

## PLANET X91

### THE UNDERWATER CAVE

#### CHAPTER ONE

“IT’S BEEN two weeks since we last saw the aliens in the boat,” whispered Florian. She flicked her long black hair away from her face to look directly at Josh. She gave him a blank look realizing she didn’t need to whisper.

Josh stepped out of the Piper’s hatch. He wandered over to stand next to Florian, watching Clay put the final touches to the large second wooden pen.

“I thought we might have been invited for dinner and us for the desert,” said Florian.

“Yes, we should have been,” replied Josh. “The creature did warn us they were cannibals.”

“I’m glad the creatures haven’t decided to come back. The Piper is an amazing ship. The way it protected us by dematerializing into being completely transparent is beyond words,” stated Florian.

Downing tools, Clay walked over. The sun had quickly turned his chest and shoulders dark.

“How’s the pen?” asked Josh.

Clay flashed him a boastful grin. “It’s just about set. Digging the holes for the main poles took the longest. If I didn’t use the hand-held laser on the wooden posts I might have been at it for months. I loved the way the laser easily slices a tree lengthways.”

“Are the pens big enough?” questioned Florian.

“I estimate both pens are large enough for at least three horses. Provided we can catch them. They have been wild for at least twenty years. The smallest pen is for the two lambs we stowed onboard after saving them from the lions.”

“What about electrifying this whole area?” quizzed Florian.

Both boys looked at her serious face. They answered simultaneously. “It can be done. It will take along time to complete.”

“Getting back on the subject of the horses, any idea on how we’re going to capture them. They are a smidgeon faster than us,” stated Florian.

“I recommend we capture the ones no older than two or three years of age,” said Josh. “The younger they are the easier they’ll be to ride.”

“Any ideas on how to make a saddle?” asked Florian, looking directly at Josh. She too appeared slightly darker around the shoulders from being in the sun.

Josh casually leaned against the hull of the Piper. “Not yet. I’ve been racking my brain trying to hack into the Piper’s computer system.”

“Have you made any progress?” asked Clay.

Josh pushed the hair from his face. He replied on a sigh. “The computer is locked down so tight I can’t find a gap to get into.”

“How close did you get?” asked Florian.

“When I got to the fifth level Doctor Henry’s hologram materialized. He’s certainly impressed by my stubbornness to get to the crux of the computer. I’ve never know a computer I can’t hack into.”

“Did Henry confess anymore about this so-called test the three of us are involved in?” asked Clay.

“No nothing. For the past hour I’ve been going over everything which has happened to us since we boarded the USS Lock. I’ve remembered every word anyone spoke right up to the time I stepped from the Piper five minutes ago.”

“You’re joking,” barked Clay.

“You can actually remember everything?” questioned Florian.

“And everything I see,” added Josh.

“How’s it possible, you’re twelve-years-old?” quizzed Clay.

“I haven’t told you guys the reason behind my family being selected into the first group to colonize planet X188.”

“Don’t keep us in suspense tell the tale,” quipped Florian.

“I have an identic memory.”

“Care to elaborate?” asked Clay.

“I not only remember every word I hear I can remember exactly what I’ve seen to the exact detail.”

“For how long?” quizzed Florian. She felt a little skeptical over the idea, but they were selected for this test of Henry’s for a reason. Maybe the secret Josh failed to say is the first part of the puzzle. She sided on the idea if they unraveled the mystery they might be transported back to the USS Lock.

“I remember the names of the guests and what they were wearing at my first birthday.”

“Unbelievable,” growled Florian.

Clay squared himself to Josh. A questionable look swept his face. “I knew there’s more to you than being clever. Seeing how I can’t prove if you’re telling the truth or not Florian and I will have to take your word on it.”

“Thank you. I’ve lost countless arguments.”

“Why?” asked Florian. “If you can remember everything, to me you’d win every time.”

“No one believes me. Unless I have a recorded video, there’s no way of proving I’m right. I’m trying to convince myself it’s not a curse,” whispered Josh, bowing his head.

Clay mentioned. “Maybe there is a way.”

“How?” asked Josh.

“Think of something Florian or me can remember since we landed; or something which might have been recorded on the viewer.”

As if Josh started flipping through files in his mind he grinned when he thought about the proof he needed. “The prehistoric bird we killed.”

“I really don’t want to remember the moment. When it boils down to us or the bird I’m glad we won,” confessed Florian. Realizing the tone in her voice sounded heartless she quickly tried to lighten the conversation. “What about it?”

“When we woke the first morning on this planet, the Pterosaur bird happened to be sitting on the nose of the shuttle. I recorded the prehistoric bird. It’s on disc.”

“How can the information prove anything?” questioned Clay, “I can barely remember the details of the creature. The largest flying thing I’ve ever seen is dead.”

“I can actually see it in living color,” added Josh “The screech it made. The amount of blood coming out of its mouth, the color of its green tongue after it died, I can see it as if it’s lying on the ground at my feet.”

“I can sort of too,” remarked Florian. “What else can you remember?”

Josh moved away. Glancing at Florian he added. “The bird’s face looked grotesque.”

“What’s up? You look like you’ve seen a ghost,” she asked.

“Could you do me a favor? I know the bird isn’t right behind you, however I can see it.”

Florian stepped to the side. Josh walked over. “This might sound weird so I keep all this locked inside my mind for fear I’ll be laughed at.” Squatting, he pointed at a small clump of grass and started tracing the outline of the bird’s head. Here is the outline of the bird’s beak. There’s a line in the top part of the beak. It must have cracked it somehow. On the left side at the corner a piece of beak has broken off. Around the area is black and not yellow like the rest of the beak.”

“Seeing how there’s only us three on this planet we’re not laughing at you,” hinted Florian, gently. She bent down tugging Josh to a standing position. Wrapping her arms about his waist she added. “Clay and I don’t think you’re crazy. If we can prove your memory is sharp it might help us to get off this rock.”

“How can we prove it?” questioned Clay.

“Easy, we can watch the recording,” said Josh. “I’m sure we’ll see the black piece of beak.”

“Let’s do it,” said Florian.

The trio walked over to the hull of the Piper. Following the boys up the narrow metal rung on the side, Florian glanced at the wall. They hadn’t lived in the ship long. Already she called it home. Thinking of the earth and the reason why they volunteered to leave, she felt herself nodding. The Piper was exactly like the earth. Mankind always fought each other for their right to own land. She’d fight anything which wanted to invade or drag her or the boys away from their home.

Florian lost sight of the boys and quickly scampered up the side of the Piper. She trotted across the roof to the maintenance shuttle from the USS Lock. Stepping through the small open hatch she still marveled at the inner workings of the craft. Everything in the shuttle fitted snug in a cavity in the walls or ceiling. Every square inch was carefully utilized. When she stepped up behind the boys she saw Josh flick the computer on.

“Florian, make yourself comfortable,” said Clay.

She squeezed into the copilot’s seat while Clay slipped into the pilot’s seat.

Josh leaned forward to press the video play button.

“Hold it one second,” jeered Clay. “To make this more believable I need the computer to answer my question first.” He eyeballed Josh. “Let’s double check your story.”

“Okay,” he answered.

Clay cleared his throat. “Computer, the recording of the prehistoric bird Josh made after we crashed on this planet, how many times has it been played back?”

There was a short pause before a metallic voice came through the speaker. “Once only; five minutes after the recording had been terminated.

“Has the recording being copied or uploaded to the Piper?”