

Untested

By Micah Chen

Venatusium. The legendary power source capable of powering ships across the galaxy. Professor Dankmark sat wondering. He set down the book on top of another pile while picking up yet another. Books and journals that had anything possibly related to venatusium surrounded him. Outside, someone rapped on the door. “Professor Dankmark! Are you home?” a gruff voice sounded.

“Come in,” replied the professor, with his attention still on the book. “Any news?” A tall man with a long overcoat strode in.

“We’ve recently discovered a new mineral deep down at one hundred miles below surface. When tested it showed strong amounts of radiation, and we figured you could take a look at it. It could be something you’re looking for,” informed the man. He pulled out a twisted piece of stone, red and speckled with pieces of green sediment. Professor Dankmark drew in a sharp breath. If the journals were correct, they all seemed to describe an immensely powerful item that looked similar to what the man had pulled from his coat.

“Let me run tests on it,” the professor requested, “Whatever it is, it’s worth looking into.” He took the stone and held it to the light. There was a click as the tall man closed the door behind him as he left.

“Interesting,” Professor Dankmark muttered to himself. He reached down and uncovered an intricately designed testing station, with all kinds of tubes and wires snaking around the lab area. He brought out the stone again, and after hefting its weight for a few moments, prepared to place the possible energy source on a platform between two wires. Suddenly, the door burst open with a loud bang, and three men rushed in, surrounding Professor Dankmark. One of the men pulled out a gun and aimed it at the professor’s head.

“You’re coming with us,” the man with the gun declared. Staring into the barrel of the gun, Professor Dankmark swallowed hard.

Tied up and in a cyber electric transport, Professor Dankmark desperately endeavored to free himself from the ropes, but his fingers soon

grew numb from the cut-off circulation at his wrists. “My only chance is to hope for rescue,” he whispered. The van suddenly jolted forward, hitting much higher speeds than before. He listened carefully and heard a high pitched whining. The sound soon grew louder. Professor Dankmark heard his captors scream and there was an explosion. He was thrown from the van and looked around him. Looking back, he saw the van engulfed in flames, and he knew that his captors had not been as fortunate as he was to survive.

After a period of time, Professor Dankmark heard a voice.

“Are you all right, professor?” asked a man wearing crisp uniform and boots. “My crew and I of the Space Fighter 659 were just reassigned to Earth. Fortunately, we were able to shoot the transport. It was the last and only way to save you and the venatusium.”

“But, I—” began Professor Dankmark but was cut off by a yell. The pounding of feet from all directions sounded.

“Crew of 659! Beam into quadrant 5!” the man in boots shouted. Several armed men appeared, ready for battle.

“Follow me!” One of them called to the professor. They took off running and reached an alley. “Hide here,” the man ordered the professor.

Suddenly, an explosion rocked the ground. Professor Dankmark started running towards the place where the explosion took place to see what had happened. He turned a corner and froze. Twenty-five bodies lay still, never to rise again. “How could all these people, twenty-eight in total, be killed for this so-called venatusium, which I haven’t even tested?” the professor whispered.