

THE ANVIL

Prologue

It formed eons ago. Shortly after the universe sparked into existence. It spent generations orbiting a distant star before something changed. Something which knocked this simple comet out of its orbit and sent it streaking much further out into the galaxy than it ever had been before.

Over the centuries, its path was nudged one way or another by the gravitational fields of the stars it passed. During its travels, something happened. Maybe it collided with another celestial body and picked up some of its characteristics. Perhaps another civilization dumped deadly waste that this comet passed through. No one will ever know. But this simple but large interstellar comet went from being composed of only rock, ice, and water vapor to having another quality. A quality that no one will ever understand.

It now emitted massive amounts of powerful radiation. Something not typically seen in comets. Traveling at over 50,000 miles per hour, this deadly ball of ice would be making a very near pass on a small inhabited world.

The inhabitants of this world saw it coming, and a few even understood the peril they faced. But there was nothing they could do. Nothing other than to prepare for how to rebuild once the danger had passed.

When no one will survive, what do you do?

From "The Ark" by Christopher Coates