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Defending the Vanguard  
(Book 7 of the Colony Ship Vanguard series)

John Thornton

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## DEDICATION

To my wonderful wife, Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) daughters, and son in laws. You have had to put up with my unusual ideas and strange mannerisms for years, and yet you still love me. Thanks

The above section has a secret message. So just jack a fusion pack in and see what is revealed here.

Thanks for reading my books. Check out the Colony Ship Eschaton series. Happy reading.

This is a work of fiction. As if I Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) really have to tell you that, right?

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cover art by Jon Hrubesch

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I hope you enjoy this book!

1 the woods

“Myrtle my dear, the trees are so pretty as they begin blooming. I am eager to see them flowering,” the older man said as the couple walked along.

“Yes, Oliver, I have always liked to see the trees when they are blooming,” the older woman replied. “The smells are so nice and sweet.”

They were walking hand in hand along a well tended trail made Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) from crushed stones. It was so firmly packed it was easy to walk upon. The bright light of Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) the sky tube far overhead filtered down through the leaves of the trees and made the habitat glow in light and warmth.

A bird with blue-gray feathers on its head over a white band of feather around its neck flew past. It had black tips on its blue wings, and a light colored belly. It gave a loud, harsh rattle as it settled prominently on a branch which reached far out over the water of the river.

“I will have to slow down a bit,” Oliver said as he limped on his leg. His sparse gray hair was short and his nearly bald head was tan. He bent over to rub the back of his calf. His arm had the C mark on it, but the C was wrinkled and faded a bit. It had been there for many decades.

“That leg of yours,” Myrtle remarked as she had numerous times. “I guess we can both rest by sitting on the bench.” Her hair was as gray as her companion’s but was much thicker.

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The couple sat on the permalloy bench which was taupe colored and angled at a comfortable degree to fit their old Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) bodies. They looked over and down the gentle grassy slope that led to the river. There were a number of ducks that were waddling around on the river bank, and a flight of geese which flew in and landed as they watched.

“Oh, yes, that is better,” Oliver said as he extended his leg out. “Is it me or did this walking trail just get longer.”

“It is you. You are the one who wanted to live a half kilometer from the mill and village on the road to Tula,” Myrtle replied with a laugh. “It is me too. I agreed! I cannot count how many times we have walked along this path together.”

“I always think of the time when Hugo was born,” Oliver said wistfully. His brown eyes misted over a bit.

The elderly woman chuckled. “My water broke just down the way a bit. It seemed like a long walk back to the medical center in Tula that day.”

“Yes, that was way before we moved out here. If Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) the baby had come when we were in Tula it would have been easier. Do you ever wonder what Hugo would have been like had the Outbreak not taken him?” Oliver asked.

“What makes you ask such a question now? That was sixty-five years ago.”

“Well Myrtle, with all the talk lately about the smugglers and the other strange things, I was just thinking,” Oliver answered.

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“You were just gossiping with those other old men you breakfast with at the pub. Yes, if I say so myself, it is all gossip. Was this from that Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) Theodore character? He is always letting his words run way faster than his mind,” Myrtle commented. “Not that outrunning his mind is any feat Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) of success. That man is just plain slow.”

“Myrtle we were all talking, yes that is true. Who else am I supposed to talk to? I cannot very well walk that five kilometers into Tula just to socialize can I? And the six men who have breakfast together are my friends, but I agree with you about Theodore, he is one dull stump. I wish he had not moved out here from Tula when he got old. They were all saying that there might be a new Outbreak, and all this talk and the actions of the authorities is about that. Well, so I thought of our Hugo and being here made me ask you.”

“Theodore is a dull stump all right, but he is a far sight better than that wife Judy Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) he had. Now she was one quarrelsome and bitter woman,” Myrtle said. “Now I remember a time when that Judy came over and just started to rant and rave at me...”

“Please Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) do not malign the dead, after all she is probably still quarreling from the grave,” Oliver gave Myrtle a smile. “My dear, I know it is painful, but can we talk about Hugo? It is important to me that we talk.”

“Well, Oliver, certainly we can talk Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) about that boy of ours. I can still see his cute little brown face looking up at us after he was born. I never thought I could love someone as much as I did Hugo. A mother feels that way about her first born, you know, no matter how short his life might be. All Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) the ladies tell me that, even the young mothers with today’s children. Why just the other day I saw Allison, you know, that woman who makes crafts? Well I was at the bizarre in Tula and she was carrying her little baby, and I said to her...”

“Myrtle, you are an expert at changing the Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) subject, I know you have not walked all the way to Tula for Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) a long time, and from what I hear Allison’s children are in school now. So, I want to know what you think would have happened had Hugo not died. Please tell me?”

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“Oliver, you are persistent on this. You can be a bulldog when you get your teeth into something. Now, I think Hugo would have grown up like our later children. He would have been a good man, like you, and he would have had a family and we would have had other grandchildren,” Myrtle said. She wiped Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) a few Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) tears from her old eyes.

“So Arvin and Simo would have had a much much older brother, and they would have been uncles.” Oliver Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) commented thoughtfully.

“And our grandchildren, Lyudmila, Natalya, Maria, and Carlos would have had more cousins,” Myrtle said. “It was not to be. Fate had it that Hugo and so many others died. That is why we have the quarantine now. I am glad our grandchildren are safe.”

“Are they? I know what happened long Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) again, but that is part of what I mean. Well, I am not Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) sure exactly what I do mean. I just wonder if they are truly safe. The men were saying that the Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) smugglers have stopped coming here because they have all died from a new Outbreak. There is talk that the Central Planning Office shut it all down just to stop this new disease from coming here. Some say the CPO itself is threatened. Things are happening. Weird and strange things, like the brown lake water last month, it is all connected.”

Myrtle reached up a wrinkled hand and stroked Oliver’s face. “Oh my dear, you worry so much, and that Theodore fool has filled your head with these silly notions. Brown Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) water?” She snorted her derision. “Did you see any of that brown water? I did not. No one I know actually saw that brown water. It is all just silly old men wagging their tongues and trying to relive the glory days of youth.”

Oliver looked hurt and cast his eyes down.

For a while they sat quietly watching the ducks and geese swim in the waters of the river, and

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seeing the budding trees around them. A rabbit hop-stepped across the trail in a leisurely manner.

“I am sorry I brought it up,” Oliver finally said, but did not look at Myrtle.  
Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7)

Reaching to hug him, but having some difficulty in getting her old body to fit, she wrapped an arm around him. “Now I should not be so harsh. I too am sorry. It has just been so long ago. Of course, we both miss Hugo, and he would have been a proud and strong man. We would have been proud of him, but he died and our lives went on. Thus is life here in C Habitat, the Woods. So please my dear, do not let the jabbering of that old cretin trouble you so.”

“You are right. Theodore was saying he knew a man who traveled from Penza, and that man said that the whole town of Penza knew about the brown water. He had a friend who saw Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) the brown water out in that lake called Walled Depths. Said it was not normal or natural. I know, none of us have ever been to that end of the habitat. He did sound sincere,” Oliver said.

“Theodore is sincerely a fool. He made the whole thing up to have something to talk about. No, I take that back, he is not smart enough to make up a realistic story, someone must have told him the story Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) and he repeated Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) it like a hill myna. His brain is no bigger than a bird’s anyway,” Myrtle said. “If there was any brown poisoned water, then it was an industrial spill and the vodnees took care of it quickly and easily. As a former engineer, I know that could happen.”

“Yes, and as a former biologist, I know a virus Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) can mutate and change. I always had my doubts about Vaccine 731. But the Epidemic Prevention and Habitat Purification Department insisted on using it. And then the Roe happened. Defending the Vanguard (Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7) They said we would be immune, but that is not what happened.” Oliver paused. “My dear Myrtle, we are both beyond the times to worry about such things. I am sorry to have mentioned Hugo. Now if we are to meet our son Arvil, we best continue our walk.”

## **Defending The Vanguard Colony Ship Vanguard Book 7**

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