

To Boldly Go: A Galaxy Far Away

A U.S.S. *Providence* story

By Cleve Johnson

Commander Melanie Leeson sat behind the desk in Captain Stuart's ready room. She scanned the information that scrolled down the monitor face. She was not a scientist but realized the mass of information that Lieutenant Commander T'Les and the other members of the science department were gathering would prove valuable to those who theorized about black holes. The one that the crew of the starship *Providence* now studied should be forthcoming with answers to some of those theories.

The door chime interrupted Leeson's thought. "Come in," she said as she touched the pause key on the computer terminal. She looked up as Lieutenant Commander Blake Adams entered the room.

"Want some company?" Adams asked while standing just inside the doorway.

Leeson smiled at Adams. "Come in, Blake," she said. "Have a seat."

Blake returned her smile. "Don't you think that I should get the skipper's permission before I take one of his seats?"

Leeson shook her head. "You're incorrigible," she said.

"Me?" Blake acted innocently as he sat in the chair across from Leeson. "What's so interesting?" he asked, nodding his head toward the computer monitor.

"The black hole," Leeson replied. "The data analysis on this thing is absolutely remarkable."

Blake leaned back, rocking in his chair. "The newest readings are even better," he stated. "T'Les ran a long-range scan and detected some radio waves coming from near the hole."

"Black holes emit radio waves, Blake," the first officer said.

Blake sat up. "These are artificial," he said, waiting for Leeson's reaction to that statement.

Melanie Leeson stared at Adams. She was not sure that she had heard correctly. "Artificial?"

"Artificial," Blake repeated. "T'Les would like to get a closer look."

"How far away is the source of these radio waves?" Leeson asked.

"Less than two parsecs," Blake replied. "We could be there and do a quick study before meeting Rob and Janice."

Leeson shook her head. "No, Blake, I don't think we would have enough time to get it done right," she stated. "I'll brief the captain after he and Jan get back tomorrow. I'll suggest that we check it," Leeson added.

Blake shrugged. “How ‘bout an away team?” he asked. “I’ve been wanting to do a test run on the new runabout anyway.”

Leeson mulled the idea over in her mind and decided that Blake’s suggestion would save time. If she waited for the captain to get back, a whole day would have been wasted in discovering the source of the radio emissions. And she wanted her curiosity satisfied as to the source. “Okay, Blake. You command an away team, but I think the science shuttle is better equipped for this mission.”

Blake Adams was disappointed that he would have to wait to fly the new runabout, but he realized that the first officer’s judgment to use the science shuttle would be the best choice. “I can have a team together and leave within the hour,” he said.

“In addition to Lieutenant Commander T’Les, who do you want to take?” Leeson asked.

Blake thought a moment. “I’ll take Mac along and have T’Les choose another science specialist to go with us.”

“Why do you need Mac?” Leeson asked.

“I may need his engineering expertise with the device that is creating those radio waves,” Blake replied. “And a conversation with Mac will be better than with our science officer.”

Leeson smiled. “Understood,” she said. “We rendezvous with Rob and Jan at 1400 hours tomorrow. I want you back by 1300,” she added.

“No problem, Mel,” Blake said. “We won’t be gone long enough for you to miss us.” Blake arose from his chair and walked toward the exit.



The science shuttle *Gagarin* sped through space at warp factor two. The black hole loomed larger in the forward windows with each passing moment.

Blake Adams piloted the shuttle while Chief John McKinney sat in the co-pilot’s position. T’Les sat behind Adams at science station one and Lieutenant Maria Gonzalez at science station two behind the co-pilot’s seat. Blake monitored the flight controls, making sure the shuttle did not get too close to the black hole. He pressed a button on the COM panel, activating the shuttle’s log recorder.

Second Officer’s Log: Stardate 54094.2

We have been traveling toward the source of the energy signal for three hours. I estimate that we should arrive at our destination in about twenty minutes at present speed. So far, sensors have not detected what is causing the radio emissions.

T’Les studied the monitor in front of her. She looked for the source of the emissions. Finally, a blip flashed on the screen, then it disappeared as quickly as had appeared. But it gave the Vulcan science officer evidence that a mechanical device was responsible for the energy signal that had been detected. “Commander Adams,” she said to get to Blake’s attention.

“What is it, Commander?” Blake replied.

“For a moment I detected an object directly ahead,” she said.

“For a moment?” Blake said. “It’s not there now?”

“No,” T’Les stated. “I suspect the natural radio waves from the black hole are interfering with our sensors.”

“We’ll be there soon, Commander,” Blake said. “We’ll come out of warp in a few minutes.”



The object had been orbiting the black hole for hundreds of years. It was shaped like a ring and made of an unknown alloy. It was large. Its purpose yet to be determined.

The shuttle exited warp space and approached the object. The shuttle moved closer, but it slowed its approach until it finally came to a complete stop. Of course, in space, there is no such thing as a complete stop since all things are in constant motion compared to other objects. But compared to the position of the alien artifact that orbited the black hole, the *Gagarin* was at a complete stop.

“Now reading complete stop, Commander,” Chief McKinney stated. “We are holding a relative distance of two kilometers.”

“Very good, Mac,” Blake replied. He turned in his chair and looked at the Vulcan sitting behind him. “You have nine hours to figure out what this is, Commander,” he said with a smile. “Then, we head back to the ship.”

T’Les nodded. “Lieutenant Gonzalez, please begin a metallurgical analysis,” she said to the other science officer. “I will begin to scan for the power source.”

“Aye, Commander,” Gonzalez replied.

Blake, having piloted the shuttle, found himself without anything to do. He looked over to the co-pilot station and noticed that Chief McKinney also had the look of a man who needed something to avoid the onset of boredom. “Game of cards?” Blake asked.

McKinney smiled. “Sure, Commander.”

Blake rose from the pilot station. “I’ll go replicate a deck,” he said as he began to move to the back of the shuttle. Blake stopped and turned back toward McKinney. “Mac?”

McKinney turned to face Adams. “Yes, Sir?”

The second officer’s face looked serious. “I like things less formal while playing cards,” he said. Then with a big grin, he said, “Call me Blake.”

McKinney returned the smile. “Yes, Sir...Uh, Blake.”

Blake Adams continued to walk toward the rear compartment when an automatic siren began to sound. Adams spun around and faced the senior science officer. “T’Les?”

The Vulcan did not take her eyes off the monitor. “There is an energy buildup within the object,” she stated in her usual calm tone, but with her voice raised to be heard above the alert klaxon. “Our scans may have triggered some type of...”

The science officer's voice trailed off as a bolt of plasma energy lanced from the center of the alien ring toward the shuttle. The *Gagarin* pitched forward as the energy struck the tiny ship. Blake grabbed the wall, barely keeping himself from falling to the floor. He waited until the inertial dampers and gravity controls compensated, and then started to move toward the piloting station. Another energy blast hit the shuttle. This time, Blake was in motion and saw the console moving speedily toward his face. Then there was blackness.



Blake opened his eyes slightly. Everything seemed blurred. He thought he heard voices, but could not quite understand what was being said. And his head felt like a meteor had struck it.

"Commander."

"Huh?" Blake muttered.

"Commander."

Blake's vision began to clear. He recognized the face of Lieutenant Gonzalez kneeling over him with something in her hand. The object she held looked familiar to him, but he had trouble identifying the small device. Blake's vision continued to clear and he realized that the object in the Lieutenant's hand was from the shuttles' emergency medical kit. "What happened?" he asked.

Gonzalez smiled. "You hit your head pretty hard, Sir," she said.

Blake noticed out of the corner of his eye that someone was coming close. It was the Vulcan science officer. "What's our status, T'Les?"

"All systems are offline, except emergency life support," T'Les stated. "Chief McKinney is attempting to remedy our situation."

Blake, lying on the floor, came to a sitting position. He sat up too fast and felt dizzy, but tried to will the sensation away without much success. He started to fall and found himself steadied by the strong arms of the Vulcan woman.

"Try to go slow, Commander," T'Les said.

"I'll be fine," Blake lied. "Help me up so I can give Mac a hand."

"That would not be wise," T'Les said. "You suffer from a concussion."

Blake's head still hurt, but he knew that he commanded the away team, and had a responsibility to the mission and to those under his command. "Lieutenant Gonzalez patched me up pretty well," he said. "I'll be fine."

Under protest, T'Les helped Blake to a standing position. "I attempted to send a distress call, but I do not believe that the signal was powerful enough to reach the *Providence*."

Blake rubbed his head. "Help me to the rear compartment," he said.

T'Les held Blake's arm to give him balance as they slowly walked toward the rear of the shuttle. The door to the compartment had been forced open due to the lack of

power to the shuttle's systems. Blake looked in, seeing McKinney working inside an open hatch. "How bad is it, Mac?"

McKinney pulled himself out of the access opening. "I have life support on minimal power and the RCS thrusters are back online," he said. "But warp and impulse drives are still out. Basically, we can turn any direction you want, but we're not going anywhere."

"What exactly happened, Commander?" Blake asked, turning his head toward the science officer who still stood close to him in case he started to fall.

"The alien device apparently had a reaction to my initial scans," she said. "Multiple plasma charges from the device struck us, rendering all of our systems inactive."

"Based on what I'm looking at, that device drained most of our power," McKinney said.

Blake thought about that and wondered how they could contact the *Providence*. "Do the best you can to come up with a solution, Mac," Blake said. "T'Les, are sensors online?"

"Not at this time," she replied. "If Chief McKinney can route enough power to my console, there may be a possibility."

"I'll do what I can, Commander, but I'm not a miracle worker," McKinney stated plainly. "You need to tell me what systems are the highest priority."

Blake thought. "Get communications up first, then the engines," he said. "Once those two systems are online, you can try to divert some power for the science stations."

"Commander Adams," the voice of Lieutenant Gonzalez came from the forward compartment. "Could you come here, please?"

"On our way," Adams replied. He turned slowly with the T'Les offering to assist him to keep balance as he walked, but Blake shook his head. "Thanks, but the dizziness is going away," he said.

The two officers joined Gonzales, who was looking out the forward windows. She turned to see Adams and T'Les approach. "The black hole is gone," she told her superiors.

"And so is the alien device," T'Les added.

"How is that possible?" Blake asked.

T'Les visually inspected the space outside of the shuttle. She checked out each of the side windows. "The stars are arranged differently," she stated. "I believe that we have been transported to another sector of space."

Blake stared out the windows. "How?"

"The alien device must be a portal, a door that operates like a transporter," she said.

"An Iconian gateway?" Blake wondered.

“Similar,” T’Les replied. “But the initial metallurgical analysis that Lieutenant Gonzalez conducted indicated the age of the device to be less than one thousand Earth years.”

“How far have we traveled?” Blake asked the science officer.

“Unknown,” T’Les replied. “Until sensors are back online, I cannot make a determination.”

Blake continued to stare out the window, wondering where they were in the galaxy.



Lieutenant Salesh K’Tok, the chief engineer for the starship *Providence*, entered the bridge. He approached Commander Leeson, who sat in the center seat, having a conversation with Yoshi Nakamara. Nakamara, who normally manned the tactical station, was acting first officer in the absence of Lieutenant Commander Adams.

“Commander Leeson, may I have a word with you?” Salesh asked.

Leeson looked at the tall, green-skinned engineer. “Certainly, Lieutenant,” she replied. “What’s on your mind?”

“I believe the away team may be in danger,” he said. “Have we had any contact with them?”

Leeson shook her head. “No contact since the last log transmission,” she said. “That was a little over two hours ago.”

“They need our help, Commander,” Salesh stated in all seriousness.

Melanie Leeson knew that Salesh came from a mysterious race and that he had senses beyond those of most humanoids. The captain claimed that the Derkhanans had insight from a spiritual source. Although Leeson respected Rob Stuart and his beliefs, she did not put a lot of credence on such beliefs herself. But neither did she want to take a chance that Salesh did not have such insight. “Lieutenant Goodman, hail the *Gagarin*,” she ordered.

Lieutenant Mary Goodman at OPS tried to contact with the shuttle. “No reply, Commander,” she said.

“Could there be communications interference from the black hole?” Leeson asked Goodman.

“I don’t think so, Sir,” Goodman replied. “At least not at this distance.”

Leeson realized that Salesh might be correct in his insight. “Yoshi, what is the ETA for the captain and doctor?”

Nakamara checked the console at his side. “Six hours, twenty minutes,” he said.

Leeson turned her chair toward the OPS station at the rear of the bridge. “Contact the *Pecos*,” she said.

“Aye,” Goodman replied.

Within seconds the image of Captain Rob and Doctor Janice Stuart appeared on the main viewer. The cockpit of the runabout *U.S.S. Pecos* was clearly shown in the background. “*What can we do for you, Exec?*” the captain asked.

Leeson saw the happiness on the face of her CO, and especially in Jan’s face. The first officer hated to bring the couple’s honeymoon to a worrisome closure, but neither could she hide the situation from them. “Sorry to bother you, Captain,” Leeson said. “This may be nothing, but Blake and an away team took the *Gagarin* to investigate artificial energy signals coming from close to the black hole that we have been studying. Lieutenant Salesh has the idea that they may be in trouble.” Leeson paused to decide how to best inform her captain of the next piece of information. Since Leeson didn’t like to waste time downplaying potential bad news, she told captain the news directly. “And we cannot establish communications with them.”

Stuart’s face changed from joy to concern. He looked at his wife, who also showed concern. Rob Stuart’s image looked back toward Leeson. “*We’ll increase speed,*” he said. “*Relay the shuttle’s last known coordinates and we will meet you there.*”

“At warp six, you should be there in just under five hours,” Leeson stated.

Stuart forced a grin. “*Actually, we will be there in about three,*” he said. “*We were going to surprise you with an early arrival.*”

Leeson smiled. “Normally I would crack down on you for cutting your leave short,” she said. “But I’ll cut you some slack this time.”

The image of both Stuarts showed some amusement at Leeson’s comment. “*Don’t waste time waiting for us, Exec,*” the captain said. “*Pecos out.*”

The image on the main viewer changed back to the star field. Leeson stood and straightened her uniform. “Set course zero three one mark two seven, Lieutenant Allen,” the acting captain stated. “Warp nine.”

Lieutenant J.G. Edward Allen pressed the course and speed into the flight console. “Course and speed laid in, Commander,” he replied.

“Engage.”



Chief McKinney entered the forward section of the shuttle. He had just finished two hours work on the small spacecraft and completed what he hoped would help the away team get back to their mother ship.

Blake sat in the pilot’s chair, staring out the forward window. He saw the reflection of Chief McKinney approaching. “What’s our status, Mac?” he asked without turning around.

McKinney wondered how the second officer knew that he was approaching. McKinney had time to figure that out later. Now, he needed to make his report. “The communications system is up and running,” he said. “We have partial power to the impulse drive and sensors.”

“No warp drive?” Blake asked.

“Sorry, Commander,” Mac replied. “The best we can do is one-half impulse.”

“At least communications are working,” Blake said. “Try to contact the ship. They can pick us up.”

“That may not be possible,” T’Les interjected.

“Why not,” McKinney asked.

“I have run a sensor sweep and have determined that we are not in our part of the galaxy,” the Vulcan said. “In fact, I am not sure that we are in our own galaxy anymore.”

Blake and Mac stared at T’Les, then at each other. They could not fathom what T’Les had just told them. “So how do we get home?” Blake wondered out loud.

Before T’Les could answer, the alert klaxon began to sound off. Blake activated his console as Mac jumped into the co-pilot’s seat, working controls. Lieutenant Gonzalez strapped herself into her chair and activated the station.

“Computer, turn the alarm off,” Blake ordered. “T’Les?”

“There is a ship approaching from one seven two mark nine, Commander,” T’Les said. “The configuration is not in our database.”

Blake piloted the shuttle, maneuvering it to face the incoming vessel. The ship began to appear in the forward window of the shuttle. It appeared larger than any other starship that Blake had ever seen. The ship looked like a giant triangle and looked large enough to hold a crew of several thousand.

“Try to hail them,” Blake said to McKinney. “Hopefully they’re friendly.”

The giant ship came closer to the tiny shuttle and hovered over it. A large door opened on the underside of the vessel, revealing a docking bay. As Blake and Mac looked at the bay through the forward windows, they felt the shuttle shudder.

“Tractor beam,” Mac stated.

The *Gagarin* was pulled into the larger ship. The tractor beam held the shuttle in place momentarily, then set it down on a landing pad within the huge hangar facility.

Blake rose from his chair and started walking toward the main hatch. “Nobody panic,” he said. “Mac, issue phasers and keep them set on stun,” Blake added.

T’Les continued to monitor her sensors. “There are four humanoids heading in this direction,” she said. “Two are armed with energy weapons.”

Blake stood by the hatch ready to open it, but waited until Mac handed him a phaser. When he received the weapon, he checked that the setting was on the lowest setting and holstered it. “I hope we won’t need these,” he said. Then, he pressed the control to depressurize and open the hatch.

Four men marched toward the shuttle. Two of them wore plasticized armor with helmets that completely covered the soldiers’ faces. They halted, but the other two, a robed figure and another figure wearing a gray uniform, continued to approach.

Blake, followed by Mac, stepped out of the Federation shuttle, waiting for the two approaching individuals to reach them. The robed figure seemed to be in charge as he

stepped ahead of the uniformed man. Blake noticed that the two people appeared to be human.

The robed man stopped in front of the shuttle and lowered his hood. The man had medium-length, brown hair and a neatly cut beard. His blue eyes gazed at Blake and Mac, who tried to appear friendly through their nervousness. The man continued to stare for a few seconds, then bowed to the Starfleet personnel. "I am Yosh Uani," he said.

Blake stepped down and stood on the warp nacelle. "Blake Adams," he replied. "We are from the Federation starship *U.S.S. Providence*."

Yosh Uani frowned. "You don't look like you belong to the Trade Federation," he said.

"I'm not sure I have heard of a Trade Federation, Blake stated. "We represent the United Federation of Planets."

"And where is this Federation of Planets?" Uani asked. "I am not familiar with it."

Blake slowly stepped off the nacelle that he had been standing on. "That's our problem," he said. "We seem to be lost."

"Lost?"

"Yes," Blake replied. "We were studying some type of alien device in orbit around a black hole. We think it was a portal from where we were to where we are."

Yosh Uani looked the shuttle over. "I admit that your ship is an unknown design," he said. "And you seem to be telling the truth."

"Commander?" Chief McKinney interrupted.

"Mister Uani, could we impose on you to help us fix our shuttle?" Blake asked.

"Certainly," Uani replied. He turned to the other man in uniform, who had previously stood silently at attention. "Commander, please assist these men as needed."

The man snapped his boot heels together. "As you wish, Master Uani," he replied.

"You can tell the others aboard your ship that it is safe to come out," Yosh Uani said.

Blake was puzzled by the man's knowledge that T'Les and Gonzalez were on the shuttle. Perhaps he had been scanning the ship before it was brought into the bay. Blake touched the combadge on his chest. "Come on out," he said. "We're among friends."

Moments later Lieutenant Maria Gonzalez and Lieutenant Commander T'Les exited the shuttle and joined Chief McKinney. The three crewmen stepped down the ramp onto the nacelle and continued down to where Blake Adams stood facing the robed man. Blake introduced his crew, noticing that neither Yosh Uani nor the commander seemed to notice the alien features of T'Les. Perhaps these people had knowledge of Vulcan. Or Romulus. They certainly did not appear to be bothered by the pointed ears.

"The commander will assign quarters for each of you," Uani said. "And an engineering detail will be made available right away."

“We are due to arrive at Coruscant tomorrow morning, Master Uani,” the commander interrupted.

“Coruscant?” Blake asked.

“Coruscant is the central planet of the Republic,” Uani stated. “It is the center of our government.”

“Oh,” Blake said.

“Now, if you will follow the commander,” Uani said.

“This way please,” the commander said as he started to walk away.

“I better get to work on those repairs,” McKinney said.

“Do what you can, Mac,” Blake said. Then, Blake and the other officers followed, wondering if they would ever get home.



Blake entered the shuttle to find Chief McKinney and some of the alien engineers—they appeared human, but they never heard of Earth—helping him make the needed repairs. “You’ve been working for hours, Mac,” Blake said.

Mac grabbed a towel and wiped his hands. “Our technology is very different from theirs,” he said. “It took longer than I thought, but repairs are complete.”

“Then we can leave anytime,” Blake said. He tapped his combadge. “Adams to T’Les.”

“*Yes Commander,*” the Vulcan replied.

“Repairs are complete,” Adams said. “We can leave as soon as you figure out which direction we need to go.”

“*I need to speak to you about that, Commander,*” T’Les stated. “*I will meet you at the shuttle. T’Les out.*”

Blake looked at Mac. The same concern was displayed on each of their faces. “That doesn’t sound good,” Mac stated.

Blake moved close to the engineer and began to whisper. “I think we should thank these people for their help and get them off the shuttle.”

McKinney nodded in agreement. “I’ll take care of that,” he said. He walked toward the technicians that were finishing putting access panels in place.

Blake went to the pilot station and took his seat. He began to do a pre-flight check on all systems to make sure they were ready to go. The only problem was knowing where home was. As he continued to check the instruments, Blake felt the throbbing in his head. He thought Lieutenant Gonzalez had taken care of his head injury, but the pain returned.

Lieutenant Commander T’Les entered the shuttle as the engineering crew was leaving. She turned to face the front of the shuttle and approached Adams. She could see him rubbing his head, the spot that had made contact with the console the day before. “Commander?”

Blake looked up. "T'Les."

"Are you well?" T'Les asked.

Blake nodded. "The pain's going away," he replied. "What did you need to see me about?"

T'Les stood with her hands behind her back. "I have determined that we are indeed in another galaxy," she stated with her usual calm demeanor.

Blake did not want to appear weak before his fellow officer, especially since he was in command of the away team. But inside, he was scared. "What options do we have?" he asked.

T'Les contemplated the situation, sat at the science console and activated the controls. She began to check the sensor readings that were gathered before the alien portal brought the away team to this galaxy. She made some calculations and rechecked them. "Logically, there may be a way to get home the same way we came," she said as she continued to work through the sensor logs.

"How's that possible if the portal is in our galaxy?" Blake asked.

"The portal may be in our galaxy, but if we return to the point where we entered this one..."

"We should be able to re-enter the same way we came through," Blake finished the science officer's sentence.

"Precisely," T'Les replied. "I am calculating a return course to that location, now."

Blake walked to the rear compartment to check on Chief McKinney. He found the Chief finishing minor repairs to the EPS taps. "Mac, how soon will the ship be ready to leave?"

Mac made a slight adjustment on the EPS conduit and replaced the cover panel. "The ship's ready now, Comm...Blake," he said.

Blake grinned as he patted the engineer on the shoulder. "Good work," he said. "Now we need to get Lieutenant Gonzalez back here and thank our friends for helping us."

"I'm afraid it's not that simple, Commander Adams."

Blake turned to see the robed man known as Yosh Uani standing in the doorway. "Excuse me?"

Uani took a step forward. Blake reached for his phaser, thinking that Uani was making an aggressive move. Uani raised his hand and Blake's phaser seemed to jump out of his hand and into the raised hand of the robed man.

"I mean you no harm," Uani stated as he handed the phaser back to Blake. "In fact, I hope to help you get home."

Blake holstered the phaser and studied Yosh Uani. "Can all your people do that little trick?"

Yosh smiled. "Those who know the ways of the Force can do what you call a 'trick' and many other things that most people cannot," he said. "I belong to the order of Jedi Knights. We are the guardians of peace in the galaxy."

Blake did not understand what Yosh was talking about. He had never heard of "Jedi" or of a "Force" before. He had also never had anyone take something out of his hand before in the manner that Yosh Uani had done. "Look, this is all very strange to us," Blake said.

"Strange is an understatement," Mac agreed.

Yosh nodded. "I understand," he said. "I need to tell you that these are troubled times for the Republic. There are rumors that a Sith Lord has much influence over the Senate and the ability of the Jedi to see future events unfold is clouded by the dark side."

Blake just pretended to understand what Yosh Uani was saying, but he suspected that Uani could tell that Blake did not have a clue. "Why are you telling us this?"

"The Jedi council suspects the Republic will soon fall," Uani said. "I would not want you to get caught in the middle."

"Then we better go right away," Blake said. He tapped his combadge. "Adams to Gonzalez."

"Gonzalez here, Sir," she said.

"Return to the shuttle right away, Lieutenant," Blake said.

"Acknowledged, Sir."

Blake rubbed his head. "Master Uani, I want to thank you for all your help and support," he said. "Is there anything we can do for you?"

"Knowing that you will be home soon is thanks enough," Uani replied.

"You sound sure that we will get home," Blake stated. "How can you be sure?"

Uani smiled. "Through the Force, I can see what will happen before it happens," he said. "In fact, if I clear my mind and concentrate..."

Blake saw the expression of Yosh Uani's face change. He saw deep concern in the man's eyes. "What is it?" he asked.

"The end of the Republic has come," he said, trance-like. He left the engineering compartment and walked out the open hatch.

"Stay here, Mac," Blake said as he followed the Jedi Master. "T'Les, we may need to get out of here fast."

"It is unwise for you to go outside the shuttle," T'Les stated. "It appears that our benefactors have become less...friendly."

"I'm going out to get Maria," Blake said. "Mac, you better get a transporter lock on her. Get one on me, too, while you're at it."

"Right away," McKinney replied.

Blake exited the shuttle and followed Uani. As soon as he stepped out of the hatch, Blake noticed that the commander was standing with several troops backing him up, at least two hundred by his estimate. *This doesn't look good*, Blake thought.

The commander stepped forward to face Yosh Uani, who stood about three or four meters distant. "Master Uani, Chancellor Palpatine has dissolved the Republic and declared himself Emperor," the commander stated. He has ordered that all Jedi are to be taken into custody."

"Now it is clear that Palpatine has maneuvered his rise to power and the creation of the clone army for his evil purposes," Uani said. "Palpatine must be the Sith who has influenced the Senate and brought all of this about."

Blake watched the commander closely. "And what about us, Commander?" he wanted to know. "Our shuttle is ready and we would like to get home."

"I'm sorry Commander Adams," the man in the uniform stated. "You are to be detained and briefed by the admiral once we reach Coruscant."

Blake saw Lieutenant Gonzalez approaching from the left. He saw the look of confusion on her face as two armored troopers ran toward her. Blake had to act fast. He tapped the badge on his chest. "Mac, beam Maria onto the shuttle."

The troops who were running toward the science specialist stopped cold in their tracks and looked at each other. Although their faces were covered by armored helmets Blake could imagine the look of confusion on their faces as Maria Gonzalez disappeared in front of them.

"I'm sorry, Commander, but I cannot allow harm to come to my crew," Blake stated. "We just want to go home and we plan on leaving now."

The commander ignored Blake and looked back at the Jedi. "Your lightsaber, Master Uani," he said holding out his hand.

Blake noticed that the commander stayed a few meters away from Uani. He also saw a few of the troops drop to one knee and take aim at the Jedi Master. Blake felt his hand inching toward his phaser but thought better of it. If only he knew where the tractor beam emitters were, so he could take those out.

Uani slowly took a device out of his cloak. He held it but did not offer to give it up. He touched a button and, to Blake's surprise, a beam of energy appeared from the end. The kneeling troops started to fire at the Jedi. Blake could not believe how fast Uani could swing the laser sword around, deflecting the shots of dozens of troopers. The Jedi skillfully used the troops' weapons discharge against them as they shot and Yosh deflected. Many troopers started to fall over as they were hit with the energy that they had fired themselves.

Blake ran for cover behind an alien shuttle, his phaser drawn. He visually searched for anything that looked like a tractor beam emitter. He searched until he saw a piece of equipment that looked like it might be the emitter. Blake set his phaser on a higher setting and fired at the emitter.

Uani continued to hold off the advancing troops. “Go!” he yelled to Blake. “Get on your ship and leave!”

Blake tapped his combadge. “Mac, beam Yosh and me into the shuttle,” he said. But as he started to dematerialize, Blake saw one of the troops rush at the Jedi and get caught in the transporter beam.

Once materialized again, Blake ducked as the troop, who had been beamed aboard with Uani, raised his weapon and tried to fire at the Jedi. Fortunately, Yosh Uani brought his laser sword down on the trooper, slicing through armor and flesh. The troop lay dead. Blake looked. “Now he’s twice the man he used to be,” he said.

Blake rushed to the pilot station. “Everyone strap in,” he said. “We’re outa here!”

The shuttle lifted off and flew through the atmospheric force field. Once clear of the giant ship, the shuttle engaged impulse engines.

“We’re going to warp in five seconds,” Blake said.

“How long until we reach the point where we entered this galaxy?” Blake asked.

T’Les looked at the science console. “Four hours, twenty-two point six minutes,” she replied. “I estimate that...” T’Les’ words were stopped as the shuttle rocked violently.

“They’re firing on us,” Mac exclaimed.

“I think we’re all aware of that, Mac,” Adams replied. “I’m going to see if I can shake them.”

The shuttle banked left, then right. The alien ship continued to fire, missing the Federation craft by a narrow margin.

“Mac, take over,” Blake ordered. “I’m going to see what will happen if a phaser on overload is beamed into their engine core.”

“I think it would be best if you kept your seat,” T’Les stated. But her suggestion was too late.

Blake was out of his chair, rushing toward the phaser locker. The tiny shuttle was hit by another blast from the gargantuan spacecraft, shaking the shuttle violently. The jolt caused the inertial dampers and gravity generators to fail. Blake lost his footing and hit his head as he fell toward the deck.

T’Les noticed Blake grab his head with both hands. She saw the pain on his face. “Commander Adams?”

Blake tried to control the pain throbbing in his, but he found it unbearable. He tried to get up, but he fell back to the floor. Then...everything went dark.



“He’s coming out of it,” a voice said. It was a familiar voice. Feminine. Optimistic. Blake knew that he should know to whom the voice belonged.

“Blake,” the voice said again. “Wake up, Blake.”

Blake Adams tried to open his eyes. Everything seemed blurry. He could see movement, but nothing was in focus.

“Give him another two cc’s of Cordrazine,” the voice stated. Within seconds, Blake felt something press against his neck and heard a hissing sound. He realized that someone had given him a hypospray.

Blake’s eyes fluttered and he squinted at the person standing over him. As his eyes focused, he recognized the doctor. And behind her stood Rob Stuart in civilian clothing. “Jan? Rob?”

“It’s about time you woke up,” Rob said. “I thought I would have to put you on report for sleeping on duty.”

Blake saw his friend smiling. “I guess T’Les got us home,” he said. “I’m glad that we got out of that other galaxy alive. The political situation could have been very life-threatening.”

Rob and Jan looked at each other, confused. And Blake could see their confusion.

“What’s wrong?” Blake asked.

Rob stepped forward and partially sat on the edge of the biobed. “What galaxy are you referring to?” he asked.

“We were transported through that portal that we went to check out,” Blake replied. “Didn’t T’Les or Mac say anything about what happened?”

“They told us that an alien probe scanned the shuttle and that the scan overpowered all your systems,” Rob said.

“Probe?”

“That’s right, Blake,” Rob said. “An alien race apparently placed a probe to study the black hole.”

Blake bit his lip. “It seemed so real,” he said.

“You hit your head and were unconscious for hours, Blake,” Jan said. “You must have dreamed it.”

“You can tell us about it later,” Rob said. “You get some rest and I’ll be back to check in tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow?” Blake was frustrated. “You mean I’m spending the night in sickbay?”

Rob nodded. “Doctor’s orders,” he said, smiling.

“I want to keep an eye on you for about twelve hours,” Jan said. “After that, you will need a day or two off to recoup,” she added.

“And what does Rob think about *you* keeping an eye on me?” Blake asked with a twinkle in his eye.

Jan shook her head and walked away.

Rob smiled. “Seems to me that you’ll be fine,” he said. The captain of the starship *Providence* left sickbay.

Blake closed his eyes, wondering if his experience was just a dream or if it was communication from another galaxy through the alien probe.



Captain’s Log: Stardate 54096.4

Lieutenant Commander T’Les has requested that we stay to study the alien probe, which I have designated as ‘Blake’s Portal’. I agree with my science officer and have given her and the science department the next few days to conduct the study. Lieutenant Commander Blake Adams is under doctor’s care and is expected to be back on the job in a couple days. I look forward to having his presence on back the bridge.



Blake lay on the biobed. He wondered why he had dreamed about such things—technology that was so alien, troops in armor, someone with extraordinary powers. He closed his eyes and soon fell asleep. And Blake dreamed about his experience in the galaxy far away.

The End