

It's a Whole New World
By Shawn Carter

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"Welcome, dearest traveler to Worlds Away Industries! Here our travel agents will assist you and your family on their next adventure away! Just walk up to a terminal now!" the automated voice said cheerfully. It appeared as a woman with the traditional old world stewardess uniform. She even had the cliché chin on hand. Veronica found it adorable. It was safe to assume she was one of the few people here to even see it as the cliché it was. That mattered little to her though as she glanced at a mother with her daughter. The daughter's face lit up as she attempted to converse with the hologram. All the mother could do was laugh at the interaction. It was always the simple things that sprung joy.

Alas, perhaps that was the only spark of joy the daughter had experienced in weeks. Perhaps in months. Veronica could only guess what the mother and daughter had been through. Had their world been devastated in The Great Betrayal? Ravaged by the brutal aftermath campaigns to librate it? Or did their government fall for Persephone's honey-covered false promises and sacrificed its people for power? It was more common than Veronica cared to admit. They weren't the only family in the station. There were several million refugees. Some were standing by the window looking out into the emptiness of space. Others sat in the limited chairs that were offered. They were flickering through data slates. Perhaps looking for any news about their world? Or finding comfort in cartoons. The others just milled around as they waited for their boarding notice.

From the looks of it, Veronica found herself the only Shadow in attendance. A feeling of relief spilled over her as she made her passed the ticket counter. This ship was a refitted warship for refugees. While there were some guards, most of them had limited training and had at best a taser. Of course, there were combat veterans who protected the wealthier refugees. Teresa, and rightfully so, saw no reason to waste the valuable shadow troops on such an outfit. In fact, the only reason why Veronica was on the was that she and it shared the same destination. There was no reason to use any part of the very much stretched shadow fleet to escort her. They need to be where they were most needed. It also helped this ship needed a chief medical officer. Who better than the head doctor of the Shadows? Veronica saw it as a vacation from all the galaxy ending events going on. She had some reading and shows to catch up on.

"Now boarding for first class. Please have your tickets and ID ready," a woman announcer said over the loudspeakers. Several people stood up from their seats and shuffled towards the gate. A small line had begun to form as Veronica made her way

passed it. No one dared to speak out about her cutting the line. A few glanced her way but looked away as soon as they got a good look at her. She had no doubt they had little idea as to who she was, but they knew what she was. It was an advantage Veronica didn't use as much as her compatriots did. Though most of them had more of an infamous history to go by than she did. She enjoyed her ambiguity. It made traveling much easier and not a huge headache. To the average citizen, she was just a Shadow with excellent credentials. To the flight officers and to those with a high enough clearance to care, she was an original.

A blinking light appeared on her watch as it buzzed on her wrist. Veronica looked down to see in, large letters, ZORA in the center of the screen. Speaking of her compatriots, Veronica hadn't expected a call from any of them. She had figured most of them were fight on some world and spared her little thought like they always do. However, Veronica always enjoyed her talks with the blind assassin. Zora always had incredible insights into the world. With a smile and a skip in her step, Veronica strolled through the gate unabated.