

Before the Great War

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Subspace- Key to the Universe

Just another day in Mars Dome-12, New Athens. Here, within the workshops that house the brightest minds known to mankind, an invention about to change the lives of every single living human being is about to take shape and form...

Only the accompanying and constant tone of the engineer's monitor in Lab-144, Argus Research Center, New Athens, kept Nathan Katz awake. One would notice the man's sun-blond hair and the darkness of his skin, gained from the days he spent prone under the sun back on Terra during his last break. One may also notice the fact that he was sprawled across the engineer's monitor, sound asleep with just a bit of drool hanging from the corner of his mouth.

Many people now believed in the common "blue collar philosophy" of work for pay, then go home and spend it. Dr. Katz was a firm believer in that cause, but the level of interest for his new project did not keep him far from the lab. For the last week, he'd been spending time in the dormitories on campus, rather than at home in the Federal District of Mars, some several hundred miles west of the research center. It wasn't that far.

Nevertheless, this night, Katz spent in the lab, rather than in his dorm room contemplating a higher reality. As a child, he always imagined himself being able to cross over into his own little world, where his thoughts and feelings he stored at the end of the day. He nurtured that thought through into adulthood, though his world mostly revolved around Patricia Fredrikson nowadays. A co-worker, her team had been working on various projects for the Fusial Science Department. Before, they'd found time to be together, but nowadays even the usual makeout session in the back of the cafeteria was rare. He really did miss her.

His work was culminated into this project. All of his life's studies, and his own outside-of-work ideas all came down to this? a key to another dimension. A passage into a different plane, but not one of his own. One to make space travel faster.

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"According to Rigel's First Law of Stellar Mechanics, within the fabric of the space-time continuum exists a factor of resistance. Not an active resistance, but one which limits the actual physics of space. If we were to be able to lower the resistance of space, we could go far beyond where our engines take us now." Chatter had started at the idea of a faster mode of travel, expanding the universe for the GTA. Some had the sound of utter astonishment or mild amusement, but most already seemed to have dismissed him as a quack.

"But that's impossible, to seed an entire plane of existence with a so-called lower resistance factor," said Dr. Edwin Rosen. Dr. Rosen was assistant director to the Spatial Mechanics Department, and a mentor of Dr. Katz. It was his skepticism and Katz's stubborn ideals that competed with each other, and Katz was driven to succeed. It was what gave him his perseverance in life.

"Exactly," he had said. He let his words sink in. *"Which is why we don't make space work for us. We take one that's already there!"*

"So what you're saying is if we enter this, 'Wonderful World of Hyperactive Engines', we can go beyond our current boundaries? And you can provide us with the key to this 'Wonderful World'?" said Terrence Darnell. He was a competent new intern at the research center, and spent his

life stringently in the name of proving others wrong through sarcasm. It was an annoying trait that was inherent in new researchers, one to be worked out of an arrogance beyond measure. But it had been done. Katz knew, it had happened to him.

“Yes. I call it, ‘Subspace’.” More chatter ensued, only to be stopped by Rosen.

“Quiet, quiet! Let the boy finish!” he growled. His old bulldog face was pulled down in a menacing glower. He turned back to Katz, who smiled his thanks, and continued.

“Well, aside from long computations and various formulas and tests I’d have to go through to show you, there is a way to cross between dimensions. Now sure, we’ve all thought we were moored to this dismal existence, and well honestly, yes we are. But if all goes well, which it has been, we can moor ourselves farther away. Optimistic? Depends on your opinion. Is it reality? Yes, it can be.”

“Subspace, as you know, can also be termed as ‘under-space’. Every physical value known there is lower than ‘Normalspace’, term coined by Dimensional Physicist Harold Belaikian. Imagine the resistance factor in normalspace termed as X. Taking, for example, Superspace, a number of frequencies up, as two-X. Now look at a frequency of Subspace. Half X? It very well could be.”

“So, esteemed ladies and gentlemen of the Argus Alumni. I implore you to look around you. We are people, no more, no less. We have at our hands the very key to unlocking the universe. And we don’t have long to do it. But the world’s hopes of expansion before Sol goes postal on the entire system has just been bolstered. And so I ask you now, as the brightest minds on the face of Terra, are you with me?”

A minute had gone by without response. Of the thousands in attendance in the auditorium, a single man stood up. Dr. Rosen rose from his seat, his face placid. He raised his two hands, and brought them together. The clap resounded through the chamber. Another followed, and then another. Others began to stand, and began their applause. Like a rolling wave of thunder, the clapping continued. Soon, the entire attendance was on their feet and clapping. Someone in the back whistled loud and long, and Katz felt color rise in his cheeks. It had been a hard-won grant. And he was about to put it in the best use possible.

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As Dr. Katz arose from his dream, recalling the winning of the subspace research grant, he noticed what had awoken him. It was his prototype. It finally went active.

After a thousand plus point inspection of each working component of the subspace engine, it’s capacitors gained charge and activated. Dr. Katz examined the engineering computer’s monitor. Parts of the subspace engine went active and their wireframes flashed on the monitor. Lines led to informational readouts, and a separate screen began flashing Katz’s computation lines of code as the engine ran through them. Katz stared at the scrolling alphanumeric, hardly aware of the distortion forming. As lines of static traced across the screens, he raised his head and looked.

There on a seven-pointed ring, each point jutting out a control box and numerous cables to the subspace engine, a light-shockwave flashed outwards, and the test chamber took a deep blue glow. Katz immediately hit the red alert button, telling personnel to clear sections in close proximity to the testing chamber, and the automatic structural integrity field to come online. Reinforced blast doors fell over other walls in the immediate area of the chamber and were energized by electromagnetic fields to hold in place. These walls were made to contain anything up to a megaton-yield nuclear blast, which should be enough.

As radiation countermeasures came into place, the screen’s static stopped, though a clear picture of the test room from the observation bunker, or the ‘thunk bunk’ as it was known to the rest

of the research station, as it was underground; could not be received. Still, Katz stared on, eyeing every detail as his creation, his creation, rent a hole in the fabric of space and time. A blue ethereal mist drifted from the core of the gash, surrounding the gate within a sphere of flickering energies.

Katz was astonished and dazzled by the display before him, and snapped out of it to realize he had one more final test to go through. A near mile away at another part of the campus, another similar gateway-projector had been set up, an “exit” for the drone that was about to “enter” the rift. Katz tapped up a menu, called up a few display screens, and then activated the drone. He watched the drone roll at a pace of five kilometers per hour as it trudged towards the gateway. In this way, exact measurements of how effective subspace would be could be solved. If all went well, the speed the drone was at should be in direct proportion with speeds in subspace. He held his breath as the drone tentatively rolled in. As it entered, light outlined its contacting surface, flickering outward with searching beams of light. The robot entered, and it was gone.

Suddenly the monitoring readouts of the drone sped up as the intensity of its devices was amplified through subspace. There was feedback through the audio receivers, which Katz quickly shut off. The video receivers were filled with snow and unreadable. Then a brief moment later, the gate collapsed with a similar blast of light, reversed and inward, fading to a small star that glimmered and was gone. Katz realized that for the duration of the entire experiment, he had held his breath. He exhaled. Inhaled. Exhaled. Inhaled...

His communicator warbled. Slowly, with a trembling hand, he moved up to his breast pocket, and extracted it to answer.

“Nathan. This is Miguel.”

Miguel Bienvides had been over at the receiving end of the gateway. His voice was flat, however.

“Did you see it? Did you see it, Mike?”

“Yes. Package delivered. Drone X1-A has made it through completely and utterly intact.”

“Do you realize what we’ve just done...”

“...what you’ve just done...”

“...what I’ve just done...?”

“Yes. You came here with a message, and you delivered it, every maldita word of it. Holy Mother, you’ve done it!”

“We finally have it! The key to subspace...is here...”