

Chapter One: Space Pirates?

When a star becomes more than a dot on the control screen, when it becomes a bright circle, that is the time to shut down the star-jump drive. At the helm of the *Star Wind*, Captain Dennis Harmon shifted smoothly into planet-jump drive. Through the forward viewport, the star Serova shone as a faraway sun.

Kit Harmon, watching from the copilot's seat, admired his father's ease with the controls. As a Space Cub, Kit had been allowed to take the helm only when the *Star Wind* was docked and the controls were set on training mode.

Now Kit was a Space Cadet. The whole family had just been home to Earth for his promotion. Now, with a licensed pilot beside him, he could legally take the helm of a space ship. Finally he outranked his sister, Vali, and he was itching to use his new privileges.

"Can I have the helm for a while, Dad?"

Captain Harmon smiled. "Of course, Cadet Harmon, until we reach the security checkpoint just off of Kona."

Kona was a beautiful planet, popular with space tourists for its Rainbow Lights and its colorful, friendly animaloid citizens. Today, for the *Star Wind*'s family crew, it was the goal both of a cargo delivery and a vacation.

Suddenly an alarm bell rang. A triangle with a question mark beside it appeared on the control screen, meaning that the *Star Wind*'s sensors couldn't identify the ship approaching them.

"The checkpoint already?" Kit asked. "No fair!"

"Can't be," his dad said, frowning, "but I'll keep the helm after all. Sorry, Cadet."