

The Silent Horizon

by Caspian Reed

The stars were brighter here—cold, distant pinpricks of light scattered across an endless void. Commander Alex Varen leaned against the observation window, her breath fogging the glass.

“We’re running out of time.”

The voice behind her belonged to Kael, the ship’s engineer. He stood with his arms crossed, shadows darkening his face.

Alex didn’t turn. “I know.”

Beyond the window, the remnants of their old world were barely visible—a pale shimmer of dust and debris where Earth had once been. The launch had been rushed, desperate. They hadn’t expected to survive this long.

“We’ll reach the anomaly in two hours,” Kael said. “If it doesn’t—”

“It will.”

The words came out sharper than she intended, but she couldn’t afford doubt. Not now.

Kael hesitated before leaving her alone with the stars.

The anomaly had appeared six months ago, a swirling rift of light and darkness that defied explanation. It was a door, or so the scientists had claimed. A way out.

But no one knew what lay on the other side.

The deck hummed beneath her feet as the engines fired. Alex closed her eyes, steadying herself against the vibration. The crew had placed their faith in her. She couldn't let them see how afraid she was.

When the alarm sounded, she opened her eyes.

The rift loomed ahead—impossibly vast, its edges rippling like water. The ship groaned as it crossed the threshold.

And then—silence.

The stars were gone.

Alex's heart pounded as the screens flickered and died. The ship shuddered, and for one terrible moment, she thought it was tearing apart.

But then the lights returned, dim and flickering.

Kael's voice crackled through the comms. "We're through."

Alex stared out the window.

The horizon wasn't empty anymore.

Something was waiting for them.