

Unsung Name- Full Series Reveal

This is my original intent for the series as far as I was able to develop it before I stalled. Most of it is extremely rough draft phase and hasn't been fitted into any real kind of story structure, but it covers the important bits in more or less the order they needed to happen. I had a ton of additional ideas for things I wanted to include in the series for worldbuilding and character development, but I'm leaving those out in case I decide to write other stories in this same universe someday. There's still so much possibility in the universe I created that I don't want to close the door on it forever.

[Author's notes will be in square brackets when I feel the need to comment on something]

Book 1- Falling into Midnight (FIM)

Flower hires the crew of the *More Gravitas* (Ori, Sya, and Waldo) to be her freelance xenoarcheology team, giving Ori a chance to finally fulfill her dream to follow in her parents' footsteps. En route to their first dig site, they encounter a destroyed freighter and rescue Jolly, along with the package he was attempting to smuggle— one of the Black Eggs. Even after discovering that the artifact can make her a full telepath, Ori resists the temptation to chase an easy payday and insists on continuing with their expedition to Naca III. [I was never really happy with how the beginning of the book strongly led toward the Egg Plot, but then suddenly veered elsewhere for the rest of the book. I didn't figure out an alternative until after FIM was published, and it would have required me to go back and remove Jolly from the first book entirely. I didn't have it in me to do that.]

They end up stuck in a polar ice mining town and their hunt for a major cultural artifact leads them to the discovery that the miners awakened an ancient evil in a cavern near the town. The Black Tree is driving the town mad. Some kind of cult has started kidnapping people and the mine manager Ratus is trying to cover up the chaos to save his own hide.

Flower discovers that all three of the local Vulch were so deeply affected by the Black Tree that they Erased themselves (ritual mutilation and excommunication from their society) then committed suicide.

Despite her reluctance, Ori finally gets involved to destroy the tree and save the town when a newfound friend and his mother are kidnapped by the cultists. The crew takes on the cultists to destroy the tree and free as many of the kidnapping victims as they could, but they are too late to save Daedus' mother Anka.

The town is freed to recover and Ratus is blackmailed into resupplying the *More Gravitas*. The crew leaves to bring the Vulch bodies and recovered artifacts to the Vulch homeworld for their much-needed payday.

Book 2

After their previous adventure on Naca III, the crew of the More Gravitax is on the long trek to the Vulch homeworld for a much-needed payday. Jolly is mentoring Ori on piloting during the current leg of their route, which will take them to the Tik-Tkek homeworld, Stutter, when he expresses confusion about why she doesn't already have her pilot's license. She seems to have all the required skill, and she's already got more hours logged behind the controls than many professional spacers he knows.

Drama ensues when Ori confronts Sya on the issue and it comes out that he's been lying to her and manipulating her the entire time they've known each other in order to guarantee their partnership by keeping Ori dependent on him for piloting and business contacts. In typical Bentu fashion, Sya assumed that Ori would abandon him as soon as he was no longer a necessary expense. The fight is interrupted when Flower's cargo unit and the ship's life support is no longer able to contain the outgassing from the three rotting Vulch bodies they recovered on Naca III. The overwhelming stench forces them to divert from an orbital resupply to a rushed landing in Kittikix, the Tik-Tkek capitol, in order to vent the stench and dispose of the bodies before they can move on.

Convinced Ori will throw him off the crew as soon as she gets the chance, Sya attempts to secure his future and get a little revenge on Jolly for ruining everything. He has his cousin on Kazetsa forward a message to Brontran (Jolly's previous employer). He tells Brontran that Jolly isn't dead and the crew has the package he was supposed to deliver. Sya's willing to get it back to him for a hefty "finder's fee". Once they land and Flower leaves with the bodies to find a local Vulch commune, Sya does his best to keep his head down waiting for the axe to drop or Brontran to respond, hoping to delay the inevitable long enough for a chance to steal the black egg.

While the crew gets settled into a hotel, Flower transports the Erased bodies to the nearest local Vulch commune. Her nervousness is justified when the local Vulch are badly thrown by her strange lack of scent during introductions. Her bathing to accommodate the crew's olfactory sensibilities has rendered her alien to her fellow Vulch. Her attempt to reconnect with the community starts out awkward at best, and even going through the motions of worship feels off to her after the existential crisis provoked by the Black Tree on Naca III. When she attempts to convince the local Vulch to perform the Taking In ceremony for the Erased Nacan bodies, they fail to understand and freak out so badly Flower becomes worried that she, too, might get Erased. The idea of an Archivist asking Vulch to Take In an Erased is the highest corruption they could imagine. Flower is told in no uncertain terms to take the Erased out of their presence and dispose of them properly if she is to remain welcome among them.

Already hurting at this stinging rejection, Flower drags the bodies out of the immediate area and attempts to perform the Taking In ceremony by herself. When she reaches the part where the community is supposed to sing the name of The Source (which requires a minimum of 3 voices singing in harmony), she is forced to admit the impossibility of the attempt and gives up, utterly crushed. She returns to the crew in defeat, only realizing once she's there that she also failed to secure any funding to pay for the ship's refueling.

While attempting to comfort Flower, Ori is reminded how important found family is and she decides to forgive Sya for his offenses. She comes to him and tells him that he's an idiot for thinking that he had to manipulate her because he's family and she'd never abandon him like that. Sya now has to deal with the

fact that he's already betrayed her and the crew again, and whether or not he can afford to admit it. The quandary becomes all the more urgent when Sya receives a reply from someone claiming to be one of Brontran's people, who says he's already in the city and ready to meet to discuss Sya's payment.

Now the crew has to find their own source of resupply funding, and Sya realizes they're on a tighter clock than he can afford to admit to the rest of the crew. He makes another attempt to convince Ori to sell the black egg, but quickly backs down before Ori gets suspicious. He does his best to rush everything they do, hoping to get them off planet before Brontran's people can catch up with them.

Their attempted quick money job is interrupted when the crew is jumped by a group of well-equipped and organized humans. Ori goes out of her way to save Sya, using the black egg to keep the mooks at bay while he escapes. This finally convinces him how much she meant that she'd never abandon him, and he turns back to retrieve her. Ori's extended, intense use of the egg seems to have triggered something in it, for she discovers that it's bonded to her hand and she can't pull away despite the pain creeping into her hand and arm. Sya arrives to help, but in the end, they are forced to cut it away, seriously damaging the palm of Ori's hand.

Despite the close call and obvious danger, Ori refuses to consider destroying it or hiding it away. While everyone else is arguing over how to escape to safety, Sya steals the egg hoping to use it to bargain with Brontran's men for their safety. When Ori realizes he's gone and calls him, Sya admits this situation is all his fault and says he's going to fix it. Ori realizes the egg is missing and goes after him.

A human Psi Agent [think Jason Bourne meets Psi Corps from Babylon 5] ambushes Sya at the meeting and disables him to recover the black egg. Ori chases Sya down in time to interrupt the agent. The agent attempts to force Ori to shoot Sya, but she fights off his mind control enough to shoot the agent in the leg instead. They tangle over the egg and in the scuffle, both of them grab the egg at the same time and mind meld. Ori learns that there's a secret offshoot of the UHN (United Human Nations) Security and Intelligence Division called Section 11. There's 3 Black Eggs and they're plotting to use the eggs to spy on other governments. The egg that Ori ended up with was meant for this agent, but someone got to Jolly's ship before he could deliver it.

The Psi Agent is killed while their minds are joined [Undecided if it was Sya trying to save Ori, or Ori accidentally pulling the trigger], and the backlash as Ori feels him die overloads her mind and she's knocked unconscious. Sya brings her and the egg back to the rest of the crew and admits that this is all his fault.

When Ori comes to, she tells the crew about S11's plot. She's convinced that the psi agents will get caught eventually, and when they do, it will start an even worse war than the one that killed her parents. They need to hunt these agents down and get their eggs out of play any way they can. The crew also learns that it's not Brontran's people after them, but other S11 agents [regular humans, fortunately. Psi Agents are rare] who have been monitoring his organization. They're better trained, better connected, and far more dangerous than Brontran's thugs could ever be.

Ori's acting strangely after her close call. The memories she gained from the Psi Agent have blurred with her own and she starts having trouble telling which are hers and which are his. Using the black egg helps give her clarity, reinforcing her feeling that she needs to keep it now more than ever. She also gains some of the agent's skills and training, which makes her both more useful and more dangerous.

However, she has to learn a new level of control and wariness, as she nearly kills her own friends on a few occasions simply because they touched her unexpectedly or made unexpected loud noises.

The crew is able to raid some resource caches setup by S11 to gain the money they need for a resupply, which also throws off S11 into thinking that Agent 1 is still alive and acting way off script, possibly gone rogue. They also gained some very useful information the crew can use to help avoid S11's people while they try to get back to the *More Gravitass* and escape the system.

While the crew hides out and tries to find a safe way back to their ship, they catch Ori using the egg again. She continues to find excuses to keep using the black egg, saying she'll be more careful this time. She's acting like an addict and refuses to listen to anyone about their concerns. The crew debates some kind of intervention, but they all have too much to lose to simply try to take it from her, and after Sya's betrayal he certainly can't get anywhere near it.

Sya contacts the S11 agents and tells them that instead of returning the black egg, the Psi Agent went rogue and made a deal with his crew to smuggle him off planet with the egg in return for protection from S11. Sya offers to show them to the meeting site so they can retrieve him and the egg before he gets away in exchange for a fair payoff and an agreement to leave him in peace.

Instead, Sya and Ori lead them into a trap and the agents are captured by local authorities. Ori is wiped out after the chase and heads to her cabin on the *More Gravitass* to get some sleep. The crew starts arguing again over what to do about Ori's addiction to the black egg and all the trouble it's causing them, but they keep going in circles. None of them have anywhere else to go if their intervention goes wrong.

While the rest of the crew debates, Flower decides to sacrifice her connection to the crew for the sake of Ori's welfare and steals the egg, intending to bring it to the Great Archive, where aliens are forbidden and there are no telepaths to be tempted by its powers. She finds Sya standing in the airlock, blocking her way. After a few stone-faced moments of looking between her and the egg, he opens the door for her and steps aside. Probably the closest thing to an expression of trust and friendship she's ever likely to get out of him.

The crew escapes the system to safety, leaving Flower to find her own way home.

Book 3

After discovering that Flower and the black egg are gone, Ori freaks out over what she sees as yet another friend's betrayal. When it becomes obvious that she's never going to be able to track Flower down, she insists that the crew has to pursue the other agents and their black eggs. She claims that the crew is the only one who can do it because they can't trust the UHN government, telling any of the colonies would start a civil war (things are still strained after the carnage of the Retribution War), and telling the Commonwealth government would just start the war they're trying to avoid that much sooner. It's also not a big leap to assume that this is also a means of acquiring a new black egg to replace the one Ori lost.

The rest of the crew refuse to take on a suicide mission for no profit when they're clearly out of their depth. They should be doing everything they can to disappear now that they have a rouge intelligence agency after them. Ori overreacts, treating this like another betrayal. At their next stop, she takes off without Sya and Jolly, only allowing Waldo to stay because he's too timid to put up much of a protest and she needs him to keep the rickety ship flying.

[Undecided if she hunts down Brontran for more information first or goes after Agent 2 directly. Could go either way depending on what works best for pacing and structure. A side trip to Brontran's location would add weeks of travel time as well as however long was spent on the actual hunt.]

Flower returns to the Great Archive to turn in the reports from her original expedition and the black egg. She discovers that the GA already has 2 other black eggs in storage from long ago. The Master Archivist informs Flower that they are linked to an ancient darkness that ended civilizations, and she fears this new egg may be a sign of their return. Flower is officially retasked to investigate the danger and given more resources, including two more Vulch to travel with her as a proper group. Flower rushes off to warn the crew, knowing that they're already on the hunt.

From the mind meld, Ori knows that Agent 2 was assigned to spy on and disrupt a cold war summit being held to diffuse tensions. [each Psi Agent was sent one of the three black eggs to facilitate their mission. The egg Jolly was smuggling when he lost his ship was meant for Agent 1.] She knows the other faction that attacked Jolly's ship is going to be hunting for the agent as well, but she hopes their inside information can get them there first.

Jolly and Sya are forced to work together, drawing on old contacts and favors in the hopes of catching up to Ori before she gets herself killed. Along the way, Jolly runs into his old crew and it comes out that his nickname is short for Jolly Roger. After his crash in the Retribution War, Jolly couldn't get legitimate work and fell in with a raider gang. He was given the nickname after he passed out drunk and they hoisted him up on a flagpole as a joke. The freighter he'd been piloting in FIM was first pirated from its legitimate owners, and then stolen from the raiders when Jolly couldn't take living like that anymore. Brontran had helped him fake a new registry and papers for it in exchange for ongoing service.

A three way cat and mouse game ensues between Ori, Agent 2, and an agent from the other faction [we'll call her Grace]. The summit attendees and everyone in the area (including local Vulch) starts acting more agitated and paranoid until the talks collapse and people are causing disruptions. It's a political clusterfuck that may lead to open war. Worse yet, the summit was between the Commonwealth and the Garuud, the species that almost wiped out humanity in the Retribution War. Spying on fellow Commonwealth governments would be bad enough, but if Agent 2 gets caught spying on the Garuud, the political fallout could cost them their membership in the Commonwealth.

Waldo's been secretly sending increasingly worried messages to Sya, Jolly, and Flower, allowing them to locate and finally catch up with Ori.

Ori and Grace collide, fighting to be the first to reach Agent 2. Ori gains the upper hand and gets there first, but when she arrives, she finds the psi agent, there's a small black tree growing out of his body, a miniature version of the monster they discovered on Naca III. It turns out Ori's favorite artifact wasn't an egg, it was a seed. Her addiction to the artifact was a trap to push her into using it until it could bond

with a telepath and use the victim as substrate to grow. Ori finally realizes how grievously she's screwed up and how hard her crew was fighting to save her from it. This would have been her.

The rapidly growing mental assault of the black tree could be considered an attack on the Garuud, yet another act of war, and the human body it's growing out of is all the evidence necessary to prove humanity's guilt. Before she is able to destroy the tree and evidence that would get humanity into seriously deep shit, S11 agents show up. Sya and Jolly provide enough timely reinforcements to save Ori, but they are forced to retreat and S11 ends up recovering the young Black Tree.

Humanity might not be blamed for this incident, but now the crew has to deal with a Black Tree in the hands of a rogue spy agency. After what the last tree did to the mine workers on Naca III, they can't even imagine the kind of damage a bunch of well-trained and funded psi agents could do if the tree got to them.

Flower and friends reunite with the crew somewhere after the tree reveal. Ori realizes what Flower saved her from and gratefully welcomes her back. The Vulch team provides assistance and intel to help going forward. Reporting the link between the eggs and black trees to the Great Archive garners them additional assistance and resources now that the Archivists start to realize what a direct threat it is to their people.

Book 4

The crew ends up teaming up with Grace and her organization (who turn out to have the same goal as Ori and they've been getting in each other's way) to remove the last egg from play and take down the rest of S11. While the rest of the crew plans their mission, Flower and her 2 assistants return to Vulch to try to convince the Council of Masters that the Vulch need to take a more active hand in the affairs of the galaxy and help the crew with more than just information.

The crew's attempt against the S11 lab fails, and they flee, only to discover that there's a bomb on the fusion reactor of the *Grav* and barely enough time to abandon the ship. Sya shuts the crew into the escape pod and turns the ship back to the lab so that the explosion destroys the lab and the young black tree. Sya sacrifices himself to save the rest of the crew and complete Ori's mission. The crew is picked up by a UHN patrol vessel and arrested for a terrorist attack on a government facility.

Flower shows up in the SID director's office out of nowhere and shows him that they have details on Section 11's entire plot with the black eggs, including proof humans were behind the incident at the peace summit with the Garuud. If the crew isn't freed and left alone, the Vulch will release the info to the Commonwealth and no amount of denials or claims of "rogue agencies" will save the UHN from the fallout. What remains of S11 is shut down and disbanded. Grace shows up with Flower as the crew is freed and offers to sponsor Ori's admission into her agency (they exist to protect the galaxy from existential threats like the eggs and the black trees).

Ori returns to Avalon and says goodbye to her parents at the Avalon Crater memorial. At the center of the crater (scrubbed of radioactive materials to safe levels) is a statue of King Arthur in a boat lying in repose with Excalibur. An angel kneels at each end of the boat facing him. Arthur's head resting in one

angel's lap, hands gently holding each side of his head. The boat is piled full of pictures, flowers, and mementos (even a few from Bentu and other aliens) from the families and friends who lost loved ones in the attack. Ori says her goodbye and places the last trinket she has left of them in the boat along with a small piece of the More Gravitass.