

Astral Vergence

By

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Alarms blaring, warning lights pulsing, intruder defensive measures were active. Admiral Zechariah Lucien raced down the main hall of an alien Stealth-Destroyer in the Reptilian home star system of Alpha Draconis. He was carrying the Akashic Crystal of Zion, its psychometric vibrations so intense, Zech could barely hold on to it, even with it encased in a flux-pack. It held eons of information dating back to the birth of this universe. To touch it with bare hands was to invoke vivid imagery within the mind, which was forbidden to view, but for the Council of Transcendental Divine Ones; self-declared prophets promising to bring about universal balance and a rapturous ascension.

Seventeen years of continuous battle over a distance of a hundred thousand parsecs. *So much death for something so small.* His entire command of five-hundred thousand soldiers died in its capture; his fleet of a hundred various starships all destroyed, except one; his personal Stealth-Cruiser, the Ascending Assailant. *I've got to reach the shuttle bay.*

Zigzagging his way through the colossal warship, Zech made a quick right into an adjacent corridor. He was being hunted by Reptilian Royal-Guard and their predatory fire-hounds; he sensed their presence growing nearer. If he were stopped for more than a moment, their numbers would multiply until escape was impossible.

Flipping open a touch-screen on the left forearm of his exoskeleton battle-suit, the greatest tech humanity had to offer, Zech pressed a holographic textile to ready his ship for a swift exodus. His suit still provided electronic invisibility, but the active-camo had been burned out by a point-blank plasma blast.

Telekinetically tearing through a sealed access, Zech forced his way into a ceremonial hall where blood sacrifices were performed. An opulent altar was placed at the center of the vast room. *How could a race so scientifically advanced be so spiritually primitive?* He felt the heavy presence of four fire-hounds, ferocious beasts more dragon than pit-bull, just as the lighting in the room died, casting him into darkness. *A trap!*

Jaws wide, spewing indigo flames that lit the entire room, a roaring fire-hound, the size of a tiger, with taloned wings spread, leapt at Zech.

With the prodigious advantage of precognitive velocity, Zech sidestepped while triggering foot-long red plasma-daggers from each of his gauntlets. He thrust his fists to the side, burning through the fire-hound's rigid hide, and green bloody-innards splashed to the alien-metal floor.

The second hound leapt for him and Zech dived and rolled under the beast, skewering its underbelly with his daggers.

The third hound learned from the first two; he did not leap high, but instead he charged forward low to the ground, while the fourth hound leapt from behind him.

Zech rolled to his feet and held his ground to the last moment, then flipped an aerial cartwheel to his left, and the hounds smacked into each other. As they scrambled to their clawed feet, Zech flipped over them, slashing the back of their skulls mid-flip, ripping through their brainstems.

When he hit the ground, four of the Royal Guard entered; long black pointed fingernails, green scaly flesh, yellow jagged teeth, vertical pupils, and stubby black horns. Their plasma rifles were charged and glowing hot.

Before they could fire, Zech threw out his palms, smacking them with a psychokinetic wave. All four flew backward into the wall with such force that their bones shattered, shredding their organs: Green blood smeared the wall as they fell.

He dashed out of the ceremonial hall, ran down the final corridor, and turned the corner to find access to shuttle bay six impeded by heavy blast doors three-feet thick.

Powering off his plasma-daggers, Zech shut his eyes and took a psychic peak of the shuttle bay. His ship was still invisible, the docking bay door still open, and only the usual personnel were present.

Zech spread his legs and held his arms out, bracing himself. He breathed in deep, summoning all of his mental might, and as he breathed out through grinding teeth, his entire body trembling, he twisted the locking mechanisms to hell, peeling the doors apart. He collapsed to the floor, gasping and fighting to remain conscious.

Struggling to his feet, Zech slipped between the blast doors into the vast shuttle bay. *I've done it! The war is over. All the sacrificed lives were not in vain.*

Halfway across the shuttle bay, the docking bay door where his ship awaited closed, and all the interior doors opened at once. Dozens of barking fire-hounds and hundreds of Royal Guard poured in all around him, forming a massive phalanx.

Zech raised his arms in surrender, resting his fingertips on the back of his neck, and turned around.

The sea of soldiers restraining their snarling hounds, parted as their human spokesman entered. Feared throughout the universe as the Dark Prince of Zion, he wore the metallic holy garb of a Reptilian High-Priest, including a scepter and miter-headress. He carried himself with the ostentatious extravagance of a supreme ruler.

Jeremiah, the true name of the Dark Prince, stopped ten feet from Zech and held out his palm as if to welcome peace. Zech's flux-pack flew free of his utility belt into Jeremiah's open hand, and he imparted it to a guard who then fled the shuttle bay with it.

Zech pleaded, "I beseech you, my only brother, to return with me, all transgressions forgiven."

Jeremiah replied, "The cherished son offers amnesty in exchange for a life of prostration. Ridiculous!"

"What have the Reptiles done to your mind to cause you to rebel against me, against the entire human race?"

Jeremiah turned his back. "Goodbye, my brother." He walked away as the guards unleashed the hounds. The Reptilians cheered in their raucous alien tongue, fervent to watch Zech eaten alive.

Pressing a hidden switch on the rear of his helmet, Zech triggered a synthetic adrenalin release. Dropping to his knees, he bowed as if defeated while the adrenalin coursed into his exhausted mind. *When we meet again brother, it will be your death.* Zech inhaled deep and balled his fists, his mind and body burning intensely. As the hoard of hounds leapt at him, he jumped up throwing his arms out and bellowing with all of his strength: An explosion of psychokinetic electricity, and a mentally pummeling psychic scream, combined with a wave of tremendous force, exploded outward from him, sending the leaping hounds soaring into the air, and the Reptilian guards, grasping their skulls in agony, to the floor.

Zech twisted around, charging towards his Stealth-Cruiser, and flipped open the touch-screen on his forearm, disengaged the active-camo and security defenses of his ship, then pulled a cluster of micro-fusion grenades from his utility belt and tossed them behind him as he dove into the Ascending Assailant. The port sheathed closed behind him as he rushed into the cockpit. Gripping the controls, he spun the ship toward the furious aliens and activated the stellar drive.

His ship entered slipstream-space, by way of artificial wormhole created via quantum particle accelerator, while atomizing everything in the shuttle bay and tearing a massive hole in the Reptilian Stealth-Destroyer.

My failure is humanity's doom...

* * *

Alarm blaring, Zechariah Lucius rolled off the tired couch onto the living-room floor, smacking the snooze button as he fell...

Nine minutes later the screaming returned. Zech reached up to silence the alarm, and Jeremiah, his older brother, switched off the alarm while grabbing his extended hand, and pulled him up from the worn carpet.

"Morning bro," said Jeremy with a half smile. He ruffled Zech's messy blonde hair. "You look beat as hell. Nightmares?"

Zech rubbed his eyes, thinking for a moment. "Don't remember."

"Well rejoice, tomorrow's Saturday." He handed Zech an inhibitor pill, which blocked his pleasure receptors from all forms of opiates.

Zech swallowed it and then mumbled, "Praise the gods," as he staggered toward the bathroom.

The living room of Jeremy's apartment dubbed as Zech's bedroom, while he was getting his life back in order. Jeremy offered, no, more like pleaded, to help him in any way possible if Zech would get into a program. Jeremy even got him a job as an exterior security guard at the R&D lab where he works as a lab assistant, Raytheon Company; a privately owned enterprise that does research and development in advanced weaponry for separate government agencies and branches of the military. Hush-hush Tom Clancy kind of shit.

Off and on, more on than off, Jeremy had taken care of Zech since childhood. Their father had left them when they were nine and eleven-years-old. A motorcycle accident. An old woman turned into his lane, forcing him into oncoming traffic. He severed his spinal cord; an instant death. The old bitch didn't even realize she had caused a tragedy.

Staring in the mirror, Zech found his blue eyes bloodshot. He had a full night's sleep, hadn't drunk the night before, or touched any chemicals since right before rehab. *Why the hell do I feel like I've been up all night with dope and hoes?*

He brushed his teeth, shaved, showered, threw on his uniform, put a change of clothes in a backpack, grabbed a breakfast bar and a mug of coffee, and rushed to the bus stop with Jeremy as it reached the corner.

Zech plopped into a seat with a sigh. Jeremy wrapped an arm around him and squeezed his shoulder. "You're doing good bro, real good. I'm damn proud. Keep fighting. It will all work out." He handed him a brown-bag lunch.

"Thanks...for everything." Zech sipped his coffee. "Especially not telling mom."

"I don't want to break her heart any more than you. Plus she'd blame me anyhow. I'll always be responsible for you in her eyes."

"Someday maybe I will find a way to change that." *Highly doubtful.*

The rest of the commute passed without conversation, same as most of Zech's workday. Clock in; tour barbed-wire-fenced perimeter for thirty minutes; sit in entryway guardhouse listening to radio for thirty minutes; repeat and repeat for eight hours; clock out.

He changed into his jeans and sneaks, and caught the bus, alone this time. Jeremy was working a double for some OT. A perfect chance to visit The Red Raven.

Frank, a short muscle-bound Italian, both bouncer and house pusher, greeted him at the entry. "I will be in shortly, how much you want, Zech?"

"None. Is she working tonight?"

He nodded with a mixed look of confused and suspicion. "As always."

"Thanks." Zech went through the heavy door into the foyer.

The voluptuous strawberry-blonde, Chastity, was working the register. She wouldn't charge him the cover. She was plastic, but she also wanted to screw his brains out. "Hey, heartbreaker!" She reached across the counter and hugged him, careful not to smear her makeup. "Where you been?"

"Reconstituting my life." *Something you would not understand.*

Eyes wide, mouth gaping. "You're clean?" She cocked an eyebrow. "Wrong place for that sweetie."

"Yeah, no kidding, but you know the reason I'm here."

"Sure do, and she has been missing on you hardcore."

Zech gave her a half smile. "Well, then I better go get a good seat."

She playfully hollered after him, "Don't cause any trouble, stud!" as he left the foyer.

It was early and the bar was already jumping. Cute cocktail-waitresses, hungry indecent dancers, brazen businessmen, and curious couples weaved a black-lit superficial dream-catcher of primitive pleasures; alcohol and chemicals repressing retention and exaggerating exhilaration. The room began to spin.

I need a drink and a seat, now.

Zech moved through the smoke-laden crowd toward the stage. He stopped an unknown cocktail-girl, cute but not his taste, and ordered two double Jack and root beers to be brought to him. His favorite seat, center stage, was vacant. The usuals still showing him respect, even after his seven-week absence.

A bleached-blonde in a black pleather Cat-Women suit prowled the stage for dollar bills. *Costume night, how could I've forgotten?*

Five minutes later as she left the stage, Zech received his drinks. He gulped one down in its entirety, cold and sweet. *Damn, that's good.*

Over the PA system, DJ TJ announced, "Up next for all you rowdy cowboy's, is our own rodeo star, *Reilly!*"

A fast paced Garth Brooks song burst from the sound system as a tall brunet in pink boots, chaps, vest and cowboy hat, galloped onto stage. She line danced with a broad smile and swung a lasso above her head.

Zech jumped in his seat as he was bitten on the neck. "What the hell!"

Joe-Fred laughed, wearing a black wife-beater and baggie jeans, hair spiked and blue, tattooed from the neck down and pierced in every which way. He plopped into the seat next to Zech. "Holy *queefing* Jesus! Where the *shit* you been?"

"A place you wouldn't find very enjoyable." Zech changed the subject. "How's the XTC Playhouse?"

"Selling porn is the greatest job any man could ask for." Excited, he threw his hands in the air. "Dude! You are not going to believe this one. This bald, old, fat guy, and *goddamn* do I mean fat, came in the other day and bought a *purple...double dildo!* I almost shit myself, I swear!"

Zech shook his head in amazement. “You’re crazy man. Were you completely neglected as a child, or were you just dropped on your head continuously?”

Joe-Fred laughed and slapped Zech on the shoulder. “So you ready to get busted tonight?”

“Sorry dude, but my chemical romance is over.”

Joe-Fred jolted in his seat. “What are you saying? Why?”

“It’s time. Time for my life to have some direction.”

“You can’t quit on me. We’ve been chillin’ together since high school.”

“And that’s the problem, we haven’t done anything *but* chill since high school. Don’t you want anything more for yourself?”

Joe-Fred looked as confused and scared by the question as a child holding a dead puppy. “Dude, I got to go, man. Peace.” He disappeared into the crowd heading towards Frank by the DJ shack.

Well, that went as badly as I expected.

Zech nursed his second drink while gazing inattentively at the pink cowgirl.

Purpose, I’ve got to find true purpose, but the only thing I care for is Jade and Jeremy, and I can barely help myself. What could I possibly offer them?

When Reilly left the stage all but completely nude, the DJ announced, “And now what we have all been waiting for, the half-Brazilian half-Japanese girl of our dreams...The *Jade Maiden!*”

The lights throughout the bar dimmed and a synthetic fog rolled out onto the stage. The beating drums of an Asian pop song flowed over the drunken crowd. They whistled and hollered until finally with her head bowed, eyes closed, Jade tiptoed out from behind the curtain. She was wearing a fiery-red kimono that Zech had never seen before, and her black hair was pinned up with ornate hair-sticks. The room fell silent; even the cocktail girls stopped to admire.

Eyes remaining closed, hands clasped together and hidden within her sleeves, Jade swayed within her stunning silk kimono to the slow beat, as she moved center stage. With the grace of a geisha, she bowed to the crowd. As she rose like the blooming of a cherry blossom, she pulled her kimono to the upper thigh, baring her long lustrous legs for a moment, before allowing it to fall, and was granted an eager applaud.

The rhythmic music began to crescendo, and Jade’s dancing sway kept pace with the rising tempo until the song peaked and she swung her arms about, revealing two flowery Asian-fans.

Twirling and whirling, the spotlights barely able to follow, she moved about the stage like a fluttering nymph. With a sudden break in the song, Jade reached back to her obi and pulled the broad slash loose, then hugged herself and spun, giving another peek of her legs so sleek. The ravenous wolves that filled the bar howled in delight.

The Asian tune slowed for a soft solo, and Jade came to a halt. With a provocative roll of one shoulder, followed by the other, she unclothed her chest and upper back, while veiling her breasts with her fans. A slow smile broke across her alabaster face, her eyes still shut, as another crescendo began, the crowd breathless, the wait just about over. The song broke: Jade dropped her fans and threw her arms out above her head, casting her kimono aside. As it flowed to the tile the lights grew bright, and she opened her green eyes wide. The crowd exploded into wild cheers.

Her shimmering creamy-jade eyes matched her name, and so did her frilly G-string. With an innocent smile, she pulled her hair pins and tossed them to Zech. Her long midnight-black

hair fell free, reaching just short of the arch of her slender back, where a sparkling pink faery resting upon a violet lotus was tattooed. *Goddamn have I missed you!*

Zech watched as Jade lost her top, her bosom so buoyant. She proceeded to spin the poles inverted, legs spread, ever so supple. Then circled the stage squatting, bouncing her bottom, bending over forward and backward, showered with bills all along the way. Finally, the captivated audience masturbated into a frenzy, she picked up her belongings and left the stage.

Mere moments later, ignoring all the other men's pleading cries, and wearing a flowery silk short-robe, she appeared at Zech's side. Taking him by the hand, she led him into the VIP section and sat him in the darkest corner.

Jade didn't bother to ask where he had been, thrilled just to be with him again. It was in the eyes. *She's high, high as hell. Wish I was there.* She dropped her robe to the floor. Naked but for her G-string, she climbed onto his lap and cooed. "When are you going to take me away from all this?"

"Where would we go, gorgeous?"

"Somewhere softer, quite and beautiful."

"If I knew a place worthy of you," Zech kissed her upon the forehead, "I would take you without delay."

She kissed his bottom lip, a taste of sweet jasmine, and then she bit his lip as a bit of passion seemed to rise up from within her heart. She forced her tongue into his mouth and her rising passion splashed over him in a warm tsunami of indulging obsession.

Her hands moved over his chest, abs and back, as she pressed her breasts to his yearning mouth. He sucked and nibbled her erect nipples while caressing her perfect bottom.

She spun around and looked back over her shoulder, with a half grin and the devil in her eye. She then ground her tight ass into his groin with a diligent tempo. Her blissful gyration had quite an arousing effect.

With the mean dope sickness, even masturbation had not crossed his mind over the last seven weeks, but now it felt as if his hormones had been secretly multiplying and waiting to strike back at him. It took all of his willpower not to grab Jade by the hair and pound her from behind until she screamed in orgasmic celebration.

Jade twisted around, looking deep into his eyes. "I want to be happy with you forever." She licked her lips and then his, as she unbuttoned and then unzipped his jeans, never breaking eye contact.

Another deep kiss, which seemed to reach into the very core of his heart, then with her firm plump lips and gentle soft tongue, she began to pleasure him right there where he sat, in the darkness of the bar.

Zech closed his eyes in bliss, forgetting his addiction, forgetting the world. As his every muscle relaxed, a sudden warm sensation flowed over him. Jade's tongue seemed to elongate, then coiled around his shaft. *Incredible!*

Ten minutes later, he dug his fingers into the vinyl seating and grunted as she swallowed. *Life, with all of its pain, is worth living.*

In his ecstasy, he hadn't noticed the music had ceased. *DJ TJ is an ass.*

He opened his eyes leisurely, and found the bar had transformed, and so had Jade!

A serpent-tongued naked Reptilian woman, wearing shackles, stood up from between Zech's legs. She exited his private quarters, as the head councilman of the Transcendental Divine Ones entered, his royal guard viewable in the corridor.

Zech didn't know how he knew who the ceremonially robed man was, but he did, and he felt the utmost reverence for him. He zipped his pants and threw himself to the floor. "Your Supreme Holiness, I am most honored to be in your presence."

Not with his weathered hands, but with his mind, the councilman picked Zech up from the floor, and in the same moment, Zech remembered everything.

The man before him was more than his greatest leader, he was his own blood. "Father, why have you left the protection of Earth Two?"

His father spoke without the use of words, using only directed thought. *"My son, there was inadequate time for you to reach me, so we have meet halfway. There is something that only I have the power to do, which must be done, if we are to defeat the Reptilians."*

"But Father, I am worthy of only death. I have failed to retrieve the Akashic Crystal, and also Jeremiah. Has not all hope been lost?"

"There is but one hope. It requires me to break a most sacred law. Yet the council has voted unanimously."

"But first, I must explain to you a hidden truth, which has never been given to anyone outside the council before. Our world lies entwined with another world, a parallel universe, equal and opposite of ours. They have always been in balance with each other."

"Using the Akashic Crystal without proper understanding, the Reptilians have disrupted this balance, and if we do not act quickly, both worlds will be obliterated."

Zech replied, "What do you ask of me?"

"Zechariah, you must awaken within your alter-self, and kill Jeremiah's alter-self, but only after retrieving an advanced piece of technology from him. The PX8, which is the equal opposite of our Akashic Crystal of Zion."

"How will this be possible?"

His father reached out his open palms, emitting a golden ball of sparkling energy. With a purposeful blink, it floated toward Zech. *"Upon awakening, you will remember this world, your true self, and you will not have forgotten your psychokinetic abilities. You will not fail."*

As the energy reached him, it expanded and enveloped him in a visual enchantment. His psyche imposed upon itself and Zech closed and opened his eyes to find himself back in the bar, Jade curled up on his lap, cooing and nibbling on his ear.

Zech mused, "Failure is no longer a possibility," feeling a phenomenal power like no high he had ever experienced, surging through his mind and body.

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Alarms blaring, warning lights pulsing, the night guard, Nick, came running out of the entryway guardhouse in astonishment.

Zech, wearing a ski mask and using telekinesis, had torn the twelve-foot-tall barbed-wire-fenced gate from its posts and tossed it aside. Nick's mind weakened by shock, Zech easily reached into his subconscious and gave him an undeniable suggestion to sleep. His eyes rolled back, and he crumbled to the blacktop.

Zech, backpack over his shoulder, sprinted across the vast, mostly vacant, parking lot towards the main entry. There was the faint scent of a coming storm on the breeze and a rolling of thick clouds in the night sky. *The gods are with me tonight.*

A moment before he reached the entrance, two interior guards, burst from the entryway, pistols drawn and leveled at Zech.

Resisting the urge to simply force them to fire upon each other, Zech gestured with his hands to say I am unarmed, and their pistols flipped out of their grip through the air and onto the architecturally ornamental Plexiglas roof.

With a wave of his hands, the guards turned with wide eyes and bashed their foreheads together, and they collapsed on top of each other.

Father, I will regain your pride. With a mental thrust, the front doors tore open and off their hinges. He rushed into the lavished lobby.

Snapping his fingers, the immense Plexiglas ceiling shattered, raining down on the guard taking aim from behind the front desk, and Zech psychokinetically shielded himself from the falling Plexiglas as he moved through the lobby. The guard tossed his weapon aside and raised his hands.

Mentally grabbing the guard by the throat, Zech lifted him above the desk. "If you wish to resume breathing, you will do as I say and nothing less or more."

The guard nodded with bulging eyes and Zech allowed him to drop to the floor.

He read the guard's nametag as the man climbed to his feet on trembling legs. "Dean, get Jeremiah Lucius to bring the PX8 here to me, alone, or I'll have to torture you to *death*."

Hyperventilating, Dean used the terminal on the desk to access the employee directory, then dialed the phone with shaking hands. "Shut up and listen! Send Jeremiah Lucius up to the front desk with the PX8. If you don't I'm dead. I don't know, a *terrorist*. And send him alone, or I'm more than dead." He hung up, raised his hands above his head, closed his eyes, and began to whimper.

"Get on the floor and I will not have to kill you."

The guard obeyed without complaint.

As Zech waited, a dozen police cruisers, two SWAT trucks, an ambulance and a fire engine, filled the parking lot.

A squadron of guards entered the lobby from behind him.

Zech has sensed them approaching and did not bother to turn around to face them. With a slight wave of his hand, they slammed into the nearest wall, rendered unconscious.

Dean sobbed and pissed himself.

The elevators chimed, the doors opened and out walked Jeremiah in a lab coat and carrying a small metallic box. His energy reeked of fear.

Jeremiah made his way past the unconscious guards littering the floor and handed Zech the box. Recognizing his eyes from behind the mask, Jeremiah cried, "Zech! My *God*, what are you doing? You will have to take responsibility for this."

Zech placed the small box in his backpack and returned the pack to his back, then replied with great sincerity. "Have you ever had a dream so lucent, it altered your perception of reality? When you awoke you found the world less real than the one you had awoken from. How can you determine which choices are right and wrong when all your options are a reflection of each other?"

"The answer is simple, you *cannot* choose for yourself. You're suffering from some sort of severe episode of dementia or schizophrenia. Don't do this. I'm not your enemy, I'm your brother, and I love you. Please let me help you."

"Black and white have faded together creating a single gray truth. I'm sorry, but no matter how boundless of a love I feel for you, you're both my brother *and* my enemy." *This is for you Father, more so than the universe.* "Goodbye, my brother."

Zech closed his eyes and turned his back, unable to watch his own actions. He squeezed his fist and Jeremiah's head jerked, snapping his neck. He crumbled to the floor.

Opening his eyes, Zech found a swarm of SWAT, weapons in hand, hurrying in all around him. With too little time to disarm too many at once, Zech was forced to resort to the most taxing of his abilities: Pyrokinesis.

Crossing his fists over his chest, he shouted at the sudden overwhelming pain of his brother's death, and a wave of fire burst outward from him, engulfing the entire SWAT team in scorching flame; their shields and armor melted and burned; they ran about shrieking in torment. Just as death had finally taken them, it began to pour, as if the tears of the gods.

Zech exited the building and was welcomed by a spectacular strike of lightning and a parking lot full of raging police, hiding behind their open car doors with weapons drawn. The dozen cruisers formed an impenetrable zigzagging barrier. The SWAT trucks and the ambulance were off to the left side, and the fire engine stood ready behind the cruisers, set to charge forward to extinguish any fires. A lone police motorcycle sat propped by the guardhouse, keys in the ignition. *How inviting, and my alter-self promised his mother he would never ride anything more dangerous than a dirt bike in a forest free from traffic.*

Zech threw his hands to the sky and the police' weapons flew through the rain and into the lobby. As the police stepped back in disbelief, Zech clapped his hands and their car doors slammed shut. He waved his arms to the right; the cruisers leaned right on two wheels. He waved them to the left, and the cars rolled over. The police dived and rolled out of the way.

Zech projected an intense image, children in flames within the lobby, into the mind of the fire-engine driver.

The fireman floored the gas, and the engine roared as he slammed the colossal truck into the upside-down police cruisers, plowing a path for Zech.

Zech darted through the heavy rain and the mass confusion. He jumped on the motorcycle, and peeling out, he spun the bike towards the missing gate as a blinding spotlight hit him: A police helicopter.

Exhausted, Zech reached out with the last of his mental strength, taking power of the controls. The pilot attempted to resist him for only a moment before leaping from the copter as it swooped down and crashed into the SWAT trucks with a satisfying explosion of fire and twisted metal.

He ripped back on the throttle, and the back tire let out a scream as he fled the havoc scene.

In relief and anguish, Zech rode through the retreating rain back to The Red Raven. *I may have been forced to kill my dear brother, but it was well worth regaining the respect of my father, and the safety of this universe and my own.*

Zech parked the bike behind the bar, to hide it from the cops who were no doubt searching for him. The moment he killed the engine, two men in black approached from shadow. Handing over the small box, he asked, "How do I return to my ship, my true body?"

"We do not come from a parallel universe. We come from a negative polarity fourth-dimensional plane. Your governments are aware of our existence and of the limits of our technology." They morphed for just a second into a Reptilian form.

"Shit!" *Psychological warfare. They must have manipulated my dreams through some sort of psychic projection.* "What have I brought you?"

"Although your governments deny the scientific truth to the public, your planet's natural shielding is stronger than any we have encountered before. The Van Allen Radiation Belts

impede our ships from entering your atmosphere. You have rendered us the means to safely phase through it.”

Zech’s mind spun in a crushing vertigo. “What do you want from us? Slaves? Resources?”

“It is not the humans we’ve come for, or your dwindling resources. It is the life force of your planet that we will harvest. The soul of a human in comparison to the soul of Terra is as a single candle to Sol. With your current governments, your world will suffer an apocalypse before long. What are a few of your earth years value in contrast to the incredible amount of energy your precious Gaia, which you rape and plunder, will supply us? Your time is fading. You cannot survive without your mother. Savor what you have left of it.” The men in black dematerialized.

Vision blurred, heart pounding, Zech crumbled into a murky puddle. *Jeremy, what have I done? I’ve killed you! What will I tell mom? She will think I’m possessed by the devil. What will I tell the world? I’ve committed xenocide! They will lock me away.*

Dope! I’ve got to get high. I just need to get high, forget everything, and die alone, before the invasion.

No! It is time I take responsibility for my actions. I must undo this somehow.

My psychokinetic abilities. I may be able to teach others. If only they will listen. They will have to believe me when I show them what I can do. Jade, my precious Jade, she will believe me. She has to, I don’t have anyone else.

Zech balled his fists, rising to his feet with a determination beyond anything he had ever known in this world. He gazed up at the stars, and in that moment, Zechariah Lucius made the greatest choice of his life. *I will lead the human resistance.*