to the ground and looked her over.

“That was quite a fall we all took. Looks like you got the worst of it.”

Riza managed a chuckle. “A few days in a hospital bed, some good medication and I’ll be back to work.”

“You bet you will. I need you.” said Ted, trying to comfort her .

Riza perked up a bit. “There’s an equipment station about two hundred metres above and to the right of us. If you can make it there you might be able to get out.”

Ted look around, took a deep breath, then let it out. “You mean “we.” He bent down to pick up Riza. She was surprised that he would do that. As he lifted her up she let out a howling cry of pain!

Anne stepped up to Ted. She gave him a look as he adjusted his grip on Riza, putting one of her arms around his shoulders. He looked at Anne.

“Nobody gets left behind if I can help it.”

Ted took a few steps to the ladder leading upwards. He stopped and motioned Anne ahead of him.

“Security Officers with broken ribs first.”

Anne made her way to the ladder and started up. She was beginning to have more respect for Ted.

Through rubble raining down on them and the ladder they were on slowly deteriorating, Ted, Anne and Riza slowly made their way to equipment station seventy-seven.

The small room had rows of equipment on racks. Metal benches, lockers and a computer station were situated around them. A large electrical panel with several lights flashing on it was embedded into a wall across from a small wire mesh elevator. This was a lift used to bring maintenance Workers and Equipment up and down from the surface.

The Trio stopped in front of the lift. Ted put Riza down but discovered he had been carrying a lifeless body. For how long he didn't know. He got on his knees beside her.

“Oh, no...”

Anne watched Ted with Riza. She looked away and saw the lift. Walking up to it she inspected it. “Looks like it might be-” she cut herself off as she managed to open the door to it. A green light on a panel inside of it lit up. Ted joined her as the Two got into the cramped space.

Ted looked at Riza’s still body as he closed the lift’s door. Suddenly the room shuddered and the lift tilted! Equipment poured off the racks and a large hole opened up between the lift and the rest of the room. Sparks flew from the control panel on the wall but the lights were still flashing.

Ted and Anne were tossed to the lift’s floor. The green light on the panel faded out. Ted hit the button to operate the machine but it wouldn’t work.

“Smack! The controls are out!” he said in frustration.

Another shudder! The room was quickly breaking up.

Ted glanced at the control panel across from the lift. “Maybe it’s just the auto controls!” he quickly opened the door.

Anne grabbed one of his arms and stopped him. “Where do you think you’re going?!”

Ted grabbed Anne's hand and threw it off. He got out of the cage and closed the door behind him.

Indicating the control panel across from them Ted said " I'll have to get to that panel to engage the manual override!"

Anne ran to open the door but Ted was already gone. He rushed away from the lift and threw himself across the hole, landing with a thud on the ground on the other side and smashing into the control panel as he rolled.

He slowly got up and looked the panel over then threw a few switches and punched a red button.

The lift groaned then slowly rose. Inside Anne watched Ted slump to the floor. Their eyes met. Ted smiled. Anne was mortified.

A large section of pipe came down on the lift and sent her violently crashing to the floor, knocking her out.

The pipe continued down and obliterated equipment station seventy-seven.

End Of Chapter Four

Stay Tuned For The Next Exciting Chapter In The

“aLIEN dECEPTION” Saga!

Coming Friday, April 5, 2019, 4:15 PM PST

Chapter Five

“Return To Sender”

gLOSSARY

People, Places, Things and Terms

A) People

1. Patty Reed

- Maintenance Worker with the Ted Saunders crew working on stabilizing the inside of the sink hole in Hank Bartel's wheat field

2. Craig Howard

- Maintenance Worker with the Ted Saunders Crew working on stabilizing the inside of the sink hole in Hank Bartel's wheat field

3. Ken Danners

- A mysterious Crewman from the S1 Communications Centre who seems to know something no one else does
- Ken has the skill to put anyone into a highly suggestive state by pinching a pressure point on their shoulder. Like a hypnotist he can implant a subconscious suggestion into his victim's mind and get them to do whatever he wants (most of the time).

4. Anne Brown

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

5. Wayne Kilgallen

- Red Squad Sergeant from detachment seventeen of S1 sector eight

6. Steven Berth

- Head Of The Main Communications Centre

7. Illegals

- Crew Members dissatisfied with the way Command is running S1.
They originated in sector nine and go about S1 causing
disturbances that they hope will lead to change.

8. James Khan

- Shuttlecraft Winning Pilot

9. Shona Weeks

- Shuttlecraft Winning Co-Pilot

10. Marf Sutherland

- Shuttlecraft Winning Communications Officer

11. Sal

- A shuttlecraft engineer

B) Places

1. Starship One

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

2. Main Communications Centre

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

3. Search and Scan Operations

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

4. Long-Range Shuttlecraft Winning

- A large exploration shuttle sent out to retrieve the lost “McCall” shuttle

5. Shuttlecraft Bay Fifty-Two

- The bay the Winning is launched from

6. Shuttlecraft Bay Ready Room

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

7. Barkers

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

C) Things

1. Red Security Squads

- S.W.A.T teams sent in from security detachments to quell riots and potentially lethal confrontations
- Squad Personnel are identified with a red patch on the left shoulder of their jackets shoulder

2. Sector Five Red Security Squad

- The Red Security Squad Anne is in charge of

3. Service Access Ways

- Tunnels with ladders and equipment rooms allowing Maintenance Workers to get around when repairing damage

D) Terms

1. Smack

- Sh*t, Nonsense, B.S

2. Cran

- Hell, damn

3. Ding

- Criminal

4. Hempwads

- As**oles/S.O.B's

5. Starpen

- Fool, idiot

6. Flack Vest

- Bullet/laser proof vest used in riot situations