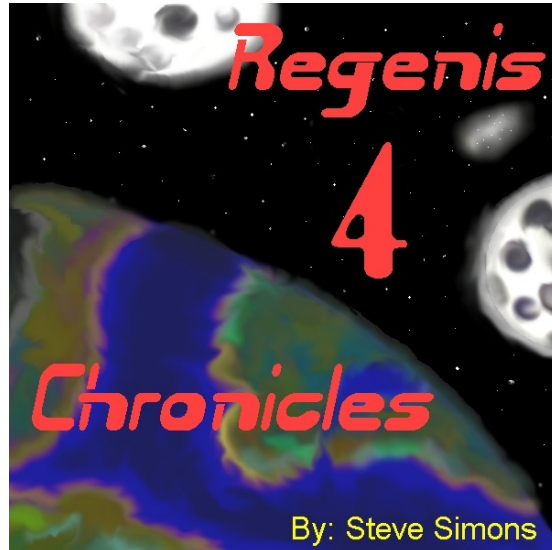


REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Regenis 4 Chronicles

Book 1

Steve Simons



Smashwords Edition

Copyright 2009 Steve Simons

This book is also available
as an Audio Book from PodioBooks.com

For more titles from this author check out
www.SciFiStories.co.uk

Smashwords Edition, License Notes

This ebook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This ebook may not be re-sold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each person you share it with. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then you should return to Smashwords.com and purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.

~~~~~

### INDEX

Chapter 1 - Welcome Surprises  
Chapter 2 - Regenis 4 Night Lights  
Chapter 3 – Through The Back Door  
Chapter 4 - Its all on the label  
Chapter 5 - With Friends Like These

(c)2009 Steve Simons

## **REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)**

- Chapter 6 - Who to Trust
- Chapter 7 - An Interesting Place
- Chapter 8 - One Down
- Chapter 9 – Games Without Fun
- Chapter 10 – Where To?
- Chapter 11 – Sunrise at the Temples
- Chapter 12 – Discoveries and Meetings
- Chapter 13 – Suspicions
- Chapter 14 – Working Things Out

~~~~~

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Chapter 1 - Welcome Surprises

The two moons of Regenis 4 were still visible, their silvery light streaming through the small window in the food preparation area of the Glaceon's dwelling. The silvery light was gradually being tinged by the orange and red hues of the sun as it was just peeping above the horizon.

A heated discussion was taking place in the food preparation area. Edward and Maria were discussing their eldest son's birthday present. Edward in his mid-fifties, didn't feel his age despite the put downs he received from his sons, was arguing his case as to why he bought his eldest son such a dangerous and adventurous present, without consulting his wife Maria, who was ten years younger, yet the way she talked sometimes you'd have thought she was the older of the two of them. Maria was not only annoyed that Edward had bought such such an irresponsible gift, but that he had not discussed it beforehand, every year before this, they had discussed and agreed what they were going to get their sons for their birthday, before actually getting it,. Edward knew that Maria would not have agreed to get the present that he had brought for Ed. He knew the very arguments that Maria was using now, would have stood in his way. As Ed was 18, Edward had been determined to get his son a really special present to reward him for all his study and hard work at the academy, at the same time it would give Ed a sense of independence that Edward had wished he'd had at 18.

Maria told Edward that the present was impractical and dangerous and that he'd never forgive himself if Ed killed himself. Edward referred Maria to Ed's academy reports and pointed out that he was an excellent pilot and his navigational skills were second to none. Maria said that the present was too fast and totally impractical. Ed wouldn't be able to carry anything on it. He'd be tempted to speed around and ram himself into the rocks. Edward decided to put his foot down by saying that the deed had been done and they could only see how Ed gets on with it.

Maria, determined to have the last word on the matter, said that Edward could be the one that takes the call from E-services when they inform the family that Ed has broken his limbs or worse.

Edward calls an end to the discussion by pointing out that Ed was on his way to the food preparation room.

The door opened and sure enough in walked Ed, he was as tall as his dad and had the same light hair colour, but his facial features were much more like his Mother's. In a sleepy manner, yet still with some enthusiasm in his voice he greeted his parents with his usual "Sub Zero both, any Tastiday left?"

Maria told Ed that she had bought a fresh "cart" yesterday. Then she wished Ed a happy birthday, and handed him an e-screen, announcing that his EB-Cards were on it.

Edward remarked that he couldn't figure out why they still called them "cards".

Ed, enjoying the opportunity, rebuked his father and told him not to be such a "Stuffer Duffer".

Maria, whilst used to their banter and continual put downs, was never comfortable about it and saw it as her duty to smooth things out, so she was glad of an opportunity to interrupt things as she handed over the bowl of breakfast cereal and said, "Here are your Tastiday Ed".

Edward asked Ed if he could get the weed waster out of the equipment store when he'd finished his breakfast. Ed said he'd do it, but protested that he would not use it, as last time he burned his

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

feet.

Edward ribbed Ed by saying, "Just how big do they have to paint the arrows on it? What do you expect if you point the darned thing the wrong way round then turn it on?"

Ed replied that he can't help it if he's blind as well as stupid.

Edward said, "Excuses, excuses, always excuses."

Maria encouraged them to hush up and for Ed to eat his breakfast.

Ed said, "OK, OK, Fetch bot refuelling."

Fetch bot was Ed's nickname for himself whenever he was given fetching and errand type tasks. Edward smiled, if there was one thing that he appreciate about his eldest son, it was his sense of humour. Edward could get to a situation where he was really annoyed about something that Ed had or come to that had not done and be really fuming about it. Then along would come Ed and with a quick one liner Ed would completely defuse the situation. Ed seemed on the surface to have a devil may care attitude, yet he was in reality really conscientious. He just didn't show it outwardly, it would seem as if a problem didn't really matter, yet he'd come up with a well thought out solution. Edward also noted that Ed was a born leader, he had the ability to get others enthusiastic about whatever needed to be done and could, it seemed, effortlessly pass out tasks and they would be done. It was almost as if Ed had hypnotic powers, a kind of personal magnetism.

Ed then remarked, "Quick Mum get some more breakfast, Dad has contracted Cheshire Cat syndrome."

Edward looked around for something safe to throw at Ed and settled on a globe root, left over from last nights meal. He skilfully threw it straight at Ed's right ear, striking it's target straight away.

Ed responded with, "Fetch bot has suffered memory loss, task stack now empty."

Edward said, "Job stack open, push, travel to equipment store, open, retrieve weed waster, close store, leave weed waster in dangerous place on path and disappear. Close job stack and execute job stack."

At one time, in his many faceted life, Edward was a systems programmer. So he had often resorted back to such language, Ed and Paul enjoyed this banter, after all they had grown up with it and it made life a bit more interesting trying to interpret what really they had to do. After all it beat being asked to "Ed please fetch the weed waster".

Ed laughed and asked why the weed waster should be left in a dangerous place on the path. Edward replied that this was Ed's usual behaviour.

Maria interjected a protest of "Boys!"

Ed responded, "OK Mum, Fetch bot refuelled, executing job stack."

Just then Paul, Ed's younger brother, only by two years, entered the food preparation area. Paul had black hair just like Maria's, his facial features were a cross between Edward's and Maria's. He was about 4 centimetres shorter than Ed. Paul was much "quieter" than Ed, in that he merged

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

more into the background, he seemed more studious, quite content to spend hours on Galcomnet (similar to today's internet), whereas Ed was more content to be in a group of mates having a laugh and a joke about the latest vid (film or video clip) that had hit the GN (Galcomnet).

Paul seemed to be much more awake and with it, as he greeted Ed with, "Sub-Zero and happy BD by the way. The SC given you anything worthwhile for me to borrow?"

SC was the nickname youngsters on Regenis 4 used when referring to their parents. SC meant supporters club.

Ed responded with, "Fetch bot gotta do errand as MTSCM got don't want to do it myself syndrome."

Paul asked, "MTSCM what on R4 is that?"

Ed replied, "Male Type SC Member."

Paul encouraged Ed with, "Oh I see. Fetch bot better get on with it as I'm dying to see what hand me down or borrow it, I'm getting."

"Who's BD is it?" replied Ed.

"Why its your BD Ed, but you know I just love to benefit too.", answered Paul.

Paul was quite right, he nearly always ended up borrowing Ed's birthday presents, or if it was that great, he'd have to wait until Ed tired of it, then Ed would get the item as a hand me down. Ed left to carry out his errand.

Paul asked his Mum what was for "Munchies". Maria asked if he wants some Tastiday.

Paul responded, "What low carb rubbish? Give me full fat any day."

Maria replied, "I haven't got full English, got to order more supplies today."

Paul disappointedly said, "No FFE, OK I'll skip munchies and see if Fetch bot has lasered off his foot successfully yet."

Quite why it was referred to as Full Fat English breakfast no-one knows, it bears little relation to the cooked breakfasts that originally bore that name, apart from the fact that it had a higher fat content than the modern breakfast options and of course it is cooked. FFE was not very popular, as medical advice favoured lower fat foods as being more healthy. However it was still available as some people liked to eat it as a treat. Paul, whilst knowing all the science behind the medical advice, preferred to buck the current trend as he just liked the taste and the comfortable feeling that such a breakfast gave him.

Paul emerged from the dwelling entrance, into the sunlight, hardly able to believe his eyes. His brother Ed was sitting astride a shiny new Airsleaker.

Paul asked if it was the AS 40 60.

Ed replied, "The very same."

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Paul, still disbelieving his eyes, asked, "Why would the male SC buy himself one of those? Is it some sort of mid-life crisis thing? Surely he knows the female of the clan would do her nut."

Ed responded, "It's not for Dad , its for me!"

Paul asked how Ed knew that.

Ed replied, that it was kind of a given away by the gift gift label on the control stix.

Paul, still unable to believe what had happened says, "Blimey how did he get that through the FSC?"

Edward, now standing behind Paul, made him jump by responding, "He didn't, she's still fuming."

Ed responded, "Thanks, its, its....."

Edward finished his sentence with the question, "Got to go back to the manufacturer?"

Ed replied, "No way! It's sub-zero, you're the best MSC ever."

Edward, corrected his son with, "Dad would be better!"

Paul asked Ed when he was going to take the air sleaker for a test run.

Ed replied that he needed to read the manual first. Then he said, "You can come on the test run if you like."

Paul replied, "Does an ant eater turn down the chance of a free ant hill?"

Ed says, "I'll take that as a yes then."

Edward, smiled and said, "Well I'm not even bothering to say anything about safe piloting, if you're taking time out to read the manual."

Ed replied, "Ah but I didn't say which part, I might only be reading the specifications, so I know how much I can get out of this beauty."

~~ Later ~~

Paul objected to having to putting a helmet on, but Ed being safety conscious insisted. Edward walked by them as Ed was doing the final pre-flight checks and jibbed, "You got your hands full there Ed, Paul already giving you grief?"

Ed replied, "These youngsters eh?"

Edward replied, "Enjoy yourselves boys, see you latter."

The boys waved as the air sleaker lifted off and gently eased itself forward. Paul heard Ed ask, "Where to sir?"

Paul replied, "Make it a mystery tour."

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

"OK, hold on tight!" said Ed. The air sleaker leaned to the right and headed off at speed, looping over the roof of their dwelling, heading off to the distant hills. The speed picked up even further as the engine got more settled.

Paul, almost shouted into Ed's headset, "This is great, no wonder you enjoy this flying stuff."

Ed reminded Paul that the microphones were pretty sensitive on the comms gear. Then pointed out that they would soon be coming up upon the Dekantsi caves and he told Paul to look to the right of the air sleaker.

Sure enough they rose into the air to clear the top of the first hill and the caves could be seen quite clearly below. The Air Sleaker leaned to the left and flew over some larger openings, then approached a large cliff. Ed pulled back the stick to make the air sleaker rise, both boys were rather worried that the sleaker wouldn't rise quickly enough, but it was definitely up to the task and it glided over the top of the cliff effortlessly. They continued on for a short while, rising all the time, so they'd rise over the oncoming hills, then a gorge came into view.

Ed remarked, "This might be interesting to check out the sleaker's steering."

Paul nervously replied, "Just don't get too close to those rocks."

The air sleaker gently dropped down into the gorge, the rocks seemed quite close as the sleaker swung from one side to the other, snaking its way down the gorge, following its wobbly path.

Paul said, "Hey you are good at this piloting thing." It was the first time that Paul had ever travelled with Ed as pilot. The pilots at the academy were not allowed to take other students with them as passengers, only instructors were allowed to accompany the trainees. Yes, Paul had watched his brother a few times, but that was only from the ground and it was difficult to get a true measure of the skill involved from that perspective.

They passed several side shoots, then Ed decided he'd explore one of them. The turn caught Paul by surprise, he nearly fell off, but recovered just-in time.

The new gorge they had entered become ever wider until suddenly the side walls completely dropped away, as did the floor of the gorge. They seemed to be in a massive canyon, with rocks far below them. Ed skirted round the edge of the canyon for a bit, but when they came across nothing of interest, Ed decided they would turn back. When they got back to main run, Ed decided to rise up so they could get an aerial view of the gorge runs and that canyon that they had just been in.

To the surprise of both boys there was no sign of the large canyon, just a large expanse of flat rock. Ed marked his current position on the air sleaker's navigation system, so he could check out a map of the area when they got home.

They scouted around a bit more, took a circular tour over the mines and then headed home.

When they arrived home, they could see that there were two people talking to their Dad.

Ed landed the air sleaker without any fuss. The boys dismounted.

One of the visitors broke away from the little huddle by the dwelling entrance. He was shorter but somewhat larger than Paul, although he was about the same age. He had red hair, so red it

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

looked like a fashion dye that was all the rage some time ago. As best he could, he rushed over to Ed and Paul, exclaiming, "Wow I don't believe it, it can't be, that isn't an AS 40 60?"

"Oh hi, Elcesior, it sure is, Ed is just testing it out for me." replied Paul. He knew Elcesior as they shared some classes at the academy. Elcesior had only recently joined the academy, but the two boys had become friends very quickly.

Ed quickly responded, "Hey clan boy, its mine, you're going to have to wait some years before this baby becomes a hand me down, or a 'Can I borrow it'."

Elcesior remarked that Ed was really lucky to have one of the the most wanted icons of their age, he then remarked that its pulling power far outweighed anything that the academy had.

All heads turned round as they heard a female voice say, "So this is where you're hiding yourself Elcesior. Nice Airsleaker!"

Ed can hardly believe his eyes, there standing before him was the coolest girl he'd ever seen. Her long blond hair gleaming in the sunshine, framing her face and leading Ed's eyes down to her dress which was more stylish than he'd seen in years. The last time he'd seen something this stylish was when they had an unexpected visitor from Yedzion, she had come to see their father. He remembered there had been some tension between Edward and Maria for a few days after the visit. Ed looked back at this girl's face, such large blue eyes, you could almost take a swim in those eyes. He couldn't help but notice her pupils suddenly get larger. He realised that he must be staring at her and turned his attention back to Elcesior, just in time to hear him say, "Oh hi Jenny, yes it's Paul's."

Ed corrected the statement with, "No actually it could only be owned by an ace pilot, I'm Ed by the way, the current owner of said Airsleaker." He nervously looked back at Jenny to see if his bragging had any effect upon her. He was just in time to see her avert her gaze away from him. He could not help but notice the slight change in colouration of her face, it was changing from its beautiful pale to a somewhat redder hue. This time, he could not take his eyes away from Jenny's face, her face was long and slender, although he could see that she was wearing some make-up it was subtle enough that he could see that she was genuinely beautiful. He could not understand the feelings he was experiencing. Before now whenever he saw a girl, he just saw her as yet another friend, but this feeling was considerably different. As Jenny looked back in his direction again, Ed found himself involuntarily looking away again. This was ridiculous, he thought to himself, but he seemed to have no control over his own reactions.

Jenny, still flushed at the cheeks replied in a somewhat embarrassed way, " Oh I've seen you doing your stuff at the academy. I'm Jenny and this horrible specimen is my brother Elcesior."

"Hey steady on", protested Elcesior, "I might be tempted to reveal your faults.

Ed came to Jenny's defence with, "I'm sure that wouldn't take long." His confidence seemed to be returning, thank goodness.

Jenny, embarrassed, looked down at the ground. Not daring to look at Ed. She had admired his confident manner and stunning good looks when she'd seen him at the academy, but never had she dreamed she'd ever be permitted to get this close to him, he always seemed to be surrounded by a throng of admiring hangers on. It almost seemed like he was followed everywhere by his "bodyguards". Jenny couldn't believe this moment, she cursed the fact that she was struggling to

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

look at him let alone engage in some sort of meaningful conversation. She desperately wanted to say something that would make this meeting stand out and get her noticed, but her brain seemed to have turned to jelly, a stodgy one at that. She was internally beating herself up something rotten trying to think of something witty or important to say. But try as she might, nothing came forward, she couldn't even look at him for any length of time, especially when she sensed that he was looking at her., What was wrong with her, normally she had no trouble at all talking to boys.

Elcesior breaks the moment by remarking, "Haven't you always wanted to ride one of these things Jenny?"

Jenny still embarrassed said, "Yes, but I'm sure Paul, er sorry, Ed has much better things to do with his time."

Paul remarked, "I'm sure Ed would be only too pleased to demonstrate his new toy, he's a very safe and skilful pilot, I can assure you."

By this time both Ed and Jenny feel somewhat backed into a corner, Ed feeling obligated to offer the ride and Jenny to accept the invitation. Whilst they both felt inwardly awkward about the situation, outwardly the transaction was conducted somewhat smoothly. Ed merely said he'd be delighted to take Jenny for a trip on the new Airsleaker. Jenny accepted with, "If you're sure that's alright, after all you've just got it haven't you, so your Dad told us."

Ed, ever the gentleman said, "Be an honour to take you. Just got a few things to check out regards the maps and I can take you shortly. Perhaps you'd like to come in for a drink?"

Paul lead Elcesior and Jenny in and introduced them to his mother. They were soon chatting about how Jenny and Elcesior were settling into their new dwelling. Maria said that she knew that they didn't live far away and wondered when they would meet up, after all Regenis 4 was only a small planet.

Ed called Paul into his room to assist him analyse the maps and the location they had visited. When they had finished, Paul and Ed rejoined their visitors. Ed told his mum that Jenny had always wanted to ride on an air sleaker so he was just going to take her out for a short trip. Maria, ever the curious person asked if Elcesior ever wanted to try one as well. To which Elcesior surprisingly replied that the sudden movements of anything like an air sleaker made him quite sick, so no he'd never really been interested.

Ed and Jenny bid everyone farewell and Maria, just had to tell Ed to be careful and not go too fast or far. Ed felt a bit stupid being told to be careful by his mum, it didn't suit his carefree cool but daredevil pilot image.

Ed tried to make it look as if he hadn't heard his mum and walked down the hallway and out through the door, Jenny followed. As the door was closing Ed heard his mum ask his Dad, "They will be alright won't they Edward?"

Edward just looked at the ceiling as if to say, "Stop worrying woman."

~~~~~

### Chapter 2 - Regenis 4 Night Lights

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Ed lifted the seat of the air sleaker and reached into the dedicated compartment that housed the protective clothes, he fished out two all-in-one suits, handed one to Jenny and nervously said, "Just for your.... er....protection... in-case you fall off the... er..... Aisleaker."

Jenny quietly took the offered package and asked, "Thanks, do I need to take anything off or is it.... er..... worn on top?"

Ed, who was normally a very confident talker, couldn't believe how difficult he was finding this conversation, stumbling over his words and feeling quiet hot, he must be as red as a globe root by now, especially when Jenny mentioned taking things off! What on Regenis 4 was happening to him? Realising that there had been a long embarrassing pause, judging by the appealing look that Jenny was giving him, willing him to answer her question. Ed suddenly took control of himself, mentally he slapped himself round the face, nagging himself to get a grip. He responded with, "Er...No it just slips on top.... of what you are wearing.... it is quite loose fitting....it .....er..... only inflates if we run into trouble. "

Ed couldn't help but just stand and watch as Jenny slipped off her shoes and slipped into her protective gear. He'd seen loads of girls getting into flight gear and hadn't batted an eyelid before, so what was different now? Well Jenny's clothes for starters, those frills on her costume, he'd only seen such stylish clothes on the fashion channel, when his Mum had been watching it once or twice, but this was different with Jenny doing her balancing act before him, the frills emphasising her every movement. Ed was brought back to reality when Jenny stopped her balancing act and asked, "What not putting on your flight suit?"

"Er.... sorry... yes..... I er..... forgot, just seeing if you.... er needed any help." replied Ed.

"As you can see, I don't." replied Jenny, with confidence returning to her voice. She'd obviously had enough of Ed's admiring looks. She wanted to get on with the trip and end this moment of embarrassment.

Ed quickly got into his flight suit, the years of practice showed, as he had his suit fastened and it was adjusting itself, whilst Jenny was still trying to figure out how to fasten hers. Ed was tempted to reach out and help her, but then thought better of it, his motives may have been mis-interpreted. Instead he reached into the air sleaker again and plucked out two helmets, that looked more like a pair of cubes. Ed flicked his left wrist and the helmet immediately took on the more recognisable helmet shape.

Ed found himself staring again, after he'd handed Jenny her helmet and she took it. He watched as she pushed her long blonde, now gleaming hair up into the helmet. Ed noticed that Jenny had not fastened her suit properly, he was worried that it would not inflate properly. He found himself standing before Jenny reaching out to her suit, stopped himself just before his hands actually made contact and felt he should explain his actions, "Your suit is not exactly fastened properly, can I.... er.... re-fasten it for you?" He paused as he waited for permission to proceed.

Jenny was looking at his hands as if hypnotised by them, Ed patiently waited for her to catch up with the situation. When she did, he could see that her face had flushed quite red, it made him quickly withdraw his hands. Jenny muttered, "Er.... yes of course.... I er.... haven't put one of these..... on before."

Ed said, "No quite..... it takes a bit of practice. " Seeing Jenny's somewhat apologetic smile, he felt a strange feeling inside, which bought out a protective streak in him, as if he were dealing with a small helpless child. He gently reached out and carefully pulled the top fastenings of Jenny's suit

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

apart again. There were those frills again. He wanted to pull the suit further apart to see more of them again, but he resisted the temptation. He re-fastened the suit, gently pressing the fasteners home. To have such close contact with Jenny was at the same time heavenly and also highly embarrassing. He quickly stepped back and put on his helmet, then stood astride the Airsleaker, concentrating on mounting it then carrying out his pre-flight checks. Aware that all the time Jenny was watching closely his every move.

Ed finished his checks and gently spoke to Jenny through the headset microphone in his helmet, he said, "OK you can climb aboard now. There was a moment's pause, then he felt the craft drop ever so slightly as Jenny alighted the rear seat. He had to concentrate hard, to clear his imagination of the sight of Jenny. Ed spoke again, asking, "Well we're all ready to go, are you OK?"

"As ready as I'll ever be", replied Jenny.

The take off was as smooth as silk, they could only just discern that they were rising high above the ground.

As Ed engaged forward thrust and the craft gently eased forward, he suddenly felt Jenny lean in towards him and she gently eased her arms around his waist. Ed had a soft gooey feeling in the pit of his stomach, he knew he was going to enjoy this flight. Ed gently swung the air sleaker round the dwelling, to the right not daring to repeat the moves he'd made earlier in the day when his brother Paul was riding with him, when he had made the air sleaker rise straight over the roof of the dwelling. He headed towards the same light orange hills in the distance that he and Paul had visited earlier. The further they travelled, the more Ed eased the throttle forward, but the acceleration was so gentle, that Jenny had no idea of the speed that they were travelling, until she looked towards the ground.

"This is fantastic!" she almost shouted into the microphone.

"OK, OK, no need to deafen me", said Ed, "These microphones are pretty sensitive you know."

Jenny apologised, then concentrated, on the ever changing colours of hills that were rapidly approaching now. The colours were changing as their angle of approach changed and as the sun was slowly sinking, something apparently to do with the gasses in the atmosphere. The rock composition was also changing as they got closer.

As Ed felt Jenny's grip around his waist change from a somewhat fearful grip into a more relaxed clasp, he felt his confidence returning, he took the air sleaker down closer to the ground as a group of rocks came into view, "I'll take us through these rocks, there's some quite spectacular caves amongst them, Paul and I checked them out earlier today." Gone was the stuttering of his earlier exchanges with Jenny.

"OK, not too close though, we don't want to crash." said Jenny with a small element of fear in her voice.

"Trust me I'm an ace pilot remember. I never take chances with my craft or my precious cargo." replied Ed.

Jenny's confidence must have also returned as she gently ribbed Ed with, "Oh I'm cargo now am I?"

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

"Only of the most precious sort." Ed said, enjoying the banter.

"I see what you mean by the spectacular caves. I wonder if there are any animals sheltering in the caves?" wondered Jenny.

"Why are you snackish?" ribbed Ed.

"Certainly not!" replied Jenny sounding quite disgusted by the suggestion.

"Well I for one am not proposing we crash land to find out whether the caves are occupied or not. Those rocks might seem pretty smooth, but they are treacherous." replied Ed.

The air sleaker changed direction and descended a few more feet and they caught sight of even bigger and more spectacular caves, now well lit by the ever sinking sun. There were a myriad of colours emerging from the cave mouths as the sunlight caught the different rock types. The air sleaker changed direction again and started to ascend, quite steeply. As Jenny looked the other side of the craft she saw why Ed was taking this course of action, there was a steep cliff rising before them. Her grip on Ed's waist tightened again, but he didn't mind, in fact it made him feel needed and brought them closer together in the shared thrill of the air sleaker ride as they rose into the air at such a rate.

Jenny, not knowing the capabilities of the Airsleaker, had the fear that it would give out before the summit of the cliff was reached. However, the air sleaker rode effortlessly over the top edge of the cliff and its flight path evened out quite quickly. To the right the large sun could be seen touching the horizon and to the left, the first of the two moons could be seen edging its way above the horizon.

Ed headed the air sleaker to the main area of the hills, it took a few minutes to reach the first edge of the rocks, but as soon as they were below the craft, Jenny could see that they were making fair speed as the rocks sped below them. Her confidence returned again and she eased up her grip on Ed.

A large gorge appeared before them and Ed headed straight for it. He eased the craft between the rocks and as the gorge turned to the right, Ed followed its path skilfully keeping the craft exactly in the middle of the gully, maintaining an even height. There were steep turns to right and left, with further gully's leading off on both sides. As Jenny looked down these, she could see that most did not lead far, others seemed to snake deeper into the rocks.

Jenny asked Ed a question, which took him by surprise at first, as he was concentrating on piloting the craft and had not expected to hear Jenny's voice. He had to ask her to repeat the question. She asked how he was managing to navigate his way so skilfully through the gully.

Ed replied, that he had uploaded a detailed map to the air sleaker that morning and was flying using a combination of the map and the surround-a-readings that the Airsleaker's own navigational system was giving him, that combined with his own observations, made the navigation relatively easy.

Jenny thought, rather you than me, it may seem easy to Ed with all his experience of flying, but she would hate to try herself, although she knew there were some ace female trainee pilots at the academy, who would probably be equal to, or even surpass Ed's skills. Jenny's specialism lay in her artistic ability. She had the ability to observe a scene in nature and translate that into a design for clothing or dwelling panels. Back on her home planet she had won several awards for her

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

designs, in fact one of her designs could be periodically seen on the master wall of the entrance lobby to the main administration construct, quite a feat considering she was only 13 when she submitted the design.

The air sleaker ascended at a tremendous rate, far above the gorge that they had been travelling through. Jenny looked back and could see how windy the gully had been and also how far they had travelled. The air sleaker descended rapidly again back into the gorge. As they went down Jenny could see that the next sections of the gorge were even more treacherous.

Jenny nervously asked, "Shouldn't we be heading back now?"

Ed replied, "Yes in a few minutes, I just wanted to show you something that Paul and I saw earlier today, it is quite spectacular."

They had descended back into the gorge and had followed the gorge's path from right to left and back right again, then suddenly without warning the air sleaker turned down a side path.

"Did you mean to do that?" asked Jenny nervously.

"Of course." replied Ed

Again the air sleaker followed closely the path of this new gorge. As they progressed down it, the walls were retreating and the gorge becoming ever wider until suddenly the side walls completely dropped away, as did the floor of the gorge. They were in the same massive canyon, that Ed and Paul had visited earlier. The air sleaker came to an easy halt.

"See what I mean?" asked Ed.

"That is fantastic." said Jenny absolutely astounded at the size of the canyon. She was wishing he'd bought her e-pad, then she would have been able to take some photos and done some sketches. She asked, "How come we did not see this canyon when we were far above the gorge?"

"Good question!" exclaimed Ed, "I wondered the same myself when Paul and I saw it this afternoon. I did a bit of research when I got home and found it hasn't been mapped and even the Airlsleaker's measurement system failed to detect it, there must be some form of cloaking effect at play."

Just then both Ed and Jenny saw lights off to the right of the canyon, quite far off, but distinctly visible.

They both exclaimed, "Hey what's that over there!"

Ed suggested that they take a closer look.

It took a quite a few minutes to get nearer to the area where the lights had appeared, they could now make out a series of temporary structures, the lights were quite clearly visible. Ed took some photos and readings using the on-board equipment of the Airlsleaker. But when he checked the results, there was nothing recorded. He thought this very strange, so reached into the arm of his jacket and pulled out his e-reader, switched modes to writing and recorded the colours and shapes he had observed. When he played back his notes, all was OK.

Ed reassured Jenny, with, "I think we've spent enough time here, lets get back home."

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Jenny was rather concerned that it would be too dark to be able to get safely home, but Ed assured her that the air sleaker had excellent night navicon and lighting systems. There would be nothing to worry about.

Ed turned the air sleaker around and headed back the way they had come. Soon they were back into the main gorge and Ed eased the air sleaker upwards to escape the gorge, then headed the craft back in a homeward direction.

By this time the last rays of the sun were about to disappear below the horizon and the two silvery moons were quite high in the early night sky. The light was quite eerie as the orange and silvery rays melted together, fighting with each other to light up the rocks. On some their orange features were clearly picked out, whilst others were little more than in semi shadow.

The air sleaker was making good speed and passed over the outlying group of rocks. The home dwellings could just be made out, almost touching the horizon. They looked temptingly near, yet far enough away; that it left Ed and Jenny, feeling they would never make it home, yet as time passed by, the dwellings, ever faster sneaked up upon them.

Jenny exclaimed that she was going to be in some trouble for getting back so late, her Father liked her to be in before sunset normally.

Ed said that he'd go straight to Jenny's dwelling first to ensure she got home safely.

Soon Ed was retrieving Jenny's safety gear and bidding her good night. They paused, both looking into each other's eyes as if a secret communication was taking place, yet in reality, they both felt awkward, neither knew what to do next. Ed clumsily leaned forward and pecked Jenny on the cheek, saying, "good night, hope to see you again tomorrow, hope you don't get too much grief from the SCs."

Jenny replied, "SCs?....Oh I know what you mean..... only have a Father, our Mother died a few years back."

Ed said, "Oh sorry to hear that." as if it had just happened.

"Better go" said Jenny.

"Yeah, see you soon." replied Ed, he couldn't help but notice that Jenny had the same red flushed appearance as she had before their flight. Mind you he felt pretty warm himself and wondered what he must look like.

"Hopefully tomorrow." said Jenny wistfully. Then she turned and walked into her dwelling, paused for a moment at the open doorway, looked over her shoulder at Ed as if she were savouring the moment, capturing the memory of what he looked like standing there before her in his flight suit. Ed likewise admiring once again Jenny's stylish costume, emphasising her beautiful figure. As she turned to walk fully into the dwelling and the door gently slid into place, Ed caught sight of Jenny's long gleaming hair again as it flicked around following the movement of her head. How he wished now that he'd kissed her lips rather than her cheek.

As Ed hung around, just in-case there were fireworks, he could not help but reflect upon their adventure and the way that Jenny had clung onto him as they rode the Airsleaker, kept coming back into his mind. It brought that familiar gooey feeling back to his stomach. He longed to see

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Jenny standing at the door again. Instead, he caught a sight of her at an upstairs window. He could swear he caught the sight of her raise her hand up to her mouth, she seemed to kiss it then held the hand out towards him and she seemed to be blowing. Ed had no doubts that Jenny felt as strongly about him as he did about her. He returned the gesture and mouthed, "everything OK?"

Jenny mouthed back, "Yes..... perfect." She stood at the window staring down at Ed, whilst he not daring to move, least the magic spell be broken. After what seemed like an eternity, Jenny's image at the window faded as she faded in the LCD light filter. Just as Ed was about to turn and walk over to the Airsleaker, he caught sight of Jenny again as she took one last look at him, before fading in the filter again.

Ed climbed back aboard the Airsleaker, after having stowed Jenny's safety gear, and he made the air sleaker climb back up into the silvery sky and headed off towards the two moons.

~~~~~

Chapter 3 – Through The Back Door

"Sub-zero Ed," Paul greeted Ed, then continued, "How did last night go?"

Ed appeared to have not heard the question, but instead asked his own question of, "Where's the SCs this morning then?"

Paul replied, "I think they muttered something about going to the trading station, MSC's weed waster has gone on the faulty spiral, possibly heading towards the recyc plant."

Ed pointed out, "I didn't actually touch the weed waster, I hope he realises that."

Paul replied, "Yeah I think he knows that. Its something to do with the power regulation system, I think he said moisture was to blame, whoever that is."

"Rain or mist, you brain loss clan boy. Wonder where the FSC put the Tastiday?" replied Ed.

"Der, I think she left it on the table ready for you along with a bowl, as she knows you have difficulties with your sight and engaging your brain first thing." Jested Paul.

"Hey look who's talking, Mister I can't find my comter unit, oh it's still attached to yesterday's clothes." replied Ed.

"Hey Mister cranky, just eat your low carb garb and refuel your brain." said Paul.

Despite engaging with the usual banter with his brother, Ed was wondering how Jenny was and whether he'd see her again today. The very thought of Jenny, reminded him of their adventure last night, it bought back the familiar memories of her clinging onto him tightly and their parting, it also reminded Ed of the temporary buildings that they had seen in the secret gorge, which prompted Ed to say, "Paul, you'll never guess what Jenny and I saw last night in that canyon that you and I saw in the afternoon."

"I'm shocked that you took Jenny to our place." mocked Paul.

"Seriously, we saw some form of temporary factory complex. There were coloured lights and gases emerging from it, goodness knows what was going on down there. I tried to take photos

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

and readings but the Airsleaker's kit wouldn't record anything. I ended up taking notes on my e-reader. I wondered if we could do some research on the Galcomnet." asked Ed.

"More like, could I do the research, you're hopeless with the Galcomnet." replied Paul.

"Its too complicated." complained Ed.

"Just stick to your fly boy activities and leave the real brain work to Paul-e-kins." rebuked Paul.

"Lets have breakfast first and retire to your terminal." replied Ed, not rising to the bait.

"OK fly boy, see you shortly, I've already had mine." Said Paul heading towards the door.

"Awe breakfast alone, how I crave for intelligent conversation, but then the FSC has gone shopping, so I'll just have to put up with my own company." replied Ed.

Paul wasn't going to respond, he just slipped through the doorway and disappeared down the corridor.

~~ Later ~~

"OK Ed just give me the interactive glove, I don't want you straying off into areas you won't have a clue how to get out of." said Paul.

Ed replied, "Hey clan boy you have some interesting stuff here about astronomy, never knew you were into this sort of stuff and there's loads on materials science, you're a secret little boffin aren't you?"

Paul said, "Just give me the glove or I'll shut down the terminal."

"OK clan boy, don't get your clothes in a twist, here's your glove. Oh and here are the notes I took down last night." replied Ed.

Paul took both items, the glove and e-reader. He fired up the e-reader and read through Ed's notes. "Pretty comprehensive notes clan boy, I'm impressed."

"Thanks", replied Ed, "Do you think its enough to find some relevant info on the Galcomnet, so we can find out what is being made in that temporary factory?"

"We'll just have to see what we come up with, I'll do some searches to find what matches I come up with." replied Paul.

"Shall I see what I can find to drink in this place?" Asked Ed.

"Yeah, but don't raid Dad's drinks unit again, you know how hopping mad he was last time." replied Paul.

"As if I'd make that mistake again, anyway I have my own secret supply now." said Ed.

"Wow clan boy I'm impressed. Off you go you little hunter you, I'm going into busy mode now." replied Paul.

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Ed headed off through the doorway and said, "I'm in search mode now, clan boy on a mission."

By the time Ed got back with two drinks and nibbles on a tray, Paul had some good news for him.

"Who says you aren't adaptable? Ed does domesticated, I'm impressed. By the way got somewhere with your stuff." reported Paul.

"Help yourself to nibbles and a drink, what have you got for me?" asked Ed placing the tray gently beside the terminal.

"Thanks. The indications are that what is being manufactured is a fairly complex, but a totally illegal and deadly mix of gases. The stuff that's escaping is bad enough to give you a serious headache and sickness for a few weeks." replied Paul as he took the interactive glove off and helped himself to a handful of nibbles and a drink.

"How on Regenis 4 are they getting away with that then?" asked Ed.

"The question is more, why are they doing it, what is their aim and who the heck are they?" replied Paul.

"Good point. If it's so deadly, they must be planning some form of weapon, but for what purpose? As to who they are, well there are many off worlders who'd love to have control of Regenis 4's resources and wealth, but why manufacture a weapon on the planet where they are likely to be found?" responded Ed.

"Ah but, they don't think they can be found, remember the cloaking? We only stumbled upon their factory because we happened to take that particular path to their area of operations and then we wouldn't have seen it if you hadn't have gone back at night." replied Paul.

"True, but I don't think we're dealing with off-worlders, call it a gut feeling." said Ed.

"It doesn't really matter who they are; they are up to dangerous stuff and now we know we've got to do something to stop them." pointed out Paul.

"A thought just occurred to me, what if it isn't going to be used against the populace of Regenis 4, but against another planet?" asked Ed.

"What you think it could be our own administration?" asked Paul.

"It could be, after all we don't know what is happening on the intergalactic scene do we?" pointed out Ed.

"True, true." agreed Paul, then he offered, "I could search the administration's Secretet."

"How on Regenis 4 can you do that, it's so secure and locked up with encryption, you'd be detected in a matter of milliseconds." asked Ed.

Paul pointed out, "Every system has a back door and weakness and the Secretet is no exception. A mate of mine cracked it a few months back and gave me a copy of the routine to get beyond the encryption ring and security hurdles. But I must make sure she's not using her copy as two can't run at the same time, otherwise we'd be detected in the drop of an Apsicon seed. I'll just contact my mate." Paul switched to the visicall screen and called his academy pall. "Hi are you visiting

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

George this morning?" The rather attractive girl on the screen replied that she had no intention of visiting George all day, so Paul could stay all day if he needed to. Paul asked if anyone else was likely to visit. She assured him that he was the only other one with George's address. Paul thanked her and switched back to the Galcomnet. "OK lets go in" he confidently announced.

Ed remarked, "Hey Paul you dark horse you, never told me anything about that little beauty."

Paul replied, "What Felicity, she's just a mate, she's dating one of those athlete types from another academy." Then Paul turned his attention to searching the administration's most secret areas.

After about an hours search, Paul announced that he'd been to the "inner heart" of the administration and there was no record of any research or manufacturing projects of weapons or anything even vaguely associated with the boys discovery.

"Well if its not the administration, its either some dissatisfied faction of the Regenis 4 populace who want a greater share of the planet's riches, or its off-worlders. So our next question is who is it and why?" said Ed.

Paul asked, "Shouldn't we tip off the administration as to what is going on under their noses?"

"Oh yes they are going to believe two wild and scary academy students." retorted Ed.

"Hey we're not wild and scary!" protested Paul.

"To them we will be, if we start spreading rumours about the enemy within. We need more to go on before we make any accusations." said Ed.

"We should at least tell the SCs what we've discovered." said Paul.

"No I don't even think we should tell them, Mum will worry about the danger and bound to make a blunder that will alert the administration." replied Ed.

"What do you mean?" asked Paul.

"Well we've only got be back a bit late from somewhere and she'd blab it all out to the administration as to what we'd found. Whereas if she knows nothing, she'd only contact e-services, who will just treat us as just missing." replied Ed.

"Good point." said Paul and continued, "If we're to go back to that plant, we need some seriously effective safety gear."

"Oh yes I forgot about that aspect." replied Ed.

"Come to think of it, I know where I can borrow some seriously good supplies of safety gear, without being detected. However, I'm going to need to involve Elcesior." offered Paul.

"Why Elcesior?" asked Ed.

"Because he is my man with the finger on the gear." replied Paul.

"Do you think he can keep the secret?" asked Ed.

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

"I'm sure he can, after all his neck would be on the block if his borrowing activities were discovered." said Paul.

"What makes you so sure he will want to get involved in the first place?", asked Ed.

"Let's just say, you don't know everything about me clan boy", pointed out Paul.

"OK point taken, say no more. See what you can arrange OK?" asked Ed.

"Leave it with me." replied Paul.

Just then Edward and Maria came back.

Maria asked, "OK boys? What have you busy doing?"

"Just a bit of surfing, looking for some new tunes and videos." replied Ed.

"What's that on the screen? Looks kind of official?" asked Edward.

Paul suddenly realised, he hadn't signed out of the Secretenet. Quick thinking he said, "Oh its a game that we found on the Galcomnet."

Edward looked quite impressed, "Looks quite realistic."

"How would you know?" asked Paul, forgetting that he was talking to his Dad.

"I used to work for the administration, when we first came to Regenis 4." replied Edward.

"Yes I thought they'd done a really good job too." said Ed coming to his brother's aid.

"Well must get on, I'm helping at the mine this afternoon. Fancy coming with me?" asked Edward.

Paul hurriedly said that he had some academy stuff to do. Whilst Ed had no excuses, so volunteered his services, it was a while since he'd been down the mine in any case, so he was curious how it had progressed.

Maria looked at Edward and Ed and instructed them to both take care, then asked if they wanted any lunch before they went. Edward declined, saying that they'd get something at the canteen as it would be free anyway. Ed added, that it was usually pretty tasty anyway, then realised he'd upset his Mum a bit with that comment.

The three men set off in their various directions.

~~~~~

### Chapter 4 - Its all on the label

Edward and Ed arrived at the mine just in time for a shift change. "Ah well the canteen will be fairly empty, usually only a few of those coming off shift bother to stop for a meal." said Edward.

"More munchies for you and me then Dad." replied Ed.

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

"I don't believe it, you just called me Dad, I'm going to faint." said Edward, pretending to faint, then he continued, "OK let's sign-in and go straight to the canteen."

After their really tasty meal, they went to the protective gear lockers and suited up, then went down the mine in the express lift.

"Well not much change so far, since I last came down with you." remarked Ed.

"Apparently there is at the cutting edge, they have some new machines that came from Galtoid 3." replied Edward.

The lift stopped and the doors opened, revealing a largish cavern with a shiny see through transport tube to the right.

"Oh how convenient there's a Transvec waiting for us." said Edward and walked in the direction of the open end of the shiny tube.

Sure enough there was a transport vehicle waiting for them. Once they were seated and had fastened their belts, the vehicle gently moved off down the tube, gathering speed as it travelled down the mine. They could see the rock formations and their subtle changes as seams of valuable minerals were revealed, some were pretty large others quite small and insignificant. As the vehicle gained speed, the colour changes seemed almost like disco lights.

After about fifteen minutes the Transvec started to slow down until it eventually came to rest at the other open end of the see through tube.

"Well we have to walk from here, but by the painted symbols on the wall its not far as they've only recently extended the Transvec tube to this point. Now I probably don't need to remind you, but stay close and keep a wary eye out for machines, there are all sorts of servebots around here, some are quite small and its really easy to trip over them, I know I've done it." said Edward.

"OK Dad. Thanks for the reminder." said Ed.

They walked for a bit and encountered several other people carrying out tasks along the route. Most looked up and nodded at them.

"Wow! that is a big beastie!" Exclaimed Ed.

"She sure is impressive, isn't she?" replied Edward and continued, "Our task is to carry out the minor course corrections and ensure the sensitive parts of the machine are kept clear of obstructions."

There were two people already in the control area of the mining machine. Edward gently tapped the shoulder of the tallest of the two. He nodded in acknowledgement of the signal, adjusted some controls, then both of the people in the control area turned around and Ed got a shock as he recognised Jenny's face. He stammered, "Hello Jen... Jenny what are you doing down here?"

Jenny replied, "I could ask you the same, but I can guess the answer, this is my Dad by the way, Dad this is Ed, the one with the new air sleaker and this Ed is Grakeon, my Dad."

Ed, instinctively put out his hand for Grakeon to shake it, but then realised that Grakeon only had

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

one arm, the left one. Ed was about to withdraw his hand, when Grakeon gave it a hearty, yet slightly awkward shake with his left hand. The way in which he skilfully did this indicated that he was used to people not realising that he only had the one arm. Ed heard Grakeon say, "Pleased to meet you", through his headset.

Grakeon seemed to be about the same age as Ed's father, although it was actually difficult to judge someone's age when they were wearing the mine's protective gear. Ed was going more by the lines on Grakeon's face, than anything else. Grakeon had a kindly face. Thinking back to the events of last night when Jenny had said that she was going to be in some trouble for getting back so late and her Father liked her to be in before sunset normally; Ed found it difficult to imagine the man before him getting really cross. Ed felt that even though he didn't know Grakeon, there was something quite likeable about him, whether the feeling would be mutual, Ed was not sure.

Ed introduced his Dad to Grakeon, Edward put out his left hand and the handshake looked a lot more normal, although none-the-less a hearty one. Both men were heard to say, pleased to meet you. Then Grakeon showed Edward the controls of the machine, whilst Jenny told Ed what he needed to do, she stood behind him at times and Ed really enjoyed the contact as Jenny reached round him, to point to particular controls. Whilst Ed tried to concentrate on what Jenny was saying, he could not help but drift back in his mind to last night and he found himself again wistfully thinking, "I wish I had kissed those lips of yours," as he stared into her eyes, appearing to be paying close attention to what she was saying.

Jenny had gone silent as she returned Ed's stare. This time around there was none of the awkwardness of yesterday's earlier encounters. Suddenly both Ed and Jenny were aware that the chatter that they had heard in the background of their own conversation had also died. They looked at their respective fathers and instantly both Ed and Jenny went bright red. Even though they were wearing helmets, their faces were unmistakeably red, deep red.

Both fathers looked at each other and smiled. It was Grakeon who was first to speak, he said, "I think someone will be wanting to put in an extra shift, looks like your lad needs some extra coaching." then to Jenny he said, "No need to rush back, Elcesior and I will be watching the game this afternoon and I know you just get bored. See you later." Then he turned his attention back to Edward and cheerily says, "Really nice to meet you" He nods towards the mining machine and says, "Treat her gentle eh?"

"Oh I see the....." replies Edward and nods towards the machine, then continues, "Be a pleasure to use a bit of quality kit. Enjoy the game, I'm going to catch it latter, just couldn't turn up opportunity to earn a few credits."

"Well, more than pays for the sports subscription eh?" asked Grakeon and he turned and left the machine and mining area. He didn't once turn back, obviously focused on getting away to watch the game.

Ed watched as Grakeon headed off up the mine, he felt guilty that he was holding Jenny back and said to her, "You don't have to stay you know, I think I can manage."

Jenny replied, "Oh..... don't you want me to stay? I just thought...."

They are disturbed by Edward as he says, "When you've made up your minds who's staying and going, can we get on with the task in hand?"

Ed apologetically said, "Er... yes.... sorry." Then to Jenny he said, "I could do with the help, if I'm

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

honest I wasn't really paying full attention to your explanation of what to do."

Jenny delighted that she could show off her expertise now, set about demonstrating the machine's controls again. This time Ed was paying closer attention.

Edward left them to get on with the task, but every so often he glanced round to watch the pair as it reminded him so much of his early days when he'd first met Maria. Edward found himself drifting back in his fond memories, between bouts of concentration when course corrections were required.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

"How did you get on with securing the safety gear then Paul?" asked Ed.

"Not a problem, I told you my man had his finger on the gear. I hid it in the back of the equipment store. How did the mine duty go? Heard you bumped into an old friend." replied Paul.

"Well not so old." said Ed, his eyebrows rising and a big grin forming on his face.

"I gather it was just as much a surprise for Jenny." said Paul.

"How did you find out?" asked Ed.

"Some brothers just can't keep secrets." replied Paul.

"Don't I know it, should have guessed it was Elcesior. When are we going to take another look at the the secret factory?" asked Ed.

"Well if we go during daylight, we may not be able to find it again and in any case we might be spotted." replied Paul.

"True, true. Suppose we could pretend we're going out on a double date and head off late afternoon like Jenny and I did last time. suggested Ed.

"I'll just have to invent a girlfriend for the night then." said Paul.

"What about Felicity?" asked Ed.

"Just hope the word doesn't get back to Felicity or her boyfriend or I'll be dead meat." replied Paul, then he continued, " I'll just pop out and sneak the safety gear into the Airlsleaker's carrier."

Ed replied, "OK. and I'll just go and keep the SC's busy chatting about mine and Dad's, er.... mining experience. If I drop into the conversation about meeting Jenny that'll keep the FSCs occupied with twenty questions."

Paul sneaked out to the equipment store, whilst Ed set off for the entertainment room and found his parents already chatting about the encounter with the Fluorescens clan. Ed decided to skip his involvement, made the pretence of picking something up and darted straight back out again.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

The air sleaker came to rest behind a group of rocks, the factory was in clear sight, but the rocks

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

offered a fair degree of cover and protection.

Ed asked Paul, "Did your mate do something about ensuring the radios in the headgear can't be picked up by this lot?" He pointed in the direction of the factory.

"Yes he has changed the frequencies. He said he used scatter frequency transmitters, that not only scramble the signals, but also transmit for random periods on various frequencies, sometimes using two or three at the same time. so not a chance of being understood, even if someone does pick up the signals and because of the frequency spread they'd have difficulty in tracing the signals." replied Paul.

"Wow, he's thorough!", remarked Ed.

Ed and Paul changed into the safety gear, hoping that they weren't already too close, although they couldn't smell anything out of the ordinary before putting on their suits.

"Oh excellent," exclaimed Ed, "I see you have brought some gas analysers."

"That was my mates idea, I thought it was a good one. He also included gas capture units so we can take samples to the authorities or whoever we decide to disclose our findings to." replied Paul.

"OK excellent work, let's go for it, but be careful not to be seen." said Ed.

They edged their way round the rocks closer and closer to the factory, stopping every so often to test the air for gasses. Eventually they got close enough to get some interesting readings and samples. Paul suddenly noticed that his suit had some grey and green powder on it, when he told Ed, he suggested they take samples of it before packing the suits away for de-contamination processing. Then moved even closer to the factory and noticed some containers that were covered with some form of sheet material. Paul, lifted one corner of the the sheeting and crawled under it. He was gone for about a minute. Ed was about to go in to see what had happened, when he saw the sheet move as Paul was about to emerge. Ed suddenly caught sight of someone heading towards them, he ducked out of sight and called to his brother to stay put and explained why. He heard Paul, whisper, "That was close, I was about to emerge from, the sheet when you spoke."

Ed waited for what seemed like an eternity, before carefully peeping round the rocks. The person was still in sight, but with his back to Ed, he was retrieving something from another stack of boxes near to where Paul was hiding. Ed updated Paul, telling him not to say anything, in-case he gave himself away.

Ed waited again for quite a while before peeping again, when he did look, the person appeared to have gone. However, Ed was taking no chances and kept looking around in the hope that he'd catch sight of the person on their way back to the factory, but nothing could be seen. He called Paul and suggested that he carefully emerge from his hiding place, whilst Ed keep watch. Shortly afterwards, the sheet moved and Paul emerged, he kept low down and scouted round the rocks, eventually ending up by Ed.

"Any sign of Herbert?" asked Paul.

"Who's Herbert?" asked Ed

"The Herbert who came out for more supplies of course." replied Paul.

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

"No nothing, hopefully he's disappeared back inside. Did you find anything useful under the sheet?" asked Ed.

"Well actually yes, three things. One of the boxes was damaged and I managed to retrieve some tubes of some sort of liquid. I also noted the markings of the boxes, including some form of organisational logo. I've captured it all in my e-reader." replied Paul.

"Well I think we've done as much as we can here, time to retreat back home." said Ed.

They sneaked off round the rocks, back in the direction of the Airsleaker. When they arrived back at the air sleaker Ed asked, "Should we keep the suits on or take them off now."

Paul replied, "Best to keep them on for now, as we don't have the decontam units with us and might be affected by whatever the suits have been exposed to."

Ed agreed and they climbed aboard the Airsleaker. Ed took off carefully, keeping the air sleaker low down and behind rocks wherever possible. However, they got nearly to the entrance to the canyon when they heard the engines of other airborne vehicles. Paul turned round and to his shock and dismay saw two vehicles heading in their direction.

"We have company, you'll really need to earn your pilot's licence now and avoid being followed." said Paul to Ed.

Ed replied, "OK hang on this could get rough, will need to drop in some sudden swings to get round corner quickly. How far do you think they are from us?"

Paul looked round and guesstimated the distance between them and the nearest chasing vehicle, he reported back to Ed that he thought they were about 300 metres and possibly closing.

Ed increased the speed, swung through the entrance to the canyon and headed immediately to the right, then swung violently upward above the canyon entrance and in a "U" turn headed to the left. Paul heard him say, "That might fool them, they will assume we've continued in the same direction we were heading when we left the canyon."

They stayed high up and swung off to the right down another side path, once they entered this, it became more like a fully enclosed tunnel with only a few vertical shafts leading up. The tunnel took quite violent turns to the left and right, at one point Ed thought they were going to crash, as the walls closed in and left only about 8 centimetres either side of the Airsleaker. Due to Ed's skill he managed to make it through the gap.

"Where does this lead?" asked Paul.

"It comes out a couple of kilometres north of our original entry point." Ed replied.

Well there's one thing for sure, those craft following us wouldn't get through that last gap. Great flying by the way." said Paul.

"Thanks, I thought our number was up on that one myself. The other craft, definitely wider than ours then?" asked Ed.

"Yep, they sure were. Mainly due to the weapons on the sides." replied Paul.

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

"I don't like the sound of that last bit." said Ed, "hang on tight this next bit looks a bit rough, some swinging about needed, I think we'll slow up a bit now."

Ed eased back on the throttle considerably and then violently swung to the right and upwards, followed by an immediate downward and left roll. Then they swung to the right and immediately left. Paul suddenly said, "What is that noise?"

Ed delayed answering the question as he consulted the Airsleaker's instrument panel. Then he replied, "Oh it's OK, its actually the sound of our engine, being reflected back to us by one of the small side crevices."

"Are you sure its not a cave collapse or the engines of the other craft?" asked Paul.

Ed consulted the instrument panel again, but confirmed that he was absolutely sure.

After quite a lot of darting about to left right up and down, they eventually emerged out onto the open plain. Ed flew to the nearest rock group and halted the air sleaker for a while, whilst he checked his navigational equipment. Then declared that all was clear and it would be safe to return home, but he still took the precaution of flying low and darting between rock groups, until they reached the open lands. Once again he halted for a while checking his instruments and then doing a visual scan of the skyline, although it was difficult to see much as it was quite dark now, even with the two moons in the night sky. Ed was about to set off, when he caught sight of something gleaming in the distance, then something else quite close to it. Ed reversed the air sleaker behind the group of rocks.

Paul nervously asked, "What's up?"

"I think I've seen something moving in the distance, could be the pursuers on the other hand might be nothing at all, I'm taking no chances, we'll hold up here for a while. " replied Ed, then he turned off the air sleaker and its instruments.

"What did you do that for?" asked Paul.

Ed replied, "In-case they are tracking our instrumentation. We'll rely on visual observation for a while until we're sure it isn't the baddies."

For the next half hour Ed and Paul took it in turns to peer round the rocks and check for any signs of the the other craft. They had several sightings, which seemed to come ever nearer, then suddenly headed off back towards the main rock outcrop, obviously returning to their base. After a further 15 minutes of waiting, nothing further was sighted, so Ed said, "OK. lets go now. Where did you put the decontam units?"

Paul replied, "I hid them in that small outcrop behind our place."

"OK. I'll head straight for that first, we can clean up the suits and Airsleaker, get changed and then head home." said Ed as he started the Airsleaker.

Soon they had reached the decontam units. Paul had kept an eye open for the the other craft and luckily there were no further sightings.

Soon they had decontaminated the suits and the Airsleaker. The suits were packed in the

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

decontam units and the samples bagged up for lab analysis.

"Homeward bound then clan boy." said Paul.

"Am I tired after all that, I could sleep for a week!" responded Ed.

Paul reminded Ed, "Don't forget about our cover story of double date."

"Oh yes I'd forgotten all about that." said Ed.

They quickly discussed their imaginary dates, so they wouldn't be caught out by the SCs. However, they needn't have worried, the SCs were well into a drama cast and just nodded at the two boys in acknowledgement that they were back safe.

"See you tomorrow clan boy" said Ed to Paul.

"Get ya Zees." replied Paul. He sneaked the samples into one of his hiding places and settled down for the night.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

"Sub-Zero Ed, off for your Tastiday?" said Paul.

"Must have food." replied Ed

"Easy clan boy, catch you afterwards, we can look at the notes on my e-reader and see if we can find anything useful on the Galcomnet." suggested Paul.

"OK whatever you say, just let me get my Tastiday." replied Ed

The two met up about 20 minutes later in Paul's room. He already had the Galcomnet up and running and was about to start the searches. After a short while, their Dad poked his head round the door and asked, "searching for new games?"

"Well actually we're looking for some clues to get us past a tricky level of that game we were playing the other day." replied Ed.

"Oh yes, hey that's the description of a chemical compound isn't it? Is it some sort of chemical weapon threat?" asked Edward.

Paul and Ed were so shocked at the fact that their Dad, whom they normally thought of as being such a "stuffer duffer", had picked up on what they had discovered so quickly.

"Well it is isn't it?" asked Edward.

"We didn't know, so that's why we were doing a search on Galcomnet." said Ed, hoping this would throw their Dad off of the scent.

Edward picked up Paul's e-reader and scanned the list of chemical names and origination codes, then he saw the logo.

"What is going on here boys? This logo is the Plessorean Corporation logo from Galtoid 3." Asked

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Edward.

"Is it?" asked Ed, then he turned to Paul hoping he could swing things back onto the game theme and said, "Ah that explains who the adversary is in the game."

Edward was obviously not convinced and continued, "What are you two boys up to? It isn't a game is it?"

Neither boy could look straight at their Dad's face, which instantly told him, he was right.

"OK come clean, what is going on and come to it, what is in that bottle by the terminal, the label looks a bit strange?" asked Edward.

Both boys looked at each other and nodded.

"OK. Dad, you're right it isn't a game, we've stumbled on something that we think is a huge threat, but we wanted to make sure before doing anything hasty." Admitted Ed.

"Right start from the beginning." insisted Edward.

Between Ed and Paul, they told the story of their discovery and research to-date.

When they finished Edward admitted, "Well I can see why you wanted to keep this secret, tell the wrong person and you'd tip off the perpetrators. Mind you I think you may have tipped them off yourselves, that someone is onto them. I wouldn't mind betting they have either increased their security or have shut the factory down and cleared out."

"What do you think we should do next?" asked Ed.

"Mmmm tricky, give me some time, I still have some trusted contacts in the administration, I'll do a bit of digging around to ensure this isn't anything to do with them. As you suspect though, I'm sure this is some sort of off-world threat. Of course the one thing we don't know is whether it is aimed at us or at another planet or group of planets." replied Edward.

"OK. we'll continue our research into the chemicals and prove the chemical weapon threat." said Paul.

"Be careful to cover your tracks, use different search engines to check out the different chemicals. I suppose you haven't got user names and accounts other than your own?" Asked Edward.

"Hey you're not dealing with amateurs here Dad. Got it covered." replied Paul.

"If you need more user names I still have a few up my sleeve that you can use." offered Edward.

"Oh yes please, you can never have enough." replied Paul.

Edward asked if Paul's e-reader was networked and after being assured it wasn't, he entered several account details onto it. Then reminded Paul to delete them after he'd finished using them. Paul was amazed at how his Dad could remember all the account details without having to refer to an e-reader.

Edward remarked, "That's the beauty of being an Administration employee on the security side,

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

they provide memory augmentation that is secure to the individual."

"What is augment..." asked Ed

"An implant in my brain, that enhances my memory, I can store memories and information away securely, like this conversation and there will be no trace in my brain, but instead it is locked away in my secure storage and only accessible by me. Even the administration can't access it, without me wishing them to. Its a kind of double security, in-case of spies within the ring of spies." replied Edward.

"You were a spy?" asked Ed.

"Who was a what?" replied Edward winking, "I'm just a man trying to scratch a living on a desolate rock in this sector of space."

The boys continued their research and their Dad disappeared for a few days, "on business".

~~~~~

### Chapter 5 - With Friends Like These

"Just how many days is a few?" asked Paul, "Dad has been gone for nearly a week now and apart from a VisiCall on his second day, we've heard nor seen nothing of him."

Ed replied, "Yes I got to admit I'm getting pretty worried myself now. What can we do about it though, we haven't got a clue where he went or who he was going to see?"

"Maybe that's our starting point, to find out who he is most likely to have visited.", suggested Paul.

"That's all very well, but we don't want to raise any suspicions about what he was up to." said Ed.

"We won't if we merely take the tack that he was looking up old friends and we are concerned that we haven't heard from him for nearly a week." replied Paul.

"OK I'll ask Mum who were his closest friends as we believe he was planning to look one or two up whilst he was away." suggested Ed.

"That sounds OK to me. Just don't sound worried." said Paul.

Ed left Paul's room and came back about twenty minutes later.

"Well how did it go?" asked Paul.

"Mum was relieved that I talked to her as she was getting worried about Dad herself, she even said that it reminded her of their early days at Regenis 4, when he'd often disappear for weeks on end and she wouldn't have a clue when let alone if she'd see him again." replied Ed.

"Did she give you any leads as to whom he was most likely to have visited?" asked Paul.

"Yes there were several in the field so to speak, but only three highly likely in the really trusted category." said Ed.

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

"Trusted category, wow if you got to that level of conversation, Mum must be really suspicious now." remarked Paul.

"Leave it out, I'm more subtle than that. I don't think she has a clue that you and I are involved in anything, we're just caring sons as far as she's concerned. The upshot is that you and I have got access to funds and got her blessing to seek Dad out, provided we keep in touch and don't get ourselves into any trouble or danger." said Ed.

"We're in enough of that already." responded Paul.

Ed continued, "Our first port of call, is literally a port. We are going to Hescedion space port, where Dad's old mate Jerestican Klayfer works. I rang his daughter....."

"You have quite a thing with Girls don't you?" interrupted Paul.

Ed ignored him and went on to say, "...she said we'd be most welcome to stay with them for a couple of days, as the last time Jerestican saw us, you were a baby and I was a toddler. She said he'd be thrilled to see us, as for Dad visiting Jerestican, she hasn't seen him, but that doesn't mean anything, as they could have met up at Jerestican's workplace, in any case his daughter had been away for the last week, she'd only just arrived back from her academy."

"Well best pack some gear and say farewell to Mum. How are we travelling, by Airsleaker?" asked Paul.

"No way it's too far and in any case Mum wouldn't trust us on a solo journey further than half a day's ride. We're travelling by overnight Tubevec." replied Ed.

"Great, I've always fancied one of those overnight journeys. Something strangely exciting about sleeping in your Jim Jams whilst travelling on a Tubevec with a load of strangers in the compartments around you." said Paul.

"You're just downright weird Clan Boy." responded Ed.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

"Did you get any sleep?" asked Ed.

"A little. I kept hearing noises from the other compartments and corridor. I'd just get off to sleep for a while and wake up again. How about you?" replied Paul.

"Pretty much the same, I don't feel as if I'd had a wink of sleep." said Ed.

"Looking forward to meeting Academy Girl?" asked Paul.

"More keen to find out what happened to Dad." said Ed.

"Let's go and get some breakfast. I understand their cooked offerings are something to behold." suggested Paul.

As it happened both boys were in for a bit of disappointment, the catering facilities had decided to go faulty and there wasn't even a supply of Ed's favourite Tastiday.

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

So they just has some juice for breakfast.

The Transvec soon arrived at their destination, The station was absolutely packed and heaving with people heading this way and that. The space port was obviously a very popular place for travellers.

Ed said, "Carina is meeting us by the central information desk. I think it is in this direction." He was consulting his e-reader, which was displaying a map of the space port.

The two boys walked in the indicated direction and sure enough, even through the throngs of the heaving mass of people, they could see the sign "Central Information". As they got closer, Paul caught sight of a beautiful girl with chestnut shoulder length hair. He couldn't believe their luck when he saw that she was holding up a handwritten sign that read "Ed & Paul".

"That must be Carina over there." exclaimed Paul to Ed.

Ed looking in the direction Paul was pointing and saw the sign then the girl. He replied, "I suppose so."

They jostled their way through the crowd, at one point they became separated as the crowd pushed between them. But they joined up again when they reached the girl holding up the sign. Paul was first to reach her and introduced himself and at the same time checked that she had the right Paul and Ed, well after all there could be another Paul & Ed around in this crowd somewhere. By the time Ed joined them, Paul and Carina were chatting as if they were old friends meeting up again after a long break. Ed decided to take a back seat, literally, as they took a transport to Carina and Jerestican's dwelling. By the time they arrived at the apartment, it seemed as if Carina and Paul had exchanged their life stories. They hadn't stopped talking since they first met. Ed felt like a lemon sat in the back of the transport, he just concentrated on the journey, taking in all the sights, after all it was his first time at the port and he didn't want to miss a thing.

When they arrived at the apartment, it was a very attractive apartment, overlooking the main docking area of the space port itself; Carina showed the boys to their rooms. She told them that her Dad would be back in time for dinner, so they had the rest of day to settle in and explore the space port and town if they liked. Then she offered them breakfast, which Paul accepted without hesitation, what is more he even asked if Carina had some of Ed's favourite Tastiday, to which she replied, "Yes its Dad's favourite too. Although I can't understand it, I hate the stuff, prefer a good English myself." Carina then admitted that she'd known about the Tubevec's catering disaster before it came in to the station, "one advantage of being family of staff", she said.

The rest of the day was spent exploring the town, the boys were very impressed by the sheer number and variety of shops, restaurants and entertainments. They said that the port was far too busy and hectic for "country folk like them".

~~~~ Later ~~~~

Jerestican had a real surprise when he walked in and found two lads chatting to Carina, he assumed at first that the were academy pals. Then Carina explained who they were. Ed then asked if their Dad had contacted or visited Jerestican over the last five or six days. To their delight, he replied that Edward had visited him about four days ago as he was on business in the area. Jerestican asked if anything was wrong. Paul told him that they hadn't heard from him for nearly a week and thought it was a little strange, as usually he kept in close contact when he went away.

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Jerestican said, "I can see why you'd be worried then. In the old days when we worked for the Administration it would be nothing to be away for weeks without contact, but not now..... that's something different."

Ed diplomatically asked if Edward had discussed anything with Jerestican before he left. Jerestican seemed a little nervous at this question, he seemed to be avoiding any eye contact, as if he were not sure whether to say anything in-case of letting any secrets out. Ed thought this was strange behaviour for what he assumed Jerestican to be, an ex-spy. After a somewhat embarrassing pause Jerestican said, "Well actually we did discuss something that your father was investigating, but I can't really say anything about it as it was kind of related to your father's old trade."

It was interesting that Jerestican had assumed that Edward had told his sons that he was a spy, or perhaps the assumption that Jerestican was also a spy is incorrect, perhaps Edward had a cover employment and Jerestican was actually unknowingly part of that cover. This spy business was far too complicated to get your head around it all.

Paul asked, "Did Edward give any indication as to where he was going next on his journeys?"

"Well actually I suggested he visit some old colleagues that we used to work closely with and I think he was going to visit them." said Jerestican.

"Great, would you mind if we contacted them, to see if Edward had visited or contacted them?" asked Ed.

Jerestican replied somewhat hesitantly, "Well actually..... I can't ..... I can't pass on any details, as they may not appreciate me letting you know anything about them. I can however, contact them myself and see if Edward did visit or make contact."

Ed said, "That would be very helpful if you could, as we are quite concerned." He paused for a short while and then continued, "Oh and by the way we do know what Edward is investigating, as we made the discovery in the first place."

Jerestican seemed very shocked at this admission and only responded with, "Oh I see."

It was Carina who spoke next, she said, "I hope Dad manages to find him OK. I'd hate the thought of anything happening to your Dad, he was always very nice when he visited us, so it comes as no surprise that he raised two caring sons like yourselves."

Jerestican suddenly said, "I can't believe how you two have grown..... Ed was a toddler and you Paul were a babe in arms when I last saw you two. That's the problem with living out in the sticks, I didn't get to see you grow up, whereas your father saw Carinna quite often as we have always lived in busy and central places. Let's celebrate meeting up again and go out for dinner tonight, my treat."

"That's most kind of you." accepted Ed somewhat nervously, he was still unsure about Jerestican's reaction to the earlier discussion. Ed had a strong feeling that Jerestican was hiding something. It was only later when the boys were getting changed to go out, that he had a chance to discuss it with Paul, who admitted he had the same feeling of suspicion. They agreed that whilst they were keen to know if their dad had contacted Jerestican's colleagues, they also needed to watch their back and ensure they didn't stay too long and fall into some form of trap. Although it may already

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

be too late.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

The restaurant was separated off into discrete areas, each table screened off from the next by virtu-screens. These had the dual purpose of looking attractive, yet providing soundproofing, so it made it very difficult for conversations to be overheard. Guests can, if they want to, completely shield themselves in their cubicle, leaving none or only one surface transparent.

Paul whispered to Ed, "I think I'd prefer it if this place was a bit more open". Ed nodded in agreement.

They were soon shown to their table and were reading the e-menu, the silence between them was quite uncomfortable. Paul looked up and caught Carina's quizzical look, she mouthed, "What's going on? Why has the conversation died all of a sudden?"

Paul shrugged his shoulders, he didn't know if Carina could be trusted and didn't really want to put the situation to test, so decided to play dumb. He continued reading the menu, but soon looked up again as Carina spoke.

Carina said, "That's the one disadvantage to this place, there's just too much choice and all of it is really excellent."

Jerestican said, "Well I had to bring Edward's boys to somewhere fitting for the occasion."

Carina, determined to keep the conversation on a roll, said, "Well I'm going to be boring and have what I had last time we came, the Borasican stew."

Jerestican said, "Ah yes that was good, I'll join you. No pressure lads take your time, its all good, the only thing I'd advise avoiding is the Plegarian Wrap, tends to repeat on you for days afterwards. I made that mistake when I was away with Edward once, never again. Mind you we ran into an interesting Professor, can't remember his name now, anyway he had the same thing, we ran into him a couple of days later and he agreed with me, never again."

Ed replied, "OK clan boy, forewarned is fore armed, let's give the Plegarian wrap a miss then. I think I fancy the Trascedian Noodles."

Carina said, "Oh yes that is good, mind you its quite spicy, great if you like hot foods."

Ed replied, "Count me in."

Paul felt a bit under pressure now, as he was last to choose, he said, "I can't quite decide between the Hepsigianian stir fry or the Klesti salad."

Jerestican responded, "The Klesti Salad is quite metallic in taste, but very good for you, plenty of vitamins and minerals and the Hepsigianian stir fry is quite oily, but none-the-less both very good."

Paul said, "I've had the Hepsigianian stir fry before, so perhaps I'll try the Klesti salad."

Jerestican told them that they merely had to press the item on the screen twice to order. The screens changed to drinks immediately afterwards and an estimate of delivery time of the meal was displayed at the bottom of each of the screens, the time was counting down.

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

"Wow talk about time pressure, to place your order." exclaimed Paul.

"It's just for guidance." said Jerestican.

The rest of the meal passed by quite pleasantly, Carina and Jerestican asking the boys about their academy courses and plans for the future and Paul asked similar questions of Carina. They all enjoyed their meals and the time seemed to pass by quite quickly.

When they left the restaurant, two men came up to Jerestican and he started chatting with them, they seemed to be old friends. One was very tall and thin, he had a large hat on and it was impossible to make out his facial features as his face was in shadow. The other character was very short, his head quite large in proportion to the rest of his body, he had several scars across his face and looked really rough, as if he'd been in several fights and was not the sort of character that you'd want to upset. He had a very grumpy withdrawn look about him. There was generally an air about him that gave the impression that he could not be trusted.

Ed and Paul took an instant dislike to the smaller of the two characters. The taller one, whilst his face could not be seen, seemed a lot more friendly and trustworthy, although his association with the smaller man, planted seeds of doubt in the boys minds. They were quite horrified when they heard the taller man invite the party to join them.

Jerestican told the boys that these men were the friends of their father's and that he'd seen them after he'd left Jerestican.

They all climbed into a vehicle and were soon zooming away. The vehicle pulled up to a fairly nondescript building. They all got out and went inside.

The building's interior seemed to be some form of warehouse with an office at the end. Lead by the two men, the group headed to the office. Once inside Jerestican introduced the two men as Gerherp and Yestant, both were involved in import and export, hence the warehouse.

Jerestican said they had worked closely with him and Edward, although they weren't in the employ of the Administration they had helped them out of close shaves on many occasions.

Yestant, the taller of the two men, took his hat off and put it on the table. The boys immediately noticed that Yestant has very dark eye sockets, almost as if he had a pair of black eyes from a recent fight. Ed had seen pictures of people with such faces before, he strained to remember where those people had come from, but he couldn't remember the name of the place, but he knew it was quite a far off planetary system.

Both men shook hands with Ed and Paul. Gerherp seemed quite reluctant at first to step forward and shake their hands, it was almost as if he were under threat of some sort of punishment if he didn't shake hands. Whilst Yestant seemed much more enthusiastic, although you would not guess that from the expressionless look on his face, it was more the speed at which he stepped forward and extended his hand in friendship.

Jerestican asked the men, if Edward had indicated to them where he was going next.

Yestant replied, "Yep we'd given him some information about some chemical imports and as a result he said he was minded to visit Genthaed in the Galtoid sector."

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Jerestican asked, "Do you know if he actually went there?"

Yestant replied, "Well now, I only know that he booked a flight, as he did it from our office, probably still got the receipt on our system somewhere."

Jerestican then asked, "Could you find that for us, then we can check if he actually boarded the flight?"

Yestant looked at Gerherp and asked if he could dig it out. Gerherp remained rooted to the spot for a while, then he reluctantly walked to a terminal in the corner of the office and started his search for the receipt. Gerherp was obviously a man of few words as even when he delivered an e-Reader to Yestant, he said nothing.

Yestant passed the screen to Jerestican without even pausing to look at it.

Jerestican looked at the screen and nodded, then looked up at Yestant said, "Thanks, is it OK if we borrow this?"

Yestant replied, "Keep it, it was a freeby from one of our exporters. Got dozens of 'em in the corner, dunno what to do with 'em."

Yestant turned to the boys and said, "If yer ever want any cheap flights we can help you out, we've got so many call-ins we probably won't use them in our lifetimes."

Ed and Paul just nodded in acknowledgement and Jerestican asked, "Haven't you got your own space freighter these days?"

Yestant replied, "No need for it now, we're doing so much trade in so many directions we wouldn't have time to make the flights. We sold the freighter a few years back, bought this place on the proceeds."

Jerestican asked, "Do you still get out there?" and pointed towards the sky.

Yestant replied, "Blimey, I spend most of my time out there, Gerherp is the land based part of the partnership, got fed up with our customers picking fights with him."

Ed and Paul couldn't help but feel, that it wasn't surprising that others wanted to pick a fight with him, he was such an objectionable character, moody, slow and so surly.

Jerestican turned to Gerherp and asked if he missed the travel, Gerherp simply waved his hand to indicate he didn't. Then Jerestican turned back to Yestant and thanked him for the information and held up the e-Reader.

Yestant offered them a lift back to Jerestican's place and Jerestican accepted the offer.

They were soon back at the apartment. Jerestican held up the e-Reader and said that he'd do some research and find out if Edward ever did board the flight.

Carina invited Ed and Paul to sit and have a drink. They sat and whilst Carina fetched the drinks there was quite an embarrassing silence. It was Ed who eventually broke the silence when he asked if Carina had ever met Yestant and Gerherp before.

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Carina admitted that she knew only a few of her Dad's friends and colleagues but Yestant and Gerherp were not amongst those that she knew.

Paul said, "Gerherp was chatty wasn't he?"

They all laughed.

Carina said, "Gerherp is probably a really nice guy, its just that he's a Reglaxian and their physical looks plus the pheromones that they give out are so objectionable from a human viewpoint."

Ed asked, "Ferry whats?"

Carina replied, "Pheromones, its the personal perfumes that we all emit, we usually have several and they change in response to the situation we face. Ever heard of the smell of fear?"

Ed responded, "Yeah I have, but..."

Carina continued, "Well the Reglaxian's emit a combined fear and aggressive smell, or at least that's how humans read it. Probably reads as friendly to a fellow Reglaxian. That's why humans think he's such an objectionable character and pick fights with him. They think he's aggressive towards them, but he's probably a really nice guy just wishing people would take to him, like Yestant your and my dad obviously have."

Paul said, "No wonder he stays here, the mere sight of him seems to indicate he's up for a bit of a fight."

Ed said, "I feel guilty now, as I illogically took an instant dislike to him. As for Yestant, as he had his face covered and I couldn't see his eyes I thought he was hiding something."

Carina replied, "He was hiding something, his eyes. We humans are used to being able to see people's eyes and use them to confirm someone's sincerity. I forget what race Yestant is from, but his race don't have colours in their eyes, so we cannot use them as a clue, so again we are at a loss regards trusting them."

Ed commented, "It was funny, when he took the hat off, he seemed a lot more friendly, although I still had a sense of mistrust."

Carina said, "That would be the eyes. If you think back to what actually happened and what was said, I think you'll come to the conclusion that they actually wanted to help us."

Paul interjected, "Gerherp was rather reluctant to go to the Galcomnet terminal and check the flight details though."

Carina corrected him with, "No he wasn't, he was going as fast as a Reglaxian can go in our gravity. Where they come from, the gravity is about half ours. Life must be pretty difficult here for Gerherp."

Ed decided that as they felt guilty enough, he'd try and change the conversation, he said, "Let's hope your Dad manages to turn up something about Edward that can help us."

Carina agreed and they sat quietly enjoying their drinks, then Carina put on a musivid and they started chatting about how musivids were made and debating which were the best.

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

When they decide to go to bed, Ed and Paul managed to have a confidential chat, they agreed that they were still unsure about Jerestican, Yestant and Gerherp. Although in terms of the latter two they could see why they had the element of illogical mistrust. They weren't sure what they should do if Jerestican finds that their dad had boarded the flight.

~~~~~

# REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

## Chapter 6 - Who to Trust

The next morning, over breakfast Jerestican confirmed that Edward had boarded the flight to Genthæd, he offered to put them back in touch with Yestant, if they wanted to accept his offer of free flights and also fly to Genthæd.

Ed thanked Jerestican and said that they would need to consult their mother, to see what she suggested their next action should be. Then he asked if Jerestican had any idea who Edward would contact when he got to Genthæd?

Jerestican apologised and said he didn't have a clue, there certainly weren't any contacts that he was aware of.

After breakfast Ed contacted his mum and told her that Jerestican had helped them to find that Edward had flown to Genthæd, but they did not know who he'd gone to see. His mum said that there would be no point in going on a "wild goose chase" to another system, let alone planet, on the off chance that they find him. She suggested that unless Jerestican could suggest anyone else to see on Regenis 4, that the two boys come back home.

Ed passed their mum's decision onto Jerestican, in the hope that he could suggest some other lead.

Jerestican said that it would be pointless putting the boys into contact with anyone else, as it was unlikely that Edward had the time to visit anyone else, the flight had been the day after the booking had been made.

Ed and Paul packed their things, thanked Jerestican and Carina for their help and hospitality and informed them that they would be returning home.

Carina took them to the space port and they said their goodbyes.

Carina asked Paul, "You will get in touch won't you?" The tone was quite pleading in nature, so much so that Ed noted especially his brother's reaction.

Paul replied, "Hey of course we'll let you know if we find our Dad. I promise."

Ed noted that Carina seemed a bit disappointed with Paul's response, as if she were expecting more.

Ed thought to to himself, watch this space eh?

As their Transvec was not due in for a couple of hours, Ed and Paul decided to go to one of the cafés. They sat down and ordered some drinks. Whilst they were waiting, Paul caught sight of someone he thought he recognised, his Dad!

He ran across to the man, tapped him on the shoulder and exclaimed, "Hey Dad".

The man turned round. Paul was startled to see that whilst the man very much looked like his Dad, there were slight differences. The man exclaimed, "Hi Paul, is Ed with you?"

Paul was shocked, this man was quite clearly not his Dad, yet he looked so much like him. Paul

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

was confused as to what was going on, who was this man, could he be trusted, how did he know about Ed?

The man continued, "I've been looking for you both, I heard you'd arrived yesterday and that you were visiting Jerestican Klayfer, but I didn't find you in time to warn you about him."

Paul stuttered, "Just who are you?"

The man replied with a beaming smile across his face, "I am your uncle, your dad's twin brother. I don't know if he ever mentioned me to you, probably not as I'm still working for the company." He winked.

Paul asked, "How do I know you are telling me the truth?"

"Oh so he didn't tell you about me. You can always check with your mum, ask Maria about Richard and mention the third brick by the main statue at the temple of Hesaedesian on the outer rings of Jenks two. She will know about a bracelet of untold value, but of great danger that is hidden at that location. There are only two people who know about this, your mother and me. Ask her for something that will confirm that I know her. To give you a chance to check me out, I will go and return in one hour. I have something I need to do during that time. Mention to no-one else that you have seen me." replied the man and he disappeared into a crowd of people.

Paul quickly got back to Ed and quietly told him what had happened.

Ed and Paul debated what was the best thing to do, after all this could be some form of trap and the man could easily not be who or what he said it was. Ed suggested that they get as far away from the port as possible, hide somewhere and catch a later Transvec. Paul said that he thought the man was genuine, he said he could not believe how much he was like their father, he really believed he'd seen their father until he got right up close to the man.

Ed pointed out that if the people they are dealing with are that desperate they could find someone who was similar build and look to their father and make them up with some form of mask. Paul suggested that he find a quiet spot and contact their mother as the man had suggested, meanwhile Ed could wait and keep an eye out for any strange activity in-case it was some form of trap.

He added, that if Paul returned and found Ed gone, he should hide himself away somewhere secure and at some later stage get himself safely home, but NOT on the Transvec they were planning to travel on.

Paul contacted his mum as Ed had suggested. When he told her what had happened and passed the message on that the man had given her, she was shocked. She confirmed that it was highly likely that this man was their uncle Richard. She told Paul to ask him how many rings make six, and added that he should be able to answer within a count of ten. She said that if he takes longer than that, he's an imposter and operating on voice link and someone would be feeding him the answers. The answer should be 23. She told Paul to then ask him for the explanation and contact her to check if he is right. Finally Paul should ask him how many knights have visited the restored palace of five?

Paul was relieved to see Ed still sitting in the café. He gave Ed the thumbs up sign, he also looked relieved.

An hour seemed a long time to wait for the man's return, especially as he was a couple of minutes

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

late.

He sat down beside Paul and asked if he had any questions for him. Paul studied his eyes carefully as he asked the first question. The reply was almost an instantaneous "23".

He smiled as Paul said, "Mum also asked, how many knights have visited the restored palace of five?"

The man smiled again and said, "Trust Maria to throw in a catch question, the answer has to be none, as they never restored the palace of five."

Paul contacted his Mum and confirmed that this man had given the correct replies, she asked for an explanation of the first answer.

The man smiled again and said, "Tell her the sixth planet of Klesti has 23 rings and she'd know all about the twenty third as it nearly holed our craft."

Paul's mum reassuringly said, "That's your uncle Richard, still got his sense of humour and I'd recognise his voice anywhere, put him onto me."

Paul patched the communication to Richard's comms device.

"Hello Maria, Edward got himself into a scrape again I see..... Nice sensible boys you have here, shame I haven't been able to meet them before..... yes of course I'll take care of them..... I'll pass you back." Richard nodded to Paul's comms device and patched the communication back to him.

Maria said, "You can trust your uncle Richard to take care of you from now on, do as he suggests, it'll almost be like having your dad with you."

The three had something to eat whilst they carefully discussed what the boys had discovered to-date.

Richard said, "Well we can trust Yestant and Gerherp, but not Jerestican, his daughter doesn't know what he's up to, but I wouldn't trust her as she will be loyal to her dad, only natural. We must get you two to the Galtoid sector."

"Surely that's too dangerous, Jerestican will have alerted whoever is working on Genthaed." remarked Ed.

"Absolutely, that's precisely why you're not going to Genthaed, instead I'm sending you to Jedhaed. It's the nearest safe planet to Genthaed. I'll meet you there once I've established where your dad has been taken. By the way he was kidnapped, he didn't go to Genthaed of his own free will. The information about the chemicals that he was investigating was planted on our friends Gerherp and Yestant, without them knowing the significance of it. The trail was deliberately set to Genthaed, but in fact your dad should have followed up some more leads on Regenis 4. We discovered the factory soon after you had, you need to pick your friends wisely, some kid inadvertently tipped us off that something was happening near where you live. Some academy equipment went missing and when it turned up again, it had small traces of chemicals on it. We found out who had "borrowed" the equipment and he squealed like a small animal captured in a corner."

Ed was relieved that the informant had been Elcesior and not Jenny.

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Richard passed some electronic documentation to Ed and Paul through their communicators. Then he said, "I have passed to you your e-tickets and your new identities, you Ed are now Wesley Heffner and you Paul are Jack Gestner, you know each other from the Hesadian Academy, where you are currently studying. you're archaeologists interested in the temples of Jedhaed. I've also patched some reading materials to you for your flight, the password is Jedhaed. I believe in keeping it simple. Your flight departs in 30 minutes from gate 23. The flight is straight through. Talk to no-one about me or your mission and just behave as if you are archaeologists. There will be funds and accommodation waiting for you. One of our agents will keep an eye on you, but will only make contact if you get into trouble. The secret pass phrase is in your reading materials, part of which will destroy itself six hours into your flight, so I suggest you start your reading early. Good luck and I'll see you at Jedhaed. You had best get off now to gate 23 and check in ."

Ed said, "We had best get a refund on our Transvec return ticket before checking inn."

Richard replied, "No way, that will give away the fact that you are not intending to return home."

Ed pointed out, "But it'll be obvious when we fail to turn up."

"Yes but in the meantime, if someone is tracking your movements they will suspect that there's something up and possibly figure out our plans." Richard replied.

Richard shook hands and disappeared as quickly as he had before.

# REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

## Chapter 7 - An Interesting Place

Wesley and Jack checked into their flight, just slightly ahead of time. They met each other in the departure lounge, as if they had not seen each other for a while. They exchanged pleasantries grabbed a drink, sat down then seemed to be occupied in a great deal of reading. Every so often they broke off and seemed to be interestedly taking note of their fellow passengers.

The flight though long, passed off with no events. No-one seemed to have any interest in the two boys. They seemed too intent on their study, during the early part of the flight and in the latter part grabbing some sleep, along with the other passengers.

The Jedhaed space port was brightly decorated and whilst it was not enormous like the Hescedion space port, due to the lack of people seemed huge in comparison.

Wesley walked in a determined way towards the information desk and asked how he could get to the Hausian Hotel. The clerk pointed towards a conveyor belt labelled Hausian Express way and said, but you will need to check your baggage here, it is unsafe to take it with you. Wesley handed over his bag.

The clerk looked confused, "Sorry you appear to have the wrong baggage this belongs to Ed..." He didn't finish his sentence, instead another voice was heard to say, "All is correct this is the baggage of Wesley Heffner destined for the Hausian Hotel."

Wesley realised that he hadn't actually heard the voice more like remembered it. The feeling was strange. The clerk simply placed the bag on a platform and it sank into the ground.

Jack Gestner appeared to have the same sort of confusion with his luggage at first it appeared to belong to someone called Paul, then to Jack Gestner destined for the same hotel. The clerk again smiled and pointed to the conveyor belt marked "Hausian Express way".

Wesley and Jack stepped aboard and were gently whisked away into a transparent tube. They could see many similar tubes heading off in different directions, then as the tubes gradually dispersed, buildings could be seen as could be the occasional plot of greenery and coloured plants.

Wesley said to Jack, "seems a very pleasant and orderly place."

Jack was too busy taking in the scene to take any notice of Wesley's comment, let alone reply.

Soon they were standing in the lobby of the Hausian hotel. They walked over to the reception desk.

The clerk, slim and tall, with a rather oval looking face that was rather expressionless like a robot; looked odd wearing a totally purple all-in-one outfit. He looked up and said, "Good day Wesley Heffner and Jack Gestner. Your baggage is already in your rooms, 220 for you Myster Wesley and 221 for you Myster Jack. I hope adjoining rooms is satisfactory, we can change it if you wish, we can put you on separate floors or even wings?"

Wesley answered, "No that's perfectly alright with me."

He turned to Jack with a questioning look.

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Jack responded, "And with me. Do you need us to sign-in or anything."

The clerk responded, "No you were registered at the station, directly from you e-identity."

"Oh!" was all Jack could muster in reply, then said, "Thank you."

"Should you need anything else Mysters, please do not hesitate to contact or discuss it with me. I hope your stay is profitable and pleasurable at the same instant." responded the clerk.

"Thank you." said Wesley as he turned to walk away, he nodded towards Jack then to the transfer tube. Jack followed his lead.

They stepped into the transfer tube one at a time. As soon as Wesley stepped in, he seemed to disappear. When Jack stepped in, he felt a strange shiver go up his spine, then he saw Wesley standing in the corridor in front of him.

"Yes strange feeling isn't it?" asked Wesley.

"Too right it is, one second you're in the reception, next you're in the corridor to your hotel room. What's more you feel like you've had a thousand volts shot up your spine." replied Jack.

"Not only that, but outside your room, look 221." said Wesley pointing to the door.

The door opened as Jack approached it. He exclaimed, "I've been robbed already!"

Wesley rushed in, nearly knocking Jack over. "Oh hang on, I've heard of these rooms before, they're called e-rooms. You decide on the layout you like from the screen just inside the door, you've got to stay in the entrance way, as the furniture is constructed to meet your specifications. The particle beams used in the construction are pretty dangerous if you get in the way. You may need surgery to remove the leg of a chair or something similar if you get in a beam's way when it is constructing. You've also got to watch where you put things, in-case you accidentally call up the re-design facility." said Wesley.

"This must be the screen here." said Jack pointing to a small panel just inside the doorway. "Where's my baggage then?" asked Jack.

"Oh look it's down there in that recess below the panel, best to leave it there. Have fun designing your room, I'll see you in about an hour when I've unpacked and had a shower." replied Wesley.

"Where's the shower?" asked Jack.

"Wherever you want it to be, that's part of the fun." replied Wesley.

"How on earth does it fit in with the plumbing?" Asked Jack.

"I think its the other way round, the plumbing fits in with your design." said Wesley as he left to design his own room.

Jack had great fun working out the design of his room, he placed and erased things a number of times, until he settled on something he really liked. Then he found the lock option, so he couldn't accidentally embed his socks or something else in the depths of a wall, piece of furniture or the

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

shower fittings. Jack was really pleased with the end result. He watched a musivid for a few minutes, then realised that he needed to take a shower before Wesley came back.

Jack had just got in the shower, when the doorbell sounded. Jack touched the control panel that activated the intercom, "Yes who is it?" asked Jack.

"Me you dork! By the sounds of it you're still showering, shall I come back?" responded Wesley.

"Na, come in and appraise my design work." said Jack as he pressed the element of the panel that opened the door. As the door slid open two girls walked by and glanced in, they could see the naked top half of Jack in the shower. He forgot he'd put it in line of sight of the door and that the top half was transparent.

One of the girls said in a loud voice, "Nice room!"

The other giggled uncontrollably.

Wesley didn't know where to look, but smiled weakly as the two girls passed by.

As the door slid in place behind him, Wesley said, "Nice one! We weren't supposed to get ourselves noticed, but instead blend into the surroundings."

Jack replied, "Awe forget it, they were only admiring the room."

"I don't think somehow that was all they were admiring." said Wesley. He looked around the room, which seemed somewhat bigger than his own. Then he objected, "Hey your room's bigger than mine!"

"Not at all," responded Jack, "It's simply a matter of design and perspective. If I know you, you've probably over done it with the furniture and it appears to eat up the space. I've gone for the minimalistic approach, making best use of space."

"Blimey an interior designer now eh?" asked Wesley.

"What are we going to do now?" asked Jack.

"Well judging by my stomach growling, it must be lunch time, so we'd best seek out some food, then see if we can arrange some transport to the temples." suggested Wesley.

Strangely enough there were no catering facilities in the hotel apart from room service, but the expressionless reception desk clerk directed them to a "popular eatery" which was conveniently near the hotel.

He quickly produced a map with the route clearly marked out on it. The boys thanked the clerk who had already turned his attention to another guest.

"Busy place." remarked Jack.

Wesley didn't reply, he was concentrating on the map and trying to identify landmarks. Jack reached across and pointed to the flashing marks at the bottom of the map, "That's us, the map re-draws itself as we walk along, you'll notice the two dots only move when there are choices behind us."

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

"That's clever." said Wesley and he seemed to be more relaxed now.

They were soon at the "eatery", which had the atmosphere of a MacDonald's restaurant at 2 in the morning.

However, that did not really bother the boys they were just hungry. Soon their appetite was satisfied with some not very exciting, but none-the-less filling food. The servoid returned to the table and dropped an e-screen on the table with a short grunt. Wesley picked up the e-screen, glanced at it and told Jack that it was the bill. Wesley raised his communicator and pointed to it then to the servoid, which remained totally motionless. Wesley seeing no response announced, "Please charge it." and again pointed to his communicator.

The servoid, grunted, made some wheezing sounds, then pointed to the e-screen, then to Wesley.

"Yes, please charge it to this." said Wesley again raising the communicator.

Another round of unsatisfactory noises emitted from the servoid and it pointed to the e-screen again.

A rather deep stranger's voice was heard from behind Wesley, it said, "Can I be of help?"

Wesley turned around and was most surprised to see a small woman standing behind him.

She had obviously spotted the very surprised look on Wesley's face as she said, "Yes sorry about the translator, it doesn't exactly match the way I look, but hey it was a bargain at 23 hexatjeeps and it gets most discussions spot on."

"Yes," Wesley responded rather weakly, "This servoid doesn't seem to understand that we'd like our bill charged to our e-account."

"Au contrair, it wants you to press your thumb on the e-screen, as that's the way things are done here." replied the stranger.

"Oh I see, how stupid of me." said Wesley, going rather red with embarrassment.

"You weren't to know. Glad to be of assistance, have a nice stay." and with that response, the stranger turned sideways and disappeared!

Wesley, pressed his thumb on the e-screen and instantly it displayed, "Thank you, sorry about the mis-understanding, please come back and see us again soon."

Just as mysteriously, as the stranger disappearing, two mints appeared on top of the e-screen.

"Safe to eat?" asked Jack.

"Yes" displayed the e-screen. The boys took the mints and left the e-screen in the capable manipulators of the servoid.

"Where to now?" asked Jack.

"Hotel reception to enquire about transport." replied Wesley.

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

When they got back to the hotel, the desk clerk had changed. Wesley confidently walked up to her and started to discuss transport arrangements. At first she appeared quite interested, until two uniformed men walked into the reception area and she nodded in the direction of Wesley and Jack. Jack had seen them coming and had got rather nervous, so when it came to the lets run for it, he was well in the lead and was well away from the hotel before the man chasing him had even started to run after him.

The uniformed men had an advantage over Jack and Wesley, they knew the layout of the "land" so to speak. Both Jack and Wesley relied heavily on obvious obstacles that blocked the view of the pursuers. There were a number of occasions when the pursuers got quite close to either Jack or Wesley. No shots were fired, so they either didn't want to harm any bystanders or they had strict instructions to bring the boys in alive.

Amazingly the boys managed to stay quite close to each other, yet most of the time keep their pursuers at a safe distance.

Suddenly two more uniformed men joined in the chase, which made things even harder. The boys were soon separated and the uniformed men seemed to be concentrating their efforts on Wesley. Jack took advantage of the lack of attention on him and really legged it, putting significant distance between the uniformed men and himself. He found a group of buildings with lots of people milling around them. He slowed up and was soon absorbed into the crowd. He walked quite calmly and after a considerable time found a little café, he ordered a drink and sat at the back somewhere.

Jack was worried sick about his brother and what was happening to him. The likelihood of him escaping the attention of the four uniformed men, was very slim; even though he was highly devious and very fit. Then Jack turned his attention to himself, what was he going to do? He had nothing apart from the clothes on his back, if he tried to use any form of e-dentity he would be tracked and caught in a matter of minutes. Come to that how was he going to pay for his drink? Where was he going to sleep tonight? How was he going to get his brother back safely without handing himself in?

# REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

## Chapter 8 - One Down

Jack was suddenly aware that someone had sat down beside him. He heard them say, "For goodness sake turn off your comms device, you're broadcasting your e-identity, its like having a neon sign pointing to your head saying "Here I am".

Without question Jack did as the stranger instructed. His common sense told him that it was a wise move to turn off his comms device, after all their e-identities had been easily read when they they were at the space port, this location would be no different.

Once Jack had turned off his comms device, he turned his attention to the stranger. She was dressed averagely and wouldn't stand out in the crowd. Her face was covered by a thin cloth, so he could only see her eyes and they didn't give much away. There was nothing for Jack to judge the stranger by apart from her voice.

Just as Jack was pondering his next move, the stranger spoke, "At this time of year, the two moons of Jedhaed appear to be part of the temple complex as they are so low down."

Jack was completely taken aback by the stranger's comment, it sounded like they were continuing an earlier conversation. Then he remembered that it was the pass phrase that Richard had given them and he'd said that if they got into trouble one of his colleagues would get in touch and use this phrase. Jack racked his brains for the proper response phrase, but with all that running and worry his mind went blank, so he said nothing for a while, then weakly responded, "Yes I had heard they look like two extra domes." Then suddenly the correct pass phrase came back to him, "The temples are like passageways to the celestial domes."

"Well that confirms you didn't hack Jack's arm off and take his communicator so you could advertise your location to me and any other interested party." replied the stranger.

Jack detected the sense of humour and smile in the voice.

she continued, "If you're wondering what happened to Wesley, he was caught by those thugs. As I speak our people are trying to track him down, but its not easy as unlike you, they had the sense to turn off his comms device."

"You have me at the disadvantage, you know my name, but I don't know yours." prompted Jack.

"Just call me Sylvie, its not my real name, but hey its safer that way." replied Sylvie, then she continued, "Oh and in answer to your other questions, I'll pay for your drink, your tab has been replaced by my own; I have somewhere safe for you to sleep tonight; and lastly we'll handle getting your brother back, that's our job."

"How the heck did you know that's what I was thinking?" asked Jack.

"Obvious really, that's what I'd be thinking if I was in your shoes." replied Sylvie.

Jack wasn't fully convinced by her explanation, but it would do for the time being. He wondered where the safe place was likely to be and if it were anywhere near where his brother was being held captive.

Sylvie said, "I said we don't know where Wesley is, we're trying to track him still. As for the safe

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

place, its quite far from here, but that is what makes it safe."

Jack thought he was going mad, he was sure he hadn't spoken his thoughts out loud, yet Sylvie seemed to know what he was thinking.

Sylvie quietly said, "No you're not going mad, I can read your mind, its a useful gift I have had since childhood. Well gift is probably too much of a glass half full, optimistic approach, it can also be a curse. There are times when you just don't want to know what someone thinks about you, etcetera, etcetera."

"Phew!" Jack breathed a sigh of relief.

"Right drink up, we've got to make a move, those people over there seem somewhat interested in us and the last thing we need is to attract any attention to us." said Sylvie.

They were soon travelling on a Transvec tube to destination unknown. The Transvec was pretty quiet, in terms of passengers. There were only two others and they soon got off. It seemed strange to Jack to be travelling in absolute silence, he was just about to ask a question, when he thought he heard Sylvie say, "don't speak these things are bugged."

The more Jack thought about Sylvie's comment, the more he didn't remember any sound actually coming from her lips, then his curiosity was answered when he heard Sylvie say, "I'm communicating telepathically, by my mind, but I can't do it for long as its too tiring."

For the rest of the journey they travelled in silence, until Sylvie jerked Jacks arm and nodded towards the doors. They got out of the Transvec and walked for a while until they reached a building with several doors. Sylvie waved her arm before one of the doors and it opened inwards. The lighting beyond the doorway was somewhat subdued. As soon as the door closed, the light increased significantly.

Jack could see that it was a tastefully decorated place. He was about to comment on it, when Sylvie said, "Thanks did it myself. Although its not actually my place, just a safe house."

Sylvie showed him to a very comfortable bedroom, it had all the sort of entertainment equipment that Jack could wish for.

"There's no Galcomnet, that's for your protection. The authorities monitor usage very closely.

We've got our own portal." said Sylvie then in response to Jacks thoughts continued, "How did you know about Secretnet? Oh yes your Father was in the service. No I don't know about his whereabouts, but I do know our people are looking for him and are close to finding him. Yes Richard is looking."

It seemed strange conducting a one way conversation. Jack yawned.

"Yes it has been a long journey, I can understand why you're tired. Have a nap before dinner, I've got some stuff to do anyway." said Sylvie and she left Jack in his room. He flopped down on the bed and within minutes was fast asleep.

< Break Music >

Dinner was a fairly simple affair. Sylvie apologised for her lack of catering skills, after all she

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

normally had no time for such niceties, chasing around the universe after people or things.

Jack was just grateful for something to eat, so whilst it wasn't up to the standard of a high class restaurant he was quite delighted with the meal. He issued some praise that made Sylvie feel a bit better about her efforts.

When dinner was over Jack tried to start a conversation about Sylvie's work.

Sylvie replied, "We don't talk about our work, in-case the people we're guarding or working with gain too much information that could be useful to the 'enemy'."

Jack tried to turn the conversation to taste in music, but even that drew a blank with, "Best to avoid that, as I might give away information about places I've visited." said Sylvie.

Jack asked, "If Wesley manages to get free from his captors, how will he find us?"

Sylvie replied, "He won't, our operatives will find him before he even has a chance to take a breath."

Jack couldn't help but think, "Talk about being over confident in your abilities! This is just totally boring."

As if in response to Jack's thoughts, Sylvie said, "Why don't you watch a film or musivid, there's loads to choose from on our entertainment system in your room, even got some of the stuff that's just been released."

"OK" said Jack and he went to his room. He searched through the catalogue and sure enough there were new films and musivids that he hadn't even seen the adverts for yet, but had heard they were in production. He entertained himself for several days with the films, musivids and games. He was getting pretty good at some of the newer games. Even though the place was well equipped and he had plenty of entertainment, the fact that Sylvie was about as friendly as a servebot and he knew he was trapped here, Paul felt like a prisoner, all that was missing were the bars at the windows and doors. Come to that there might as well have been bars at the windows, as Paul was under strict instructions not to open the window covering in-case anyone saw him.

Just when Paul was convinced that he was not going to get any news about his brother or dad, Sylvie took a visicall from an agent who claimed to be calling from Gentaed. Paul saw that the location identity confirmed this. He felt somewhat uncomfortable as if he should not be in the room and that the call was private, but despite her earlier precautions, Sylvie made no indication that he should go, or come to that stay; it was almost as if she had forgotten he was there. The caller claimed that Grandfather was well, he had finished his visit and would be returning that afternoon..." then there were details of a flight and arrivals time. The caller requested that Sylvie be there to collect him, although the caller did not mention Sylvie's name. It was as if the person calling, was a cousin or a distant relation, he had the same detached manner as Sylvie.

When the call had finished and Sylvie made absolutely sure that the connection had been broken, she turned to Paul and said, "I expect you gathered from that conversation that your father has been found and he's safe and well. I've got to collect him from the space port this evening, at the time you heard. We'll have some lunch before I go. There are snacks in the kitchen unit for your evening meal, I'm sure you'll find something suitable. You must not leave this place or attempt to contact anyone you know, as that would put your father and us at risk, that includes your mother, much as it pains me to say that."

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Wow the first time a bit of emotion crept into her voice. Paul was quite taken aback. He quickly restrained himself in-case Sylvie picked up on his reaction, but he could tell from her face that she'd already picked up the thought.

Over lunch, Paul remarked that it seemed strange that the call had not come from his uncle Richard. Sylvie didn't appear disturbed at all by the remark, instead she said that Richard and Edward may already be on the flight.

When Sylvie left, Paul re-assured her that he wouldn't contact anyone and would stay put, unless his life was in danger.

A second show of emotion swept over Sylvie when she said to Paul, "If that happens, get yourself to a place where you'll feel safe and that your Uncle is most likely to think of. We will find you, not the other way, OK?"

Paul detected the serious concern in her voice and nodded. Sylvie left without any further delay, she actually smiled briefly at him as she left.

After Sylvie had been gone for a while, Paul decided he'd use SecreNet to check the departure time for the flight, as he still had serious doubts about the call and whether it was indeed genuine. Whilst he readily wanted to believe that Richard had kept his promise and his father was safe, something inside him doubted that Richard would leave such an important communication to another agent. Call it something in his genes, being the son of a secret agent or that he was just downright mistrusting. His thoughts and feelings seemed to be further confirmed when the flight schedules showed that there wasn't a flight due in at the time that the so called agent had given Sylvie. However, there was nothing he could do about the situation, but wait to see if Sylvie returned safely.

Paul decided to go back to his room and play a little more on one of the games that he'd become quite a sub-zero gamer at. The time slipped by quite quickly, he was getting snackish, so he decided to go out to the kitchen to find something "suitable" as Sylvie put it.

As he slipped through the door he was suddenly conscious of an arm coming into view on his right side, it was only a brief awareness as the arm and hand were covered in black material, all except a small cloth in the palm of the hand, which was quickly placed over his mouth. Paul caught a brief glance at his attacker or at least the masked face and dark brown eyes, as he slumped to the ground.

# REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

## Chapter 9 – Games Without Fun

When Paul woke up, he suddenly remembered what he'd seen; an arm coming into view on his right side, the arm and hand were covered in black material, all except a small white cloth in the palm of the hand, which was quickly placed over his mouth. Paul caught a brief glance at his attacker or at least the masked face and dark brown eyes, as he'd slumped to the ground.

His next thought was where was he, was he OK, had anything happened to him? There was a large screen on the perfectly white ceiling, when he turned his head to one side then the other, he noticed that the walls were also perfectly smooth and white. He tried to lift himself up and that was when he became aware of the restraints on his arms and legs. No matter how he struggled he could not loosen himself from them. He could not actually feel them pressing against his skin, but they prevented movement. When he looked at them they appeared as a fuzzy outline, obviously some form of force field rather than made of any form of material. "That's a pain" thought Paul, "You can't wear out or stress a force field. Whoever has captured me knows what they're doing and has money behind them."

Paul looked again at the walls, trying to see if he could detect any form of entrance, but was unable to find any. Paul was getting quite desperate and feeling totally trapped, then it suddenly occurred to him that there was a fresh air feed gently blowing against his face, yet there were no grills or holes in the walls or ceiling, they were just too perfect! Yet where was the air coming from? Then it came to him, the room may be a total illusion generated by projectors, especially as it appeared so perfect. This made him relax and feel less trapped. For all he knew, his brother Ed may be merely a few feet away from him. That thought made him feel much more at ease.

Suddenly the screen showed swirling coloured patterns and Paul could just make out a faint voice saying "welcome, you are quite safe, we want to help you, so relax." The message repeated over and over, getting a bit louder each time, there was a break of 20 or so seconds between each burst.

Rather than make Paul relax it had the opposite effect and made him more restless. Whoever was controlling it, had obviously noticed his reaction as the message stopped halfway through one of its loops, although the coloured swirls continued, they were ever changing and quite attractive. Paul resisted the temptation to stare at them. Instead he turned his attention to one of the restraints and tried to move an arm, whilst the effort was futile, it gave him something to concentrate on. Just laying there watching the screen was boring. He continued like this on and off for what seemed like hours.

Suddenly a voice could be heard and an obviously computer generated face appeared on the screen. The face seemed friendly enough, but that was half the trick. Whoever was behind all this wanted to build up trust between Paul and the image.

The voice said, "Hello Jack, or is it Paul, which do you like to be called these days?"

Paul made absolutely no response.

"No matter," responded the voice, "I have your attention and that will be OK with me."

There was a pause, then the voice continued, "We can help each other out you know. I know that you have lost two things quite dear to you and I need some information. We could do quite a nice trade, two for one I think the supermarkets call it.

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Paul didn't respond, but was thinking, "More like BOG OFF!" It was a phrase he'd heard his dad use. The supermarkets meant Buy One Get One Free, but Paul had another meaning of "Get lost."

"Let me be a bit more specific", the voice continued, "Recently you lost your brother, tut! tut! and on a strange planet, light years from home, wonder what Mum will think? Especially as you ran away from him as fast as you could. Yet look, we have still found you and want to re-unit you with your brother Wesley, oh sorry I meant Ed."

There was a pause, then the voice continued, "Then before that your father wandered off into space, getting himself lost. Luckily we were on hand to find him too...." The voice carried on in the same vein, but Paul had lost interest by this point and his technical curiosity crept in regards the face and the way it kept in perfect timing with the voice. He wondered if it was a live response system or was it a recording. Then he analysed what it had been saying to-date, there had been no real opportunity for it to respond to change as Paul had not said anything. Paul decided to have a bit of fun and test the system out. So he said, "Have you ever played the game, 'VP Cybernautics'?"

There was another pause, as if the person behind the voice were thinking or asking others what Paul was talking about. Then the voice resumed with, "We are not here to play games, this is reality."

Paul responded, "No chance to test out theories and stretch your brain capacity then, shame, you must live a pretty boring existence then."

This time there was a fairly quick response, "We don't need to test out theories, just deal in what you know and in exchange we will give you what you have lost".

Paul ignored the comment and went on, "Strange things those e-rooms, pretty dangerous for someone who's never encountered one before. Get too carried away, step into your room before construction is finished and you'll end up as part of the fixtures or furniture. Just think, unless there's someone to clean up your room, they might only find you when the hotel is demolished, upgraded or there's a change of management."

"What on the moons of Jedhaed is he waffling on about?" The voice responded and was obviously not aware that the microphone was still on. "He is OK isn't he, didn't suffer any sort of damage on the way here?"

Paul could just about make out another voice in the background denying any "rough stuff". Then the voices ceased as someone must have realised that the microphone was still on.

Paul smiled to himself, and mentally scored One to Paul, Nil to his captors.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

The voice tried several times to re-establish control of the conversation, but every time Paul threw random, and totally unrelated comments into the conversation. As time went on the voice tried threats, saying that his father and brother would suffer if he didn't co-operate. Paul simply carried on ignoring the thread of conversation and either threw in the random comments or said nothing.

The voice broke off for a while. Paul thought to himself, "Ah peace at last."

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Then the voice came back, this time sounded even more menacing, "OK if you want to play games, I've got a good one for you, it's called, 'co-operation' if you don't co-operate with us, we will make things painful for you!"

Paul thought to himself, "Ah that's interesting, this guy is not in charge and can't make many decisions on his own as he said 'we'."

The voice continued, "Right why did you follow your father out to the Galtoid sector?"

Paul thought, "Right they don't know anything for sure that we made the discovery." Then he calmly said, "There was a good comedy on the other night, boy did I laugh and laugh, hadn't seen anything so funny in ages, shame I can't remember the title now."

Suddenly Paul felt real pain up and down his back. It only lasted a few seconds but it might as well been minutes. It took him a while to get his breath back again and get his breathing under control.

The voice then said, "OK maybe you'll be more co-operative now, where were we? Ah yes, why did you follow your father to the Galtoid Sector and why come to Jedhaed, when you knew he went to Gentaed."

"Perhaps I missed him, fancied a trip abroad, had the wrong planet or couldn't afford the full fair to wherever he actually went... where did you say he was?" said Paul as confidently as ever.

The same pain suddenly shot through him.

The voice asked, "You still like this game? I didn't explain the rules of co-operation, the less you do it the more we do it, if you get my meaning."

Another shot went through him, these two were, for a shorter period, but none-the-less still jarred Paul up considerably.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

Suddenly the lights and screen went out. Although Paul could not see well in the dark, he did get the sense that his hunch had been right and the room was faked up by projectors and force fields. Then it dawned on him, that if the projectors and force fields had died he could break free. He got himself off the bed and although he was a bit shaky, he managed to get onto his legs. He took a good look around and saw a distant emergency exit sign, he decided to get to that as soon as possible. He decided not to look for Ed as he had no guarantees that he was even in the same district let alone building. The place seemed to be a large building with smaller ones within it. He quickly headed towards the exit.

A voice was heard from across the other side of the building, "Better take a torch with you and check if they are still secure, we don't know how long the power will be off for. We also don't know if the restraints will have failed and be careful these two are slippery characters."

Suddenly as he rounded one of the internal buildings, he saw a figure in front of him, although the lighting was poor he managed to recognise the clothes as those Ed was wearing when he was captured. He cautiously, yet quickly moved up to the figure, getting ready to attack it in-case it wasn't Ed. The figure suddenly turned and instantly Paul recognised Ed's face. He pointed in the direction of the exit. Ed nodded, he indicated that he was going to go round the right corner of the

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

next building, whilst Paul would take the left.

“Older Brothers, don't you just love them, they always want to be in charge”, thought Paul, but he nodded in agreement. They stealthily set off in their separate directions only to meet up again in a few moments at the emergency exit. Paul had arrived first and was working on the the door alarm.

“Well,” he whispered to Ed, “we certainly don't want our capturers to know that we we no longer wish to remain as their guests and this is the exit we chose to take..... OK lets go. The door opened quietly and the external lighting was only a bit better than the internal. The two boys were through the door in lightening quick time and the door closed again.

“Lets hope no-one notices that the door lock had been opened.” remarked Ed.

“Should spring back into its locked position.” replied Paul.

“Lets hope that no-one heard it.” said Ed.

They looked quickly around and Ed saw what looked like a air sleaker parked up by another nearby building. He tapped Paul on the shoulder and pointed to the Airsleaker. They ran to it and Ed was soon checking it over to see if he could override its security lock, he looked at Paul in desperation.

“Can you fly it, looks like a much earlier model than yours?” asked Paul.

“Yeah I can fly darn near anything apart from a broomstick, I just can't crack the security lock.” replied Ed.

“Leave that bit to the expert.” Paul took over the control panel and after a very few seconds had the thing buzzing with life. “There you go boss over to you.”

Ed took over checked a few things and then announced, “OK climb aboard we have go for flight, plenty of fuel and despite its age it is in pretty good nick according to the service log.”

They climbed aboard and were shortly heading skyward. As soon as they got above the building, another two vehicles were chasing them.

“Hold on tight this is going to get rough!” shouted Ed, missing the comforts of his home head gear and protective clothing.

# REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

## Chapter 10 – Where To?

Ed and Paul climbed aboard the air sleaker and were shortly heading skyward. Another two vehicles were chasing them as soon as they got above the building.

“Hold on tight this is going to get rough!” shouted Ed, missing the comforts of his home head gear and protective clothing.

Ed headed towards a set of taller buildings to the right, he accelerated and swung round the back of the nearest, there were several buildings behind it. Ed found the first gap between the buildings swung left into it, then did a nose dive straight for the ground, levelled off then swung violently right into a tunnel, hoping that the other end wasn't blocked. The navicon system seemed to be indicating that it was clear and luckily it was. When they emerged from the other end, he swung violently to the left, saw three buildings to the right, the middle of which was much lower than the other two, Ed swung the air sleaker upward and over the middle building. Ed could see from the navicon screen that he had not managed to shake off the pursuers, one had just turned onto the street they had just left, the other seemed to be racing on ahead, trying to find an intercept course.

Ed headed straight for the ground again, pulled up and at the same time banked to the right and headed through an arched tunnel way between two buildings. When they emerged, he headed straight up the facing street, saw a tall building ahead, and planned to swing left around it. When he glanced at the navicon screen to see what his pursuers were up to and also check for any obstructions, he saw that one was quite far to the right of him behind two sets of buildings, which seemed to be providing good cover. The other had missed his nose dive through the tunnel and instead was heading up over a building further down the street. Far from feeling smug this would enable the latter pursuer to catch up some time. Ed changed his plan and instead swung up over the nearest building to the left. He stayed at that height and swung over the next street and building opposite. He caught a glimpse of the nearest pursuer as they swung down over the building and into the street that Ed had just left.

Meanwhile the other pursuer had changed direction, detecting that Ed was heading away from them. Ed swung immediately right checked the navicon screen and decided to dive down and go through the next tunnel between buildings, which was on the left, he crossed the next street diagonally at speed and then turned sharply into the next tunnel to the left. He braked hard once inside and came to a complete stand still, then turned off the lights. He was hoping that the pursuer's had not spotted his use of the tunnels. Their vehicles seemed too wide to use the tunnels themselves, but he knew that would not protect him and Paul. He had no idea now where the pursuers were as they had disappeared off his navicon screen every time he used these tunnels. Ed was banking on the fact that the same probably happened to their screens. He would appear as a temporary blip whenever he emerged from one tunnel and slipped into another. He had to hand it to Paul, as he kept absolutely quiet and had managed to stay on the air sleaker, despite only Ed knowing, which way it was going to lurch or swing next. They waited for what seemed like an eternity, obviously the trick had worked, as they had heard nothing from their pursuers. Ed turned on the lights again and gently pushed forward, accelerated across the gap between buildings and darted into the next tunnel opposite, whilst glancing at the navicon screen. There was a slight persistence of the latest traces of their pursuer's positions. One pursuer was a about six buildings away to the south, the other was about two blocks to the east of them at nearly the same latitude or row line as they were. Ed decided that it was time to make a break for it, he turned right after emerging from the tunnel. Then he darted right down the next available tunnel, this time not pausing, but instead heading straight across into the next tunnel. He turned left when he emerged.

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Ed took quick note of the positions of his pursuers, he switched to a detailed map, studied it for a few seconds, spotted some form of drainage or air supply tunnel. There appeared to be no covering, so he decided to chance using that. He turned off his navicon screen, as he was hoping to double back behind the second pursuer and throw them off his scent, he swung round the back of the next tall building, turned off his lights and headed diagonally northwards behind the following tall building.

Ed shouted to Paul, "How wide do you think their vehicles are?"

Paul replied, "I'd estimate about one and half to one point eight metres at the most."

Ed replied triumphantly, good because I estimate this tunnel is no more than a metre. They're stuffed!"

Just at that point he dived straight down into the tunnel and slowed up. As there was still a bit of distance to the nearest pursuer, he could afford to put his lights back on. He soon had the air sleaker purring along at just above crawling speed, as he took his bearings and looked around the tunnel.

"What is this place?" asked Paul.

"Its an old air duct by the looks at it, the map shows its about 6 kilometres long and goes right under the densest part of the built up area. We can poodle along down here, whilst we make up our minds where to go." replied Ed.

"What's happened to the navicon system?" asked Paul.

"I turned it off as that's how they were tracking us, without it they are blind, we just disappeared off their maps as if we'd exploded." said Ed.

"But surely they will guess we've gone down this tunnel?" asked Paul.

"Well they may do, but there's so many buildings close together in this area with tunnels between them that they may assume we're holed up in one of those tunnels. As every time we dipped down into the tunnels between the buildings we disappeared off their maps. I know this as they disappeared off of mine every time we went through one. I'll be really cautious when we emerge from the other end just in-case they've sussed what I've done." said Ed.

Ed stopped the air sleaker for a short while and listened to hear if there were any sound evidence that the pursuers had followed them down the tunnel. However there were no sounds at all apart from some local wildlife that had made its home here and made the boys jump when it suddenly decided to scurry up the tunnel. Ed decided all was clear and set off again.

The further they travelled, the straighter the tunnel became and it also flattened out, so Ed was able to increase the speed again. The 6 kilometre journey seemed to take an age, so they were glad to see some faint light ahead. Ed stopped the air sleaker some distance from the entrance, turned out the lights and they dismounted. They carefully walked towards the entrance stopping and listening every so often, but could hear nothing. As they got to the entrance they heard some form of transport rush by. They ventured forward cautiously and it turned out to be a Transvec Tube a little way off. There were no buildings in close proximity, apart from a bit of ruin immediately in front of the tunnel entrance. The boys scanned the ground and sky for any

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

evidence of waiting vehicles or people, but there was nothing.

They went back down the tunnel.

<Break Music>

Sylvie was almost at the space port, when she got the report from the safe house guarding system that its security had been breached, it had managed to snatch a video clip of the character that had subdued and abducted Paul, before it failed. As onward transmission to Sylvie's comms device was the duty of a more remote part of the system it was able to forward a status report and the video clip. This immediately put Sylvie on a higher alert plane, whilst she also had her doubts about the earlier call about Edward being on his way, she had no choice but to react to it, the chains of command being what they were, the person who had contacted her was higher up the chain than Sylvie. This all made her more nervous as it meant that her own organisation had now been infiltrated and that the enemy was within as well as outside.

Sylvie decided to go ahead with the attempt at pick-up in-case she could learn anything new about the enemy. She knew she could do nothing for Paul, as by the time she got back he'd be secreted away somewhere that she didn't have a chance to find.

The space port was as busy as ever, people mulling around either waiting for an outgoing flight or like her awaiting to meet people off an incoming one. She checked the information boards, the flight was due in on time, so she had twenty minutes to kill. She decided to go to a café and have a drink. Whilst there, she used her comms device to check that the flight details were genuine. That was when she received her second shock of the day, there was no scheduled flight for that time of day. Sylvie double checked using several sources but they all confirmed the same thing, the whole thing was a trap. Sylvie switched her comms device to stealth mode and attempted to contact Richard. Surprisingly he came back to her very quickly, she went through the usual protocol to check his identity to ensure it really was him and was delighted to find it was. She told him the latest news about Ed, Paul and the in coming flight trap. He knew about Ed but not Paul and obviously not about the trap nor their colleague's involvement with the enemy. He told her that he was delighted to inform her that they had secured Edward and that they were both on their way to Jedhaed. There was a pause in communications for a while, Sylvie took the opportunity to sip her drink and try and relax.

When Richard came back, he suggested that Sylvie go to safe house alpha four. He stressed that he did NOT want her hanging around the space port and did not want her trying to find out anything more about the local enemy. He was also most disappointed that their own organisation had been infiltrated, he told her that he'd personally be taking over as her co-ordinator, that she should make no further contact with the local ring, as far as they were concerned she'd just disappeared. Luckily the safe houses don't show who's using them only flags up that the house is in use and the agent should select another one. They signed off.

Sylvie quickly finished her drink. Did the usual quick scan to ensure she wasn't being watched or followed. Then headed out of the space port in the direction of safe house alpha four. All the time she kept a watchful visual and electronic scan for any signs that she was being followed or observed. There were absolutely none, so if they had intended on picking her up, they were probably going to do so when she turned up at the flight arrival area to so call "pick up Edward and Richard". Sylvie darted into nearby building, found a toilet, changed her clothes, shoes and emerged through another exit. She headed off to safe house alpha four.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Ed and Paul were deciding what to do next. They decided that they had best get as far away from the area as possible, but the problem was go where? The Airsleaker's maps weren't that helpful and did not have any local knowledge. The boys decided that they needed to stay away from areas where there were lots of people, but equally they needed to go somewhere where their uncle was likely to find them. Then Paul suggested that as their original remit included going to the temples they might as well go there. Ed argued that they may be spotted as the place was likely to be heaving with people. Paul suggested that unless these goons had prior knowledge of the meeting place, why would they assume that the boys would head for the temples, after all they had never been to the planet before. Ed thought the situation through and decided it was worth a try, in any case, there was a higher chance that their uncle would find them at the temples. Then Ed decided to have a quick look at the storage compartment of the air sleaker in-case there was anything useful to them. As it happened there was quite a bit of food and what is more it looked as if it had only just been purchased, it was still wrapped in the shopping bag. They decided they'd wait before having any. Ed mapped the route to the Temples and they cautiously set off on what was going to be a long journey.

Paul nervously kept an eye out for other vehicles, but being in the early hours of the morning the only things running were the Transvec tubes and an occasional personal transport. Every so often Paul asked Ed if he were OK still to fly. The response was always the same, better flying like this than the earlier ducking and diving.

They stopped off after a couple of hours to grab a drink and a quick snack, then they were on their way again. It was strange travelling across a foreign planet at the early hours of the morning, Ed and Paul could just make out outlines, no details or colours of structures, wildlife, plants or landscape.

Paul was relieved to hear Ed say, "Not far now, about 40 kilometres straight ahead."

When they were about ten kilometres away, they started to see the temple structures, which were relatively easy to make out as the land all around was perfectly flat with hardly any other buildings around. They could occasionally make out a glint off of the Transvec tube heading towards the temple complex main entrance.

Ed was consulting more detailed maps to plan where they would land and hide the Airsleaker, whilst he was doing that, he glanced at some information about the temples that may be useful to them.

The closer they got the more spectacular the complex looked.

~~~~~

# REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

## Chapter 11 – Sunrise at the Temples

Ed consulted more detailed maps, to plan where they would land and hide the Airsleaker. There was a large parking area to the north of the temple complex, but a lone air sleaker parked there would stand out like a sore thumb. Ed knew he needed to find somewhere more discrete, but equally a lone vehicle parked at the chosen location shouldn't look out of place. Ed found the ideal location, some form of utility building, part of the catering and cleaning area. There were several storage alcoves, one of those was bound to be a suitable area. Ed nodded to himself, then in-between checking for obstacles and other craft, he checked out other useful information about the temple complex.

As they approached even closer, the temple complex became more spectacular. The boys could see that the buildings covered one heck of an area of land, but it was also pretty tall in places. From a distance it looked like a story tale palace with its towers stretching up into the early morning skies. The closer they got, the single mass appeared more like a collection of discrete, but related buildings, all surrounded by a high wall.

The pass phrase that Paul had used to Sylvie had described well the effect that the two moons rising above the temples had on the whole structure. "The temples are like passageways to the celestial domes." The moons looked as if they were integral parts of the structures and that the whole complex had been built as an entrance way to these special domes. As they sank below the horizon though, their effect diminished considerably, but the rising sun took over with its spectacular lighting effects, casting long shadows behind the complex, whilst the buildings themselves were lit initially with very strong streaks of red and orange, which were gradually giving way to streaks of yellow light. The gold highlights at the tops of the towers really caught this light and made the most of the opportunity to show off their splendour. The fort like edging of the lower walls, looked strange as they had been painted with stripes of blue, green and bright red. The blue and green seemed to fade into the background, making the gaps between the raised segments seem much wider than they actually were. At random spacing there were paintings of strange looking creatures. These stood out particularly well as they were in gold and really caught the glint of the early morning sun. It was almost as if these characters were holding a ritual early morning dance.

Ed and Paul knew from their extensive reading on their flight to Jedhaed, that the painted figures represented the gods and the important mythical and historic characters with whom they interacted on the planet. Apparently there were complete scenes painted at the tops of the walls, each representing a particular historic or mythical event. The full scene could be seen in normal daylight and would be pretty spectacular due to the vivid mix of colours, which were apparently as vibrant today as when first painted. However, under the current lighting conditions and at the distance that Ed and Paul were viewing the painted figures, only selected figures stood out. It was quite fitting that these would be the key characters involved in the scene depicted. It was as if the sun were playing some sort of editing effect upon the scenes and playing back only those deemed as the most important in the story, to appear at this stage. As if it were the start of a film and only the starring actors names were appearing on the opening credits of the film.

Ed swung the air sleaker to the right and the temples gradually slipped from view. The air sleaker appeared to be heading towards distant mountains to the east. Ed continued on this path for a short while, then swung back to the left, lowered the craft towards the ground and eased it towards the walls of the temple itself, although maintaining sufficient distance that they would not be seen by any eyes that may be about at this time. There was sufficient cover from the bushes and shrubs that surrounded the temples and gave them some protection from the winds that blew from

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

the east in the long hot summer months. After what seemed like an eternity, the air sleaker came to rest within a fold between parts of a building. There seemed to be no exit from the building at this place, but there was sufficient looping round of the building to provide an ideal parking spot for the Airsleaker. Then as if an added bonus, Ed spotted a storage door marked the equivalent of E226. Ed dismounted and carefully opened the door, checking for any form of alarm system trigger, but there was none. Ed couldn't believe his luck, the cupboard was completely empty and sufficiently big enough to hide the air sleaker in the shadows. Between him and Paul they soon had the air sleaker, safely stowed away. They retrieved some food and drink from its storage compartment and they were soon walking away from the alcove, they quietly discussed their tactics and decided that as the temples were so vast there was bound to be a way to sneak into complex without being detected. They should be able to find somewhere to hide until the visitors arrived and then they would be free to move around like any other visitor.

They walked for a while keeping close to the walls of the building and keeping an eye open for any form of window or security monitoring equipment. Luckily there were neither. The locals must feel so confident that the temples were sufficiently away from the populace that they did not need extensive security.

Suddenly the modern building ended, there was a gap between the old and new buildings. Ed and Paul pushed between the two buildings and emerged into a large empty square, surrounded by temple buildings and walkways between them which lead off to other parts of the complex. Behind them was the catering and administration building, whilst there were a few lit windows there were no real signs of life or activity. Ed and Paul stayed close to the old temple building to their right, there was a golden arched entrance quite close to the area that they had just squeezed through. They slipped through the entrance into the shadows being careful not to make any noise. Their way was faintly lighted by small archways high up on the walls, which let light through and it reflected off of the light coloured walls. The building they were in was rather like a maze, they managed to get themselves in deep enough to avoid detection, yet not too far that they would be unable to find their way out.

They found a nice little raised platform to sit on and settled down to breakfast.

"Sorry we haven't got your favourite Tastiday." whispered Paul.

"Just great to have something to eat and somewhere to sit." whispered Ed.

"This place must be a nightmare at closing time, to ensure that you've found and evicted every visitor." said Paul, between mouthfuls of food.

"It must be. I don't know what we're going to do at the end of the day." said Ed.

"Well I suppose we could always leave with the other visitors, sneak round to the air sleaker cupboard, hide there for a bit and sneak back in through our secret entrance, when the staff have gone." suggested Paul.

"Good idea." agreed Ed, "They probably count in and out the visitors so that will confuse them when they have two extras appearing on the tally."

"Lets hope we're not holed up here too long then, otherwise they are bound to get suspicious." said Paul.

There was silence for a while, then curiosity got the better of Ed and he asked, "How long were you

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

held prisoner at that place?”

“I'm not sure, as I don't know how long I was unconscious, but I think it was only a day, how about you?” asked Paul.

“It was difficult to tell, as like you found there was nothing to measure time by, but I think it was only a couple of days. Did they get anything out of you?” Ed asked.

“I treated the whole thing like a Galcomnet game, a challenge of wills and they didn't get a thing from me. Mind you I don't mind admitting it was a painful game, so I was glad of the power cut.” said Paul.

“Yeah me too, they did get my name and linked that we'd come in search of Dad, but that was all. They couldn't figure out why we'd come to Jedhaed instead of Genthaed, they were waiting for us on Genthaed apparently, then for a brief moment our baggage showed up on the check-in system of the hotel. It was long enough for their systems to flag up our arrival.” said Ed.

“Well at least no-one betrayed us then.” said Paul.

“Apparently not.” replied Ed.

Paul told Ed about Sylvie and the safe house. Then typical for Paul he focused on the films and games he played on the Secretnet system.

The boys were deep in whispered conversation about a particular game that Paul was getting pretty good at playing, when they suddenly they heard noises come from outside. Two members of staff were on their way to the administration block and seemed to be exchanging comments about their night's activities. Although Ed and Paul couldn't understand all that was said, they could understand odd words and phrases, such is the beauty of having a Galactic language.

Paul remarked, “Well they had a packed night by the sounds of it!”

Ed replied, “Almost as exciting as ours by the sounds of it.”

There was quiet again for a while, then more voices that sounded as if they were heading for the same building as the last two.

Ed and Paul packed away the empty food wrappings, ready for disposal in the nearest bin. They didn't want to leave any sign that they'd been hiding in this building. They headed back towards the entrance that they'd first entered this building through. Then waited until the general noise levels raised. Suddenly someone passed by them and went on into the building, he or she nodded at them and grunted some form of greeting, Ed returned the greeting and the individual carried on deeper into the building, soon two more people came in trying to catch up with the first.

As Ed and Paul emerged into the square they could see the sun was quite high now and the buildings looked even more spectacular than before. More of the story characters could be clearly seen on the sides of the buildings.

“Lets go to the centre temple, the altar and central statue are quite amazing according to the info we read.” suggested Ed.

“OK with me. I've been quite looking forward to seeing it.” agreed Paul.

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Ed was pretty good at remembering the layout of the complex, he lead the way and only made one slip up, resulting in a dead end, but what a dead end, it was a massive painting that showed a really spectacular flood that was smashing rocks against each other and snapping trees as if they were match sticks. The boys spent a few minutes admiring the vibrancy and sheer size of the painting, before resuming their hunt for the central temple.

Ed remarked that the site was pretty light on signs and sign posts. Paul suggested that it would mean greater sales of live maps.

"I dare not download one, as turning on our communicators would give away our location immediately." said Ed.

"Don't worry you seem to be doing a good, from memory job." re-assured Paul.

After a further 5 minutes, they saw the easily recognisable frontage of the main temple, it had been quite prominent in their reading materials and had been used on the publicity posters back at their hotel and the space port. There were hoards of people walking up and down the steps, no-one took any notice of Ed and Paul, they blended into the crowd easily as just two more visitors.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

Sylvie waited in a café at the space port awaiting the announcement of arrival of Edward and Richard's flight. Anyone looking out for Sylvie would not have easily recognised her, her clothes and hair were totally different from those of the previous day. She kept a cautious eye open for anyone who appeared to be watching people carefully, somewhat difficult in a place where people were always watching and waiting for travellers to arrive. However, Sylvie's talents for reading minds paid off here. Luckily thus far no-one seemed interested in trying to find her.

The announcement of arrival of Edward and Richard's flight came over the tannoy system. Sylvie didn't even bat an eyelid, let alone get up out of her seat. They had already arranged to meet up outside of the space port, she just wanted to be doubly sure that no-one was following either her or Edward and Richard.

Whilst they were heavily disguised, Sylvie still recognised Edward and Richard as they emerged from their arrivals gate along with their fellow passengers. Sylvie resisted the temptation to send Richard a mentally transferred message re-assuring him that she was near by. She wasn't sure if anyone else was around who had talents similar or the same as her own. She simply, casually observed the two men break away from the crowd. As she suspected, they were being followed, as a third character set off in the same direction in a determined way. Then there was the classic agent's cross as the individual nodded at someone standing to one side, he then nodded in the direction of Edward and Richard, changed the direction of his own travel and left the tracking to his colleague.

Sylvie got up and casually followed the first agent, she managed to follow him into a quiet area, where she shot him with a hidden weapon. She held her hand up to her chin as if she'd just remembered something and headed back in the direction that Edward and Richard had headed. By careful navigation she managed to catch up with their pursuer without him noticing her. She paused, reached into her handbag and pulled out a map, whilst sneakily looking around to see if there were any other potential "hand over" agents. But there were none. Suddenly the man following Edward and Richard stumbled and grabbed his own left leg, as if he were in pain. Sylvie walked off at a tangent and headed for an exit further down from the one that Edward and Richard

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

had just gone through. As Sylvie put the map back into her bag there was a small explosion coming from the place where the agent had fallen with a painful leg. As Sylvie walked through the exit she knew from the thoughts she received, that the man who had been following Edward and Richard was dead.

"I suppose I could have been a little more subtle." thought Sylvie as she waited for Edward and Richard to join her in her private transport. They nearly walked straight past, until Sylvie used the pre-arranged question pass phrase.

They didn't talk until they got back to the safe house, even though the transport was private you could never be too sure whether it was bugged or not.

When they arrived a few streets from the safe house, Sylvie parked up and they walked the rest of the way. At one point Richard broke off and headed in a different direction and headed back on himself to check if they were being followed. However the area was so quiet that there was no-one around to follow them in any case.

"Better safe than sorry." thought Richard as he he entered the safe house and the door closed behind him.

The introductions over, Sylvie set about fixing something to eat, whilst Edward went off to have a refreshing wash and Richard enquired whether anything further had been heard about the boys.

"Yes apparently they have escaped, however the Jedhaedians haven't a clue where they've gone, but I know that they are most likely to be hiding out at the Temple complex, it was the last thing that Paul passed to me when I told him that if anything were to happen, he should hide somewhere where you would be most likely to think of. He immediately thought of their mission to go to the temples." replied Sylvie.

"He'd make an excellent agent." remarked Richard.

Just at that moment Edward entered the room again and said, "Now I don't want you recruiting my sons, there's been enough family involvement in the service."

"Of course, of course." replied Richard feeling somewhat ashamed of his remark. His nephews had been placed in enough danger for a lifetime. "We'll have some lunch and then set off for the temples to find them."

"I've got new identities for you." said Sylvie.

"Speaking of which, your new look had me totally fooled, didn't recognise you at all." said Richard.

"Why thank you, I had excellent training sir." said Sylvie in somewhat of a mocking tone.

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Chapter 12 – Discoveries and Meetings

The central temple lived up to expectations, it was massively tall from the exterior and the interior seemed even bigger as there were division upon division, each causing the tourist to crane their neck even more just in order to see right up each wall. Originally each inner division would have been separated by really heavy high doors, to allow easy access for the modern day visitors, these were all kept permanently open, so it was just about possible to see right into the inner division from the entrance doorway, except for the throngs of people in the way.

Ed and Paul examined the paintings and carvings on the walls carefully, after all this was probably going to be the one and only time that they would see such a splendid sight. Eventually they stood at the base of the main altar steps. The statue of Gradulux towering above the altar table and the boys themselves. They could not but fail to be impressed at the workmanship that created such a massive yet incredibly detailed statue. What amazed them was the fact that no-one in the times when the temples were built or since, had actually claimed to see Gradulux in person, yet the statue was so magnificent in detail that it was almost as if it was actually based upon a real entity.

Ed and Paul were amazed that everyone was actually allowed to touch the statue and altar. Most places like this that one visits are so roped or screened off, that you are not sure that what you are seeing is a projection or real. There was no doubting that this was real.

There were a few people on bended knees before the statue, as if in prayer or sheer adulation.

Paul was so taken with the moment that he asked Ed, “Do you think we should kneel also out of respect?”

Ed replied, “No whilst it might be viewed in that way, it might equally be viewed that you are taking the mickey and being disrespectful. This isn't our worshipful entity, whilst we can admire the workmanship that went behind the statue's construction and the faith it continues to draw, anything beyond that would not be appropriate.”

Someone close by was obviously listening to Ed's argument as they got up, dusted themselves off and scurried away in embarrassment. Someone else in local planetary costume looked round to see who was speaking, saw Ed and smiled a very exaggerated smile of agreement with Ed's words. He got up and walked over to Ed, nodded respectfully and said, “Words of great wisdom from one of young times, but the meaning is very deep and could almost have been spoken by a devout of Gradulux himself. I am much in admiration of your respect and pass my deep respect also to you and your beliefs. May you take the peace and understanding of Gradulux with you to your home land.” He nodded and bowed respectful to Ed and Paul.

They felt compelled also to bow in return and Ed muttered, “Our grateful thanks for your blessing and we equally pass unto you and your kin our deepest respect and wish for peace.”

With that the man, rose again, turned and briskly walked away. He paused, turned, bowed again and disappeared into the crowd.

“Wow that was a really spiritual moment there.” remarked Paul.

“It certainly was.” agreed Ed, then continued, “Kind of leaves you with a rosy glow inside.”

Ed and Paul explored the central temple a little more, but nothing further impressed them as much

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

as the altar room, the statue of Gradulux and their encounter with one of his faithful.

Ed said, "We'd better make our way towards the main entrance now, as its probably only a couple of hours from closing time and I don't know about you, but I'm getting hungry now."

Along the route to the entrance there were several smaller temples including one with a bathing pool, the boys couldn't believe it, but visitors were allowed to dangle their legs into the water. Not wishing to miss out and having walked all day they felt pretty hot and tired anyway, they joined in the ritual.

Ed whispered to Paul, "Hey does this remind you of the paddling pool that mum used to put out for us in the summer months?"

"Yes it does, same sort of cooling refreshing effect too." replied Paul.

"Apparently the water naturally carries soothing oils from fiche's deep in the planet's core. Be poisonous to drink though." said Ed

"Hey can you imagine getting your water supplies mixed up?" asked Paul.

"Pretty fatal mistake eh?" agreed Ed.

There was an announcement in several languages that the temple would be closing in twenty minutes, so last admissions were happening now.

The boys set off again for the entrance.

They arrived at the entrance, which also served as exit, as a mass exodus was taking place. Luckily Ed spotted that those leaving the complex were using some form of electronic pass. He turned to Paul and said, "Oh I think I left my camera at the bath temple."

Paul looked at him quizzically at first, then realised that there was something wrong. When they were out of earshot of other tourists, Ed said, "That's how they keep track of the visitors, by those electronic passes that we've seen hanging around many people's necks. So there's no chance of us getting out without one. We'll have to head back to our secret entrance.

They got about three quarters of the way, when Paul suddenly remembered hearing a familiar voice. He recognised it more clearly the second time around, it was Sylvie. She had told him that she was at the main entrance with Edward and Richard and asked if Ed and Paul were safe and together. Paul thought back their current position and their plan to exit via the back, he imagined the administration block. Sylvie confirmed that she would meet them at the cupboard E226.

Paul relayed the message in a series of whispers to Ed. He said, "Ah that's what's going on, I thought I was going mad, remembering conversations that hadn't taken place."

There were a couple of occasions when the boys nearly got caught, the staff were obviously checking the grounds to see if there were any stragglers still wandering around the temples. The boys managed to get back to the first temple that they had hidden in. There was quite a lot of activity around the administration building so they were unable to sneak through the gap between that building and the temple.. They hid in the temple again, listening for the sounds to die down. Paul put Sylvie in the picture. She was still making her way around the outside of the temple complex.

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Eventually activity around the administration block died down and the boys were able to quickly sneak into the gap between the buildings. Ed made it just-in-time, as he heard two people chattering as they headed towards the administration building, one said he thought he had seen something between the buildings, luckily it was the end of a busy day and his colleague didn't want to do anything more than hand in his keys, so he accused his friend of drinking too much chandalook the previous night. They continued on to the administration building without stopping.

Ed and Paul found their way into the cupboard where the air sleaker was still safely stored, they retrieved some more food from its storage area before closing the cupboard door again and finding themselves in total darkness.

Paul "heard" Sylvie report that she could see the administration building now. He guided her to their hiding place and soon daylight seeped between the gap formed by the open door. Ed turned on the Airsleaker's lights and they shared out the food and remaining drink with Sylvie. When they'd had enough of a rest and some food. Ed suggested that to save their legs, they could drag the air sleaker out beyond the bushes and they would be able to ride round to the place that Edward and Richard were waiting.

"I can't believe it that dad has been rescued and is really here." said Ed.

Sylvie pointed out, "You won't recognise either him or Richard at first as they are heavily disguised."

"You can talk about disguises, if I hadn't held the mental conversation with you before seeing you I'd have walked straight past you without recognising you." said Paul.

"Yeah we're pretty good at our disguises these days." agreed Sylvie.

They soon had the air sleaker behind the bushes with engine purring ready to take them to Edward and Richard. It only seemed to take a few minutes to get to the front entrance. Mind you no-one took any notice of the speed that they were travelling at.

Soon the three were approaching on foot the two distinguished gentlemen who were seated near the main entrance. As they approached the gentlemen stood and reached out to shake the hands of the two young men. Without any fuss the group headed towards the Tubevec along with loads of other tired and weary tourists. It seemed most strange to the boys not to be making a fuss over the fact that their father and uncle were both safe and what's more together! However, they followed the behaviour of the adults around them.

Richard bought the boys their tickets.

A security guard challenged the group and asked if the two young men could explain why their e-identity bracelets were apparently not working. Paul explained that there had been an accident in the bath temple and their bracelets had been damaged by the waters. There was a very convincing voice that said, "This is a perfectly acceptable explanation, let them go through."

"I'm not sure about this." said the security guard and he was about to press a communicator button on his control panel when the voice again said, "This happened last week if you remember, the people involved threatened to sue the temple authorities for the repairs, but you managed to calm things down."

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

The security guard almost talking to himself was heard to say to Paul, "Oh yes the same thing happened last week, you'd think they'd warn visitors about it. I hope you had a pleasant visit to the temples and will come back again soon." He waved them on.

The group were soon heading towards the city again, hurtling through the countryside at amazing speed.

"Won't you miss your Airsleaker?" asked Paul.

"I think I can live without it, although it was nice having independent transport again." replied Ed.

Sylvie reminded them that Tubevecs were often bugged so they should keep quiet.

The rest of the journey was spent in painful silence, they watched the countryside then the city pass by them at speed, noting the occasional wildlife.

Sylvie's private transport was waiting at the station. Once again she had to remind the boys that the transport could be bugged. They soon reached the safe house and it was an enormous relief when the door closed behind them and they could drop all pretences. There was much hugging and such chatter that it was difficult to follow a particular conversation. Sylvie decided to go to the food prep area and fix something to eat and drink.

~~~~~

# REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

## Chapter 13 - Suspicions

Edward filled the boys in, with his side of the story. He told them that when he visited Jerestican, he at first suspected nothing, being glad to see an old friend that he hadn't talked to in a long time. However, he got the impression that all was not as it seemed, especially when he had mentioned imports of chemicals. Edward said that he'd gained the impression that Jerestican was somehow involved in disguising the true nature of the imports to Regenis 4. Edward knew that Jerestican would not be able to do this on his own. So when he offered to take Edward to see his old friends Gerherp and Yestant, he suspected that they were also involved, being in the import and export business they may be transporting the goods so to speak. When they met up, his old friends seemed as sincere and honest as they ever were. During their conversation about the chemical imports, Yestant said he thought he'd seen some communication about something coming from Genthaed, they'd been offered the opportunity to ship it into Regenis 4, but at the time they didn't have easy access to a space freighter in that region of space, as it would mean a lot of messing about with transfers involving extra costs, they'd declined the shipment. Yestant suggested that if Edward wanted to follow-up that lead they could get him a free flight, Yestant handed Edward an e-reader with a code on it. It not only carried the code but also the message, "be very careful I feel there's something wrong here, could be a trap".

Edward said he showed the screen to Yestant and pointed at the word "trap" then said "OK, this is the code here eh?" Yestant had confirmed that it was correct. He then offered their Galcomnet terminal so Edward could book a flight. Whilst Edward was at the terminal he did a search to see if there were anything suspicious about Gerherp and Yestant's shipments and whether there had been any coming from anywhere near the Galtoid Sector, but found nothing.

Yestant had come over to the terminal, asking Edward if he were having any trouble "logging on", then he had smiled at Edward as he realised what he was doing. He'd said "That's OK, you seem to be doing alright now, there's no dodgy flights on this carrier, I can assure you. I have trouble with this thing sometimes, that's why Gerherp is the main operator." Then he took over the interface for a short while and navigated Edward to the flights booking section. "There you go, that's the screen you need."

Edward said that Jerestican seemed to be quite relieved when Edward left early the next day. The flight went without a hitch, he was not surprised when he was greeted at the space port by what appeared to be security personnel. He knew they were fakes of course. He was taken to some sort of warehouse, but he managed to escape and hid for several days, before being discovered and captured.

He then described the set-up that he was taken to and it was almost identical to that at which Ed and Paul had "stayed". Luckily he wasn't there for too long before his brother Richard and some other agents managed to rescue him. His captives had managed to get nothing of use from him, despite their best efforts.

Richard took over the narrative, he filled everyone in on the story from his perspective. The secret service had discovered that Regenis 4 was not the only target for secret factories, reports had come in in the last few days that several other mining planets appeared to have unlicensed factories, that were cloaked in the same way as that on Regenis 4. The agents had also discovered that the mechanism of getting supplies to the planets revolved around the mining machines that were being shipped. A Government employee on one of these planets had realised that there were too many crates being imported for what appeared to be one trial machine. The extra crates mysteriously DISAPPEARED a day later. The plan was to use the chemical weapons

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

to undermine the local populations of the mine rich planets so the Galtoid sector can take over their resources.

Richard then turned to Ed and said that he was sorry to inform him that Elcesior and Jenny's father had been arrested as he was suspected as being a agent working for the Galtoid sector operation, they thought he was managing the import of the chemicals and extra equipment for the factory.

Ed couldn't believe his ears and wondered if Jenny and Elcesior knew anything about the plot and their father's involvement. Then he felt sorry for them on a strange planet, no one to turn to, their father gone and they would be under suspicion of collaborating. Then his thoughts turned to the fact that Elcesior had easily given away the fact that Ed and Paul had borrowed Academy equipment to make their discoveries. But then if he'd been involved in the Galtoid plot, surely he'd want to cover things up not confess to the whole thing. His mind was spinning with all the possibilities.

"Leave it to the professionals" said Richard reassuringly, "We'll find out the truth of the matter."

Edward put his arm around Ed, "I know it's a cruel old world when you can't trust your feelings and ears, but I can assure you the truth will come out, we just need to have faith in the service and bide our time whilst we wait for them to thoroughly check things out. And having worked for them I can assure you they will be thorough and leave no space rock unturned."

Ed smiled and hugged his dad. It took Edward by surprise. Ed said, "Thanks dad, it's just a bit of a shock to find out that people you thought you could trust, may have plans to destroy everything you believe in, but hey you've had nearly two weeks of it."

Edward replied, "I have at that and I agree it's quite a shock to my system. At least we've discovered the plot before any real damage has been done. Those who are guilty of wrong doing will have to take what's coming to them. I just hope that innocent people don't get unjustly accused."

Richard joined in by saying, "I agree whole heartedly with you there Eddy, the service will do it's utmost to ensure that we find the real truth before the justice system takes over."

Ed and Paul, couldn't believe their ears, "Eddy" their father, the "stuffer duffer" was referred to as "Eddy" by none other than his brother.

Edward looked somewhat embarrassed at being called "Eddy". It was obviously a nickname that Richard had used in childhood. Ed and Paul remembered back to when they'd first met Richard, he'd referred to their dad by his more formal name, "Edward".

Richard seemed totally unaware of the stir he'd caused. Paul detected an "Oops" coming from Sylvie, in the food prep area.

Ed, Quick thinking, asked Richard, "Have you got a SecreNet terminal here?"

Richard surprised by the request replied, "Er.... yes it's in the office over there." He pointed towards the open doorway.

Ed detecting an unasked question responded, "It's just that Paul told me about a game he was playing at his last safe house and I thought he'd want to show it to me."

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

"Of course you're more than welcome to use it, suggest you use the ID "QUESTOR98" with password "GAL98C", rather than the previous user ID that Paul was given; in-case anyone is monitoring users and waiting for Paul to come back on-line." suggested Richard.

Ed and Paul went to the office and once they'd left the room, Edward rebuked Richard, "Eddy! You haven't called me that for years."

~~~~ Later ~~~~

"So what did you two get up to as lads", asked Paul of his dad and Richard as they settled down for the meal.

Edward replied, "Pretty much the same as you and Ed really. We fought battles on far off planets, we were ace fighter pilots battling some ruthless foe, whom of course we defeated. We had our own hobbies and interests.

Richard interjected, "I seem to remember yours involved a lot of girls."

Edward went red and got his own back with, "And yours mostly involved computers, cyphers and codes."

Richard pointed out, "Ah but it was a good grounding for the service," then he turned to Sylvie, "Excellent Hepsiganian stir fry by the way Sylvie."

Sylvie blushed and muttered, "Thanks."

The others also issued praise.

Paul turned to Richard and said, "You two were similar to us then. He...", Paul pointed to Ed and continued, "...is an ace pilot, whilst I'm into techy stuff like Galcomnet, materials science and the like. Our skills and knowledge have proved useful on this mission."

Edward interrupted, "Hey don't go getting any ideas about joining the service you two, it can bring a lot of risk and heartache can't it?" He turned to Richard for support.

Richard quickly picked up on his brother's plea for help, "It certainly can, we've lost a good many close friends and colleagues, not to mention loves of our life."

Ed and Paul were thinking the same, "Hello sounds like some interesting stories here."

Then Paul detected Sylvie saying, "Don't go there, as there's still plenty of pain."

There was silence for a while, until Ed asked Richard, "When did the secret factory on Regenis 4 get raided? Only I'm curious as to why our captors continued to pursue and capture us."

Richard replied, "We didn't raid it, as we thought it might put everyone at greater risk and in any case we could find out far more intelligence from other planets. They had a back-up plan as they shifted their operations to an alternative site. However, we were able to monitor them closely this time and see how they operated. It confirmed Jerestican's involvement in the incoming shipments of equipment and chemicals, it also pointed us to the mine and Grakeon's possible involvement, although that still remains to be proved.

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

~~~~ Later ~~~~

The flight back to Regenis 4 went well. They travelled via Placeedees in order to throw pursuers off the scent. There was a one night stop-over. When they checked into the hotel, Ed and Paul shared a room. Paul expressed disappointment at the fact that it wasn't an 'e-room'.

“What no chance to startle passing girls with your shower antics?” ribbed Ed.

Maria was overjoyed to welcome back the “four men in her life”, as she put it.

Richard was given the “guest suite” as Edward put it. Richard was going to go back to his flat, but Edward had insisted that he come back with them, “Maria would never forgive me if you didn't come and stay for at least one night.”

Maria told Ed that Jenny and Elcesior had been over several times in the last couple of days looking for Ed and Paul. Maria confirmed that their father had been arrested and she said Jenny was quite distraught with worry.

Ed was tempted to say something about the reason for their father's arrest, but decided it would be best to just sound sympathetic. He promised to pop round and see them both.

Maria seemed quite content with that statement.

They were soon all seated and enjoying a meal together. Ed and Paul felt like flies on the wall as Richard, Maria and Edward were exchanging comments about past events and the phrase, “remember when we went to..... and ..... happened.” was well used by end of the evening. The boys certainly learned a whole lot of stuff about their parents that they'd never dreamed of. Places that they had only seen in e-books or heard about were discussed in some detail.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

After breakfast and his first fix of “Tastiday” for several days, Ed invited Paul to join him on a visit to the Fluorescens dwelling.

Ed and Paul were greeted by a very tearful Jenny, “Oh thank goodness you're back. Did your mum tell you what has happened?”

“Yes” replied Ed, “Do you know why he has been arrested?”

“Something to do with his work they said, when they took him away. He was supposed to be 'helping them with their enquiries'.” Jenny replied wiping her eyes, then she pointed down the hallway, indicating that they come in.

“Probably investigating an accident at work or something like that.” reassured Ed.

“I don't think it can be, or if it is, it must be pretty serious, as he's been held so far for three days. He rang after the first day to say he was going to be held for a bit longer and he asked how we were.” Jenny pointed to herself and Elcesior, who had come out to see who had come round. She continued, “Then he said he had to go again, he looked really rough as if he hadn't slept all night.”

“He hasn't mentioned anything going on at work has he?” asked Paul.

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Jenny turned to him and looked as if he were accusing her of a crime, then calmed down as she realised he was trying to be helpful. Jenny replied, "He hardly ever talks about his work, does he?" she asked Elcesior.

"Not really, just the odd thing now and again. From what I gather things were going well. The mining operation was ahead of schedule and things had been going really well. The people learning how to operate the new machine had picked it up fast." said Elcesior.

"There was something strange about their uniforms." remarked Jenny.

"What the mining staff?" asked Elcesior.

"No dim wit! The police who arrested dad!" rebuked Jenny.

"What sort of strange?" asked Ed.

"Well they had the usual R4C logo on the uniform, but underneath was written 'SD5'." relied Jenny

"Perhaps it was a police division like 'Special Detectives'." suggested Paul.

Ed backed him up with, "That's probably it, they have all sorts of department names."

"But there was no braid." responded Jenny.

"What?" asked Paul.

"The police have yellow braid, down the sides of their uniform and each officer has a unique ID number. All three officers just had 'SD5' under the logo." retorted Jenny.

"Perhaps being detectives they don't have to have a number." suggested Elcesior and rapidly got the feeling he should have kept quiet, as Jenny threw him one of those 'shut up dim wit' type of looks.

"So anyway what have you two been up to?" asked Jenny.

Ed, relieved he hadn't actually voiced the same suggestion, although he was thinking it, replied, "Our uncle called out of the blue and invited us up to the Hescedion space port to spend a few days with him."

"More like a week!" interjected Elcesior, then slinked off to the food prep area, as Jenny threw another of those looks at him. Just before he disappeared he managed to get out, "Drink anyone?"

Ed and Paul asked for a FRUICOL.

Jenny was still glowering at him as he asked, "Ice?"

Simultaneously Ed and Paul said, "Yes please."

Jenny pointed to an open door and said, "Do come in. This is the first time you've actually been in our place isn't it?"

Ed replied, "Er...Yes it is."

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

They walked into the main room and were quite surprised by the décor. Paul had seen similar in history info, the style came from a planet called 'Earth' and a region called 'the Mediterranean'. Paul quite liked it, it seemed to have more character than most modern places, which seemed quite bland in comparison.

Ed said, "Wow like what you've done with the place."

Paul asked, "Is it Mediterranean?"

Jenny replied, "I don't know where the style comes from, saw it in an old video and liked it. As dad is not into décor, he gave me and Elcesior a free hand in decorating the place. We had to import some of the materials."

Ed said, "That doesn't surprise me."

The conversation continued on about design, taste in videos and the like. Elcesior stayed out of it having had his "fingers burnt".

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Chapter 14 – Working Things Out

Richard was notified the following day, that Grakeon had been released. Shortly afterwards, Jenny called Ed, to give him the news. Although Ed already knew, he managed to cover it up and appeared to be pleased that Grakeon had returned home. Apparently he had been told, that he should not return to work, until told to do so. Jenny said, he'd be like a cadged animal, as he loved his work.

Ed was still suspicious about Grakeon and whether he was involved in the plot or not. The secret service may have released him to see what he does and who he contacts. On the other hand he may have been innocent.

Edward could see, that Ed was struggling with the news. He put his arm around Ed's shoulder and said, "I know its hard, just got to stick with it for the time being, you're doing well and I'm proud of you both." The last was said, just as Paul entered the room.

Later that morning, one of Paul's mates arrived and started talking about Grakeon's arrest. Paul wondered where he'd got his information from, some of it was quite detailed and some was more like wild guesses and totally wrong. Paul's mate, Geraldo Deakon, knew that there were items going missing from the mine and it was something to do with the Galtoid Sector planets and he knew that Grakeon was suspected of being involved in their disappearance. Geraldo knew nothing of the secret factory though and Paul wasn't about to tell him anything about it. Ed couldn't listen to the things that Geraldo was saying about Jenny, Elcesior and Grakeon, so he made his excuses that he had some maintenance work to do on his air sleaker.

Geraldo said, "Strange to be doing some maintenance on the air sleaker isn't it, he's only just got it hasn't he?"

Paul said, "Oh its only some minor defects that are easily put right, you know what these ace pilots are like?"

Geraldo replied, "Oh yeah I do at that."

The conversation turned back to these darned "off-worlders who come to our planet and think they can do what they darned well like..." Paul tried to keep a balanced view saying things like, "Well nothing's been proven as yet", whilst not wanting to upset his mate and his views. Paul mainly ended up listening to Geraldo ranting on about off-worlders and other alleged occurrences involving "these scum" as he put it. Paul didn't know where to look, after all until now Elcesior had been classed as one of his mates. He felt quite disloyal about the conversation.

When Geraldo finally left, Paul went to see Ed and chatted through the conversations. Ed suggested that as Paul had felt so strongly about running down Elcesior and as nothing adverse had been proven against the family, Paul should have pushed the "Well nothings been proven card a bit more, to make Geraldo realise that there may be another side to the story."

"That's easy to say here, but you should have heard him going on about off-worlders generally. It was conspiracy theory after conspiracy theory with a few dodgy facts thrown in for good measure." replied Paul.

"I know it's never easy when you have someone with such strong views. However, you can't just sit back and let him walk all over you and your thoughts and feelings on the matter. He should

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

respect that you have your views also.” said Ed.

“I suppose you're right, probably won't see or hear from him for a while anyway. I think he got the gist that I wasn't buying into his theories.” replied Paul.

Then after a short silence Paul asked, “What do you really think Ed, are the Fluerescens guilty or not guilty?”

“Jury is out here mate! I just do not know. I'm convinced that neither Elcesior or Jenny knew anything about the plot. As for Grakeon, who knows, you heard Elcesior, his dad was pretty quiet about his work. That could have been because he didn't want to bore them, on the other hand perhaps he didn't want to let anything slip and put them at greater risk. Only time will tell.” replied Ed.

“I think you're right there.” said Paul.

“Fancy a ride on the Airsleaker?” asked Ed.

“Hey yeah you must be dying to have another flight, not going near any secret factories though are you?” replied Paul.

“Na, given them up. I thought I'd go to the trading centre and see what accessories I can get for the Airsleaker.” said Ed.

“What like a couple of laser cannons?” kidded Paul.

“Something like that.” replied Ed.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

It seemed strange to be going back to the Academy after their adventures, also saying goodbye to the uncle that they never knew they had. He'd promised to come back and see them in a couple of weeks, but just had to get back to the office to sort out all the “paperwork”.

Ed had said to Paul, “What about that? Even exotic jobs like being a secret agent has its boring elements. You'd never have guessed it would you?”

The Academy looked exactly the same as the last time they saw it. It just didn't feel the same, there was a kind of secretive buzz going on. Paul caught the odd comment or two and quickly sussed out that everyone was talking about Jenny and Elcesior, obviously Geraldo had been passing off his comments and opinions about the off-worlders. From what Paul had overheard, the general opinion was that Jenny and Elcesior were spies sent here to help sabotage the mining equipment and send secret information back to their home planet.

Paul whispered the rumours to Ed and said, “Talk about getting things completely wrong.”

Ed whispered back, “Say and do nothing, we're not involved we're just acquaintances right?”

Paul nodded.

Apart from the gossip still going on around them, no-one involved Ed and Paul, they didn't even discuss their absence from the Academy and that included the teaching staff. The whole thing

## REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

made Ed and Paul feel particularly uncomfortable, almost as if they were being accused of being involved in the plot with Jenny and Elcesior. Ed and Paul were treated as if they were strangers from “out of town” and totally ignored. As neither Ed nor Paul pursued the matter and just got on with their studies etc. it seemed to the external observer as if this were normal, however if you'd seen the two boys and their friends a few weeks before you just wouldn't recognise the scene now.

When Ed and Paul got home, they discussed their strange day at the Academy with Edward and Maria. Edward said, that apparently Geraldo had been spreading all sorts of rumours about the Fluerescens and about Ed and Paul's involvement in the plot. Edward agreed that the boys had taken the right stance of not raising their profile and engaging anyone in conversation or argument as it could turn nasty. The boys were tempted not to turn in to the Academy the following day, but Edward encouraged them to “ride out the storm”.

That evening Jenny and Elcesior came round and they all discussed the days events . Ed asked how their dad was coping.

Jenny said she'd never seen him, so down in the mouth, he'd lost interest in everything, he just couldn't believe that colleagues that he'd worked so closely with could believe that he'd be capable of being involved in anything against the administration and peoples who had welcomed him and his family with open arms.

Jenny went on to say that Grakeon had helped the Regenis 4 Authorities to try and identify who was behind the plot, that they were investigating, as he had theories about who was ultimately behind the whole thing based on things he'd heard and seen before they left the Galtoid sector. He'd kept an eye out for suspicious goings on and had discovered the extra shipments, but only when it was too late. He didn't think that the mining machine corporation itself was involved in the plot, but more a case of someone pretending to ship stuff out in their name. He'd heard that a Mr Klayfer was arranging for shipments to be made to the mine, then as mysteriously as they appeared, they'd be picked up again and Mr Klayfer's name would appear on the collection papers as the person authorising for a mistaken shipment to be collected.

The discussion was confirmed latter that evening when Richard contacted Edward on a secure comms link and informed him that Grakeon was in the clear; in fact he'd been of great assistance to the “authorities” in pinning down the activist ring. As a result of the information and names that he'd been able to supply, the whole ring had been arrested with the exception of someone called Deakon, he warned Edward that Deakon's son went to the same Academy as Ed and Paul and that they should be careful what they do and say. Edward had filled Richard in on the day's events. Then he relayed Richard's news to Ed and Paul.

~~~~ Later ~~~~

At the Academy there was a buzz going on again, apparently the principle had called an urgent faculty meeting and wanted to address the students before classes began. It seemed strange not going straight to classes, instead everyone was mulling around the main campus hall. After hanging around outside for half an hour they were ushered inside by the teaching staff, just as there were sirens from departing security vehicles.

Ed and Paul had been looking around desperately to see if they could spot Geraldo Deakon, Jenny and Elcesior; but to no avail.

The hall was buzzing with raised voices as the students were trying to figure out what all the excitement was about.

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

There was a self imposed hush set upon the audience as the senior faculty staff stepped out onto the stage. The principle, a short rather portly man with a head that boasted very little hair, was the last to step onto the stage. He went straight to the front of the stage, whilst his senior staff sat in row behind him. As if to add drama to the moment of hush, he cleared his voice and after a moment's silence started his speech, his voice boomed right to the back of the hall.

“It has come to my attention that there are various rumours spreading across the academy about four of our students. I want to set the record straight about the students and put an instant stop to the rumours that seem to be spreading like wildfire and proliferating like a rapidly expanding organism.” The principle paused to take in breath and survey the audience. Then continued, “The students concerned are Ed and Paul Glaceon plus Elcesior and Jenny Fluerecens. The rumours are essentially that these students were involved in wrong doings against the Regenis 4 state and its peoples. In fact I have been assured by the state that nothing could be further from the truth and that in fact these individuals have been very courageous and have helped the state foil a potentially very dangerous plot, which would have not only affected this planet but countless others too. The state cannot at this stage authorise me to reveal details of the plot concerned as they are still in the process of rounding up all who have been involved in it. I can however say that all will be revealed in the news bulletins in a day or two. In the interim I request, no, I demand that the students in question be no longer the subject of malicious gossip, instead be afforded the status that the state wishes to afford them in due time, namely that of heroes of the state. As principle of this Academy I wish to extend my thanks to the four for their part in safeguarding Regenis 4 and its peoples.”

The senior staff stood as one and clapped most heartily. Everyone turned to look for Ed, Paul, Jenny and Elcesior. The latter pair had appeared near the front of the stage and were accompanied by one of the teaching staff. The whole audience followed the lead of the senior staff and joined in the clapping.

Ed and Paul didn't know where to look, they were totally surprised by this turn of events. The remainder of the day was a total opposite of the previous day, instead of no-one wanting to talk to them everyone wanted to be their friend or mate.

When they got home later that afternoon, their uncle Richard was waiting for them. He had a medal for each of them, which he told them the president himself had asked to be given to the boys for their courage and heroic actions. Richard was most shocked about the Principle's announcement, as he'd only been asked to put a stop to the rumours, so that things would be more comfortable for the four students. Luckily Richard didn't feel that the clean up operation had been compromised at all, as both Mr Deakon and his son Geraldo had been arrested that morning on the edge of the Academy campus. There had been numerous other arrests both on and off planet.

“Ah that's what the noise was all about just before the Principle's announcement” remarked Paul. He looked around for Ed, but he was nowhere to be seen.

Paul wandered off to the food prep area but Ed wasn't there. He went to Ed's room, but he wasn't there either. He decided that Ed must be in the store cupboard tending his precious Airsleaker. The door was slightly ajar, Paul pulled it fully open and to his surprise Ed was kissing Jenny. He stopped, looked at Paul and said, “Mind if you close the door old chap, there's a terrible draft in here?”

Paul asked, “Nice to see you've worked things out. What's it like kissing a hero then?”

REGENIS 4 CHRONICLES (Book1)

Ed replied, "Its very nice thank you, now why don't you clear off and find yourself a hero, so you can try it?"

There was no reply, except for the gentle "Tap!" as the cupboard door closed by itself.

<The End>

Written By: Steve Simons – Originally written and serialised for KidsCastUK in 2007, but due to demand was re-written as book. (c)2009 Steve Simons

Book 2 – "The Invisible Foe" is now available through SmashWords.com, search for "regen
book 2"