

A Time in

Nostalgia

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Dedicated to

Effie Christie
Rose Masa
Harold Garrow

And many thanks to our brothers, sisters, friends, and family

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Chapter 1

The Trip

It would be the time of day in the afternoon that the sun would shine warmth on your face if you lived on a planet near a sun. For Tobin Guide it was just a boring time cycle with dull lights and panels. Living on a research station for a ten year old boy often puts him in a comatose state making him crave any stimulation that is not control panel or on board computer related. The occasional photo on the corridors walls was not enough color for him. What would it be like on a colony planet, he often thought to himself? He had only seen holo programs of trees, nature, and wild life. The station did not have much in the potted plant garden to speak of.

A calling voice of a man snapped Tobin out of his daze. It was his Uncle Stan Venkman saying “Hey, do you listen to anything around you? The children’s monitor group leader just informed me that you’ll need supervision tomorrow. They are remodeling the care center and do to the lack of research lately I get to take you with me on my shift.” Tobin and Stan exchanged looks. Stan added “Well, I’m sure you won’t be too much to handle right?”

If you asked Stan about his nephew, he would say he was a young brown eyed, brunette boy, who was stubborn and bull headed. Stan had thought to himself and was hoping Tobin would just sit and sulk for the day. Tobin's parents would leave him with friends and family quite often actually. While they went to build and set up other stations this caused Tobin to brood a lot, this making him suffer socially. Now he was Stan's to take care of indefinitely. The years have passed and Tobin still treats his uncle as a stranger; keeping himself disconnected from everyone. Not showing any interest in a relationship with his uncle or anyone else.

Stan tapped Tobin on the side while saying "Come on let's go to our quarters to get you fed and to bed; I know I'll need the sleep."

Dinner was bland and boring to Tobin, sitting there picking at his food, he was just going to leave most of it for Stan to throw out. Stan trying to grab Tobin's attention said "Don't think that you'll be getting out of studying, you can consider your homework load to be doubled."

Tobin sighed and pushed his plate away, got up, grabbed his study port, and went to his room and plugged it into his holo stand. Tobin flipped through the study program, not even looking at it. If he wanted he could do the weeks' worth of work in one day. What a bore he thought to himself to learn about things that he would never see in person. An hour passed and his uncle poked his head in to see if he was still studying. Stan stood with a short pause and then walked off to his own room for the night. Tobin quickly opened a game program to keep occupied if you could call it a game. Even the games the youth could use were full of learning problems you had to do to get to play the more

fun levels. After a while Tobin turned off his holo port then went and lay on his bed to stare at the ceiling. Tobin thought what would it be like to be really living a life and not this artificial existence, that he was told was a great way to live. They said living in search of new knowledge in this air tight sterile station was the best thing anyone could achieve. There must be something more for me thought Tobin as his eyes closed and there was black for what seemed a little bit of time; morning came fast.

On a lower deck in a research room stood Tobin, he was watching people poke and fiddle with instruments of all kinds. His uncle was across the room talking to a younger woman with black straight hair. She wasn't showing much interest in Stan and was more involved in her work. Not to say Stan wasn't a looker mind you, he had blond hair, beard, and blue eyes. Tobin really doubted how much blood there was between them, after all his uncle was no flirt and lacked much in personality or so Tobin thought. Stan obsessed about his tasks and never took time for fun.

Stan stopped talking to the lady and walked up to Tobin and began to say "Well it seems we are going on a bit of a field trip. Sarah has just informed me the staff is in need of tools and parts."

Tobin responded with "So?"

"The supply ship will not be here for another week." Stan said with a happy tone.

Tobin looked puzzled. Stan added to help him understand "It means we are going to Nostalgia to pick some up."

"What's that?" asked Tobin.

“It’s a space station on the other side of Alpha Phoenix’s moon.” Stan replied with a grin.

“I’ve never heard of it.”

“We don’t use it too often as a supplier, our funding does not approve of its business classification. It’s not up to their codes.”

“Not up to code? Funding? Then why go there?”

“OK, it’s like this; we have to pull out of a limited slush fund to get our parts from Nostalgia; so we don’t go there often.”

“When do we leave?”

“Now, I think this technical speech is too much for you.”

Stan gathered their pass cards and computer pads to go to the docking bay. Tobin and Stan walked quickly through the hallways and to the lifts; they moved smooth and efficiently bringing them to the docking bay. This suited Tobin and his impatient attitude.

While in the shuttle navigating close to the red moon “This has to be exciting for you Tobin. Quite the treat I would say.” Stan remarked trying to start a conversation.

But his nephew just replied in an unenthusiastic voice “It’s not all that great; couldn’t they have given us a bigger shuttle. It would be nice to have my own space.”

“Sorry kiddo, I don’t think you need a whole cabin to yourself. Settle yourself down; the pilot will get us there soon enough. The parts we’re picking up are small and just a few of them. So, we don’t need a bigger

craft.”

They sat there quietly staring out the viewing port until they reached a rather basic looking space station. Stan spent the time it took them to get there; thinking about the first couple of times he had met Tobin. He was such a nice little boy easy to pull jokes on, and had a look of brightness on his face and in his eyes. Now Tobin doesn't but have one expression to him; a somber dullness.

Aboard the space station most of the equipment on it looked out dated, and the lights were gloomy. Tobin didn't know whether the station was going to fall apart by just having them step aboard it.

No one seemed to be there just an eerie stillness. Did they come all that way only to go back empty handed? Tobin was about to remark to his uncle about the strange place. When a medium size fellow appeared at one of the entry ways; he wasn't as tall as his uncle. But not quite short either, he was an older man in his late fifty's. He was partially balding and had no facial hair.

The man smiled and said “Welcome! Good to have you here; what can I do for you?”

Stan replied “Sarah arranged for us to pick some parts up for the Gallant.”

The man answered “Oh yes, in just a little bit more time I'll have your order around for you. Come follow me to the briefing room.”

The group walked down rather old and dingy corridors to come to a fair size plain room. Stan added “Where are my manners Tobin, this is our host Mr. Dent.”

Dent replied “Just call me Anthony.” As they entered the room, Dent went on to say “I’ll have Trace bring you refreshments and check on your order.”

Just before Dent left the room Trace entered with a tray of snacks. She was a tall slender woman with green eyes. She had blonde page cut hair. She said to them “I hope these goodies perk you up from your trip. I got them ready ahead of time it would have slipped Anthony’s mind.”

Stan warmly greeted her with “Good to see you, how is Dent treating you?”

“Quite fine thank you.”

“We still need another technician in my department.”

“Oh that offer is still there? I don’t think you’re really trying to fill it.”

“It would be worth it to have you on the team.”

“Dent keeps me plenty busy and I don’t think you could compensate me in the same way.”

Tobin quickly tried to find other things to focus his attention on. He noticed the door seem to be ajar; it must have not been making contact with the sensor. Tobin looked at Stan; as he thought he was too far off talking to notice him. Quietly Tobin slipped through the door and to the hallway.

Why does it look so old in here he thought to himself. Does this station have any funds to fix it up to code? How can it still be running in this condition? Tobin let his eyes wander down the hall under the dimming lights. He found his feet following his gaze

walking further from the briefing room. As Tobin walked down the hall he noticed the ship seemed to take on different features. There weren't a lot of doors and they seemed to all have code locks on them. With a sigh Tobin thought of going back before he was missed. But with one more look down the hall he noticed another door ajar. Tobin was not a bad natured boy but he didn't want to let the chance of exploring pass him by; after all seldom did anything peek his interest.

When he entered the room it was lowly lit making Tobin uncertain on what to expect. It was packed with small and large crates. It was easy for Tobin to lose his footing as he did, and had to catch himself using a crate. He heard a noise and noticed a shift in the shadows of a corner. Tobin stood up and thought to himself there is something more to this place. Tobin carefully made his way to where he was sure he saw the shift and looked around "Nothing. Great." he said to himself "Hardly worth getting a lecture for." Within a moment he heard another rustle, Tobin panned his eyes back and forth to see if he could catch what made the noise. He found some open crates and start rummaging through them, what he found was almost indescribable to him. Some of the items were extremely out dated and others were unknown to him. He could imagine what they were or what they were ever used for. Old fibers bound together with a form of type on them. What is the purpose of that, all knowledge is digital. Tobin heard the noise again he turned his head in the direction it came from. He seen a shape move to an area he was sure to catch it. Tobin moved quickly and went where he thought it moved to. He peered around a crate and in to a corner. He seen a pair of shinning eyes and a furry outline, Tobin went to creep towards the figure.

"Tobin there you are. I've been looking for you."

Tobin turned around with a surprised look on his face to see Trace. She then said “Come with me. I’ll get you back to the briefing room.” Tobin followed without saying a word. When they arrived Stan looked sternly at Tobin. Trace said “Oh, I found him. He got lost looking for the ship. You see he went back to get his holo pad.”

Stan sternly said “Next time let us know. We could have someone go get it for you.” Tobin nodded his head and sat quietly while Stan thanked Trace. Why did she cover up what I was doing? It was like Trace was sticking up for me. She doesn’t even know me.

Dent entered the room with a content look on his face. “We managed to find all the parts to fill the order and they are being loaded as we speak. You just have a few minutes to wait and then you can start your trip back.” Dent finished saying.

Tobin just wanted to hide, getting on the ship couldn’t come quick enough for him. Is this where Trace tells of his mischief? Trace and Dent only exchanged rather pleased expressions.

Stan thanked Dent by saying “Thanks for coming up with the parts for us on short notice. It doesn’t seem as though you get to many visitors here.”

Dent replied “Oh, we keep ourselves busy in other ways. I guess we can walk you down to your ship.” It didn’t take the group long to get to the ship. Trace and Dent sent Tobin and Stan off with good tidings.

Tobin was happy to leave without a scolding. Now he had to endure the trip back to the station with his uncle. Stan seemed to be in a pleasant mood. He once again tried to pick up conversation with Tobin. “What did you think of Nostalgia?”

Tobin tried not to give his actions a way. He pretended not to hear his uncle. Stan went on to say “Well I think it was a nice outing from our station. Trace always has something fascinating to talk about. And Dent really knows his stuff, I don’t think there is anything that man can’t find or get up and running.” Stan gave up on talking to Tobin and sat back with a content feeling. He always enjoyed the visits to Nostalgia.

Tobin sat and kept thinking about what he saw back in the storage room. What was all that stuff and that furry animal he seen and where did it come from? For the first time he started to feel an excitement bellowing inside of himself. The ship docked at their home station where the crew began to unload the supplies and parts. Stan and Tobin headed back to the lab to check in with Sarah to verify the parts list. Within a minute the list was done and Stan started to work on the project. He was assigned early that day. Tobin grabbed a chair and sat leaning on the table watching his uncle work. The lab workers offered him some puzzle solving programs to use but Tobin would have nothing to do with it. He would rather be doing something real with his time other than looking at a screen or holo picture.