

THE DEEPENING
BOOK 1

FIRST CONTACT

KELLY BREWER

First Contact: Book One in The Deepening Series

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Before you begin, I have a free bonus for you—like nothing you’ve ever seen or heard before!

To accompany this rock opera sci-fi, I’m giving you a free soundtrack featuring the songs *Take You*, *Put a Smile on Yours*, *Crooked Little Liar* and more! You can listen along as you read.

To receive your free soundtrack, just go to <https://kgbrewer.com/First-Contact-Bonuses> and sign up for my mailing list. No spam or junk, promise.

Immediately after signing up you’ll receive an email with access to the bonus soundtrack.

By signing up I’ll also notify you when the next book is released, so you can be one of the first to read the sequel! Thanks for your support.

–Kelly

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CHAPTER 1

ASCENSION

His eyes flicked open. Whiskey, his black cat, purred on his chest, staring at him. Time to wake up and feed me. The long whiskers barely touched Kyle's face and tickled, then itched. He caressed the cat's head and neck as he rose up out of bed. Whiskey jumped down and darted to her feed bowl in the kitchen, even though he wouldn't be there for at least fifteen minutes.

Humans before animals, silly puss. He would take care of his business first. The bathroom lights came up slowly as he entered. Shit, shower, shave, shampoo, not necessarily in that order.

Fifteen minutes later, he walked out of the bathroom naked, shaking his long hair into place with one hand and looking at his to-do list taped to the closet mirror. There were only two items.

Buy cat food.
Rock on the moon.

A butterfly fluttered in his belly, as it always did before a big show. He took the stickie and walked into the kitchen. No matter how many times he performed or how well his team prepared, the day of, he felt jittery. Had they considered all the possibilities in their preparations? How prepared were they in case of emergency? He was famous for last-minute changes because he had so many ideas!

He filled a glass full of water and poured half into the cat's bowl then drank the rest. Whiskey darted between his feet and caressed his legs, arching her back in anticipation of what came next. He dumped the last of the feed bag into the other bowl and she crouched, crunching and purring loudly.

Kyle smiled.

They had made him swear at last night's rehearsal there would be

no more changes.

He'd sworn, but they all knew that was bullshit. Kyle laughed aloud and Whiskey's ears bent back, though she didn't stop munching. Three years of planning and preparation were finally about to pay off, he thought, and tomorrow's first-ever live concert on the moon would be glorious! And hopefully, flawless.

After a light breakfast, he glanced out the front window and noticed a driverless white sedan sent by the record company waiting outside the closed front gate of his mansion. They had sent it to get him safely—and slowly—to Angel's spaceport, which was about three hours away, driving the speed limit. Kyle shook his head. No way he was going to spend his last few minutes on Earth dozing in a safe, robotic drone. He would drive himself in his new car.

He picked up a remote and keyed the metallic animal alive a floor below in the garage. It roared awake and purred up to his front door on autopilot. He dressed quickly, said goodbye to his little black cat, and, with the remote, revved up the big cat growling outside the front door. Whiskey scurried for cover, and the waiting sedan drone, sensing the conflict, slid away to the curb in threat-avoidance mode.

His bags were already packed in the waiting gyro at spaceport, and Kyle jumped in the car, then bolted out of the heavy, black iron front gate, barely missing the drone, which paused, unsure, then turned to carefully follow him. The 12-cylinder, 2492 Panther Sports Coupe leapt past the cowering, featureless car. There was never any traffic around his secluded ranch and Kyle gunned it. The limo-drone then turned and merged carefully into the lane a half mile back.

Kyle had had a Standard Food Mart built at the intersection nearest his home, five miles west, and he and a few other reclusive celebrity types were its only patrons this far from civilization. He voice-activated his order before he arrived and, after a quick drive through, headed directly to Angel's gyro-port with a large bag of Universal Pet Feed in the seat next to him. Only the best for his feline friend, whom he had reluctantly left behind.

The Panther was a little air-conditioned bubble racing through the bright morning. It was an hour and a half drive from his desert

home to the spaceport, a short trip by Texas standards if he kept wheels down. The sound of rubber on the road helped him focus. The surefooted, petrol-powered beauty beneath him whined savagely into every turn and incline. The solar-powered auto-drone quickly disappeared in rearview dust.

His newest kitty was filled with that new car smell and the sound of rock and roll. *His* rock and roll. Sales of his band's newest album were skyrocketing and the latest release, "Take You," had found the sweet spot and drove it home. It was exhilarating! He turned the music up. Screw the ears. They were for listening. Loud!

So much work. So much sacrifice. Such kick-ass songs. He rocked and sang the whole record at the top of his lungs, rocketing down the bright, empty highway.

It felt good to revel in it for a few moments and, alone and racing through the desert, his confidence grew. This album was his best work yet. He would be able to deliver to a live audience without any doubt, looking them all in the eye. He would not change a single note. For the moment, he was relieved.

But only for a moment. In this business, fame and success were ghosts. Close your eyes and they dissipate into the ether. Or into someone else's pocket and that was *not* going to happen! He'd already lost everything once, it was not happening again.

Angel's private spaceport was nestled down in a long, narrow valley between two pink granite ridges that were surrounded by low mountains. Strangely, from space, at sunrise, the formation looked like a perfect vagina a mile long and half mile wide. The rising sun peeked over the eastern ridge, casting its soft pink light onto the tarmac. Angel called his spacious, secluded desert spaceport "Mother's Hips."

Kyle veered out of the last curve in the wrong lane and punched the muscle car over the last mile of road. His butterfly had been joined by a few friends as the car reached 270 mph. Three massive silver spaceships glinted unafraid at the sky, one steaming and ready to launch. To the east of the launch pad, a line of identical white sedans waited single file, indicating everyone was there and he was the last to arrive.

He quickly ran out of runway then expertly decelerated through the security gate with a combination of braking and downshifting.

Laughing out loud, he headed straight for the line of featureless drones, which quickly went into “avert accident mode.” One by one the cars turned from him, rising up and away from his incoming trajectory. He passed close under them, stirring up a dust devil that rose and swallowed them all.

Angel was standing on the asphalt outside the hangar and had watched him descend with a rooster tail across the western ridge. He didn’t move as Kyle veered towards him, skidding to a stop a few feet away.

The men stared at each other. Angel raised his hands slightly, palms out. He mouthed the words “What the hell?” then shifted his attention to a mechanic that had walked up at the same time. Kyle got out of the vehicle, stretched, and grunted as he breathed in the cool, swirling morning air of the desert mountain. Gyro fumes and excitement were in the air.

A sweet perfume also lingered. His expert nose knew his woman was already on board.

CHAPTER 2

DARK AND LIGHT

“*Hola*, Angel, my friend!” Kyle shouted over the hiss of ship engines. Angel was a small, energetic Hispanic man with dark hair and inquisitive eyes.

Ignoring Kyle’s fake Spanish accent, he stepped close and said, “*Hola*, my friend. Mercy is already on board. She got here in a real fancy shuttle jet about two minutes ago. Everyone else came last night to stow gear and have the first of many parties you guys are famous for.”

“I hope it didn’t get too crazy too soon. We have a long way to go before we see this place again,” Kyle shouted, looking around.

“Better climb aboard, my friend. All the gear was loaded last night. All ‘special requests’”—Angel winked—“are on board and in good supply. Everything like we discussed.”

Kyle loved this man. He was efficient, trustworthy, and discreet. Angel, a marine medic and pilot, had saved Kyle’s life. Seven years ago they had shipped out at the same time from Centre military, a few months before the first “Spike.” That massacre only lasted a week, but millions of people had been destroyed worldwide before the sudden chaos subsided as quickly as it had arisen. Their squad had been ordered to control their sector by any means possible. The two men had survived because of each other and still could not discuss the carnage they had so unwillingly participated in.

After the success of the band’s first record, he hired Angel as a general contractor. That meant he did anything that needed done. If he handled it, he got paid. Angel did not turn down much work. Occasionally, he did say no. Kyle learned his limits.

The man was also some sort of mind reader. He frequently finished Kyle’s sentences. Kyle tested him and would just randomly think something. Many times, Angel seemed to unknowingly respond.

The stout little Mexican was discreet to a fault. Kyle had to replay their conversations over in his mind a few times, usually realizing that he'd been kindly schooled between the lines.

But not this time. In the days leading up to the tour, they had discussed in depth the needs of rock royalty on a sojourn to the stars. Hosting that royalty in the record company's classic, retro, fuel-burning rocket ship would be a necessary evil. Angel understood perfectly and spoke plainly.

"You want to do your freaky stuff with your freaky friends while you think no one is watching. I got it," Angel said disapprovingly. "God is watching, my friend," he finished with raised eyebrows.

"One last thing," Kyle said, glancing at the self-driving company sedan he had left behind as it glided gently to the end of its assigned route near the others, "Can you take this sack of cat food and feed my favorite pussy?"

Angel did not laugh.

He was married and had four daughters.

The ship was spacious. Nine passengers were already aboard but he did not see any of them. The boys were obviously going to ride out the imminent launch into rock history in their rooms.

Someone saw him though. She jumped him from behind, giggling and showering down kisses. Mercy fell on him angelically, sweet and light.

He slowly turned in her embrace, letting her playful kisses fall on his neck, ear, cheek, and finally his mouth. Her taste filled his head.

Her perfume,
hypnotizing,
warm,
thrilling.

He could fly if he could get enough of her scent up his nose.

This was her first tour. She still could not believe where she was. About to sail to the stars with one of Earth's biggest stars. His group had somehow landed the Grand Trine Tour. Every major artist had

coveted and auditioned for this gig. The Cosmic Mechanix had clinched it. She was so proud of her man.

And she would marry him before the final show at Neptune in the wedding of the century! She would be a galactic rock 'n' roll queen.

Big fun for a twenty-year-old daughter of one of the Deepening's most influential billionaires. Born in Jupiter orbit, she was already space royalty.

Her imagination had built-up great expectations for the wedding and they planned to make it quite a show. Their research into Neptunian mythology had them envisioning him dressed as mighty Neptune, riding across oceans of light and sound, and she the beautiful Salacia, Goddess of Rivers, a billion light years flowing unto him.

How could the river not embrace its final destination, she teased him seductively?

He embraced her, her long auburn hair covering her shoulders and chest. He pulled back slightly, caressing her cool slender arms in his warm, rough hands, and admired. Her entire body was trembling as he held her. She was bursting with words but held them back. He loved her for it. There was plenty of time in the following weeks.

Those weeks would be a challenge. Space travel was dangerous. Safety was strictly enforced while Deepening, and sexual relations were frowned upon. A pregnancy would get the couple grounded, sent directly to a full-gravity complex for the duration to ensure fetal and family viability. Parents were not allowed to divorce unless they returned to Earth.

A zero-tolerance policy for any dysfunction kept only the best and brightest at the helm of man's best hope for survival, the Deepening. Other territories *must* be colonized to receive humanity, which had been growing exponentially. The Spikes were coming more frequently and the next one could be the one that engulfed the planet in self-destruction.

And they had both promised her high-profile parents they would abstain. That was easier said than done. Youthful fantasies and energy sent their blood and mind racing! For the sake of their promise and the completion of the tour, she hoped Kyle was stronger than she was.

Time to fly.

Angel activated launch sequence from the control tower nearby. The ship pulsed to life. They strapped into adjoining seats and the craft shuddered. Anticipation sparkled her gaze in sharp sunlight that arced through the room. She had never traveled in an old-timey rocket ship before. A deep, harmonic vibration penetrated the walls of the ship. She could feel the power and excitement.

He reached over, fingering one lock of her hair back behind her left ear, revealing her neck and the glory of her barely covered breasts. Her elegant nose and jawline contrasted in the shadow and light playing through the cabin window.

With a deep rumble, the gyro rose mightily into Earth orbit. They turned to look at each other at the same time. Mercy could hold his complete attention without saying a word.

And she knew it.

Below, after the dust settled, a dense vapor surrounding a roiling clot of red dirt still swirled above the launch pad. Nearly invisible, its color and form blended with the dry red-orange landscape. If seen, it would have been mistaken for a dust devil walking across the arid, windy plains.

Rising up in the gyro's noxious vapor trail, it rushed towards the ozone layer, formed itself into a cone, and transmitted a stratospheric buzz that, if heard, would sound like a lightning strike just before the boom.

Translated: "The Accurzzzed One hasz fled!

Under-mind Him!

Time-szync all to erasure hot.

Pray the Hawk faileth not."

Can't wait to find out what happens next?
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