

Chapter Six

The Trap

"When the distinction between Hunter and Prey becomes blurred, that's when the fun really begins."

- Zoo Collectors myth.

On Farnell's World, the destruction of the Hresaty had been observed with dismay. A major event this near the only habitable system for sixty light years was bound to produce visitors. Any visitors were unwelcome. The Avians were highly undesirable, and Civilisation was only slightly less so. The most feared possibility was of pirates upsetting the status quo, that which had been carefully engineered for the previous few centuries.

When the approach of the Revenge was detected, the observers came close to panic. They owned no transport of their own, and there were no effective defences. They had no inkling of what was coming, except that it came from the direction of Civilisation and was huge and powerful, and therefore likely to be Patrol or Navy. Having escaped from repressive authority to found this new world five centuries earlier, they had no wish to return. There were only two faint possibilities of survival in anonymity. One was that the problem might pass them by, and the other was that somehow they could enlist the aid of what appeared to be a solitary man in the moon. He at least seemed to be making adequate preparations for unwelcome visitors, but they did not know on whose side he would be. He had no reason to help them, but might be useful against a common foe.

The 'solitary man in the moon' showed a somewhat different reaction when Galileo announced the detection of the Revenge.

"Are you sure?" Harry exclaimed with delight, "Double check the warp pattern and see if Shakespear has a match for it!"