

The World of Peril in Paradise

Travel forward in time to 2080 CE, a time when humans have left Earth to venture across our galaxy on the Space Ark *Mayflower* in search of an alternate home planet. Imagine the crew's surprise when they stumbled across a mighty consortium of planets bound together by the Interstellar Collective for Peace and Security, a centuries-old organization linking intelligent alien life within the Milky Way. Ten years have passed since the arrival of the human colonizers, who brought not only hope with them but also the seeds of destruction.

Meet the “Collective”

Cepheus-9: A beautiful water planet of eleven islands, floating on a turquoise sea under a lilac-tinged sky where two suns set every evening. The history of the peaceful and cosmopolitan Cepheusians dates back over ten thousand years when the people learned the craft of boat-making and voyaged across the boundless Cepheusian sea to engage in trade and commerce. Cities sprang up and spread across the land masses until the edges of municipalities melded to form one enormous megatropolis. Tropical forests fell under the advances of civilization, and it was not long before the people constructed spaceports and powerful starships to venture across the galaxy, forming trade alliances on distant worlds. Water is a powerful element of Cepheusian life, and it is to the seas that they return when their spirits part from the physical realm.

Deneb-7: A planet of great diversity, Deneb-7 is inhabited by three races: the powerful and warlike Wessels, the technologically advanced Fyjers, and the nomadic Geiten people. The Empty Quarter, a vast desert, belts the planet, while two major river systems run north to south, with important irrigation canals delivering water to scattered towns and cities. Rugged mountains rich in natural resources are a source of wealth for the people of Deneb-7. However, a constant clash of culture between the Wessels and the traditional Geiten people has made the planet the pariah of the Collective.

Aditi: A partner nation to the Collective, Aditi is peopled by sentient marine creatures who now call dry land their home. Home to vast beds of government-controlled kelp, Aditi trades in this “green gold” with those member planets of the Collective facing devastating climate change. The Aditians live in constant apprehension of their oceans that regularly rise to reclaim the land that, before the spread of cities, lay beneath the planet's briny waters.

The planets of Lacerta, Cygnus-Morea, Vulpecula, and Krystal round out the membership in the Collective, and for 485 years, the galactic collaboration between like-minded planets has stood the test of time.

Meet the Cast

The Humans

Daniel Radu is an astronautical engineer and project manager for NASA's Space Ark *Mayflower*. Now residing on Cepheus-9, he is employed by the Collective as an exobotanist. Raised in Santa Barbara, California, Daniel lived most of his adult life in the futuristic city of

Nasaton, Florida. A widower, his wife Poppy unknowingly brought the Chimera bacteriophage onboard the *Mayflower*. They have two sons, ten-year-old Lewis and eight-year-old Max.

Tara Kóbor, an award-winning astrophysicist employed by NASA, discovered the Earth-like planet Deneb-7 and was awarded a Nobel Prize for her work on exoplanets. She married her high school sweetheart Pallav, who was NASA's security officer. On Deneb, Pallav befriended a powerful Denebian warlord, obtained a commission in the alien army, and rose to the position of Provost Marshal with the Wessel military. Both Tara and Pallav were born and raised in Custer, South Dakota, and he followed Tara as her career skyrocketed. The couple have three children: Luke (17 years old), Isabella (15 years old), and Jolanta, a seven-year-old Denebian orphan.

Fynn Vogel is a combat veteran fighter ace and was the main pilot on the *Mayflower*. Upon his arrival on Deneb-7, Fynn was adopted by the Wessel President and named as his heir. Hailing from Thunder Bay, Fynn is one of the top-scoring warbird aces in the Collective.

The Denebians:

Gomalan is the Head of State for the Wessel nation. A grizzled ex-soldier, Gomalan was the High Commander of the Wessel Armed Forces before he entered politics. He craves power over everything. Married to Magdar, who, like her husband, lusts for power.

Nagib is a Geiten and the Elder of the village of Urkyn. A good friend to Daniel, Nagib is a forward thinker. He is partnered with Charra, an outspoken woman who rigidly follows Geiten traditions and is not a fan of the humans. They have three children: Geneen, a young adult who despises the treatment that the Wessels mete out to the Geiten and has left Urkyn to fight for Geiten equality; Brynn and Shalo are twin sister and brother, both are very intelligent and active young teens. In accordance with Geiten traditions, Brynn is facing an arranged marriage.

The Cepheusians:

Dr. Meera is the senior exobotanist and Head of the Department of Agriculture's Exobotany Research, Development, and Exploration Centre at the Interstellar Collective for Peace and Security. A woman of mature years, she was married to Warin who fell victim to the Human Introduced Disease—the Chimera bacteriophage. At his death, Meera paid for a procedure that captured the entire databank of Warin's brain cells so that she could continue to consult with an AI version of her late husband. They have two adult children—Hema and Hamo.

KaLahila, aka the Drug Lord of the Stars, oversees a drug-running enterprise responsible for spreading Hell Dust and the Chimera bacteriophage across the galaxy. His crew includes the pilot, Kendra; Dacia, the engineer; and Big Belly and Amber Eyes, two of his minions.

The Aditians:

Barta, aka the Sea Witch of Aditi, is absolutely ruthless and one of the planet's major kelp poachers. She employs Kelvan and Tetra in her poaching enterprise, and they will stop at nothing to get what they want.

Dr. Pilo and Dr. Sinti are two senior botanists for the Aditian government who have asked the Collective for assistance after a major tsunami decimated the shoreline and the government sea pens.

Meet the Author



Zanne Raby is a science fiction author and military veteran. She was in the first class of female officer cadets admitted to the Royal Military College of Canada and served for over three decades with the Royal Canadian Air Force across Canada, Europe, the Middle East, and with US Central Command. After retiring from the Air Force, she moved to a small acreage overlooking beautiful Georgian Bay. When not behind the keyboard, Zanne enjoys travel, hiking, gardening and playing with her small dog with a big personality, Maximus.