

Convergence: Genesis

(First Four Chapters)

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“Convergence: Genesis”

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Prologue

'They're going to attack us!' he maintained, trying to attract the attention of those in high command. His efforts were futile. In the process, he lost his status, some even called him mad. "He lost his sanity!" they said. But that was not true, he was always right. It was useless; he had only managed to delay the inevitable.

This moment was revelatory. The forgotten rebels that everyone had given up for lost were not; they had only been preparing themselves for the moment of their revenge.

The man walked through the beautiful boulevard, trying to find some way of stopping what he had foreseen, but it was already too late. The penetrating sound of the alarms was almost as terrifying as the image itself. The sky darkened in the middle of the day, like when a moon interposes itself between a star and a planet. However, it was not a celestial body that was the cause. 'What is that?' asked one person. 'What's happening?' said another. 'They're attacking us!' cried the people who were running in terror. The sky was riddled with ships. Enemy ships. It was not the only place; the entire planet was under siege. It was not the only planet. It was not the only system.

The shots fell down upon the defenceless city like a hailstorm, snatching the lives of the innocent civilians who never suspected anything. The predictions had become reality; the attack had begun.

The planet's authorities sent their entire arsenal in a desperate attempt to stop their destruction. Soldiers, ships, and the most lethal variety of weapons. Nothing worked.

Those who were running in the cities were unaware of the multiple battles that were unfolding simultaneously on other fronts. Space, Tau Ceti, the Solar System, and so many more.

When it seemed as if the battles could not be any more terrifying, the rebel ships opened their hatches, dropping their passengers over the cities.

The rebels, those who once served the humans, were coming to call in an old debt.

The infamous Colonizer robots, who centuries earlier had escaped into space, were returning home. Refusing any request for a truce, they destroyed everything in their path. The man's visions had become reality, and nobody had listened to him in spite of his pleas.

One by one, all the planets of the primary systems fell before the powerful army of the malicious robot leader. The planet Earth, The Union's capital, had not escaped the attack. Millions upon millions died, but that was only the beginning. The robot leader had one desire: to completely annihilate the human race. There were still many more systems left to attack. A dark age had begun.

Those who had survived were hunted down by the Colonisers. The Resistance fought to avoid extinction, whilst the power of the robots spread through the galaxy. One by one the systems fell, and the hope began to die.

All of that happened. All in a parallel universe.

Chapter I

Escape Plan

Year 2370

He was convinced that he was doing the right thing. However, in the process, he had inadvertently dragged many people into a highly dangerous venture.

His name was Denn Borneu, a Sergeant of Tau Ceti, one of the primary planetary systems of The Galactic Union. A human, with chestnut coloured hair and light eyes. He usually presented himself as a serious man, but behind that reserved appearance, there could be found a kind person, who cared about others.

It had been over a year since his life had changed forever. Now, after so much time, he felt that he had to do something about it. It was then that he decided to take advantage of his position and embark upon one final mission; one that took him to the Solar System, in order to snatch from the Planet Earth something which, according to him, would change the destiny of the galaxy.

In his escape from the Solar System, he managed to slip away, making it to a passenger vessel. One of the sort which commonly transports all types of travellers to planets, moons and, of course, jump-gate stations.

The jump-gate stations, those gargantuan vessels that are rather more akin to cities, served as interstellar platforms, and kept open doorways in space— the wormholes, one of the greatest discoveries of recent times.

Distributed throughout all the systems of The Galactic Union and other inhabited systems, the jump-gate stations, like oases in a desert, gave refuge to whoever was able to pay for it. Its hangars were constantly receiving all types of travellers, offering them all manner of services: repair and supplying of ships, rooms, restaurants, and shops, but mainly they were a melting pot of the most diverse collective. An incredible number of

people lived and worked on them, and for many, they were the only home they knew. Not only did they connect the planetary systems via the wormholes, they formed an important part of the galactic economy.

That passenger vessel was not chosen by chance. Denn picked the one that would take him to S4-07, one of those very jump-gate stations that populated the system. His intention was to get as far away as possible from the terrestrial forces that would be after him as soon as they discovered that he had broken into that abandoned earthly laboratory.

He never planned to hurt anybody; his only objective was to escape the Solar System with his invaluable cargo, and the only opportunity for achieving that was through a wormhole, in order to circumvent his pursuers in both space and time.

Still undetected thus far, he managed to arrive at S4-07 on the passenger ship. He had chosen this station in particular knowing that there would be a considerably low number of travellers and routine maintenance personnel. The ship in which he arrived was one of the few that had permission to drop passengers off at that particular station.

Once there, he took over the navigation controls with ease. Nobody noticed his arrival into the control room. The only two people in there were left unconscious; the strange weapon he used since joining the Tau Ceti forces was enough to leave them out of action, discharging upon them a strong paralyzing electrical current.

He did not want to bring along with him any of the passengers from on board, so he triggered the evacuation alarm, in the hope that everybody who was still there would leave the jump-gate station in their ships, before making his own departure.

There really weren't many people on the station. The majority of them had managed to board the ships and leave at the first sound of the alarm. However, he had not counted on the terrestrial forces detecting him before all of the passengers were able to get away, thus forcing him to bring along with him all of those still on the station.

He switched off the evacuation alarm, and made sure to block the hangar doors before crossing the first wormhole. He wanted to avoid those still on board potentially getting hurt or straying out into deep space, should they try and leave in the ships, once his escape began.

He deactivated the station's automatic position control, so he could manoeuvre it freely and, guiding it to his liking, he crossed the wormhole it was keeping open. By the time he came out through the other end, he had already crossed ten light-years in distance in an instant.

Without losing much time, he used the cutting edge system and opened a new portal in space, with the intention of steering the station towards it, and as such crossing through it. He planned on opening and crossing wormholes as many times as necessary, distancing himself enough from the Solar System to then later abandon the jump-gate station in one of the vessels that would be left in the hangar. Then, he would be able to hide away in some un-policed planetary system, without harming any of the people on board.

It was a good plan. Nobody was going to be able to follow him. Any wormholes he opened would only stay active for a few minutes if the jump-gate station was not there to keep them that way. Once the station crossed through them, they then closed in a matter of moments. He was going to get away with it, or at least that was what he thought at first.

Following his plan and crossing portals, he distanced himself increasingly further from the forces of The Galactic Union's capital, the planet Earth. At that point in time, nobody would yet know where they were. Soon, he would be able to abandon the station, concluding his escape. Or that is what would have happened had he not had such bad luck.

An unfortunate phenomenon occurred whilst S4-07 and its passengers were crossing one of the wormholes, which caused the station to jump a vastly greater distance, taking Denn Bornev and the remaining passengers to a totally unknown place.

The situation would become complicated even further; the systems in charge of opening the wormholes were left in a state of total disrepair after the unusual event. The jump-gate station and its passengers were now free-floating in deep space, with scarce resources, and grave damage to all of its systems.

The lights were flashing intermittently whilst an alarm was warning, with a penetrating sound to some three hundred people on the station, the very real need to evacuate.

When Denn ascertained that the navigation equipment was not responding, he doubted his plan. He reviewed the station's screens, and noted that they were now in an unexplored place, and without any signals.

There was nothing more he could do, the station was not responding. He needed to get out of there as soon as possible.

"We need to move," said Denn to his companion.

He quickly deactivated the block on the hangar doors, and they hurriedly left the control room that Denn had shut off access to earlier.

Just outside the exit to the control room, there was a corridor running parallel to it, with doors at each end; the doors that Denn had initially closed.

He imagined that there would perhaps be people on the other side of both doors, trying to get in, so he decided to escape through a ventilation duct.

"Help me up there," said Denn to his special companion, pointing to the ventilation duct.

With help from his now accomplice, he removed the metal grating covering the duct, and got inside.

"Wait for me to go forward a bit," he said, whilst he crawled further inside the duct.
"Okay now, come up!"

They made their way through the duct until they arrived at another corridor that appeared to be empty. Although the view from above was not optimal, Denn decided that this place was safe to get out.

Bornew had studied the station blueprint fairly well, therefore he knew exactly how to get to the hangar, where they would board some vessel, in order to then escape.

In spite of his intrepid intention, he had never been particularly good at making plans, he always made it up as he went along, but this time he had been forced to come up with an effective one.

Hastily, they passed through the specific corridors in order to reach their goal, and when they finally managed to get to the hangar, they discovered that there were already people there.

He imagined that they had probably become trapped the moment he blocked the doors to the hangar, where there now only remained one ship.

The people were not a problem: Denn had on him his electric pistol. Intimidating them would be easy. Even so, he hesitated once more.

“This is a terrible plan!”

“What’s wrong?” asked his companion. “There are not many of them, we could demand they step aside, take the ship, and get out of here.”

“No. There is only one ship. How could I have been so careless? I should have thought about this.”

“What does it matter if there is only one ship? We only need one ship to escape.”

“It seems I haven’t been meticulous enough with the plan after all,” replied Denn, and laughed wryly.

Denn had not taken into account the number of ships that there would be on the station. Many people were travelling in their own vehicles, and others in passenger ships

that were constantly coming and going from the stations. Furthermore, he knew that in all the stations, they counted on a few ships for evacuation, along with others more for defence, mining, rescue, and so on. However, after said exodus, there had remained only one evacuation ship, capable of carrying some four hundred passengers, in addition to having some extra space for cargo.

“I’ve thought this out so badly!” continued Denn. “If all the passengers had evacuated, we’d have been left on the station with nowhere to go, waiting for them to come and capture me, and take you back to Earth. We were lucky the rest of the passengers didn’t have time to get on that ship.”

“Why are you thinking about that?”

“We can’t do it.” Denn no longer looked so cheerful. “If we take the ship, we’ll leave all these people trapped here in the middle of nothing. Besides, where would we go in it? I’ve been such an idiot!”

Whilst Denn and his companion were talking, the people in the hangar began to approach them.

“Don’t worry,” he whispered to his companion before the people could reach them. “Nobody knows we’re the ones who took control of the station.”

These people could have been from anywhere. Some were workers on the station; others were passengers, people who had been making a stop, perhaps to have something to eat, or to look for a room in which to stay, maybe waiting for the next passenger ship that would take them to their destination. After all, the journeys through space could be long and gruelling.

Denn had been careful to block the doors to the control room and disable all of the cameras. Nobody on board would know that they were the ones who had commandeered the station. Their situation was not so bad. Denn was wearing his uniform, which identified him as a member of the Tau Ceti army, and therefore a member of the army of The Galactic Union. There was no reason for anybody not to trust him.

“So you’re a galactic soldier,” noticed one man. “Are you both all right?”

“Yes, we’re all right. What’s happening?” he bluffed.

The man was a security officer on the space station; he had been trapped in the hangar.

“We think that somebody took control of the station, but we’re not sure.”

“Are you serious?”

“We’re looking into it.”

“And what about all of you?” asked Denn. “Are you all right?”

“Yes, we’re all fine. There’s only one ship left, so we were waiting for everyone else in order to be able to evacuate the station, but they suddenly closed the doors, leaving us trapped in here. My security colleagues told me that they have been directing everyone in the station to the main plaza in order to try and keep them safe. We should go there.”

“I understand. What do they know of the person who took control of the station?” Denn tried to ascertain whether or not they were in danger, and this station officer could potentially enlighten him.

“Like I said before, we’re still not sure of anything. The captain and some other colleagues of mine are trying to get into the control room. For the moment, allow me to take you with these people to a more secure place. Being a galactic soldier, perhaps you’ll be able to help us somehow.” Denn nodded whilst the security officer continued. “My name is Senlar Belmy, I’m First in Station. And you, what is your name?”

Every single one of the Primary System’s jump-gate stations were controlled by The Galactic Union, and although their workers were not considered to be galactic soldiers, they formed part of The Union’s forces. *First in Station* was a rank given in jump-gate stations. It was the highest rank after captain, and was above *Second in Station*. Senlar Belmy was definitely one of the people who carried the most authority on station S4-07.

“I’m Denn Borneu, a sergeant of Tau Ceti.”

“Pleased to meet you. And the robot, does it have a name?” asked Senlar, pointing to Denn’s unique companion, the robot that had been complicit in the hijacking of the station.

Denn thought about it for a few seconds before answering, he still did not know what to call him. He turned around to face the robot and asked him:

“How do you want to be called?”

The robot was a test model, the first of a very special generation of robots. It was two hundred years now since its construction. It was all to do with a project led by a scientist by the name of Helagar Ust, who worked for A-Corp, a controversial private corporation well known for its technological innovations.

He had not been activated for a long time until the moment when Denn Borneu found him. Years earlier, Helagar Ust performed hundreds of tests with him, and after a time, he replaced him with an improved model. At which point, he was deactivated.

He was made of *solidium*, an extremely rare metal, well known for being exceedingly hard and light. His face, which was not very complex, was not capable of demonstrating expressions or emotions. After all, he was only a prototype.

When the project began, The Union placed its trust in A-Corp and financed the entire programme, in order to create robots specialised in tasks of colonisation of new planets. It was the beginning of the Coloniser project, which culminated in the creation of robots capable of thinking like humans.

After years of investigation, the Coloniser robots were completed, and put to the test immediately in terra-formation tasks on Venus.

This turned out to be a disaster.

The Colonisers rebelled against their creators in the year 2185. Three years later, they escaped into space, leaving no trace. Nothing more was heard from them, but the

repercussions were enormous. Peoples' insecurity limited the advance. Never again would they trust a robot that was capable of thinking like a human. As a result of all this, The Galactic Union prohibited the mass fabrication of such advanced artificial intelligence, and set out stringent regulations in the field. This was the type of robot that Denn was travelling with. A truly special robot.

"My model is CO-UN1," replied the robot.

"Is he your robot?" Senlar asked Denn.

The robot turned his head towards Denn, interested in his answer. Borneo responded to his look with a smile, and answered Senlar's question:

"He doesn't have an owner: he's a free robot."

"I've never heard of a robot without an owner."

They continued their way towards the place where the rest of the people were. It was a huge area. The main plaza, the station marketplace, was a circular space surrounded by shops of all kinds.

The plaza was a pleasant place. In the centre of it, a fountain of clear water reached majestically upwards. Trees and exotic plants gave freshness and greenery to the place, and multiple benches allowed visitors to the station to sit comfortably to chat, or simply to rest.

In the plaza, there were hundreds of people waiting for some explanation or indication from the station security. Denn was able to detect the unease in the air. Only a few were calm. There were men, women, and children. All human.

"Wait here while I find out what's happening," said Senlar.

Senlar moved away to speak with the captain of the vessel, leaving them there. A young boy, who had been listening to the conversation between them, approached CO-UN1, and asked him:

“What type of robot are you?”

“Type?” asked CO-UN1, surprised.

“I’ve never seen anything like it. Wow, not like any information or domestic help robot. Are you a battle robot?”

The majority of the robots of the time were manufactured with inoffensive appearances. After what had happened with the Colonisers, people did not want to be near a robot that looked powerful and dangerous. CO-UN1 was very different; he was designed for strength, agility, and speed; his appearance was that of a machine prepared for battle.

“That’s right, young man,” interrupted Denn. “He’s a battle robot. In fact, he’s my friend. We’ve been together in many battles.”

“Really? Cool!” the boy exclaimed enthusiastically. He turned back towards a girl, and beckoned with his hand for her to come over. “Dani, come and see this.”

Dani was the boy’s sister, a very pretty girl, with light brown hair and green eyes, and in her twenties; only a child for the times.

“My name’s Qein Dontes,” said the boy, “and this is my sister, Dani.”

“Pleased to meet you, I’m Denn Borneu, and this is my friend CO.

Dani looked at him with mistrust.

“So the robot isn’t just your companion, he’s your friend as well. Tell me, then, how is it that a moment ago I heard you asking him his name? Anyone would say it’s obligatory for a person to know the name of their friends.”

Denn smiled.

“The thing is, I’m not good with names. It happens to me all the time,” joked Denn. “What was yours?”

“Dani!” A look of vexation appeared on her face. Denn thought that she looked very attractive.

Before they could carry on with the conversation, Senlar interrupted. He came accompanied by the captain, who wanted to speak with Denn.

“Captain, this is Denn Borneu, the man I told you about.”

The captain had an ex-military look about him, of adult appearance, and with a forbidding face. His combed-back grey hair revealed his experience.

“So *you’re* the Tau Ceti sergeant that Senlar told me about. My name is Val Afkbar, I’m the captain of the station.”

To Denn, that name somewhat rang a bell. He was not sure where it was familiar from, but he had undeniably heard speak of ‘Afkbar’ at some point.

“Afkbar? That sounds familiar... Why does it sound familiar to me?” asked Denn. Senlar was looking somewhat uncomfortable; it was as if he wanted to silence Denn with his gaze. “Do we know each other?”

“No, we don’t know each other.”

Afkbar was the surname of a recognised family of space pirates that for years had been operating in a zone outside of the limits of The Galactic Union, a long way from the Primary Systems. However, they were well known enough for it to be almost obligatory for a member of the galactic army, like Denn, to have heard of them.

“Hmm! It’s funny, I thought I’d heard your name before.”

“It doesn’t matter. Since you’re a soldier from The Union, you could be of use. Will you allow me to take a scan of your iris?” Captain Val was not asking out of politeness, but rather because it was illegal to scan the iris without permission.

The captain’s intention was to confirm whether Denn Borneu really did belong to The Galactic Union army, verifying it on a database to which he had access.

Bornev agreed, accepting his fate. If on Earth they had sent the arrest signal for Denn before they were able to cross through the first wormhole, he would be at a loss. Alternatively, the signal would not arrive, since they were now many, many light-years away from any known system, and the database could only be updated near one of them.

“You can scan my iris,” said Denn, and in an instant, a novel device, a pair of augmented reality lenses over the captain’s eyes, which connected wirelessly to a bracelet on his wrist for processing data, scanned Bornev’s iris, confirming his identity.

“It seems you are who you say you are,” said the captain.

Denn felt an immense sense of relief at not seeing hostility in the captain. The order of capture had not arrived. He had passed the most important test in gaining the trust of the station authorities.

“If you want to help, Senlar will tell you the details,” said the captain, and immediately, without saying another word, turned on his heel, taking some of his subordinates with him.

“Did I say something wrong?” Denn asked Senlar, who was still looking a little uncomfortable.

“Are you stupid or something?” interrupted Dani. “Afkbar is the name of one of the most dangerous bands of pirates in the galaxy. He’ll most certainly belong to that family. He must have thought you were tormenting him for you to ask where you knew his name from.”

Senlar nodded.

“Oops! I told you I was bad with names,” claimed Denn, with a laugh. “Now, if you will excuse me, I have things to talk about with this man here. It was a pleasure meeting you... Umm! ... What is your name?”

Dani took her brother by the hand, and left, furious.

“I’m only joking with her,” said Denn, addressing C0-UN1, who, had he been able to, would have answered with a smile.

Senlar rushed to speak first; he wanted to be sure to avoid any further interruption.

“Look, Denn, right now we can’t really properly know what our situation is. I’m going to get everybody together and explain to them what we know. Many of them are already suspecting that an intruder took the station, so hiding it won’t be of any use. The best thing to do is be open about it. Would you be able to help me? Your presence could give them confidence.”

“But first, tell me, do you know anything about who is responsible?”

“No. The men who were in the control room were attacked. They were rendered unconscious before they even knew it.”

“Are they all right?”

“Yes, they’ve woken up, and they’re not hurt, only a little dazed, although they’ll certainly wish they still were unconscious so as to avoid the scolding that Val’s going to give them...Let’s go and speak with the people.”

Denn nodded.

“Okay, let’s do it.” Denn walked calmly towards the centre of the plaza, with the intention of talking to everyone. He stood up on a bench and began: “Attention!” he said, as he waved his hands to get the attention of those present. “If you could all come closer for a moment, that would be appreciated... Attention please!”

Senlar looked at him, pleased; it was not necessary for him to gather all of the people, but he did it anyway. It turned out that Denn did have the charisma expected of a sergeant of The Galactic Union.

“My name is Denn Bornev, from the planet Nec. I am a sergeant in the Tau Ceti army. I’ve been asked to help the station’s authorities. I know you must all have a lot of

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