

# SUMMARY OF TWILIGHT'S PEAK

If the Travellers manage to create a summary of the text, it will be close or identical to this text:

The task force left Vanejen with a cargo of pharmaceuticals for Regina.

It consisted of four ships: three scouts and a transport.

The transport Gyro Cadiz was a remade subsidised merchant, fitted with long range tanks.

Our ship, the Blatant Lie, was a bold protector now; our own mission side-lined.

Another, the Carlisle, was a sleek new ship with a freshly trained crew.

The last, Black Gold, was a ringer; a courier with a crew of malice and mould.

The route we took was circuitous, intended to avoid Zhodani patrols.

A few times, the group even jumped to deep space and then again to a world beyond.

I fell sick at Rhylanor and laid in bunk through weeks of suffering.

Whilst I shivered, fever-wracked, we were betrayed.

A call for help was heard but when we approached there was no downed merchant in need.

Two fanged raiders waited in devious ambush. They launched a salvo.

We were hit but these were no ship-killers. A crash was what they planned.

The Gyro Cadiz was forced to land and it landed badly.

We dove to aid the transport, calling for aid, but Black Gold and Carlisle were fighting one another.

They circled furiously, our comrades battling the enemy within.

We fought the wolves. And lost.

Down spun the gallant Blatant Lie, crashing as the raiders planned.

No more was seen of Black Gold and Carlisle.

We accepted death then but we were spared. A Navy ship, perhaps more, had heard our call.

They smote full upon the raiders with star-hot plasma and fire-tailed spearheads.

The battle ensued, for hours. One raider broke up, wreckage landing all around us.

The other fled, harried by the Navy.

They had not seen us, nor heard our desperate pleas.

We took stock, survivors from the Gyro Cadiz and Blatant Lie.

Surveying the results, the crews found that nothing would now fly,

Not Gyro, not Blatant Lie. Certainly not Black Gold nor Carlisle. Those were gone, or worse, might return.

Unsure of who to trust, we left our dying ships. We marched overland in no particular direction, seeking shelter or useable wreckage. Or a ray of hope.

One dawned.

Salvage of parts from the wrecks could make Blatant Lie fly again.

Parts from Gyro Cadiz, even from the wolf-ship.

But first they must survive. One of the scouts was a traitor. Which one?

Hiding was necessary. And air.

There was nothing in any direction, nothing but the mountain.

So, the mountain!

Glimpsed in twilight, a structure perhaps? High up on the slopes. Beyond our reach.

We walked anyway.

Well that we did, for there were wolves abroad.

Unknown to the survivors, some of the raiders had survived.

We found one, injured and dying. He told us of betrayal, of a scout ship crew replaced with mercenaries.

An inside job, a hijacking.

He died slowly. We did not kill him but we did little for him.

His body we left under the cold stars.

We walked on. We were shocked and confused, without a goal and knowing only death awaited us.

But the mountain!

We reached its base and found a way inside. Deep fissures in the rock, twisting and crawl-making.

We hoped for air somehow. Found water instead.

No way back now, airless death awaits behind. So we marched into the mountain.

Slopes and drops we navigated, breath coming short and stale.

A sudden cavern. A structure, silvery domes in the mountain darkness.

A place of forever, inaccessible yet calling to us.

We crossed a chasm that was not always there. Science and sacrifice provided thrust and the survival kit a rope.

It was enough.

On the far side, a hidden switch was perhaps triggered.

A bridge of light appeared.

We walked across. No need to puncture bottles of precious air.

Ahead a great vault door. Opening.

Welcome?

Death?

No matter. The wolves had come after us. The air was running out.

We fled inside and thought the door sealed behind us.

We cracked our helmets as soon as we could. Sweet air.

But we were trapped.

The wolves beat at the doors and somehow got inside.

We found a way deeper in and the door closed behind us. Safe for now, we explored.

Inside the mountain was a warren of rooms of silver and grey, each different, each with fantastic artifacts.

Leaning against the wall, a hidden switch was apparently tripped,

And suddenly, the floor glowed orange.

One person lost a finger-tip when he touched it.

Another hidden switch was tripped- and holographic visions of food appeared as mirages to

Tantalise the famished crew.

One gave into temptation and clawed his way into the vision.

Whereupon it materialised, as real meat, real fruit and real drink.

Other rooms held null-G sleeping berths, areas with mystic columns for no apparent purpose,

Or fabulous crystal eggs larger than six people.

In the farthest back room, a huge globe of the world stood and revolved in real-time.

It responded to their touch and (by looking close) they could see where they had crashed.

They stayed in the rooms, warm and away from the wolves and cold death of the surface, for days.

They found wondrous devices and played with them. Some were injured.

But they found a way to supercharge their suits. All the air they needed.

Items too, small and large. They made a stockpile.

But the wolves were no longer at the door. They were in.

The crew fled, grabbing what they could. The stockpile was forgotten, kicked aside.

But we took the things we most needed.

They fled, gunshots behind them and yells of dismay.

We did not look to see what was behind.

We almost forgot to close our helmets when the vault door opened.

Out we rushed, into the crushing darkness.

The magic bridge of light was gone and the vault door closed.

They began to make a plan but as they did the bridge clicked on.

To allow the survivors to just walk across the chasm.

As they did, the bridge turned red and turned off again just as the last stepped off it.

As they sighed relief, the vault door swung open and they left hurriedly.

One of the wolves was in pursuit but could not cross the chasm.

He turned, firing ineffectually.

Something dragged him back inside. We did not see what.

The mountain!

We walked away from it now, shuddering at what might have been.

There was no sign of returning traitors or any other threat.

We must leave quickly.

The heart of Blatant Lie, her reactor. Now crushed and broken and partially exploded.

They tore it out.

In its place went the things they had found.

They wired and fixed and hoped. The ship came alive.

Desperately heaving itself from the planetary surface, Blatant Lie struggled into orbit.

It lurched and stuttered through the system and finally prepared to make a single hop.

One jump, bearing the survivors to safety.

It was not to be.

A battle raged in the system and as the ships fought,

The Blatant Lie hid, hoping its side would win.

One torpedo from the fighting never hit a target and streamed on alone, until it caught

Blatant Lie in its sensors and moved closer, exploding to blank the scout's screens,

And disable its drives.

Without drives, the ship could not manoeuvre and no one heard its calls for help.

The belligerents left, first one side retreating, then the other pursuing.

Left alone, the scout and its heroic crew settled into the vacuous night and died.

# AN INVITATION FROM THE CAPTAIN OF KNOWLEDGE

The message sent to the Travellers from Aish Niska is typical of his style – bombastic, self-congratulatory and also rather vague.

*My Dear Fellow Hunters,*

*It is regret that I must inform you of the death of our dear friend B along with her crew. The circumstances are unfortunate and tragic, and also of great significance to our mutual interest. It may be that you already know of what has happened and that you found our friend before her demise. If not, then it may interest you to learn that B died on the world of Callia, during some kind of 'inexplicable incident'. I think we all know what that means.*

*Now that B is no longer with us I am able to reveal certain information entrusted to me. I alone was party to her full records and insights, and I am now able to share them. Indeed, up to this time I was unable to even acknowledge their existence. I am certain you will find this information entirely fascinating and that you will want to be among the first to hear it.*

*To that end I have arranged a conference of the finest minds in our field. Few, if any, others could have organised such an array of brilliance and insight in the same room, and the like of this event may never be seen again. The final arrangements are still being made but in the interim seek out Willem Rafem at Weiss Downport. He will provide the details for the meeting. I am sure you cannot wait to hear what I will reveal but I am afraid you must.*

*Your friend and fellow Hunter, your Captain of Knowledge,*

*Aish Niska*