

CELUS-5
A Silver Ships Novel

S. H. JUCHA



Excerpt - Chapters 1&2

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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Despite the assistance I've received from others, all errors are mine.

Glossary

A glossary is located at the end of the book.

- 1 -
Sojourn

“Black space,” Teague declared, quoting his father’s favorite expletive.

“Ser Racine, you’ve something specific for our attention,” Captain Asu Azasdau said calmly, hiding his smile at the youth’s unbridled exclamation.

“Apologies, Captain, we have anomalies,” Teague said and shifted his telemetry board’s view of the distant planet to the *Sojourn*’s massive holo-vid.

Captain Asu Azasdau and Willem, a self-aware digital entity (SADE) and the exploration mission’s co-commander, turned to regard the display.

The *Sojourn*, Haraken’s first explorer ship, was tasked with finding a new colony for the home world and had just entered the Celus system, making for the fifth planet outward from the star. This was the *Sojourn*’s maiden voyage. Willem and his fellow scientists selected this planet, over the other nineteen identified warm-water worlds, as having the optimum opportunity to support human life.

Celus-5 was still billions of kilometers away so optical telemetry was limited. But Teague Racine had a keen eye for resolving shapes within soft imagery, probably due to the extensive amount of time he spent underwater with his Swei Swee friends, the six-legged, claw-snapping, whistling aliens that his father, Alex Racine, had rescued.

<Black space,> Asu sent to Willem via his implant, the tiny Méridien comm device planted in his cerebrum.

<I couldn’t have said it better,> Willem replied via his comm link, <although I’ve never used that specific expression.>

The captain and SADE stared intently at the object partially buried in the sands of an ocean shoreline. Despite the fuzziness, there was no mistaking the unique outline of a traveler. Nothing in the universe resembled the elongated seed-pod shape of the fighters used by the alien

Nua'll to devastate planets, as their giant sphere made its way across the galaxy.

"Ser Racine, you said anomalies ... plural," Willem reminded Teague, who might have been the son of the famous Alex Racine, but was still a sixteen-year-old journey crew member on his first expedition.

"Second image on the holo-vid, Willem," Teague replied. "This visual is taken a few kilometers farther south along the coastline. I'm referring to the polar directions in standard assignment of the ecliptic and solar rotation."

In the image, and not 50 meters apart, were the partial outlines of two more travelers, both nearly obscured under encroaching sands.

"I'd say they've been there for decades, at least, Willem," Asu said quietly.

"While I'm not in favor of random estimates," Willem replied, "if this was a prior stop by the Nua'll before the aliens encroached on the Confederation, it seems more likely that we should be considering a century or two, not decades."

"Ser Racine, widespread telemetry on the system, review all signal sources immediately," Asu ordered, suddenly concerned for the presence of danger.

"Anything specific, Captain?"

"Yes, a giant sphere."

Willem tapped into the *Sojourn's* controller, which was serving Teague's board with telemetry data, so that he could analyze the imagery as well. While his avatar couldn't breathe a sigh of relief when he found no telltale sign of the Nua'll sphere, he was nonetheless greatly relieved.

"Nothing, Captain," Teague replied. "This was my second scan. I ran the original one when we first entered the system. I searched for bodies and ships. The only large round objects found were the star, planets, and moons. No other round objects."

"Good job," Asu acknowledged. He glanced at Willem for confirmation, and the SADE nodded his agreement, which drained the tension from Asu's shoulders.

"Any other anomalies to report, Ser Racine?" Willem asked.

“None at this time, Willem,” Teague replied. “But as Dad would say, ‘there’s always tomorrow.’”

A reminder of the world-shaking events that Alex Racine had encountered and overcome in his brief twenty-year history with the Méridiens and Harakens was no comfort to Asu, Willem, or the rest of the crew stationed around the bridge. Everyone wanted to believe that, in this fashion, Teague was the polar opposite of his father, but the sight of long-buried travelers on the planet of the expedition’s intended destination quashed that hope.

* * *

After Teague’s shift, he approached a cabin door, one level down from the bridge, and it slid open at his approach, attesting to the fact that Ginny was constantly aware of Teague’s position in the ship. It might have been unnerving to Teague, if Ginny hadn’t been an integral part of his world since she had first arrived on Haraken, one of ten orphans brought from Sol, the Earth’s system, by Julien and Cordelia.

“You’re bubbling,” Ginny teased Teague.

“No, I’m not. Well, maybe a little. Guess what I found on telemetry?”

“Three travelers buried along the shoreline of our intended target?” Ginny replied nonchalantly.

“What ... how?” Teague sputtered.

“Word gets around fast on this ship, youngling of the Star Hunter First,” Ginny replied, calling him by the translation of Teague’s Swei Swee name.

“Have the Swei Swee been informed of what we’ve found?”

“Everyone knows.”

Ginny would have moved worlds to be with Teague on this journey, but it wasn’t necessary. Not only humans and SADEs were aboard the *Sojourn* but Swei Swee too.

“What did the Swei Swee say?” Teague asked.

“They were extraordinarily silent on the subject. Maybe they’ll talk to you.”

“Let’s go,” Teague said and dived out of the cabin with Ginny hot on his heels.

The Swei Swee occupied a section on the third deck. Entry was through a 4-meter chamber enclosed at both ends by double sliding doors. The construction enabled the moistened air in the Swei Swee section to remain inside and not inundate the rest of the ship.

Teague and Ginny quickly passed through the isolation chamber to find the Swei Swee clustered in the common section, enjoying a meal of faux fish, a concoction first invented aboard the city-ship *Freedom* during the voyage from Libre to Haraken. To the delight of the Swei Swee, the high protein mixture could now be produced in varying fauna shapes and sizes from food stocks, much as Haraken meal dispensers served the humans aboard.

“Companions,” Teague whistled.

“Teague,” the four Swei Swee whistled in return, but when Ginny stepped from behind Teague’s substantial stature, true hands dropped their meals on the low table, and the aliens rose on their six legs, bobbing softly.

<Little Singer,> the Swei Swee sent to Ginny.

<So you’ve heard what we’ve found,> Teague sent to the Swei Swee, including Ginny in the comm link. After any initial greeting with a whistle or warble, Teague made the effort to switch to comm implant communications so that his companions could continue to practice with their new technology.

Ginny activated the view screen behind Bobs A Lot, who twisted his eyestalks behind him to take in the screen, and downloaded the imagery of the first traveler Teague had shown the captain and Willem.

<Dark traveler,> Sand Flipper sent.

<It would appear so,> Teague sent in reply. <Willem thinks this was a previous stop of the Nua’ll sphere.>

<People escape. Search endless waters,> Whistles Keenly added. Of the four Swei Swee, he was having the most difficulty with the implant, because the software wasn’t accurately translating his thoughts, which

could be eloquently expressed in subtleties of whistles, warbles, and tweets. Both Teague and Ginny enjoyed his musical style when he spoke in his own language but refrained from tweaking the translation software app. It was beyond their capabilities. Whistles Keenly would have to wait for another session with Mutter, the Swei Swee's beloved Hive Singer.

<It's possible they did,> Teague acknowledged. <The People chose an ideal landing spot to escape their travelers and make it into the waters.>

<Let's hope the sea was welcoming,> Ginny sent.

<Yes, no hunters!> Bobs A Lot sent with urgency, which elicited a snapping of sharply pointed claws from Sand Flipper, Swift Claws, and Whistles Keenly.

<This is the other landing location,> Teague sent, switching the view screen to the image of the second landing site.

Bobs A Lot scuttled to the other side of the table, and sixteen eyeballs extended high on their stalks to stare at the dim outlines of two more half-buried travelers.

<Several hives,> Sand Flipper commented.

<Generations of younglings,> Swift Claws added.

<The images aren't clear, and that made it difficult to distinguish any dwellings on the cliffs,> Teague said. When the eyestalks shrunk halfway back into carapaces, Teague quickly added, <But we're still far away. As we draw closer, the dwellings may become visible.>

<Two or three hives. Many, many seasons of younglings. Cliffs covered with homes,> Whistles Keenly sent.

<What you're saying would be true, if there were no hunters on the land,> Ginny said.

The Swei Swee rose on their walking legs, alarmed by Ginny's thought, and sets of eyestalks swiveled from Ginny to Teague and back again.

Teague sought to counter Ginny's statement and calm his friends. <There's no evidence of land hunters, but, again, we're too far away to determine that. It might be that the Swei Swee who escaped couldn't find the materials to build their houses, so they chose another location.>

The eyestalks settled down from their extended position, and legs were lowered to more comfortable positions.

<Nice save,> Ginny sent Teague privately. <I hope it's true, but who knows what the Swei Swee found on this planet.>

* * *

When Teague passed puberty, his interests changed. The sea no longer held his complete attention, and his thoughts were filled with concepts of other worlds and the aliens who might live there. And there were scientists who were engaged in the activities Teague dreamed of doing — Willem and his interstellar exploratory team.

At the same time, Renée de Guirnon, Teague's mother, was concerned by the lack of her son's social development. Teague's time was primarily spent in the company of his Swei Swee friends, and when it came to the question of her son's social skills, it was Renée's opinion that ruled over Alex's.

When Teague professed his interest in interstellar exploration and asked if he could work with Willem, Renée told her son, who already was tall enough to look her in the eyes, "As your father would say, I'll make you a deal. You enroll in one of Espero's schools, and I'll speak to Willem myself about giving you time to observe aboard the telemetry station."

The schools, of which his mother spoke, were primarily dedicated to new immigrants, which didn't endear Teague to the idea. His education could technically have been delivered through his reader and his implant, but rather than object he agreed.

True to her word, Renée set up weeks, when school was in recess, that Teague could visit Willem's observatory. More important, she got what she wanted for her Teague — time in the presence of other children.

What neither Alex nor Renée expected was the uproar that Teague's attendance in school caused among the young Swei Swee, and, in an extraordinary event, Alex and Renée found they had an unusual guest at their home one evening. They were relaxing on a couch when a whistle pierced the open window. The Swei Swee First waited outside, and rather

than invite the leader inside, where he would be most uncomfortable, Alex stepped outside.

“The hive is unsettled,” the First whistled. “The Star Hunter First’s youngling has been absent from the waters for too long.”

“Teague is attending school to learn many things, including about the worlds above us,” Alex whistled in reply.

The Swei Swee leader kept two eyestalks on Alex, while the other two turned upward to gaze at the night’s stars. “Four Swei Swee young want to be with your youngling,” the First whistled.

“Where Teague goes, younglings don’t whistle. They speak the Star Hunter’s language and learn from books written in our words,” Alex explained.

“Star Hunters whistle in the Swei Swee language; Swei Swee whistle in the Star Hunter language,” the First riposted.

“That isn’t going to be easy,” Alex said, trying to think of a way to reason with the First.

“Destroying the world traveler wasn’t easy. It cost the People many hives. The First asks the Star Hunter leader to make this possible.”

When Alex agreed that he would try, the First extended his claws and Alex thumped them, acknowledging his intentions. The First whistled his approval, whirled, and scurried home to his mates.

What ensued was the focus of Terese, Emile, Mickey, and the SADEs to design a manner in which the Swei Swee young could communicate directly with humans, participate in their education, and journey to the stars.

There were fundamental problems to overcome for Swei Swee physiology before they could join a Haraken ship’s crew. Their breath ways were in need of frequent moistening, and they whistled and warbled, which not everyone understood, much less were able to imitate to reply.

Fortune for the intrepid Swei Swee came in the guise of Emile Billings, whom Terese Lechaux, the planet’s chief medical expert, had brought with her from New Terra, years ago. Emile was a renowned biochemist.

Emile studied the breath ways problem for months, deciding to use a nanites approach. The Méridiens had accomplished incredible feats with

nanotechnology, applying what they called nanites to myriad tasks, and the Harakens had taken the technology even farther.

When Emile was ready to apply his solution, Swift Claws, Teague's closest Swei Swee companion, volunteered to be the test subject. The young adult Swei Swee entered a sealed chamber that Emile flooded with a mist of specialized nanites, which selected the cells of the breath ways for attachment. Within the mist, a second type of nanites bonded to those attached to the breath ways tissue and created tiny hollow cylindrical structures. The tubules acted as super-transpiration wicks, sucking molecules of water from the air to keep the breath ways moist.

Swift Claws stayed on land and out of pools for a week to ensure that there was no degradation in his breath ways tissue. Even though the experiment was a success, there was a second hurdle to surmount, which was communications.

This second incredible technological feat was solving the communications problem. In a delicate operation, Terese inserted a tiny implant through a hole in a Swei Swee's tough carapace between the four eyestalks, embedding the device into the brain.

Prior to the operation, it took extensive experiments to determine which part of the alien brain should receive the implant. The devices would probably never be used similar to the manner in which humans employed them with their numerous applications. Instead, the Swei Swee implant was designed primarily for communication and data capture from the aliens' sensory input.

Mutter, Cordelia, and Julien provided the translation software for both Swei Swee and crew, who could now communicate effectively with one another, without regard to converting thoughts into the receiver's language. The sender's bio ID identified the originator's language, and the receiver's implant apps handled translation, if it was necessary.

Again, the test operation went well, this time on Whistles Keenly. However, the next part was a bit trickier. The concept of communicating by thought was more foreign to the Swei Swee than humans could have imagined. It was Ginny who taught Whistles Keenly that she could sing to him in his mind, without a single note passing her lips.

When Whistles Keenly heard Ginny in his mind via his implant, he didn't register how it had gotten there and sought to accompany Ginny by whistling audibly. To stop the Swei Swee, Ginny placed her hands over his mouth parts and continued to sing via her implant. Whistles Keenly, not wishing to be rude, simply sang along with Ginny in his mind.

It was when Ginny played back her recording, via the implants, of the two of them singing together that Whistles Keenly understood what had happened. He bobbed up and down so enthusiastically that he strained some of the muscles in four of his walking legs. Along with Ginny, Whistles Keenly became a teacher of the other three journey crew members — Sand Flipper, Bobs A Lot, and Swift Claws.

During the final design stage of the *Sojourn*, Alex added a wrinkle when he asked the Assembly to consider allowing six journey crew members, Teague, Ginny, and four Swei Swee, to join the expedition. The Assembly's reaction was one of consternation. The thought of adding teenagers and Swei Swee seemed to complicate the mission with unnecessary risks.

"On the contrary," Willem told the Assembly representatives, "Celus-5 is covered in substantial bodies of water. The ocean's vegetative coloring and growth suggest that the seas will support life as we know it. I can't think of a better way to survey the water qualities and organisms than with a team of Swei Swee."

When asked about the teenagers, Willem said, "The Swei Swee's lives would be immensely improved by the presence of a People's Singer. Ginny is imminently qualified to fulfill that role, and, as to the sixth member, I need say no more."

It didn't matter whether the Assembly thought that accepting Ginny meant accepting Teague or that Alex Racine had requested Teague be added to the roster, either way the Swei Swee, Little Singer, and Alex's son were approved to take part in the unprecedented journey of the *Sojourn*.

-2-
Nyslara

Queen Nyslara's jaw jittered in anticipation of the steaming delicacy heaped on a tray and placed before her by two servants. The hunt for ceena, the sea creatures, grew more difficult with the passing of seasons. An entire skimmer crew was lost in the effort to bring her this dish, but that was the duty of the soma, the queen's people, to see that she was properly serviced, as was due her penultimate position.

The skimmers' quarry was not only rarer to locate but had become more dangerous when encountered. Stories abounded of the easy hunts generations ago, scooping young off the beaches and netting females in shallow waters. Ceena were plentiful then, and Nyslara's soma feasted on them every day. Now, ceena was the queen's treat, and the hunters returned to the old ways, scouring the grassy plains for small creatures, many of which shared the underground with them.

Black, short-nailed claws picked a ceena shank from the tray. Sharp, needle-like teeth in an elongated snout cracked the tough shell, and the queen sucked the sweet flesh from the leg. She savored the nest's favored meal, hissing her delight as she swallowed chunks of the meat.

The tray held six times more than what Nyslara could consume, but the expanse was the traditional serving to a queen. When satiated, she waved an imperial hand at her servants to remove the tray, selecting two enormous claws from the tray before it was whisked away. Nyslara's feedwa, the queen's dogs, whined in anticipation, and she tossed a claw to each one.

The feedwa, despite echoing many features of the Dischnya, the desert people, were more lizard-like in their build, low to the ground, longer snouts, and prominent canines that were displayed outside closed jaws. In contrast, the Dischnya appeared as a cross between an ancient dog and rat,

standing on powerful, hocked, hind legs that ended in 6-centimeter claws. Hard, dark nails tipped the forearm hands, and both hands and feet carried the pads of an old race that existed by digging in the earth.

All Dischnya were furred, except for the rat-like tail, but the fur's color and pattern varied and identified each soma's nest. Small ears, yellow eyes, a pointed snout, with a long tongue, and sharp teeth, especially the incisors, completed the head. The formation of the Dischnya mouth caused their language to be spoken with a slight sibilance.

The noticeable difference between Dischnya males and females was the absence of an adult male's tail. A youth's tail was truncated in a ceremony, as he passed into the ranks of hunter or warrior.

The Dischnya weren't native to Sawa Messa. Their home world was the fourth planet outward from their star and was called Sawa, by the people. But as the millenniums passed, Sawa continued to dry, and the nests spent more and more time underground, congregating around deep reservoirs of water.

The people's primary food supply had always been the plains animals, herds of which roamed the grassy plains, but those were decimated throughout the ages by drying conditions, which withered the grasses, and the insatiable hunger of the ever-expanding nests.

Technology reached a point where the Dischnya could build crude rocket engines and small space worthy shuttles. A ring of small asteroids surrounded Sawa. It was suspected that they were the remains of a massive impact on one of the many small moons that orbited the home world.

The Dischnya long admired the green of Sawa Messa, the fifth planet outward from their star, which they observed as their home world eclipsed the fecund-appearing planet when their orbits aligned. More than a hundred years ago, the first nest, led by their queen, took the one-way trip to Sawa Messa.

The soma were housed deep in a chunk of space rock, as chemical rocket engines shoved the asteroid out of orbit and on a vector for a near pass, as the green planet approached the closest point of orbit.

When Sawa Messa hove into view, the nest loaded into their shuttles, which were designed to make planetfall on one of the continent's smooth,

arid plains. Most shuttle landings were successful; some were not. After the initial successful trip, the arrival of more nests to the new world occurred with every second rotation of Sawa and continued for eighteen rotations, until they stopped.

Communications from the Sawa Messa pioneers to Sawa's Regents of Queens went unanswered, and those on the new planet were left to wonder what had befallen their home world. Many young queens, who had braved the voyage to the new home world, suspected that it was a fight between the traditionalists, who decried the concept of leaving Sawa, and the modernists, who saw the exodus to Sawa Messa as the only way to save the soma.

Whatever the reason for the lack of communications and the end to the arrival of more nests, the expected support shipments of heavy technology and vital spare parts from Sawa were never forthcoming. So, in time, the nests were forced to adopt a much simpler level of existence, as parts for shuttles, communications, construction, energy, and medical equipment ran out.

The newly formed Fissla, the arbitrate council of queens on Sawa Messa, broke apart, and the nests resorted to competing against one another for resources. They were Dischnya, so they loved the arid plains, but soon after landing, some queens had sent numerous scouting parties into the huge belts of green forests that bracketed the plains on two sides. When not a single hunter returned, the young queens fell back on what the Dischnya knew best, and the nests of soma moved underground.

* * *

Nyslara was woken from her night's sleep by a polite rapping of sharp nails on the rock wall outside her inner abode.

"My queen, important news," Cysmana, the queen's personal attendant said, "A ship has been spotted crossing the dark sky."

"More of our people?" Nyslara asked hopefully, as she donned an embroidered royal robe that flowed to the ground, a slit up the back

accommodating her magnificent whip-like tail, and joined her personal servant.

“No, my queen, the lookouts report a strange ship crossing the sky. They only caught a glimpse of it in the last rays of Nessila, before both of them passed below the horizon. The lookouts waited to see if the ship achieved orbit or passed on before they notified the sub-commanders. The ship was spotted again, as a dark object against the night’s sky, moments ago, my queen, and the warriors believe that the aliens might intend a landing.”

“Summon Pussiro,” Nyslara ordered.

“Yes, my queen,” Cysmana said and hurried away, the pads of her feet making a soft pat-pat across the compacted earthen floor.

Nyslara paced the front room, decorated and arranged for visitors. An alien ship, appearing in the sky, was not something she’d ever pondered. There was the ancient story of a ship visiting Sawa Messa before the Dischnya arrived, but the details were lost in the ages, and many queens believed it was unfounded and possibly invented as a tale to frighten the young.

Aliens who could travel between the planets and even travel between the stars, at will, would have power that Nyslara knew her soma couldn’t match, much less overcome. A scratch of nails on the wall drew the queen’s attention. “Enter, Pussiro.”

“My queen,” Pussiro said, curling his fingers into fists and placing them beside his hips, a sign of nonaggression among the soma, as he nodded his head in obeisance.

“Give me the benefit of your advice, Pussiro,” Nyslara commanded.

Pussiro carried the scars of a multitude of skirmishes with other nests on his muzzle, shoulders, and arms. As a survivor of numerous conflicts, he’d risen steadily within the ranks of warriors until his appointment as commander of the queen’s forces, several seasons ago.

“The ship in the sky would be vastly superior to our shuttle technology ... when they were operable,” Pussiro lamented. “It displays none of our rocket’s extended tails of heavy exhaust gases, just bright circles of light at its rear.”

“Do you anticipate the aliens will land, Commander?”

“With certainty, my queen,” Pussiro said. His sad expression was accentuated by the slight graying of his muzzle, and it denoted one who had lived his life in successful devotion to his queen and having reached the pinnacle of his warrior career was now faced with the possibility of it ending in disaster.

“They will have superior weaponry, no doubt.”

“No doubt, my queen. But we are not without our own craft. We have our tunnels, and we are many.”

“I fear that will be little enough once the aliens decide they want Sawa Messa for themselves. Well, at the least, we must warn the other queens. Dispatch runners to the other nests and ensure the queens are aware of the ship. The message from me is that they should take their soma underground and disguise anything left above ground ... and do so quickly. The same must be passed to our soma.”

“As you order, my queen.”

“And, Pussiro, prepare the warriors.”

“For what type of action, my queen?”

“The answer to that question we will discover together, Pussiro. Go, make haste.”

The commander whirled, and the great claws of his hind feet scratched the hardened floor of the salon’s entrance, as he hurried away.

Once alone, except for the ubiquitous presence of Cysmana, her personal servant, waiting quietly in the corner, Nyslara pondered the future of the nests. Her emotional reaction aimed waves of anger at the traditionalists, who, more than likely, would have been the ones to stop the exodus of the Dischnya from Sawa. By now, Sawa Messa could have been a bustling world with satellites, planet-wide communications, shuttle services to a space station, and perhaps even inner system transportation to the other worlds and moons of Nessila. *At least*, Nyslara thought, *we might have appeared as an advanced society to the aliens instead of a culture hiding underground, stranded on a new world, while we seek to rebuild a technological society.*

* * *

Pussiro emerged above ground, a cadre of sub-commanders, senior warriors, and more than fifty hunters close behind him. Word of the alien ship had disturbed the soma, and it showed in their furtive behavior. The warriors wanted to question their wasat, the queen's commander, but they took notice of the fur standing out on his face and crown. It was obvious that Pussiro was in no mood for questions.

Orders were hissed to hunters, who were to act as runners to the other nests. From packs on their backs, the hunters pulled their emissary masks, which were painted with jagged lines of blue and white to prevent them from being shot by the lookouts of the competing nests. After donning their masks, the emissaries darted away into the night, their powerful legs eating up the distances on the dry, flat ground.

More hunters were sent toward the western shore with orders for the skimmer crews to hide their boats and return underground. Finally, the warrior cadre was sent to search the surface. All soma were to seek refuge below and take anything small and portable with them. Anything large was to be disguised.

Soon, Pussiro was alone, and his thoughts mirrored those of his queen. As a veteran of hundreds of nest fights, Pussiro understood the strategies of conflict — creativity above all else, flexible command, surprise attack, and overwhelming force. But his question was this: What could all that knowledge and experience gain him if the aliens simply remained in the sky and slaughtered nest after nest, as if the soma were ceena?

My Books

The Silver Ships series is available in e-book, softcover print, and audiobook versions. Please visit my website, <http://scottjucha.com>, for publication locations. You may also register at my website to receive email notification about the publish dates of my novels.

If you've been enjoying this series, please consider posting a review on Amazon, even a short one. Reviews attract other readers and help indie authors, such as me.

Alex and friends will return in the upcoming novel *Omnia, A Silver Ships Novel*.

The Silver Ships Series

The Silver Ships

Libre

Méridien

Haraken

Sol

Espero

Allora

Celus-5

Omnia (forthcoming)

The Author



I've been enamored with fiction novels since the age of thirteen and long been a fan of great storytellers. I've lived in several countries overseas and in many of the US states, including Illinois, where I met my wonderful wife thirty-seven years ago. My careers have spanned a variety of industries in the visual and scientific fields of photography, biology, film/video, software, and information

technology (IT).

My first attempt at a novel, titled *The Lure*, was a crime drama centered on the modern-day surfacing of a 110-carat yellow diamond lost during the French Revolution. In 1980, in preparation for the book, I spent two wonderful weeks researching the Brazilian people, their language, and the religious customs of Candomblé. The day I returned from Rio de Janeiro, I had my first date with my wife-to-be, Peggy Giels.

In the past, I've outlined dozens of novels, but a busy career limited my efforts to complete any of them. In the early 2014, I chose to devote my efforts to writing fulltime. My first novel, *The Silver Ships*, was released in February 2015. With the release of *Celus-5*, the series now numbers eight.

My deep appreciation goes out to the many readers who've embraced the series and its characters. Thank you!