

BOOK ONE

MINDSPACE

INFILTRATION

— Sample Chapters —



A K DUBOFF

MINDSPACE: INFILTRATION
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CHAPTER 1



CAPTAIN KIRA ELSAR raced through the desolate concrete corridor past darkened research labs. “Retreat!” she shouted into her comm.

Behind her, footsteps echoed from deeper within the underground MTech facility. Too many footsteps.

A shout sounded behind her, then a spray of plasma fire lit up the hall. Kira’s HUD politely informed her that hostile forces had been detected nearby. *Really helpful, thanks.*

She ducked behind a collection of pipes protruding from the wall. It was terrible cover, but she’d take what she could get.

Glancing toward the exit, she noticed Ari peeking around a bend in the corridor.

“I thought I ordered a retreat, soldier,” Kira said over her comm.

“That was before you got yourself cornered,” Ari Lanmore, a lance corporal on her team, replied. “No one gets left behind.”

Kira couldn’t help grinning behind the blacked-out faceplate of her helmet. She loved Tararian Guard honor, especially in a time like this. “Lay down some cover fire on my mark. I’m going to try some fancy footwork.”

“You’ve got it.”

“Now!” Steeling her resolve, Kira bolted from behind the pipes.

Her powered armor propelled her down the hall while plasma blasts flew in either direction. She’d only gone three strides when a new warning flashed on her HUD—the concentrated enemy fire was about to overload her suit’s defenses. Without thinking, she spun in a series of swift circles to diffuse the load on the armor’s electrified skin.

After seven awkward strides of spinning and skipping, Kira made it to the corner where Ari was hunkered down. She leaped the final step to safety.

“Ma’am, you are a graceful angel,” Ari said over the comm. His opaque helmet hid his face, but there was no mistaking the amusement in his voice.

“We speak of this to no one.” Kira snatched a concussion grenade from a pouch on her tactical belt and tossed it back down the hall, then she pressed herself against the wall.

Ari followed her lead.

A moment later, Kira’s HUD lit up with a flash and heat signature. The helmet muffled the explosion, but she could feel it reverberate through the wall at her back. *Try walking away from that, fokers! That’s what you get for burning my new armor.*

Dust and debris flew down the corridor. When the particulates began to settle, Ari poked his head around the corner.

“Clear,” he announced. “You do realize that your entire dance down the hall is documented on my combat recorder, right?”

“And that will be filed with the mission report and shown to no one.” Kira glared up at the huge soldier through her faceless helmet.

“Yes, ma’am, I’d never think of sharing.”

Liar. The video would be uploaded to the galactic Net before dinner. She’d be a viral sensation.

Kira rolled her hazel eyes. “At least select a tasteful song to set it

to, okay?”

Ari bust out laughing again. “I was thinking it’d go great with—”

The walls shook anew with a concussive boom and series of thuds.

What in the stars was that? Kira swapped places with Ari and refreshed the info display on her HUD. When she checked the hall around the corner, she was greeted by the sight of a mech twice her height.

A volley of kinetic rounds flew from the gun mounted on the mech’s right shoulder.

“Hello to you, too.” Kira took off full-speed down the side hall with Ari close behind.

“I thought this place was supposed to be abandoned!” Ari shouted.

“Yeah, well, our intel was wrong.” Kira reached an intersection and turned to the right, in the direction her HUD indicated was the exit. “Asher, Boro,” she raised the two other members of her team on the comm. “We’re coming out hot.”

“Looks like you’re having quite the party, ma’am,” Nia Boro replied. “I have a direct link into the local Net. I think I can lower a blast door and seal off that section.”

“Do it, for foksake!” Kira reached another intersection, this time turning left. “ETA on—”

“Done! You’re almost to threshold...”

Kira spotted the thick, metal strip in the ceiling and along the walls. As soon as she and Ari passed through, the blast door began to lower.

The mech charged for the door. Kinetic rounds pelted the blast shield, a handful making it under the metal slab. Kira and Ari flattened themselves along the side walls of the corridor to avoid the enemy fire until the shield was secured.

Kira let out a long, deep breath. Though thuds continued to

sound against the blast door, there was no way the mech could get through the meter-thick barrier. “That could have gone better.”

“We do have some good news,” Kyle Asher offered over the comm. “When you had to abort the data retrieval at the alpha location, we headed to the beta target. Location is secure. Plan B is still an option.”

“Good.” Kira assessed the relative position on her HUD. Provided there weren’t any more unexpected mechs, it should be a straight shot through another wing of research labs. “We’re on our way.”

Kira’s team was an unusual structure within the Guard—her as a captain in command of three lance corporals—but their unique specializations related to information extraction had kept them together as a unit longer than most. Situations like this when they came under unexpected enemy fire were rare, but she wouldn’t want anyone else to have her back.

Ari took point as they jogged down a side hall toward Nia and Kyle’s location. The corridor was lined with doors, and a handful of the labs had observation windows. The rooms inside looked to be sterile chambers, some of which had exam tables in the center surrounded by an array of equipment. At least no one seemed to be around in *this* section of the supposedly abandoned facility.

“Creepy much?” Ari commented.

Something about the stark white environment and empty medical rooms did make Kira’s skin crawl. “Yeah,” she replied, eyeing every surface for potential threats.

As if on cue, an overhead light began to flicker.

I’m really starting to hate this place. Kira suppressed her nerves and stayed focused on the mission at hand. “I hope the data archive has answers and I didn’t scuff up my new armor for nothing.” She frowned at the newest pit on the left arm of her sleek, black armor, which had been sustained during the latest volley of kinetic rounds.

“Better dents in the armor than holes in you.”

She couldn't argue with that.

The corridor terminated in a set of windowless double-doors. Ari cautiously cracked open the right door and peered into the hallway beyond.

“Shite... you've gotta see this.” He stepped into the room and held the door open for Kira.

Her breath caught as she took in a bank of holding cells. Clear plexiglass covered the fronts of the tiny rooms, each containing a cot, toilet, and sink. The rooms looked like they'd been used.

“So much for this being a typical MTech research lab.” Kira walked over to the nearest cell and examined its interior. Her HUD picked up gashes in the white plastic of the side wall. “Are those claw marks?”

“The configuration is more like a person's hand.” Ari's tone was dark.

“Normal nails couldn't do that. Not even close.”

“Could this be connected to the Bakzen's genetic experimentations during the war?”

Kira shook her head. “The Bakzen didn't have claws—they were more or less like us. No, this is something different.”

“Regardless, why the fok would a civilian research lab have holding cells like this?”

“For nothing good.” Kira took a calming breath. “Come on, we need to get to the others. There's no knowing if any more of MTech's guards will show up and try to kill us.”

Without another word Ari resumed jogging down the hall, keeping watch to either side in case someone—or something—was in one of the cells. He'd been assigned to the team of technical specialists as their muscle, and his commitment to that role had gotten the team safely out of worse situations than this.

Kira followed him at a slight distance, mentally running through

the possibilities. *Those stupid fokers in intel. They throw out shite and we have to clean up the mess.*

The assignment was supposed to be simple: scope out an abandoned Mysaran research facility on the remote moon and scour the data archive for any reference to the Elusian government. Like many of the border worlds operating independently from the Taran Empire, not everyone wanted to play nice all the time. The Mysarans had been particularly obstinate of late and were looking for any opportunity to pick a fight with their Elusian neighbors.

As the public-facing branch of the Empire's military might, the Tararian Guard had been called upon to run interference and keep the situation from escalating. Of course, it wasn't the Guard's place to police non-Empire worlds, but Kira's team specialized in gathering information that no one knew was being gathered. At least, that's how it was supposed to work; throwing grenades tended to undermine the stealth part of a covert ops mission.

The Guard clearly hadn't been given the whole story. Whatever was going on, Kira would get to the bottom of it—even if her armor did have to get some scrapes along the way.

After eighty meters, the corridor of cells opened into a square room filled with what appeared to be monitoring and surveillance equipment. An archway at the back led to another passageway. According to Kira's HUD, the two other members of her team were in an adjacent room. She swept her gaze around while she walked toward the door, recording it for later review. Maybe they could get more clues if the data archive didn't have the complete story.

She exited with Ari and traversed the short distance to the room where Nia and Kyle were waiting. The door was ajar.

Instead of just Kyle and Nia, though, there was a middle-aged man tied to a chair. He was wearing a white jumpsuit and looked pissed.

Kira stopped in the doorway. "You didn't tell me you had a guest."

Nia's helmet was off, exposing her slicked-back black hair. She shrugged, a smirk highlighting her dark features. "Well, I said we had secured the beta location. We just need a little help with the rest."

"I thought you'd hacked into MTech's local Net?" Kira asked.

"We did," Kyle confirmed, shaking his head of close-cropped brown hair, "but the data we're after is locked up behind some kind of firewall with encryption I've never seen before. We can crack it, of course, but how much time do you want to spend on this? A password would be much faster."

Minutes made all the difference when there were enemies breathing down their necks. It was obvious why the man was strapped to the chair.

Her team was looking at her. They knew what she could do—it was why she was the leader of a team of soldiers a head taller than her. For all Kira's comparative physical limitations, she could do what no one on her team—or anyone else in the Guard—could: read their captive's mind and extract the information they needed.

Kira swallowed. "I don't have the authorization."

Nia glanced at the man tied to the chair. "Then, ma'am, it is unlikely we will be able to access the encrypted files and fulfill the mission objective before enemy forces reach our position."

Protocol existed for a reason. Telepathy and mind-control were a slippery slope, and specific rules were the only way to keep things civilized. But, the mission was at stake.

Easier to ask for forgiveness than permission. Kira nodded to her team. "All right. We need to know what's going on. Someone wasn't honest about why we were sent here."

Relief filled the faces of her teammates.

The man in the chair shrank back. "Wait, what are you going to do?" he asked, a quaver in his voice.

Kira popped the latch on her helmet and slid it over her head. She massaged the fingers of her gloved hand over her scalp to fluff

the pixie cut of her red hair. “You’re going to tell me the password to access that encrypted information one way or another.”

The man shook his head. “I don’t know it.”

It didn’t take a telepath to know he was lying.

“Are you sure you want to do this the hard way?” Kira questioned.

He didn’t reply.

“All right.” Kira took a step forward and focused her hazel eyes on him. He tried to look away, but Kyle placed his hands on either side of the man’s head to make him face forward.

“*What is your name?*” Kira asked the man in his mind.

“*Stewart,*” came the response.

Good, he hadn’t been trained in any mental blocking techniques, like the ever-present guards Kira maintained around her own thoughts. This would be easy. Kira dove into his mind using the methods she’d been training in since she was a child.

Her homeworld of Valta was known for the unique properties of the natural ecosystem, where animals across the world shared telepathic bonds. When people had settled on the world and consumed the native resources, they found that certain members of the population developed telepathic abilities of their own.

Valta’s colonists and ecosystem had been studied for generations. Despite the research efforts, it was still impossible to predict who’d develop abilities—there was no apparent genetic link, and no one born offworld had ever developed the unique form of telepathy, even when fed a diet of plants and animals from Valta. Given that unpredictability, it was considered an honor to have telepathic gifts emerge, especially since no one was sure exactly how the abilities worked.

Valta’s telepathy was a distinct skillset from the telepathic and telekinetic abilities expressed by the Gifted in the rest of the Taran population. Those individuals often trained as Agents in the

Tararian Selective Service—or TSS, the military complement to the Guard known for its unique telekinesis training program. However, that had never been an option for Kira. The telepaths among her Valtan people were an anomaly, neither normal nor Gifted under conventional definitions. While powerful enough to both read minds and compel others, her Valtan telepathy required direct eye contact to initiate a connection, and she had none of the other advanced physical manipulation skills which fell under the ‘telekinetic’ nomenclature of the Gifted.

So, Kira had jumped at the opportunity to join the Guard at eighteen, promised she’d be able to use her abilities for a greater purpose than entertaining tourists on her homeworld. Most of the time, she believed that she was able to make a difference for the better. But times like this, when she had to violate someone’s mind against their will, turned her stomach.

It’s for the mission, she reminded herself, deftly navigating the layers of Stewart’s mind to seek out the information residing just below the surface of his consciousness. The funny thing was, the more someone wanted to hide something, the easier it was to locate.

Kira found the compartmentalized part of Stewart’s mind related to his work. “*What is the password?*” she asked in a soothing mental tone.

He struggled against her, vain attempts at resistance in her mental vise. After a moment, he gave in. The alphanumeric string filled her mind, and she memorized it.

“*Thank you,*” she told him, then retreated.

As soon as she broke eye contact with Stewart, he sucked in a sharp breath. “How did you do that?”

“Wouldn’t we all like to know,” Kira replied, then stepped over to the computer terminal. She entered the password she’d extracted from Stewart’s mind.

The display screen flashed acceptance of the access code.

Nia grinned at Kyle and Ari. "She's good."

"Just doing what's necessary for our mission," Kira said under her breath. "Where's that external drive?"

"I'm on it." Kyle plugged in a portable drive to copy the encrypted files off the local network.

He'd modified the device from the base model, making it one of the most efficient and secure data extraction tools available. Complemented by Nia's brilliance with both hardware systems and coding, the duo was regarded as the preeminent hacker duo in the Guard. When combined with Kira's telepathy and Ari's expertise in weaponry, the team hadn't yet met an obstacle they couldn't overcome.

"What do we do with him?" Ari asked with a nod toward Stewart.

"Leave him," Kira instructed. "We need to get out of here ASAP."

"Transfer is at ninety-two percent," Kyle reported.

Kira nodded. "Gear up. We're busting out of here as soon as it's done." She slipped her helmet back on and verified that no new enemies had yet registered on the sensors feeding into her HUD.

"Done." Kyle extracted the drive and handed it to Kira.

She placed it in a secure compartment in the breastplate of her armor. "Good job, all. Let's get out of here."

Ari, Nia, and Kyle headed out the door.

"You shouldn't dig into this," the prisoner cautioned before Kira left the room.

"Why?" she asked.

The man shook his head. "Unless you want to be in the middle of a war, you should leave well enough alone."

"Are the Mysarans planning a move against the Elusians?"

Stewart barked a laugh. "You think this is just about the Mysarans?"

“Well, this facility is owned by MTech, and they’re based on Mysar, so—” Kira began.

“Right, yeah. Have fun with those files.” Stewart chuckled.

“No, tell me.” Kira took a step toward him, ready to take off her helmet.

“We have company!” Ari shouted over the comm.

Kira assessed the enemy situation on her HUD—it was only five security guards, but they were between her team and the exit. Answers would have to wait.

She detached her plasma rifle from the holster integrated into the back of her armor. *Looks like we’re shooting our way out.*

CHAPTER 2

“REMIND ME TO yell at the boss for sending us in here without backup.” Kira shot at one of the security guards barring her path.

“No one was supposed to be here,” Nia said while squeezing off two quick shots at another opponent.

They were trying to incapacitate rather than kill, but the enemy was being a pain in the ass about it. After a few more carefully placed shots, Kira’s team was able to force the enemy into a side hall so they could go around them to access the exit.

It was time to run for their lives.

A plasma beam streaked past, two centimeters from Ari’s head. “Play nice!” he spun around and landed a precision shot in the offending pursuer’s leg.

Kira brushed her left hand over the drive tucked away in her armor. *Whatever we have here, MTech doesn’t want us to leave with it.*

Too bad.

They reached the secondary entrance that they’d flagged as an emergency egress point while planning the op. Fortunately, the facility didn’t seem to be fully staffed with security or they would have been trapped.

Kira ushered her team through the outer door. Ari hung back to lay down a barrage of suppressive fire to buy seconds for the run to their landing shuttle on the surface of the barely habitable moon.

The team piled into the shuttle through the back hatch, and Kira took the controls. “Come on, Ari!” she urged.

Gunshots sounded from the direction of the facility exit.

“On my way.”

Kira powered up the shuttle, waiting for her final team member to run on board.

“I’m in. Go!” Ari hit the controls to close the back hatch.

Even before the shuttle’s door had sealed, Kira lifted the craft from the ground. The craft launched on a steep, upward trajectory at a dizzying speed. They slipped off their helmets once the interior had pressurized.

“That was close.” Kyle released a slow breath.

Nia slumped back in her seat as the artificial gravity kicked in. “Didn’t they run any thermal scans of the facility before we went in? It should have been obvious it wasn’t abandoned.”

“Yeah, someone certainly knew it wasn’t,” Kira replied. “Whatever information we have, someone wants it very badly.”

“Don’t accidentally drop the drive and smash it to bits,” Ari jested.

“No worries. It’s right up against my boobs—I protect that region at any cost.” She patted her chest.

Ari cast her a sidelong glance.

Kira narrowed her eyes with playful challenge. “Yes, soldier, that’s closer than you’ll ever get to them.”

He shrugged. “I will continue my admiration from a respectful distance in the shower.”

Nia smacked him upside the head.

“What? Yours are nice, too,” Ari added.

Nia exchanged an exasperated eye-roll with Kira and left it at

that. It's not like the ladies hadn't done their own comparisons of their male counterparts—they were just more discreet with their conversations.

Kira activated the auto-pilot. "When we get to the *Raven*, how about—"

A violent jolt rocked the shuttle.

"The fok?" Nia checked the scan. "Shite, they just fired a missile at us!"

"Where'd that come from?" Kira instinctively activated the stealth mode and then took over manual control to alter course, hopefully enough to throw off any other weapons locks. When she'd completed the evasive maneuver, she consulted the scan data on the holodisplay. Sure enough, a hidden defensive launch array on the surface was aimed at them.

"They're nuts to shoot at a Guard ship!" Kyle exclaimed.

Ari frowned. "Or desperate."

Their shuttle wasn't large, but it was packed with the Guard's best tech. Even with a direct hit, it was unlikely anything the weapons array could send in their direction would do any significant damage—and with the stealth systems activated, the ship would be invisible. But, that was beside the point.

"How in the stars did MTech get these kind of armaments?" Kira murmured.

"This might explain it." Kyle added a holographic overlay over the front viewport.

Their interstellar Guard ship, the *Raven*, was in orbit at the spinward horizon line from their present position, but there was also a new ship, which hadn't been there at the time they headed down to the moon for the op. ID tags marked it as Mysaran military.

"Shuttle 1, proceed to berth immediately," a familiar voice broke in over their shuttle's comm.

"Major Sandren, what—" Kira started to ask.

“You were never on the surface of that moon and this Mysaran cruiser never saw us,” her commander replied.

Checking the scan again, Kira realized that the *Raven’s* stealth was also active.

“Yes, sir,” she acknowledged. “On our way.” She ended the comm link.

Nia’s brow pinched with concern. “What kind of shitestorm did we just stumble into?”

Kira shook her head. “I don’t know, but I want answers.”

Operating on auto-pilot for the rest of the short voyage, the shuttle looped a quarter of the way around the moon before meeting up with the *Raven*. At two hundred meters long, it was just large enough for a small crew to not go crazy if they were cooped up for more than a week or two. A cargo hold underneath the matte black vessel provided berthing for two pods.

The shuttle directed itself into an open bay door protected by a force field. As soon as the shuttle was on the deck in its usual slot, the outer hatch slid closed over the hold’s opening.

Kira rose from her seat at the controls. “I’ll hand over the loot and see what Sandren knows.”

Ari’s eyes gleamed, his spirits already recovered from their recent firefight. “While you do that, I have to, uh, file my report with the combat data.”

Kira sighed; true to form, Ari could shrug off any amount of combat if he had a new video project to obsess over. “Shite, that’s right...”

“What now?” Nia asked.

“You’ll see soon enough,” Kira grumbled, shoos her team from the shuttle.

She parted ways from them when they headed for the showers so she could debrief with their commanding officer. She’d been under Major Lucas Sandren’s command for the past two years, and

he was her favorite CO to date in her nine years with the Guard. Though he'd been rough on her at times, he was fair and had never sent her into a mission without a thorough, accurate briefing. Until today.

Sandren was in his office behind his compact desk. He leaned forward in his chair. "Captain, I—"

Kira slammed her hand on the interior control panel to close the door. "With all respect, sir, what the fok?"

"I didn't know. I wouldn't have sent you in there alone if my intel had been accurate." Sandren looked genuinely contrite.

Kira's shoulders slumped. "We weren't properly equipped for a firefight like that. We almost..."

"But you made it out."

"And then they kept shooting at us! What's a Mysaran cruiser—"

"That was an unexpected wrinkle, yes." Sandren fixed his brown eyes on her. "Were you successful?"

"Yeah, barely." She retrieved the portable drive from the pocket on her chest and tapped it against the open palm of her left hand. "What is this?"

"The higher-ups have been tight-lipped about the whole thing. You did your part."

Something about his tone indicated he might know more than he was letting on, but Kira was too tired to argue. "The MTech guy I spoke to said this wasn't just about a potential civil war with Mysar. Whatever it is, there's some foked up shite going on down there."

"The presence of the Mysaran military made that much clear." Sandren took the drive from her and stared at it in his hands. "Right before you docked, word came down that they've increased the security clearance on the op."

"Retroactively? That—"

"I know." Sandren nodded solemnly. "We'll debrief back at base."

— — —

Monica Waylon braced for the worst. “How much did they get?”

“Enough,” her assistant, Tim, replied. “Phase One and Two trial reports, expression models, the analysis of—”

Monica held up her hand to stop him; ultimately, the details didn’t matter. Her research with MTech had been exposed. The bomaxed Taran authorities were threatening to ruin everything, as usual. Years of effort would be for naught if she couldn’t keep the project moving forward.

“At least the test subjects had already been relocated,” Tim offered.

It was small consolation, but Monica needed to embrace any good news at her disposal. “Yes, there is that.”

Even though she was the project’s director, she still had superiors watching her every move. They’d been berating her for months about the expense of her new research lab on Valta, but she now felt vindicated—having anticipated that they’d need a facility with better security. Her proactive preparations meant that their work in the new Valtan lab could continue without drawing additional unwanted attention, whereas the raid would have spelled disaster if they had still been operating solely out of the moon lab. However, if the Tararian Guard was intent to intervene, she’d be forced to take drastic action.

Monica smoothed her shoulder-length brown hair. “I’ll update our benefactors about our status. Check on the Phase Two subjects.”

Tim eagerly rose from his workstation. “Right away.”

She watched him go. He’d been spending too much time with the subjects recently—getting attached. Their work demanded complete loyalty to the cause, and they couldn’t afford such distractions. She made a mental note to look into how Tim had been

spending his visits to the holding cells; he was just as disposable as the Phase One subjects.

For now, though, her collaborators were awaiting her call.

As soon as Tim had entered the cellblock, Monica logged into the secure platform she used to communicate with her associates. Her digital avatar—a gray, androgynous figure—appeared in the holoconference on her behalf. She was soon joined by the representations of two of her associates, Nox and Reya—blue and green figures, respectively.

“The situation isn’t good, but it’s salvageable,” Monica stated.

“What was the Tararian Guard doing at the moon?” Reya demanded.

“The better question is, why was that lab still inhabited?” Nox countered. “We were assured that it would be empty.”

“There were delays in transferring the rest of the weapons cache,” admitted Monica. “Unfortunately, that retrieval team hadn’t wiped the local servers yet. If I’d had warning, I would have tried to make other arrangements.”

Reya’s green avatar shook its head. “Two hours later and the Guard wouldn’t have found anything meaningful.”

“These are the risks of operating in the shadows,” Nox said. “Once the Empire’s prying eyes are no longer on the Elvar Trinary, we can operate freely.”

Monica’s eyes narrowed. “But the Empire *is* involved now. And they’re persistent.”

“We do have contingency plans in place,” Reya offered. “Is it time?”

Nox’s blue avatar nodded thoughtfully. “Yes, I may have a solution that will solve all of our problems.”

President Elton Joris of the Elusian Alliance was certain his Mysaran neighbors were up to something devious. He was no stranger to their political posturing, but unusual fleet activity coupled with rumors about MTech's research over the past several months had put him on high alert. At least his contacts would soon be able to tell him just how much danger Elusia was really in.

Maybe we should have invested more in our military, but how we were to know Mysar would move against us? He prayed that it wouldn't come to that. The Elvar Trinary had been settled by their ancestors to *escape* war; he hated to think a civil dispute might rip them apart.

A knock sounded on his door.

"Enter," Joris stated.

Nico cracked opened the door and slipped inside. "Sir, I verified that the new draft of the reunification agreement includes those language modifications you requested."

"Good. Thank you for coordinating that review," Joris acknowledged. Nico was young, but he'd proven to be a capable and dedicated assistant. Given what Elusia might be facing in the near-term, he'd need members of his administration he could trust.

"Sir, I was wondering..." Nico began tentatively.

Joris waved him the rest of the way into the office.

Nico closed the door and approached Joris' desk. "Sir, about those changes regarding the defense assurances... Are you concerned about Mysar?"

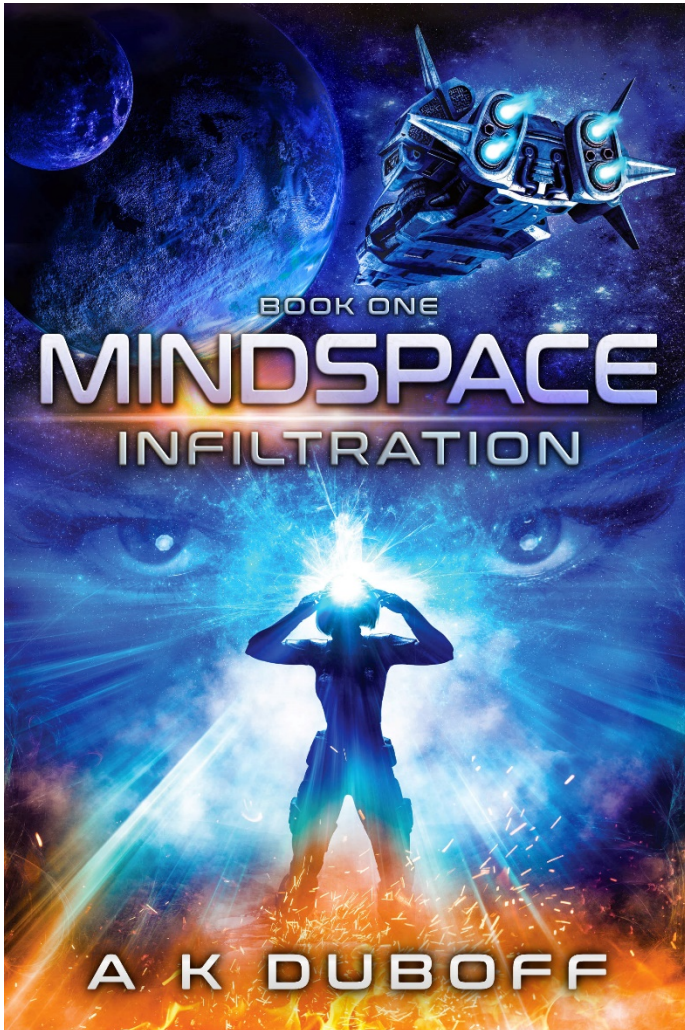
Capable, dedicated, and *astute*. Joris folded his hands on his desktop. "I began these discussions with the Taran Empire because it is my belief that we should mend ties with our Taran brethren. I hope Mysar sees fit to follow our lead."

"And if they don't?"

"Then we won't be alone."



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A.K. (Amy) DuBoff has always loved science fiction in all its forms—books, movies, shows and games. If it involves outer space, even better!

Now a full-time author, Amy can frequently be found traveling the world. When she's not writing, she enjoys wine tasting, binge-watching TV series, and playing epic strategy board games.

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