



B O N U S
S C E N E S

The Helion Chronicles 1.1

JUPITER RUN

ANNIE JACKSON

The following takes place in season 1 of [The Helion Chronicles](#) between episodes 1 and 2.



THE SHUTTLE HAD 3 CABINS around a central hub with a table off to the side and a few cushioned benches. The barest minimum of comfort embedded in the efficiency of a deep space shuttle. The teridian walls had thin veins of absilium running through them, carrying data, commands and functions throughout the ship.

Finley didn't look in any of the cabins, just took the one in the middle—straight shot to the cockpit.

When the door closed behind her Cade checked out the other 2 sparse cabins, almost identical with a bed, vidscreen, a few panels that slid out to take commands directly. He took the one with a green and blue mountain range on the wall and collapsed into the bed.

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Finley had set the ship to go to Callax starstation. It would take 3 days in the slipstream but it was close enough to the rim that there would be fewer Nova Patrol officers.

She pulled some of the stored food out, standard pollen bars. Bland but filling and nutrient dense. The ship had been stocked with plenty of water and a hydrogen processor. One of the advantages of a deep space shuttle—it could make its own water supply.

When Cade woke up she set a bar and a glass of water on the table for him and sat down on the bench next to it. "Let me see your bioport."

Cade pulled up his right sleeve as he sat down, straddling the bench. He rested his arm on the table by her and picked up the bar with his other hand.

His implant was flawless. She couldn't even see the seams where synthetic, conductive skin fused with his actual skin. Finley slid her fingers across the top of his forearm, feeling for the bioport underneath.

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Cade's nerves sparked at her touch. He wondered what it would feel like if she touched actual skin.

The skin didn't turn translucent and she looked up at him with her big, curious eyes. "You have to activate it?"

He smiled at her, "An upgrade a few years ago."

Her smiled said, a little bit, she was impressed. "I should have known with all of Caelderan's biosensors."

Cade smiled back as he popped the last bit of bar into his mouth. He slid his fingers over the bioport and the skin turned translucent.

Finley looked back to his arm, her fingers skimming around files and down into subroutines. She was so focused she didn't notice his pulse quicken. She took an absilium chip out of her pocket and placed it on top of the bioport.

The chip lit up, glowing blue and green and finally purple as it downloaded the program.

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Finley looked at his face and began sliding her fingers over his arm again. Slowly. The soft, purposeful touch of an artist sculpting his features as if they were clay. Renovating them.

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Cade forgot how to breathe.

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Darker skin. Longer, more narrow face. Sharper nose.

In a few minutes the transformation was complete and he didn't look like Cade Caelderan any longer.

"You'll need a command. The set phrase is 'solar time stands still,'" she said as she drew her fingers away. "We should get a cosmetic interface to grow your hair a little longer." She slid her fingers through the top of his hair to make it a little messy.

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He wanted to reach for her. Wanted to take her hand, to feel her touch again. On his arm and on his chest. Feel his lips on her. Pull her closer and lose track of everything else.

Cade snapped away from the fantasy. "What did you do to me?"

"I gave you a digital façade so you won't be recognized."

"I didn't know bioports can do that."

"They can't. I created the program a while ago for a friend. The holograph is so close to your face it'll register your expressions. So, you probably shouldn't smile much while we're off the ship."

"Why shouldn't I smile?"

"Because no disguise is good enough to make you look ordinary with that smile."

Cade smiled at her, proving her point without trying.

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Finley spent most of the 3 days working on the ship. She rewrote most of the nav history so it wouldn't track that they came from Jupiter. Nav systems were notoriously difficult to manipulate—they were embedded in so many systems, core code buried under a million functions.

Cade spent most of the 3 days exercising and skimming the newsstreams, watching what was going on in the solar system. Finley's video played for a day then was buried under other stories, like the explosion over Hadrian. The newsstreams didn't mention that the obliterated ship had been full of Mirrikh's cattle—his father hadn't released that

information. And, from what Cade could tell, his father was still the only one who knew he'd caused the explosion. It might be another day or 2 before the pieces came together. His father wouldn't make it easy.

Once the furor died, Cade started looking at other stories, other companies, looking for something to do.

"How far is Bakshim from Callax starstation?"

"With a decent stardrive? 3 days give or take. 10 if we stayed in the slipstream. Why do you want to visit a moon on the other side of the rim?"

"Vena Tolári just took in the refugees from Núria."

"That was nice of her," Finley replied waiting for the connection between her question and his answer.

"No, it wasn't. With all 3 prior outbreaks of lunar sickness, the owner had another planet or moon to evacuate the people. It's one of the worst outcomes of terraforming. You have to evacuate 20,000 people which requires an entire fleet. If you have 2 or 3 alternate sites you can spread them out. Otherwise they inflate your population, consume resources but they're too sick to contribute in any way. On top of that you have to handle their medical care because nanites can't cure lunar sickness yet. And you have to wait 5 years for phase 2 to complete before you can move into phase 3."

"Phase 3?"

"Resetting the atmosphere, soil and water to make it habitable. Delays everything by a decade. And you have a population of chronically ill people on your conscience."

"Is that why you stopped Mirrikh?"

Cade looked at her and she saw the responsibility of planets in his eyes.

"A Sovren's possession of worlds is founded in justice and compassion." It was an answer to her question as much as it was a truth buried deep in his heart. "Núria was Aden Mirsad's first terra. He had nowhere to evacuate them."

"So Vena Tolári took them in out of compassion."

Cade scoffed. "You've never met Vena. Something feels off."

"About her granting shelter to the exiles from Núria? People do that sort of thing."

"People take in a friend or a family. People they care about, or a small cluster of strangers if the need is dire. If every Sovren took in a few hundred, even 1,000 that would make sense. No one takes on a population of 20,000."

"Then why did she do it?"

"I don't know. That's what I'd like to find out."

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When they docked at Callax starstation, Finley short-circuited their nav system. Once the abandoned ship was discovered techs would reboot the system locking in her program changes.

Cade activated his façade and tried not to smile.

There were 281 ships docked for Finley to choose from. Even a large cruise ship which was a novelty more than a possibility.

She picked a sleek 8 cabin, 3 deck ship. It had plenty of food storage, an actual kitchen with a chefbot and hydrogen fusion to generate water. It wasn't hard to find the family

who owned it in the registry. The Larents were on a family vacation for a month exploring the solar system.

Starstations this far out didn't have bioscanners for ship access. Finley made short work of the security and she and Cade walked on board their new home, at least for now.

As they left the dock Finley transferred more than enough to the Larents to cover the ship.

"I thought you were a thief."

"I am. But I'm not cruel."

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After they left the starstation, Finley and Cade explored the ship. It was called the Dauphin but Finley would change that. They each chose a cabin on the second level. There wasn't anything interesting in the storage compartments. A few souvenirs from where the Larents had visited so far. Finley crated them up to ship when they reached Bakshim. And sent them more coins to cover clothes and things left onboard.

The engine room had ship-comms which the Larents, thankfully, had not used. They may not have even known they were there.

"Hey, the ship has an android," Cade exclaimed as they explored the engine room. She stood in a storage chamber, as if asleep.

Finley meandered over, taking in the android's burgundy hair and fair skin, the neutral grey suit; probably not equipped to deflect weapons fire. She reached out for the activation panel but Cade stopped her with his hand on her arm.

"What are you doing?"

"Activating her."

"We don't know how she's programmed. What if she takes control of the ship and flies us to a Nova Patrol station?"

"She's just a humanoid interface with the ship. She'll take our commands just like the ship does. And if I activate her, I can program her."

"You can program her so she only obeys us?"

"I won't need to. As long as we're the crew, we're the only ones she'll obey." Finley hesitated for a moment. "I should probably wait until I change the registry of the ship, though."

"Will that break her?"

"No. But it will reset her. There's no reason to do the work twice."

"How long does it take to reset the registry?"

"Most of it I can have done on the way to Bakshim. But we're going to have to interface with a registry on Saturn for it to be final. And we can have it repainted."

"Who is going to see the paint job in space?"

"No one. But what's the fun in renaming a ship if it's only digital information. What do you want to name her?"

"Amelia."

"Really? You're terrible with names."

"I'm not. Amelia rolls right off the tongue."

"You don't call ships things like Amelia. It should be powerful and fun and interesting."

"What about the android? Can we call her Amelia?"

"No."

"You're not any fun."



Read season 1 of The Helion Chronicles



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