



Chapter 7: "The Invincible Crusader of Death"

Two days after the discussion as everyone but Rick slept, the planar tear half a light year away from Revaria 9 finally erupted. Millions of the centaur like machines and squid battleships and even larger creations poured through the opening and immediately began to battle with Aavaria's forces. Within a fraction of a second, Rick looked up at the sky in the direction of the tear and Mike and John's information toys began flashing various images and information to them.

"Looks like it's time or something," Mike grumbled as he shoved Sammy out of his bed so he could get up. "Get yo ass back to the hanger, I'll be there in a minute."

Sammy stood up and cracked her knuckles then slammed her fist into Mike's stomach. "Okay! I'll see you in a minute Mikey!" She said cheerfully as she vanished into rays of red and orange light.

Mike stood up clutching his stomach. "Stupid... b-bitch. I take back everything I said about Mr. M doing a good job on making her."

When John heard the alarm he hopped out of bed and did a back flip over Pari. "Yo girlie, it's time for us to go to work. Rise and shine!"

Pari yawned and half nodded then faded into rays of cyan and blue light.

John and Mike both exited their respective rooms at the same time and noticed Rick was nowhere to be seen.

"Guess he's already up there," John said as the dorm's alarm came on officially confirming the attack. "You all warmed... hey, why are you holding your stomach?"

"Sammy isn't a morning person evidently."

The two rushed out of their rooms were first to the hangar. Milly and Kelli were the next ones to arrive followed by Sergeant Christopher and his other two squad members. Paul was another male human about the same size and build as Sergeant Christopher, but he had a fair brown skin with light blue eyes and raggedy short dark brown hair. Ithaxil was a male ichtur like Vance was. He stood just over eleven foot tall with multifaceted red eyes and a brown and red swirled carapace.

"Okay everyone! We're to rendezvous with an AVC18 carrier in orbit above this place which is going to take us into the combat zone. Let's move out!" Christopher barked.

Within moments they had filed into their respective vehicles and flew up through the domed hangar's retracted liquid like roof.

"Um, where's Rick?" Milly asked John as they were ascending beyond the atmosphere.

"If I'm a betting man, he's already up there."

"I hope he's okay then. I know I'm so nervous I'm starting to feel kinda sick," Milly mumbled.

John glanced back at her and smiled reassuringly. "I know we half tricked and half forced you into this predicament, but believe me I won't let anything happen to you nor will Rick after making that promise."

Milly looked out of the cockpit window and placed her hand on it nervously. "I hope so."

In Smushy's cockpit a similar conversation was taking place.

"I'm guessing Rick is already up there?" Kelli asked of Mike.

Mike half nodded still feeling sleepy as well as the bruise on his stomach. "Something like that."

"Um, are you okay?" Kelli asked concerned considering they were about to go into combat.

Sammy's voice interrupted them and shouted, "Oh, he's doing just fine! He just got a cup of coffee with a little extra punch in it this morning didn't you sweetie!"

Mike just grumbled in response.

Once far above the atmosphere of Revaria 9, their Sergeant guided them towards the carrier they were going to take towards the tear in planar space. An AVC18 carrier appeared much like the traditional UFO being shaped like a giant silver saucer sixty foot tall and with a diameter of two hundred and fifty feet. On the top of it were two round crystal cockpits similar to the other Varian fighters. The sides of the carrier ship rippled as the other few squads literally flew through it like the surface of water to dock inside. In other spots above the academy, thousands of other ships were doing the same preparing to leave for the battlefield.

Sergeant Christopher appeared on a small screen in the bottom right hand corner of Smushy and Paragon's screens. "I'm being told that there's going to be at least four over gods and two supreme gods up there. One of Aavaria's top class battle ships, The Avarice, is going to be focusing on them so we need to concentrate on their smaller units and battleships. If you see any kind of warning announcement from the Avarice then do everything in your power to get away from it since it's probably going to destroy reality in the area. Other than that, kill as many of those invading bastards as you can!"

"We intend to Sergeant. It's what we trained for after all," John added eagerly.

After Sergeant Christopher's communication ended and the ships had successfully docked inside the carrier, Milly tapped John on the shoulder to get his attention. "J-John, I'm starting to get really nervous. I don't know if I can do this. I m-mean I want to help end these wars, b-but I don't know how to help. It's been really bothering ever since all of this started. I can understand why you'd take Professor Kelli, but why me? I'm not strong like Rick and Kelli. I'm not talented at piloting like you or Mike. W-Why would you want me?"

John's black and yellow eyes focused on her dark green ones. He knew he couldn't tell her the truth that she was just brought along primarily to help give Rick a guilt trip. Just like Milly herself said, she wasn't really cut out for fighting. Despite the cruel circumstances that got her involved in their plan, John still felt that she had a lot of potential. "Because you're you. No more and no less. Throughout the history of worlds, many great beings muttered those same kind of words even though they eventually went on to become rulers of entire planets. Do you understand what I'm trying to say?"

Milly shook her head.

"I'm saying it's okay to be nervous and feel like you can't help right now. The you of now will not be the you of tomorrow. Sort of like how a child depends on their guardians to help them out in the beginning before they can walk on their own."

Milly took a deep breath to try and calm herself. "Thanks," she managed to say meekly. Milly looked to her left at the pitch black darkness that surrounded them inside of the liquid like interior of the carrier. "I really hope the me of tomorrow is more than the me of today too," she whispered to herself.

Even though it was a whisper, John's hearing easily heard it. He shifted his gaze towards the front of the cockpit and at the joystick and buttons before him recalling hundreds of moments of his own past for a second.

A violent shake got both of their attentions. Sergeant Christopher's voice came across their intercom a heartbeat afterward. "Alright everyone, here we go!" he shouted. "Once we get out there, follow me."

The squad all rotated their ships inside the liquid of the carrier and then flew out through the surface. The space around them was ablaze with light as weapons and magic collided between the forces. Flying through the thick of it was an enormous craft over six thousand miles long and shaped somewhat like a football with sharp pointed ends. Its surface appeared like a reflective black metal with dozens of mile wide glowing yellow lines running from tip to tip. Evenly spaced around the center of it were three massive two thousand mile long wings and orbiting the entire thing was a ten thousand mile diameter ring of silver. White lights raced up and down the yellow lines and silver ring before firing out arcs of lightning at enemy ships by the hundreds. In the background a massive red rip of flowing red light stretching almost a million miles across space was spewing forth enemy craft. Space seemed to ripple and distort violently around the tear suggesting it was highly unstable.

Kelli eyed the area looking for downed Varian fighters but didn't see any. "Could he really be doing this?" she thought to herself. Then she noticed one particular streak of golden light zipping back and forth across space towards them.

"That solves the great mystery of where Rick went for sure. Guess he's been busy considering I don't see any allied casualties," Mike muttered while flicking the controls to stay in formation. "Yo Kelli, did he say something weird to you the other day?"

"What makes you say that?" she asked.

"Rick has this annoying habit of making promises and shit that almost always complicates things for us. Hate me if you like, but we both know that if Aavaria's forces make it out of this without a scratch it'll be more than a little bit suspicious."

"I know that as well, but I'd rather them be suspicious than to see my people die."

Mike's following grunt conveyed his disapproval.

"Okay you guys, we're going to join formation with several other squads to go after that battleship at 45x175! Careful about the crossfire as we join up!" shouted Christopher's voice.

Christopher's jet twisted and dove downwards heading towards about eighty other Varian fighter jets flying in a pyramid shaped formation pointed towards the enemy battleship. The enemy battleship's front appeared much like a featureless narwhal head with a two thousand mile long eel like body. Four white sets of rune covered white wings were spaced out around its midsection slowly flapping in the void of space.

The wriggling bulk of the enemy battleship shifted in space and point its head towards the incoming Varian jets four thousand miles away. Rows of lamprey-like mouths along the vessels sides opened spewing forth more of the centaur looking machines.

"All squads prepare for combat. The enemy battleships eyes and wings are our targets to disable it," sounded a harsh human female voice across the twins intercoms. "May the goddess protect all of you!"

A moment after the females communication ended Sergeant Christopher opened the channel, "The's our squads master sergeant, hopefully I can introduce you newbies to her later on. At our current speeds, we should be within combat range in about three minutes. Since this is your first ride at the big rodeo be careful. Professor Renua, keep an eye on them."

"I will, sergeant. You be careful too, even veterans can still get hurt at the rodeo," Kelli replied. After David's communication ended, Kelli noticed Mike's hands twitching impatiently over the arcade like controls. "Try to relax, Mike. I can't have you acting rashly or else I could accidentally become just as dangerous as those enemies."

Mike's face had an expression like a child getting a new toy. "I've waited years for this

moment! I can't help it if my adrenaline is in full throttle. You getting fired up too, Smushy?" he asked eagerly.

"You know it!" she replied energetically.

Inside of Paragon, Milly was trying hard to stay focused and not panic. The fast approaching lights from the enemy units and attacks was making shake nervously. "J-John," she sputtered, "I-I don't know if I can handle this! I'm trying my b-best but it's just to much!"

"Believe in us, Milly. Just close your eyes if you have too, but you have to endure this for the things that are to come. I can tell you some stories when we get back about the first few times I went into combat as a kid ages ago." John looked at the various displays of information racing across the edges of the main screen. "Less than one minute until we engage the targets. Just close your eyes and try to relax."

A barrage of magic fueled bolts began to rain past the pack of Varian fighters as the two forces finally closed in on each other. Information streamed back and forth between the master sergeant's ship and the others giving them coordinates and warnings. Since standard Varian jets utilize a control crystal that interacts with the user's mind reducing reaction times from manual inputs, Kelli found it irrational that Paragon and Smushy were outfitted with outdated manual input systems. Regardless of the difference though, the twins wove between enemy shots and delivered killing blows with scary accuracy.

Suddenly a flashing alert came onto their screens from the master sergeant indicating they need to scatter. Kelli saw the nawhal like battleship's large facial horn gathering energy. "Mike! It's getting ready to fire!"

"Kinda sorta looks like it! That thing seems to be on par with a greater god so this attack will probably mean business!" Mike barked back. "Better grab onto the 'oh shit' handle back there, this is gonna be one heck of a roller coaster from here on out."

Kelli look around frantically and noticed a little handles by her hand with some strange scribbles written on it. "You wrote it in your native language!"

Mike shrugged. "Apparently you still figured it out!"

A large white beam surrounding by dark green lightning the size of a small city poured out of the enemy battleship's horn. The Varian formation scattered into individual squads to avoid it, with the exception of the twins who darted around it towards the enemy battleship.

John's image appeared in the lower right hand corner of Smushy's main screen with a smile on his face. "Professor Renua, please inform the sergeant and master sergeant that we're going for the enemy battleship. Since you technically outrank him and we won't be able to rejoin formation for a bit, this maneuver shouldn't be a problem."

Kelli glared at him suspiciously as Mike steered Smushy around another barrage of centaur machine attacks. "Fine. The sooner all of you get your wish, the sooner my world can rest in peace. Smushy, please transmit 'This is Colonel Kelli Renua, I'm taking private officers Mike and John Ende with me on an assault against the enemy battleship'."

There was a split second pause, then a green approval message appeared on Smushy and Paragon's screens. "Request has been accepted. Sergeant Christopher and the master sergeant wish us happy hunting," replied Smushy.

"Alright now, let's get to work!" ordered John. "Follow me, Mike!"

Paragon and Smushy sped off towards the face of the enemy battleship at speeds almost reaching a hundred thousand miles an hour. Kelli held on fast to the so called 'oh shit' handles with a grip that could crush titanium bars. Milly screamed at the top of her lungs as Paragon darted back and forth like a turbo charged firefly dodging and firing at enemies. Smushy rolled to the left while firing off a salvo of rockets and pulled up alongside of Paragon. The enemy battleship's mouth opened wide

spewing forth more centaur machines.

“That's it! Send them all out here for me to obliterate! Ha hahaaa!” Mike laughed maniacally while jamming on the arcade controls to launch all of Smushy's weapon systems at their enemies.

Mike's behavior worried Kelli more and more. He seemed almost like a wild animal playing with it's food. Even John seemed to be enjoying the fighting more than he should.

Paragon zipped past them while coated in a halo of purple light almost like a shooting star. The enemies attacks disintegrated as they hit Paragon, who in turn plowed through them like a spear of light.

“Damn that show off! Smushy! Don't let them show us up!” Mike growled.

“It can't be helped you primate! I'm designed for explosions and durability, Paragon is built for speed and finesse! If you don't like it then call someone who cares!” Smushy's retorted hostilely.

Waves of destruction followed the twin's jets as they raced into the gaping one hundred mile wide mouth of the enemy battleship. The jets had to drop their speeds down to around a two hundred miles an hour to maneuver easily as the inside was only ten miles in diameter. The interior was a sort of metallic red that appeared to have pulsing green veins of magic, several lamprey like mouths also lined the interior of the ship similar to how they were on the outside. The twin's unloaded their firepower at everything in their way from the centaur machines to the very walls themselves. Suddenly a large yellow explosion tore away the hallway about twelve miles behind them.

“What the hell was that!” Kelli yelled. “Is The Avarice attacking this ship too?”

Another blast of yellow light only five miles behind them tore another chunk of the ship apart, followed a second later by another blast only a mile back.

Kelli leaned forward angrily and yelled, “Can't you tell what that is? It's tearing through a hundred mile wide battleship ship like paper!”

A small streak of yellow light that illuminated the entire interior of the battleship flew a mile ahead of Paragon and Smushy, then seemed to spin a few times before flying back a colliding with Smushy's right wing.

“Relax! That's just your knight in shining armor,” Mike said in a unimpressed voice.

Kelli looked in disbelief at the figure standing on Smushy's right wing. A figure covered from head to toe in pitch black armored plates stood there. The armor had sharp spikes on the shoulders, knees and elbows. Dark green metal bands with shifting bright green symbols adorned all of the larger plates. A long black cloak of shadows swirled and billowed behind the figure menacingly. The figure's helmet had large curled ram horns on the sides, a row of spikes along the center of the headpiece and had mouth guard shaped like fangs. Plumes of golden fire puffed from the creatures mouthpiece seemingly as if it was breathing. Clutched in it's right hand was Rick's sword, the Octagon Blade. “No way,” was all she could say. Rick's head turned to face hers and she could clearly see his blazing red eyes from inside the helmet. As soon as they made eye contact terror and horror raced throughout her entire body.

Mike rolled his eyes in response to Rick's entrance while firing off another wave of rockets. “I present to you our friend, Rick Aggamare, also known as 'The Invincible Crusader of Death'.”