[Chapter Aldebaran]

*“Aldebaran (Alpha Tauri) is an orange, red giant star. The name means “the Follower” in Arabic and is the brightest star in the constellation Taurus the Bull. Like Gemini, this constellation is part of the zodiac, the 12 constellations that are in the apparent path the Sun passes through called the ecliptic. It is the 14th brightest star in the sky. However, its brightness can vary slightly, due to the star expanding and contracting as it fuses the hydrogen that surrounds its helium core. One can use Orion’s Belt, a linear grouping of three stars pointing northeast, to find Aldebaran”*

MunchMunch: \*Sitting at a table with Cyan next to a large window\* Ohh, so the Big and Little Dipper aren’t constellations?

Cyan: They’re asterisms, basically smaller groups of stars with a popular name. Oh, and the North Star/Polaris isn’t the brightest star in the sky. That’s a lie. :3 That title goes to Sirius, also known as the Dog Star and it means “glowing” or “scorching” in Greek.

MunchMunch: Why is it called the Dog Star? \*Sips his green tea.\*

Cyan: That’s because it is also the brightest star of the constellation, Canis Major, which is a dog. In the summertime, the star is seen in the eastern horizon just before the Sun comes up. It represented the “dog days” in the summer by the Ancient Greeks.

MunchMunch: So that’s where the term dog days come from, huh?

Cyan: Mhm. \*Sips her mocha.\* I love the wintertime because you can see some of the brightest stars and the most familiar constellations at night, even though it can get super cold if you stay out for too long, hehe~

MunchMunch: Well, you just need to bundle up with a hot drink to stay warm and avoid turning into an ice cube.

Cyan: Yeah~ \*Messenger beeps and opens it up.\* Oh, Madara messaged me. \*Skims over the message.\* Ehhh...? oAo;

MunchMunch: What’s wrong, Cyan?

Cyan: He says that there are these strange fragments floating around in the arena and if you shoot at them, you get a cool power-up!

MunchMunch: What? Power-ups in Spaceone??

Cyan: Yeah, apparently. Lemme pull up Discord and see if anyone else mentioned it… \*Opens up the Discord app.\*

MunchMunch: Maybe it’s a new update?

Cyan: Perhaps~ Oh my, everyone is talking about it. Annnnd I have +400 messages to read.

MunchMunch: \*Scrolls through the messages.\* They’re all about that new stuff. \*Reads the earlier messages.\* So, there are seven different fragments with seven different abilities. Sounds like fun, don’t you think?

Cyan: We definitely better go check this out! >w<)9 \*Looks out the window.\* Oh look, you can see Sirius is up in the sky~ \*Gets up from her seat.\*

MunchMunch: \*Also looks at the sky.\* That’s one super bright star. Hang on...There are other stars that are bright as Sirius. Didn’t you say that Sirius was noticeably the brightest one?

Cyan: Hmm? That doesn’t sound right. \*Looks at the night sky again.\* You’re right, Munch. That’s really odd. .o. None of the other stars are as bright as Sirius. In fact, the second brightest star, Canopus, appears half as bright than Sirius. What’s the meaning of this…?! \*^\*

MunchMunch: I don’t know much about stars, but I’m sure that this isn’t normal.

Cyan: Huh, it looks like there are 6 other stars that are shining as bright as Sirius...Those stars are all part of the Winter Hexagon asterism.

MunchMunch: The Winter Hexagon?

Cyan: Yeah, it’s also known as the Heavenly G, if you include Betelgeuse in the middle. This is so weird...Wait-What if…?! \*0\*)

MunchMunch: What if…?

Cyan: \*Thinks for a moment.\* Eh, nevermind. =3= I need to check up on something first. You can go ahead and go without me. I’ll catch up with you later, okay?

MunchMunch: Uh, okay. I’ll see you in the arena! \*Gets up from his chair.\*

Cyan: Okie dokie~ See ya! \*Waves as she watches Munch leave and looks back at the unusually bright stars.\* There’s gotta be a reason why those six particular stars are bright...Not to mention that they are all part of the Hexagon…

*The pilots in the West were adjusting and discussing about the new power-ups in the game. However, an unknown threat was approaching them from the east…*

Arkham: Heh heh heh! There’s absolutely no way that they’ll be prepared for this assault!

GUCCI: I can’t believe you convinced me to come along with you because it’s going to be boring if there isn’t anyone isn’t on-

Arkham: This is the moment that we’ve all been waiting for: the rise of the East Empire! The return of...D’Ark!

Reality: This is a rather small army you have-

Arkham: No, we got this! It’s time to dominate and take over the West sector once and for all!

MunchMunch: I’m just here to try out the new power-ups. Cyan said she’ll be joining us later.

GUCCI: Do keep in mind that all servers have the same fragments floating around, Ark.

Arkham: \*Already gone to cause destruction, mayhem, and most importantly, death to those who *dare* to oppose him to the West server.\*

Strange: I won’t be surprised if he tries to collect all of the fragments he sees and refuses to share. \*Stares blankly at Ark who is obviously having way too much fun.\*

Arkham: \*From a distance.\* I heard that!

GUCCI: I’m with you there, Strange. Sounds like *exactly* what he would do.

*Meanwhile, at the West Headquarters…*

ThePilot: \*Approaches the few Western pilots in a lounge room, who were chatting\* Guys, we’ve got a few intruders heading this way...And one particular pilot who is causing a racket outside.

Kuw: \*Looks up from his book.\* So soon?

trux: Sounds like the East are a little bit *too* eager to use those new power-ups.

Imperial Fleet: I don’t know how I feel about a bunch of aggressive pilots only shooting insta-kill lasers at me…

i sux: No worries, I got you covered. I’ll give them a nice helping of their own medicine. \*Leans back in his chair.\*

ThePilot: There’s the one ability that grants you a temporary shield. I think you get it from shooting light yellow shards.

i sux: Can you stack multiple effects at the same time? For example, you can activate the shield and death zone at the same time?

PLUMBUS: \*Shakes his head.\* Nope, you can’t. But, you can increase the effects of the current ability you have.

ThePilot: The effects of collecting multiple shards of the same color are different for each color. For example, if you collect five red shards, the duration and diameter of the death zone increases. However, collect the same amount of light-yellow shards, it only increases the number of hits the shield can absorb before it breaks.

Kuw: Keep in mind that the light orange shard can’t be stacked since you get a random effect each time you use it.

Imperial Fleet: Understood.

i sux: I’ll just head out there, see who we’re up against, and come back. \*Gets up from his chair and walks out.\*

trux: Um...Has anyone figured out who and where these fragments came from yet? It’s been a good few days since we found them.

PLUMBUS: No one knows why we have them.

Kuw: I mean, we’ll eventually learn where they come from and why...Right?

i sux: \*Casually strolls back into the lounge room.\* Well...That was kinda anticlimactic.

Imperial Fleet: What happened?

i sux: So, I was just fighting off Ark, but then they all suddenly retreated.

ThePilot: \*Shrugs\* Well, that’s one less thing to worry about.

i sux: Strange whispered something to Ark and then they all left.

Imperial Fleet: Perhaps their server is being invaded by EU pilots?

trux: I guess we’ll find out later. \*Pours himself a cup of lemonade and drinks it.\*

*The Eastern pilots returned back to their native server, without waging war with the West…*

Arkham: The conquering of the West can wait a little bit longer; mercy for the West today.

Reality: Wait, so why did we come back?

Strange: Apparently, Cyan figured out where these shards are coming from.

GUCCI: She did? Oooh, I’m really curious!

MunchMunch: \*Thinks to himself.\* I wonder if those bright stars we saw before have anything to do with the fragments?

Strange: Cyan is in the dr.’s office. Let’s hurry over there to hear what she has for us.

*A few minutes later, the group arrived at the office...*

Cyan: So, I guess Celestials can’t take down a 70 billion dollar weapon of mass destruction, but an energetic space elf named after a color can. :/

little dr.: \*Shrugs.\* Heh, still a win for me; I’ll log it for you.

Cyan: Thanks… -w-;;

Strange: \*Opens the door.\* Finally here...Ark kept putting us on detour to pick up more of those fragments…

Arkham: Nothing wrong with having a few extra on reserve, heh heh.

Cyan: Awh, hello hello~ Did you guys actually dominate the West?

GUCCI: Nah, we were about to until dr. contacted Strange.

Cyan: Ah, I see. ^^; Anyways, I’m assuming that you all know what I’m about to talk about…

Strange: Yes, yes. Go on.

Cyan: So, those fragments suddenly appeared in the arena about a week ago, right?

GUCCI: Yeah, sounds about right.

Cyan: As a hobby, I always look at the stars every night and record some data. However, I noticed a continuous, minor increase in apparent magnitude from only 6 particular stars ever since those shards first appeared. Tonight, when I was hanging out with Munch, we both noticed that 6 stars were as bright as Sirius. It’s even weirder that all of these stars are part of an asterism called the Winter Hexagon or the Heavenly G if you were to count Betelgeuse in the middle.

Arkham: And so…?

Cyan: After my meeting with Munch, I went back to my ship to study those 7 stars in detail and my findings show that they were all expelling a ridiculous amount of energy. Something is causing that energy to be converted into fragments that we see in the arena.

Reality: Got an explanation for that?

Cyan: Well, not yet. However, I know which fragments come from which star, based on their color and ability.

little dr.: Cyan and I had this conversation beforehand, so I typed up the information. \*Pulls up a notepad with the information on it.\*

*“- Pollux: Lighter orange, random ability listed below*

*- Aldebaran: Orange, Decreases ships lost via splitting*

*- Procyon: White, Increased flight speed*

*- Rigel: Darker blue-white, Increased firing speed*

*- Capella: Light yellow/golden, Provides a temporary shield*

*- Sirius: Blue-white, One-hit deadly laser*

*- Betelgeuse: Red, Death Zone around pilot”*

GUCCI: I don’t see the relationship between the star and the abilities...

Cyan: For example, Betelgeuse is a red supergiant star that is expected to supernova or maybe already has, but the light hasn’t reached us yet. From what astronomers know, the star is expelling a ton of gas and is a pretty bloated star. So, it sort of makes sense that the fragment would give pilots an area around them that acts like the death zone.

MunchMunch: Why does the fragment from Pollux give us random abilities?

Cyan: Pollux is the brightest star in the constellation Gemini, the Twins. In astrology, one of a Gemini’s strengths is adaptability. The Pollux shard basically forces pilots to adapt with whatever power-up you get. -w-)b

MunchMunch: Ah, that makes sense!

Strange: That’s pretty neat!

little dr.: However, we still don’t know why and how these fragments are being created.

Cyan: Obviously, this isn’t really scientific, but still cool~ Anyways, I’m going to continue monitoring them closely and let you all know ASAP. I still find all of this weird…

Arkham: \*Smilies mischievously\*

GUCCI: \*Looks at Ark\* Ark, just what are you planning now?

Arkham: Hm? Nothing!

GUCCI: Suuuuuure…

Strange: Heh, just let him be. ;)

*End of Aldebaran.*

Previous Part: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EhIKpjTlz_estKgTB95nVT8OJhj6KQCl9BZ1Sv44-Mc/edit?usp=sharing>

Next Part: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qHz2GERP20g4AvX2pxnEoJzcCLFIvgIw0NU5ubTNNdw/edit?usp=sharing>