

## Preface

This is the third, and final, book in the Future World History series. Book One covered slightly more than one hundred years, beginning in 2019. During that time, the power module was invented. It replaced all forms of energy that were previously in use. As a result of that invention the population of Earth experienced substantial economic, political, medical, and scientific changes. Earth began sending expeditions to other solar systems, met with other humanoid species, and became the four hundred eighth member of an interstellar trade group.

Book Two covered only a period of fifteen years. During this period of time Earth became the richest planet in the trade group, a position we still enjoy today. This was, for the most part, due to the efforts of Jeffery and Debbie Whitestone, the Captain and first officer of Earth's first starship. The amazing discoveries they made paved the way for Earth's success.

It started with the exploration of the Procolt System, and specifically the second planet in the system, Procolt 2. The planet was similar to Earth in terms of atmosphere, gravity, and temperature. It contained a variety of native life forms. Shortly after beginning the exploration of Procolt 2, two amazing discoveries were made. The first was the remains of a solidier from the United States found in a cave. The second, and more important, was the discovery of an intelligent non-humanoid life form. They resembled squirrels from Earth but they were much larger, had hands with opposable thumbs, and an ability to learn that exceeded any other living creature in the galaxy.

There were two major problems shared by all the trade group members at that time. Even though they were able to travel through space at up to five hundred times the speed of the light, the vast distances between solar systems required a minimum of thirty days to travel to the closest

neighbor. For more distant systems the travel time could easily exceed one hundred days. Additionally, it was impossible to communicate effectively between the member planets because the communication system they used didn't allow messages to travel faster than the speed of light.

Both of these problems were resolved by the squirrels from Procolt 2 working in conjunction with the Chief Engineer from NASA. Their three-year collaboration resulted in both ships and messaging systems that could move ten thousand times faster than light.

During this period, the people of Earth managed to incur the wrath of the Planet Crosus. Crosus attacked Earth, but even though they were defeated, more than ten thousand people on Earth lost their lives.

Jeffery and Debbie decided to retire and build a resort on Procolt 2. Procolt Paradise was a spectacular success. However, Crosus was not about to give up. They wanted revenge so they sent a terrorist couple to the resort. The terrorists set off an explosion that destroyed the resort's marina. They sent Jeffery a series of demands and said they would kill thousands of people at the resort if their demands were not met. However, S1, the leader of the Procolt 2 squirrels, told Jeffery he had a plan to resolve the problem.

That is where Book Two ended and this book begins.

Most of this book takes place in locations other than Earth. For reference purposes, you should know that one *Unit* equals 1.23 miles. A galactic standard day has 20 hours which is equal to 28.5 Earth hours. Also, for time measurement, the galactic standard uses hours and hundredths of an hour instead of hours and minutes.

Russell Fine  
September, 3506

## Procolt Paradise

Jeffery looked at S1 and asked, “What’s your plan to defuse this situation?”

“I was hesitant to tell you this earlier, but now I have no choice. Apparently, we are still being affected by the radiation. About a half year ago we began to notice that when we’re near humanoids we were able to read their emotions. Please understand, we can’t read minds. I can’t tell what they are thinking, but I can tell if they are, for example, happy, sad, excited, worried, or confused. I was concerned because I wasn’t sure if you would be comfortable knowing we could do that.”

“Wow! That’s definitely an interesting development, but I don’t see how it helps us.”

“In the tower for the guests from Coplent everyone is sad, worried, or excited. Only one couple is happy. They are in room 5217.”

Suddenly Jeffery remembered the message he received from S34 regarding Robelt and Melda Flemm. “Are the people staying in that room named Flemm?”

“Yes, how did you know?”

“I received a report from S34 about them that said they were probably from Crosus, but I decided to ignore it. Obviously, that was a serious mistake. They said they’ve placed explosives in both guest towers. I don’t think they’re going to just let us in without blowing up the other tower.”

S1 smiled and said, “I haven’t told you everything yet. We also discovered we can activate something in a humanoid brain that causes them to fall asleep instantly. Would you like me to demonstrate it for you?”

“Uh, no, I don’t think so. I assume you have tried this on people.”

“Yes, we have, but only when people are relaxing around the pool. They only sleep for a few minutes and there

doesn't appear to be any harmful effects that resulted from our experiments.”

“In this case I'm not very concerned about harmful effects. Do you have to be close to them to make this work?”

“No, I'm sure I can do it from here. But I can only do one person at a time. If you want me to do this I'll go and get S4 to help.”

“Okay, go get S4. While you're doing that, I'll get one of our doctors to whip up something that will keep them unconscious until we can get help here.”

Jeffery left his apartment and walked over to the medical office. He was surprised to find both of the resort's doctors, Frank and Marcet, there. He spent a minute or two filling them in on what happened and then he asked, “Do you guys have something that will keep the Flemms unconscious for a few days?”

Marcet replied, “They are from Crosus, not Coplent, so their physiology is different, but I'm sure I can make something you can use that will keep them out for at least a day.”

“That should be okay. I think once they are unconscious, we can bind them with wire ties and take them to a cave a few hundred units from here. When help arrives, we can go pick them up and take them to Earth or Coplent for trial.”

Marcet said, “Give me a half hour to make my magic potion. I'll bring it to you when it's ready.”

“Thanks, I'll be waiting for you,” Jeffery said as he left the office.

When Jeffery arrived at the apartment, he was surprised to see the door was open. Inside S1 and S4 were talking to Debbie. When S1 saw him he said, “We're ready. We've never tried this on anybody from Crosus before, but I see no reason why it won't work.”

“I want to wait until Marcet has her sleeping potion ready.”

Marcet and Frank arrived at the apartment a half hour later. Marcet gave Jeffery two vials of medication and an air pressure syringe. "This should keep them out for at least a day. They will probably feel like shit when they wake up, but I don't think you really care about that."

"Personally, I think that's a real plus," Jeffery said. Turning to Debbie he said, "I'll call you after they're sedated. Send a message to Earth and tell them what happened and ask them to send help."

"Okay."

Jeffery walked over to his computer and opened a screen that showed the rooms on the fifty-second floor of the Coplent Guest Tower. There were two vacant rooms on that floor. He called his chief maintenance engineer, Jim Roberts. When Jim answered Jeffery spent a few minutes telling him what happened and then Jeffery said, "I need your two strongest guys in my apartment as soon as possible and tell them to bring some big wire ties that are suitable for binding hands and feet."

"Is this going to be dangerous?"

"I don't think so, but feel free to ask for volunteers."

"Okay, I'll have two guys there in a few minutes."

"Thanks Jim," Jeffery said as he terminated the call.

A few minutes later two men showed up at Jeffery's apartment. The door was still open so they walked in. Jeffery told them what was going on and asked them to go to room 5224 in the Coplent Tower. He also told them to use the service elevator so they wouldn't have to walk by room 5217. Jeffery and the two squirrels left a few minutes later.

As soon as they arrived at the room Jeffery told S1 to put the Flemms to sleep. Jeffery watched as both S1 and S4 closed their eyes and began to concentrate on the task. A few seconds later S1 open his eyes and said, "We are finished. Both of them are sleeping."

Jeffery and the two maintenance men walked over to room 5217 and opened the door with a pass key. Once inside

they found both of them sound asleep on the couch. Jeffery gave each of them a dose of Marcet's sleeping potion and asked, "Can you guys carry them out?"

"Yeah, that's not a problem," one of the men answered.

"Okay, use the wire ties to bind their hands and feet, take them to the shuttle, and strap them in. I'll be there in a few minutes. The medication I gave them will keep them out for at least a day."

Jeffery called Debbie and told her the Flemms were no longer a threat and asked her to send the message to Earth.

"I don't think we should do that yet. I think we need to make sure they don't have some kind of automatic device that will trigger the explosives if we send a message. I'm going to get Brealak and the two of us will search their room first."

"I didn't think of that. Please contact me and let me know what you find."

"Okay."

Jeffery decided he didn't want his prisoners to die waiting for the ship from Earth, so he stopped at the break room and picked up fifteen bottles of water and twenty protein bars. When Jeffery arrived at the shuttle the two maintenance men were just finishing strapping their prisoners to their seats. When everyone was ready Jeffery flew a thousand units north of the resort and landed near a cave he had explored two years ago. He turned to his maintenance men and asked, "Did you search them for weapons or electronic devices?"

"Yeah, but we didn't find anything," one of them answered.

"Okay, let's put them at least a hundred feet inside the cave. That way if we missed something, they won't be able to use it anyway."

Since the Flemms were still unconscious, they had to be carried inside the cave. Jeffery brought a lamp and left it

with them so when they woke up, they would know they were inside a cave and realize they had been captured. He unbound their hands but not their feet and left the water and protein bars next to the lamp.

When they returned to Procolt Paradise Jeffery called Debbie. “Hi, we’re back. I left our guests in a cave a thousand units north of here. I’m sure they will be very uncomfortable when they wake up.”

“Good, they deserve it. Brealak and I searched their room. We found some communication devices and two other devices that looked like they could be used to trigger their explosives remotely. We took everything and put it inside the hotel safe.”

“Okay. When you send a message to Earth about our situation ask them if they have something, we could use to help us locate the explosives. I’m not going to feel safe until they have been located and disarmed.”

“I’ll send the message out immediately. I’ll also send a memo this morning to all our guests explaining what happened.”

“That’s a good idea, but I’m not sure what to do about our guests. What if the explosives have timers on them that are already armed?”

“I’ll mention that possibility in my message to Earth. I’m sure that even if they put timers on the devices they wouldn’t go off for several more days. Obviously, if they went off before you had time to meet their demands, they wouldn’t get what they want.”

“That’s a good point.”

Debbie sent the message to Earth a few minutes later. They would get the message in two days. Now all they could do was wait.

Four days later they received a response from Earth. They were going to send out an armed ship immediately. The ship had a six person crew and was equipped with explosive detection equipment. They would take control of the

prisoners and help locate the explosives before returning to Earth.

The ship arrived two days later. It was a small ship, but like all the ships currently being built, it had the newest propulsion system that enables it to travel at ten thousand times the speed of light, so it could travel the twenty-seven light years from Earth in three days. The Captain of the ship was Glen Turner. Captain Turner, like everyone else at NASA, knew about Jeffery and Debbie, and he was anxious to meet them.

Jeffery was informed the ship was landing and he and Debbie went to the landing pad to meet them. Captain Turner was the first one off the ship. He looked at Jeffery and Debbie, smiled, and said, "Admiral Whitestone, it's a pleasure to meet you and Captain Whitestone. I have heard a lot about both of you. You are legends back at NASA headquarters. I'm Captain Turner, but please call me Glen. This is Lieutenant Durst, my first officer."

"It's nice to meet you as well. I'm sure you're aware of our situation. After we determine if there are any explosives on the resort grounds and disarm any we find, I will be happy to treat you and your crew to an all-expense paid vacation."

"Thank you, sir, we'll get right on it. It would be helpful if there was somebody we could work with who is very familiar with the structures here."

"I will have our chief engineer, Jim Roberts, here in a few minutes to help you. We also have two prisoners stashed in a cave a thousand units from here. You'll have to retrieve them and take them back to Earth for trial."

"Take your time, they aren't going anywhere anyway."

"I'll contact you as soon as we're finished."

"Thank you," Jeffery responded. Then he called Jim Roberts and told him there was a crew here to scan the resort

for explosives and they wanted his help with the building layout. Jim said he would be there in a few minutes.

Jeffery and Debbie went back inside. They went to the staff break area where each had a cup of coffee. Shortly after they sat down S1 walked in. He sat across from Jeffery and asked, "Is that the ship from Earth that just landed?"

"Yeah, they will be scanning for explosives shortly. It's too bad you couldn't read the minds of our prisoners. Then we would know if they planted any bombs."

"Perhaps we will develop that ability in the future."

"What you did was amazing. You may have saved thousands of lives. I have no words to express how much we appreciate it."

"We will always help you in any way we can. If you and Debbie had not come to Procolt 2 we would still be living in caves."

"Okay, I guess we've helped each other."

Then S1 asked, "What are the plans for rebuilding the marina?"

"I don't know yet. I sent a message to our architect, Nandor, yesterday telling him what happened. I expect to receive a reply in two or three days. I hope we can start on the replacement very quickly."

"When you do could you also build an area for us? We would like to have four or five rooms like we have in Squirrel Haven."

"That won't be a problem. I'll let Nandor know."

"By the way, we now have three pregnant females."

"That's wonderful! It'll bring your population to one hundred twenty-two."

"Yes, our group is certainly growing. It will be years before we outgrow Squirrel Haven, but several members of our group asked if they could have a place to stay close to the lake."

"When I receive plans on the new marina from Nandor I'll let you review them."

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

S1 left the break room and for a while Debbie and Jeffery were alone. Then Jeffery’s com unit beeped. When he answered Glen Turner said, “Hi Jeffery. So far we have found three explosive devices. There was one in each guest tower in the elevator equipment room. We also found one in the main dining room kitchen. They all look like they have remote triggers, but we will disassemble them and let you know what we find.”

“Thank you, Glen. You should also check around the marina, or what’s left of it, to see if any devices are there as well.”

“No problem, but we want to leave in a half hour to pick up your prisoners. We don’t know where the cave is so we will need your help.”

“Okay, just let me know when you’re ready to go.”

“I’ll call you.”

A half hour later Glen, Jeffery, and two other members of Glen’s crew were on their way to pick up the Flemms. Glen landed the ship near the cave. As they entered Glen and his men took out their weapons. When they arrived at the area where the Flemms were left five days earlier they found them sitting on the floor with their backs against the wall. They managed to free their feet but made no move to get up as the four men approached them.

Robelt Flemm said, “Is there any additional cost for the cave tour? You should know that Melda and I really didn’t like it very much. The accommodations are awful.”

Glen said, “I’m placing both of you under arrest for destruction of property and acts of terrorism. You will be taken back to Earth for trial.”

Robelt started to say something but changed his mind.

Jeffery said, “We found the explosive devices you planted and they have all been disarmed.”

“Are you sure you found all of them?” Robelt asked as he smiled.

Jeffery ignored the question.

Each of the crewmen escorted a prisoner to the ship. Once they were inside each prisoner was placed in a seat and belted in. Glen looked at the prisoners and said, “Those belts are locked so don’t bother trying to get up.”

The trip back to Procolt Paradise was uneventful. However, after Glenn and Jeffery got off the ship Glen said, “I don’t want to deal with our prisoners during the return to Earth. Can you give me more of the sedative you used on them?”

“Sure, I’ll ask Marcet to give you some. Is there anything else you need?”

“No, I’m going to leave two of my guys here with all the equipment. I’ll have them check the buildings again. I want to leave as soon as I get the medicine. I should be back in six or seven days.”

“Okay, let’s go to the Medical Office and see Marcet.”

When Jeffery and Glen got to the office Marcet was there bandaging one of the guests who had fallen by the pool. She looked up and said, “Hi Jeffery, I’ll be done here in a minute.”

Marcet finished bandaging her patient and said, “That should be healed by tomorrow morning. Please be more careful around the pool. It does get slippery sometimes.”

“Yeah, I noticed that a bit late. Thank you, doctor.”

“You’re welcome. Please let me know if there’s a problem.”

“I will,” the patient said as she got up and left the office.

“Okay Jeffery, how can I help you?” Marcet asked.

“Glen would like more of the sedative so his prisoners won’t be a problem during the trip to Earth.”

“I think I still have ten doses.” She walked over to a cabinet and took out some vials and a pressure syringe and gave them to Glen. “Each dose should render them unconscious for at least fifteen hours, so this should be enough to get you back to Earth.”

“Thank you.” Glen said.

“You’re welcome.”

Jeffery said, “I arranged for rooms for your two crewmen who are staying. Just have them stop at the registration desk. When you come back if you would like to stay for a while just let me know.”

“Thank you, that’s very generous. Is it okay if I come back with my wife?”

“Sure. I really appreciate your help with this situation.”

“It’s all part of our job. I’ll see you again soon,” Glen said as he walked back to his ship.

Thirty days after the Flemms were brought to Earth they were tried for the crimes they committed at Procolt Paradise. The evidence was overwhelming and the trial only lasted for two days. The jury found them guilty on all counts and they were sentenced to twenty years in prison.

## Crosus

Bejort Griss, the current leader of Crosus, was mad. Every attempt to retaliate against Earth and Coplent had failed. He was sure the attack on Procolt Paradise would succeed. The attack was meticulously planned. He was positive every potential problem with the plan had been resolved. Obviously, he was wrong. The next time there would be no mistakes. His plan was to destroy the entire Procolt System, and he was sure he would soon have the ability to do it.

Hasin Tork, the person in charge of weapons development, was already a few minutes late for his appointment. Bejort didn't like waiting; he was not a patient man. He considered tardiness an act of disrespect. He thought about throwing Hasin in jail for a week as a warning not to be late again, but he needed the weapon Hasin was working on.

Hasin arrived .2 hours after the scheduled time. Bejort was almost wild with rage, but he contained himself. When Hasin entered Bejort's office he said meekly, "Sir, I'm sorry I'm late for our appointment. Please forgive me. I was waiting for the latest test results and it took a little longer than I expected."

"If you are ever late for an appointment again you will be punished. Is that clear?" Bejort said angrily.

"Yes sir. I promise it won't happen again."

"So, what were the results you wanted to have before our meeting?"

"Small scale tests indicate the device will be capable of destroying an entire solar system. However, the process will take much longer than we anticipated. It could take up to a year, far longer than our original estimate of thirty days."

Bejort looked at Hasin. The hate he felt for Hasin was obvious when he screamed, "That is entirely unacceptable! You assured me the weapon would work within thirty days.

Now I will give you thirty days to make whatever modifications are necessary to meet your original estimate. Failure to meet that goal will result in a most unpleasant experience for you and your entire family. Now get out of here.”

Hasin did not reply to Bejort’s outburst. He simply turned around and left the office. As Hasin walked back to his office he made a decision. He was going to leave Croesus. He didn’t know where he was going to go yet, but the first step was to leave the planet. By the time he arrived at his lab he knew exactly what he was going to do.

He spent two weeks making some modifications to the design of the weapon. Computer simulations indicated that the changes would speed up the process by more than a hundred days, but that was still far slower than his original estimate. Since he couldn’t find a way to speed up the process, he decided his only reasonable course of action was to cheat.

He spent the next few days modifying the simulator that was used to test the weapon. When he was finished, he ran the same test he had run previously. Now the results indicated total destruction of all planets within a two hundred -million-unit orbit around the star in twenty-seven days. He was pleased with the results and hoped Bejort would be as well.

He wrote up a report based on his latest test results and sent it to Bejort along with a request to test the weapon on a nearby system that had only one planet within its effective range. Since the Lundalt System was uninhabited, nobody would know or care if the system was destroyed. The prototype of the weapon would take one hundred fifty days to build.

Bejort was pleased with the report he received from Hasin and ordered him to proceed with the test. Hasin and his team began building the prototype. When it was about half finished Hasin told his wife what was going on and told

her to go to Beljang with their two children to visit her sister. Beljang was not part of the trade group so there were no restrictions on traveling there. It was also one of the few trading partners that Crosus still had.

Hasin was worried that Bejort might try to stop his wife and children from leaving the planet, but there was no problem. Hasin and his team finished the prototype several days ahead of schedule. Hasin arranged for a small ship to use that would take him and the weapon to the Lundalt System where it would be tested. The day before he was scheduled to leave he destroyed all the design data for the weapon.

When he left Crosus he programmed the navigation system to take him to the system where the test was supposed to occur. The ship stopped seventy-five million units from the systems sun. He sent a partial message back to Crosus indicating the navigation system had failed and brought him only twenty million units from the systems sun. Then he disabled all the telemetry systems that sent automatic messages back to Crosus. The weapon was already loaded into a small probe that was supposed to be launched at the sun. However, he aimed it at the system's only planet, a large ball of methane and ammonia, and launched it. He thought now Crosus would never be able to recover the weapon or build another one. He was only half right.

He programmed the ship to take him to Beljang. He had originally decided to destroy the ship when he got there, but changed his mind. He decided to sell the ship and use the money to take him and his family to some other planet in the trade group where he felt they would be safe. He knew that since Crosus did not have the new communication system, he would arrive and leave Beljang before Crosus received his message.

## Beljang

Two days after he arrived on Beljang he sold the ship for twelve hirodim blocks. More than enough for him and his family to get to another planet and live there for a while. He discussed it with his wife and they decided to try and emigrate to Torblit. They went to the Torblit embassy and filled out the appropriate paperwork. They were told decisions can take up to one hundred fifty days.

He was surprised to hear from the Torblit embassy fifteen days later. They wanted him to come in for an interview. He made an appointment for the following day. When Hasin and his wife arrived at the embassy they were taken to small office. The man behind the desk said, “We do not normally allow people to emigrate from Crosus. However, I noticed you were involved in scientific research. What kind of research did you do?”

“I did weapons research and design. I was ordered to design a weapon that would be capable of destroying an entire solar system. I actually completed the design but the process was too slow to be useful. I was ordered to improve the system or my family and I would suffer as a result of my failure. I decided I didn’t want to design a weapon that could potentially kill billions of people or put my family at risk. So, I sabotaged the project by destroying the prototype and all the design data except one copy of the data I saved for myself. I had previously sent my wife and our children here so they would be out of the reach of the Crosus government. Now we would like to go someplace where the government of Crosus can’t bother us.”

“That’s quite a story. Can you provide us with any proof that your story is true?”

“I have my copy of the design data for the weapon with me. I sold the ship I was supposed to use to test the prototype as soon as I arrived here. If you have spies on

Crosus I'm sure they could verify that I was involved in weapons research."

"If what you have told me is true, all of us in the trade group are in your debt. I'm sure I can verify some of what you told me. Because communication with Crosus is slow that verification may take sixty days. If you are discovered here come back to the embassy and we will give you asylum."

"Thank you, sir. We will be waiting to hear from you."

Hasin and his wife thought the meeting went well, and although they liked Beljang, they both realized they were still in danger. The next forty-two days went by slowly. Each day their concern for their safety grew. Hasin had decided that if he didn't hear from the Torblit embassy within two days he was going to ask them if they could arrange for his children to go there so at least they would be safe. That turned out to be unnecessary. Later that day he received a call from the Torblit embassy asking him and his wife to come in the following morning.

When they arrived at the embassy, they were taken to a large conference room. There were several people in the room already. After Hasin and his wife sat down the person at the head of the table stood up and said, "Thank you for coming on such short notice. I'm Portug Freedit, the Torblit Ambassador to Beljang. I want you to know that we were able to verify your background information. We sent that information to Earth. After they reviewed the information, they will have a proposal for you to consider. Please put on the translators that are on the table in front of you."

The ambassador sat down and the man next to him stood up. "Good morning, my name is Brandon Simpson. I'm in charge of research at NASA. I don't know if you know anything about NASA so I will give you a little background. NASA was founded almost two hundred years ago on Earth in a country called the United States. It originally stood for

National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The United States, and several of its neighbors, joined together to become the North American Union. About the same time NASA's mission had changed. It was now only involved in space travel. Now NASA stands for North American Space Administration. NASA developed, with the help of some beings from Procolt 2, the new propulsion and communication systems that are being used everywhere except Crosus. We are in the process of setting up a new research facility on Procolt 2. We would like to offer you a position at that research facility. It will include an excellent salary and free housing for you and your family. I can promise you will be safe there. Procolt 2 is protected by Coplent. Since the last Crosus attack there is a Coplent war ship in orbit around Procolt 2 at all times. Are you interested?"

"Yes, I'm very interested. But do you realize that one of the primary goals of the Crosus government is to destroy Procolt 2?"

"I'm aware of that. We are hoping you can assist us in developing something that will protect Procolt 2 against any weapon Crosus might develop."

"I must tell you I feel I'm responsible for the development of the weapon Crosus planned to use, so I feel compelled to assist you with that type of deterrent. I don't want to develop offensive weapons anymore."

Brandon said, "I'm very glad to hear you say that. The research facility should be completed within a half year, but you are welcome to emigrate to Procolt 2 at any time. Until the facility is completed, you and your family are welcome to stay at Procolt Paradise."

Hasin and his wife looked at each other and smiled. Hasin asked happily, "Can we leave tomorrow?"

"I will be leaving here in two days. You and your family are welcome to travel with me to Procolt 2."

“Thank you, sir. We are happy to accept your kind offer.”

“You’re welcome. Please call me Brandon. My ship is small, so there isn’t much room for you to take personal items. Just bring what you will need. Anything else can be acquired on Procolt 2. I’ll have someone pick you up and bring you to my ship. Do you have any questions?”

“How long will the trip to Procolt 2 take?”

“Not long, about three days. The distance to Procolt 2 is seventy light years. Is that okay?”

“Yes, of course. I was just curious. Thank you again for your kindness.”

“You’re welcome. Please keep the translators. I’ll have two more on the ship for your children. I’ll see you the day after tomorrow.”

The meeting broke up and Hasin and his wife went back home. They were both very happy. When their kids heard the news about them moving to Procolt 2 they were happy too, but when they heard they would be living at Procolt Paradise they were absolutely thrilled.

The day they were supposed to leave all of them woke up very early. They had already packed their clothes and a few small personal items in their suitcases. Nobody was hungry so they skipped breakfast. The car arrived to pick them up at 9:00. By 10:30 they were aboard Brandon’s ship. When they arrived, Brandon gave them a quick tour of the ship. There were three cabins, each with its own bath. There was also a control room, a kitchen, and a recreation room. It wasn’t very big, but Hasin and his family were very pleased with their accommodations.

Once the ship was underway Brandon asked Hasin to come into the recreation room because he wanted to ask him some questions. After they were both seated Brandon said, “Please tell me how this weapon you designed was supposed to work.”

“The device is designed to accelerate the sun’s aging process and bring it quickly into the ‘red giant’ stage. Depending on the size of the sun, it could expand enough to engulf any planets within two hundred million units. Our simulations indicated the device will work, but I originally thought the sun would reach its maximum growth within thirty days. It will actually take almost a year. That would give the people on the planet more than enough time to evacuate, and that was unacceptable to the Crosus government.”

“Are you absolutely certain Crosus will be unable to develop the weapon now?”

“No, I’m not. I destroyed the prototype and the design data, but it’s possible they will start the development process again. The people who assisted me are still there. They probably could start the project over again, and they would have a significant head start because of their existing knowledge.”

“How long do you think it would take them to complete the weapon again?”

“I would guess in about two or three years they could be at the point where I destroyed the data and the prototype. But remember, the government insists the weapon must work within thirty days. Neither I nor my assistants have any idea how to do that.”

“I don’t think we can safely assume they won’t figure it out. Do you have any ideas on how we can protect ourselves from the weapon?”

“I’ve been thinking about that for several days and I have a few ideas.”

Brandon and Hasin spent the next two hours discussing possible ways to disable the weapon. Together they came up with a plan, but Brandon said, “We need to discuss this with S12 when we get to Procolt 2. She is a native of Procolt 2. She and I developed the new propulsion and communication systems together. The design was hers.

I supplied the knowledge to make the systems a reality. She is, without a doubt, the most intelligent physicist I have ever met. You will be surprised when you see her, but after you talk to her for a few minutes you will be absolutely convinced she is brilliant.”

“I don’t judge people by their appearance.”

“Just remember that when you see her.”

They landed at Procolt Paradise three days later. Brandon contacted Jeffery to let him know when they would be arriving and asked Jeffery to bring S12 with him to meet Hasin and his family at the landing pad.

