

The Project

The swirling mass of murky stellar debris illuminated the darkened bridge and everything in its immediate vicinity. The Destara vessel was the only other object nearby, locked in fixed orbit for months.

Deceptar considered the crimson mass beyond, noting its subtle movements as the larger whole continued to rotate.

A lesser being would have been frustrated by the delays this operation had been experiencing. He had learned long ago that time was relative to one's perception. It would take as long as it would take. There was simply no way to hasten the process.

The starship, the *Glory of Symria*, had been here for months after having relieved its predecessor vessel. Before that, other vessels had labored in this same location for years, each carrying forward work from one science team to another all laboring in pursuit of one elusive goal.

Finally, the deed had been accomplished.

Mere weeks earlier he had been confronted in his throne room by the Renegades and their leader Magma, the first being to bear the Tetrax in this Universe. It had been a monumental confrontation and one he had prepared for. He would have either succeeded in converting its power to his own—or failed and perished.

But all that had changed when the Head Scientist here, Krotophys, had summoned him telepathically and alerted him that they had succeeded where all their predecessors had failed before. He had instantly teleported himself to this location to witness the monumental event for himself.

And so he had. The singularity before them had been converted by the Order's advanced science--and his own direction. Torn and inverted by massive energy, the gravity well had been split in half, destroying the black hole that had existed here and leaving them with something all together new and alien:

A quantum breach.

The very fabric of the Universe here had been weakened intentionally by his warriors. Acting on his instruction they had initiated the process with the hope of being able to open an entry into a parallel universe.

There was some natural process that prevented him from breaching the barrier himself. He could look into other realities from his own but not cross over into them of his own accord. So he had decided to find an artificial method to achieve the same goal instead and that had resulted in this: Project Obsidian.

"The probe should be ready soon," Krotophys spoke beside him. "The technicians are making the final preparations in the launch bay."

The breach had been created but thus far none of their attempts to scan it had resulted in success. It was impossible to determine whether or not they could actually access the adjacent reality or if some obstacle still stood in their way.

Even his own mystical sight was useless in this situation. He could look into other realities but he could not determine the precise reality they had attempted to enter. The tachyon fluctuations of space-time made determining the exact reality an impossibility. It was maddening in a way—like trying to grasp and hold several million moving objects all at once.

"Excellent," he replied. "I look forward to the results of this operation."

He had assimilated much knowledge in his time. More so since he had created the Destara Empire and used its vast resources to plunder whole civilizations. With each sector of space he became more and more powerful.

But there were still other places out there. Other dimensions that were denied him and without access he could never hope to know everything he sought to comprehend. Infinite knowledge meant infinite power—but only if he could first access that knowledge somehow.

With enough power at his command even the Tetrax wouldn't be a threat anymore... but that was all hypothetical, of course. Unless he could succeed he was still in danger from the artifact.

“The probe is now ready,” Krotophys interrupted his thoughts. “The technicians are loading it into a launch tube.”

He wasn't certain where the Tetrax in this universe had come from. Other realities contained one but he had been unaware of the one in his own reality until Magma's defection. Had it been there all along and he'd just been blinded to its power? Perhaps he could see it in other realms but not his own?

There was another possibility. Millennia ago, he had encountered an armored warrior, brandishing a sword and shield. The creature itself was reptilian in nature, its face obscured by the helmet and visor it wore.

Despite its primitive appearance it had brandished incredible power. Power that had easily overcome his own. His initial plans had been greatly delayed when it had defeated him in personal combat and entrapped him for some time in an asteroid.

It could have easily destroyed him. He had known that. Sensed it. But it had not. Instead, it had imprisoned him for thousands of years until he had been able to break himself free when an errant asteroid had collided with his own.

Had the Warrior created this Tetrax—perhaps even *all* of them in all realities even—to fulfill some grand machination of which even Deceptar himself was unaware of? He knew the Tetrax was alive in some fashion...was it left behind to finish the job the Warrior had started? And if so, why go to such elaborate trouble in the first place?

There were so many questions in that regard and no answers forthcoming from any corner of the universe.

He hadn't ever revealed the existence of the Warrior to anyone. None of the Destara Emperors nor any of his Amethyst Order. Even if he did, he had no answers to give them when they would inevitably seek them out.

“The probe has been launched,” Krotophys announced. “Telemetry and sensor data transmissions commencing.”

On the viewport beyond a small object struck out from the ship and soared into the very heart of the anomaly beyond.

On vast holo read-outs above the bridge stations he watched the data as it began to be relayed back to the ship. They had attempted to use various other probes to obtain data but each had been destroyed in the attempt, their data streams revealing little of practical use.

Still, Krotophys had persisted. Using bits of information here and there he had managed to configure this latest probe with new parameters and protection. He had explained that he hoped it would reveal something practical this time around. He hoped the scientist was correct in his presumptions. Without further information they could not hope to ultimately succeed.

“We are receiving information,” the scientist spoke beside him. “There is still significant

dimensional interference although I had anticipated that.”

“Are we making progress?”

Krotophys nodded. “I believe so, Master.”

He tapped several buttons on the console before him. One of the displays changed to a video image from the probe. At first, nothing was visible. After an instant, a star field appeared then intermittently reappeared again.

“This is at the event horizon,” he explained. “As close to the anomaly as we dare send the probe without direct interaction. The sensors are detecting what appears to be normal space on the trans-spectral sensors.”

Deceptar gazed at the hologram.

“The opening is there,” he said. “At least, partially. Can the probe go further?”

“It will be done.” Krotophys tapped on the console and the image moved closer in to the anomaly.

The image sputtered back and forth, showing stars and then nothing in rapid succession. After several minutes, the stars took on a crispness they previously lacked.

“It appears the probe has successfully—“

Then abruptly, the image burst into static.

He checked the controls.

“There is no more data coming through,” he said. “It appears the probe was lost at the threshold.”

Deceptar nodded.

“I suspect the aperture is not completely open,” he said. “It seems we have torn a hole in the fabric of the Universe as planned. But it is not stable. We must find a way to correct this issue.”

“I will begin work immediately,” Krotophys replied. “However, I do not know how soon this will be resolved. This is an unexplored field and I have no previous research to aid my efforts.”

Deceptar nodded. “I suggest investigating electromagnetic field research. It may be necessary to create a sort of filter to stabilize the tear, thereby forcing it to remain open constantly.”

The other’s expression was one of astonishment for a moment but it swiftly passed. Of course, he hadn’t begun to suspect his master’s own scientific knowledge was vast. He was used to taking orders and making those wishes become reality not ever considering the broader picture.

But that was okay. Understanding was not required, after all, only obedience.

“It will be done, Master.” He bowed slightly then turned to his console and began to work.

It had been years to get this far. He supposed he was being too optimistic in hoping they would have total success in mere weeks. Still, he could wait...he had all the time in the universe to achieve his ultimate goals.

And he would. Nothing would stop him in the grand scheme of things. Not Magma, not the Tatrix nor the long missing Warrior. He would not permit it after so long and so much effort to succeed at his goal.

He turned and left the bridge.

Copyright 2014 Anthony Klepack. Please do not republish this work in any form.