**Chapter Eight: The Storm Brews Part III**

I was confused. The Professor had laid out evidence that we were looking at some sort of parallel universe, but that didn’t appear to be the entire story. I wasn’t the best quantum physicist out there, but I did know one or two things about temporal entanglement principles and phase uncertainty theory. I did know that the possibility was very real that a parallel universe existed; hell, it was all but certain. The problem is that the existence of parallel universes is predicated one essential criteria, that they should remain separate and isolated, hence the ‘parallel’ in ‘parallel universe’. If two of these universes were ever to come in contact with each other, then they would be subject to Pauli’s exclusion principle i.e. two objects cannot occupy the exact same space at the exact same time. That would mean that either one or both the universes will end up getting annihilated.

While I was having my little internal panic attack, the professor continued to look at his fellow members of the council as they gawked at the images he was showing them. Finally, Admiral Sinclair turned to the professor and asked him, “What are we looking at here? What does this all mean?”

The perpetually overexcited head of the Department of Alternative Energy spoke before the professor could have a chance to answer him. “OH MY GOD! It’s a parallel universe! It is a parallel universe right? We are looking at an actual parallel universe! This is so exciting!” Her voice was bubbling with excitement as she looked towards the professor with large imploring eyes, as if she was begging him to agree with her.

The professor just smiled an inscrutable little smile and replied, “The answer is yes and no. If you define a parallel universe as a universe that mimics yet is separate from our own, then no, it isn’t a parallel universe. I have hacked into a couple of their networks and I have discovered that we share a common history, identical in every way, or at least it was identical until things started deviating more and more a couple of decades ago. This has led me to believe that that universe is simply an instance of our own or vice versa.”

The pudgy little Cedric held his head in both his hands and groaned in pain. “You are starting to hurt my head Professor. Can you please translate what you just said to those of us who don’t have Doctorates covering their walls like wallpaper?”

Dr. Rita Glass also chimed in, “I loathe to agree with the slimy little toad, but he is right. Your explanation is very confusing. Can you please clarify what you just said?”

“Are you familiar with the Austrian physicist Erwin Schrodinger or his thought experiment, the famous Schrodinger’s cat?”

Cedric scratched his head and replied, “Schrodinger’s cat? Isn’t that the guy who did unfortunate things to his cat to see how it would die?”

The professor chuckled and answered, ”That isn’t quite right. Schrodinger’s thought experiment proposed that if we put a cat in a metal container with some hydrocyanic acid, a rather potent poison, that would be released in the event that even a single atom of a certain radioactive substance which is also in the container decays, we cannot conclusively say whether the cat is dead or alive. Until we open the box, the cat is considered to be both dead and alive according to quantum law. This thought experiment is meant to show how uncertainty affects our universe, especially at a subatomic level. Something very similar but much grander has happened to cause the dual-universe effect that we are seeing now. Something has caused so much uncertainty that two instances of the same universe are existing at the same time. The source of the uncertainty could be on our side or theirs, but further investigation has shown the source of the uncertainty is on their side. The exact location is the Entoto Mountains in Ethiopia. From my scan of the planet surface, I have discovered this location to be the epicenter of a temporal instability, a scar if you will, that is slowly beginning to consume their universe. I believe that this is a point of divergence; someone actually managed to go back in time and that caused a divergence in the time stream. Multiple universes were born from this one singular act and ours is just one of many. The problem is that my scan has picked up a second anomalous location. This one is a point of convergence; it is resonating with the first point and is attempting to heal the temporal scar.”

Admiral Sinclair had a frown of concentration on his face as he asked, “What happens if they succeed?”

The professor beamed at him like he was looking at his favorite pupil. “The current state we are in is unstable. Remember the cat? Eventually the box will be opened and the cat will either be alive or dead. The same is true here. If they succeed, we cease to exist. It is either them or us.”

Captain Shearer suddenly stood up, attracting everybody’s attention. ”Professor, can my Sword Wings travel to this other universe?”

“In a few hours, the channel created through the black hole will stabilize enough for your smallest ships to pass through.”

As soon as she heard that, Captain Shearer immediately started to leave the room.

The kindly Dr. Green looked awfully distressed as she ran up to Captain Shearer and grabbed her arm to stop her from leaving. “Wait! What are you going to do?”

Captain Shearer violently ripped her arms away from Dr. Green causing Dr. Green to fall on the floor. She looked coldly down at her and said, “You heard the Professor. It is either them or us. You ask what I’m going to do? Well, I am going to make sure that it is us that survive and if that means that I will have to kill each and every one of them, then so be it.”

Dr. Green started crying and I could almost feel my heart break as crystal tears ran down her cheeks. “How can you do that? Can’t you see that they are human beings just like us? Do we have the right to snuff out their lives?”

Admiral Sinclair walked over to her and helped her up. “I’m sorry Cynthia but she is right. There are no other options. We need to do what is necessary to fight for the survival of our very universe.”

He turned to the two soldiers in the room and formally saluted them, “As of now, I am declaring a state of emergency. Captain Shearer and Captain Copperfield, I am placing the two of you in charge of the armada until this situation is resolved.”

He then turned to the rest of us and declared, “I need everybody here to prepare as best they can. As of this moment, we are at war.”

Elsewhere, in a place without light, without sound, without substance, fragments of thought floated around filled with envy and greed. They looked into the material world, hungry to delve into a world full of so many wonders, hungry to devour all and make it theirs, but all they could do was watch and wait. Their existence continued unchanged for eons until one day, a crack appeared in the material plane. Although the crack disappeared almost instantaneously, the always vigilant fragments did not miss their chance. In that one moment, more than a hundred fragments escaped their prison and entered the material world.

The Atelli had finally found their way to the material world. They could finally satisfy their hunger.