

STORM WARNING

THE UEO *AQUARIUS* DSV 8200

UEO Aquarius DSV 8200. The Marshall Islands, February 23rd, 2041

Captain Nick Hayden smacked his helmet up against that of his wingman, Lieutenant Jack Waters, and grinned as they walked up to their SF-37/F Raptor subfighters. “Kick the tires, light the fires, Cap’!” said Waters with a broad smile.

Hayden nodded in approval as he started up the ladder to his own cockpit on the bustling flight deck. “Give ‘em hell!”

The two Marine fighter pilots were generally accustomed to such rapid deployments. With constant drills, training and generally good spirit, they felt invincible. Captain Hayden strapped himself in to the cockpit chair as the tech assigned to his fighter ran with brilliant balance along the upper fuselage of his fighter to close the canopy. Looking around the vast, multi-deck-spanning EVA chambers of the *Aquarius DSV*, Hayden tossed a lazy salute as he fixed his eyes on the seawing crest that hung high overhead – An angel of death marked by a great sword struck through the ‘A’ in the ship’s name. The ship, and that avatar, had become affectionately known to the crew as ‘Ari’.

‘How fitting...’ he thought silently. *‘These Macs are gonna regret they ever drew themselves in to this.’*

“You good to go, sir?” asked the tech from his side, removing the many check tags that covered the fighter’s nose. Hayden grinned as he looked at the Tech. “You bet your sweet ass, Chief. Am I set?”

“That you are, sir.”

With that, the canopy slid shut and the fighter edged forward under the marshalling of the ground crew on to the launch racks...

The UEO *Aquarius* tore through the open waters around the Marshall Islands like a massive, enraged beast. Around it, the taskforce of UEO attack submarines and their fighter escorts formed a deadly flower that threatened to engulf the opposing Alliance fleet. At 5,000 feet, the cold war beneath the waves lasting a decade was now getting hot. Several torpedoes shot out from the advance guard of the Alliance taskforce and screamed in doing the better part of 150 knots (and accelerating) towards the huge UEO DSV. As if humoring a child, the *Aquarius* snapped off four intercepts without so much as a waver in course and the oncoming torpedoes detonated, still at least 3000 yards from the UEO sub.

On the bridge, Captain Lauren Hornsby studied the tactical displays on the command deck with interest and intrigue as she watched the movements of the Alliance forces. Ahead of her were some 20 Orion class attack submarines, and 9 Aleus class escort carriers; a reasonably standard Macronesian strike group. Despite all that awaited the *Aquarius*, not one of the waiting Alliance submarines really bothered her. “Commander Barry?” she said without turning away, “What’s our range?”

The XO, Timothy Barry, looked down at the operations console and read his report. “Two-two-one-zero yards to the nearest of the advance guards, sir.”

Barry was a good officer by nature, well mannered, skilled and insightful; he almost never made a mistake. Hornsby liked that. “Very well, I think that’s close enough.” She paused as she took a moment to consider her next order and realized it was one she had never before given: the idea of calling up the full firepower of the *Aquarius* had an oddly satisfying feel, and she allowed a small smile to creep in to her features. “Tactical? Flood tubes one through twenty four and make ready RAFIT batteries for repeating salvos. Target forward pulse cannons on the nearest Alliance Submarine and standby to fire.”

“Yes sir.”

With a slight smile, the Captain of the *Aquarius* allowed herself a small moment of realization that she had command of one of the most powerful creations ever built. Sitting back down in the Command chair, it was now a matter of waiting.

Two of the marine raptors from Gamma Squadron – the VF-125 ‘Widowmakers’ – screamed over the huge bulk of the *Aquarius*’s hull, fully inverted, and racing at more than 200 knots less than twenty feet away from the massive wall of steel and carbon-fiber reinforced alloys and titanium that made up the big DSV’s hull. The leading fighter pilot whooped in delight as he span away quickly after clearing the bow and span away to lead the trailing Raptor to the rest of the squadron. Their radios cracked in their ears as they took their positions amongst a wide delta formation. “Nice of you to join us, Widows Two and Three,” said the voice of Captain Hayden.

Lieutenant Waters - Widow Two - grinned viciously as he thumbed the mike controls on his stick. “Sorry sir, you know me; I just like to rattle the bridge once in a while. There ain’t nothin’ wrong with broken china on the command deck.”

The other pilots in the squadron chuckled slightly in approval and Captain Hayden couldn’t stop a slight smile as the squadron stayed in good pace with the rest of the UEO fleet. “I’ll be sure to tell Captain Hornsby that the next time she holds a briefing.” After a slight pause, he added quickly; “Alright people! Form up by wings; three by four deltas; assume my lead. Drop your socks and grab your throttles.”

“Damn it, Hayden, can you tell your fucking ground-pounders that there’s no room on this channel for your Marine egos?!” - came the new voice from the radio.

Hayden shook his head and sighed, recognizing the voice and demeanor virtually immediately. “Lieutenant Commander Adrian Keyes... what an unexpected surprise”

Hayden quietly despised the man, not so much for the fact that Adrian Keyes and his pilots were probably among the best navy pilots in the *Aquarius* battlegroup... but because they knew it. What he found slightly odd was that he knew 139th Fighter Squadron quite well, and he also knew that the ‘Blackhawks’ of Keyes’ squadron were not based on the *Aquarius*, and their carrier was not assigned to the UEO taskgroup... and that could only mean that somewhere nearby, most likely hiding in an adjacent trench, was *another* UEO fleet... Pushing the thought aside, he moved on. “Save us the boasting Keyes,” he pre-empted while he formulated the beginnings of what he considered an ingenious idea. “Here’s the deal, Squadron with the most kills buys the beer.”

Keyes – Blackhawk 1 – laughed. “That’s the most stupid thing I’ve ever heard, Nick. Why the hell would I agree to that?”

Hayden grinned. “We aren’t playing for beer, Keyes, we’re playing for honour. I wanted to see if you can stomach it. So which’ll it be; your booze or your pride?”

Keyes burst out in laughter. “*I still think it’s a dumb idea, Hayden. But you’re on!*”

Surprise again caught the two squadrons as *another* voice cracked over the radio. The Hibernian twist in the voice was sufficient to make their stomachs contort in embarrassment. “*Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Widowmaker and Black Hawk squadrons; enough with the crap. We have our orders; form up in to strike groups and fly cover for the fleet. Those ‘Alice’ Carriers are launching their Lysanders, we’ve got incoming on the Aquarius and ‘Captain wants her fat rear covered.’*”

...The Irish, clipped voice belonged to Wing Commander Corinn Roderick – the commander of the VF-115 ‘Dark Angels’ and overall commander of *every Aquarius* fighter squadron. She also, unfortunately, had the reputation for being one of the most fiery, infamous and downright dangerous pilots to ever sit in a fighter cockpit. Roderick couldn’t help but take a stab at the two testosterone-driven squadron commanders; “*...and for the record, I think you’ll find the Angels will be buying all the drinks tonight.*”

On the command deck of the *Aquarius*, Captain Hornsby looked once more to the tactical station. “Lieutenant: range?”

“One-five-zero-zero, ma’am.”

Hornsby nodded and then looked to Barry. “Well, I suppose it’s now or never.” Eyeing the tactical station, she nodded her approval. “Tactical... Open all tubes, full firing point procedures. Alert the *Morningstar, Castle, Los Angeles and Triffid*: start with their lead ships... and *fire at will.*”

The relatively calm waters around the *Aquarius* and her escorts came alive in an explosion of chaos as the first salvo of two dozen torpedoes shot out from their tubes and began their screaming run at the Macronesian fleet. Seeing their flagship open fire, it wasn’t long before the flanking UEO attack subs followed suit and opened up with their own volleys. The Alliance fleet, only too aware of it, wasted no time and began to break from their tight-knit formation to begin their attack runs against UEO counterparts. Intercept torpedoes and countermeasures burst from the prows of the Alliance vanguard force in an attempt to break apart the lethal volley of torpedoes – some fifty in total. Alerted to this by their own sensors, several wings of Lysander fighters broke out of their formations to shoot down the incoming anti-ship weapons, which to the surprise of the UEO Pilots, they were doing very efficiently.

One of those pilots, who was understandably more annoyed than impressed by the maneuvers being made by the Mac Lysanders, was Nick Hayden. “Widow One to Archangel; Alliance fighters are breaking to defend the fleet; Request permission to engage.”

“*Affirmative, Widow One. Blackhawk and Dark Angel squadrons will handle their bombers and the Orion vanguard. Permission granted to engage and destroy.*” Roderick’s orders brought a broad grin to the face of Hayden and his pilots as they snap-rolled out and up from their three-diamond formation to intercept the Alliance fighters. “Thank you, Archangel. Good hunting.”

The twelve SF-37/F Raptors broke out and prepared to do what they did best. “Widowmakers, this is Widow One. Break by pairs to engage. Repeat; engage and destroy enemy fighters bearing one-one-zero, mark two-four. Watch your wingman and take them out. No heroics, people. Let’s just get the job done.”

The affirmatives came back through the radio and when he was satisfied they had understood, Hayden snapped on his targeting computers and armed his four ASF-7 “Fox Hound” torpedoes – the UEO’s current and most efficient anti-fighter torpedo. The Fox Hound was designed for relatively short-range, high-speed attacks against fast and maneuverable targets, namely, the Macronesian Lysander interceptor, and it was exceedingly good at this task. Bracketing the first Lysander that crossed his sights, he swung the Raptor around hard and increased his throttle to match the enemy fighter’s speed at a range of 400 yards. ‘*Too easy...*’ he thought to himself as the tone went solid and he squeezed the trigger on the flight yolk to send one of the torpedoes screaming in towards the Lysander’s tail. The torpedo closed... an almost guaranteed kill... *almost...*

...The Lysander snapped away faster than Hayden thought was possible and he cursed as the torpedo lost its tracking and spiraled away before exploding harmlessly in a ball of blue fire below him. The Mac pilot had just demonstrated *exactly* why the Lysander dominated the world’s seas as the most successful superiority fighter. Its astounding maneuverability allowed it to avoid almost every torpedo that was fired at it by the relatively sluggish Spectres... which was why the UEO developed the Raptor; which outperformed it in every field.

Happy to oblige the skillful Alliance pilot, Hayden inverted and snap rolled his Raptor around in an almost impossible outside-loop that brought the engines swinging over the nose without so much as a loss of one knot in speed to find himself back on the tail of the tricky Lysander, and closing rapidly. He thought of very little as he quickly used his thumb to switch to the Raptor’s twin Hades Gatling cannons. Closing the range to a mere two hundred yards, Hayden pulled the trigger and sent heavy, 25-millimetre, Uranium 235 explosive tipped slugs flying from the guns towards the Lysander. At 5,000 feet per second, the bullets had shredded the fighter and left it little more than a field of sinking, shattered debris before he even saw the bright blue magnetic flash of the gun muzzle. “Scratch one bad guy, Widow Two; you’ve got one at 2 O’clock low, closing fast.”

“Thanks, lead. I’m on it.”

Captain Hayden watched his wingman swing away in a quick snap roll and then followed suit by pulling back on the flight yolk to bring the Raptor up and over before throwing the stick to the left again and righting the fighter. Arming his remaining torpedoes, he thumbed the radio again. “2, this is 1. I’ve got your six.”

...It was as soon as he said it that the lone Lysander that had slipped unnoticed through his rear sensors fired off two torpedoes, not at Widowmaker Two, but at *him*. Immediately, the cockpit of the Raptor began screaming as klaxons and alerts finally noticed the Macronesian fighter that had been tailing it.

“Oh crap...” he said simply. “Widow Two, I’ve just picked up a couple of small problems... You’ll have to handle yourself for a few minutes while I deal with this asshole who’s chasing me.”

“Copy, Lead. Good hunting.”

At that, Hayden went in to overdrive. Slamming the throttle forward and diving, he quickly glanced at his sensors to find that the torpedoes were at a range of just over 400 yards... and still closing. Watching the fighter’s computer, he was more than a little agitated to find that at their current rate of closing, they would hit him in less than fifteen seconds.

His instincts and training kicked in and he immediately killed every sensor, radio, ECM suite and sonar on the fighter. Allowing a small smile at death, he knew that the chances of the torpedoes being able to track a fighter that no longer emitted an

electronic signature would be significantly hampered by the action. He was now flying by instinct alone; with no instruments to guide him in any way. *'It's just you and me now, sweetheart.'*

Throwing the Raptor in to a sharp banking turn, he silently counted down the seconds and when he reached '5', he leveled out and let the torpedo settle on its final course and go to active tracking. He was so engrossed in his actions that he didn't even notice the beads of sweat that had formed on his brow. Finally, only seconds before the torpedoes hit his fuselage, he snap rolled the fighter and put it in to a nearly uncontrollable, spinning dive before releasing two countermeasures.

The torpedoes, lacking the electronic signature of Raptor to lock on to, homed in predictably on the two countermeasures and exploded in balls of fiery blue light. Returning his systems to normal, he took a brief moment to glance at his sensor display to find the troublesome Lysander still hot on his trail. Getting impatient with his opponent, he cleared the Hades guns again and silently watched as the Lysander fell away ever so gradually with only the occasional burst of distorted pulses in the water around him – the tell tale signature of a Lysander's subduction guns.

Running away? He was almost certain that would be how it looked to the pilot of the Mac fighter, but unfortunately for that same pilot... he had plenty of other plans. Hayden watched the sensor display once more and just as the range between the two fighters passed 1000 yards, Hayden played his trump card. Hitting the brakes on the starboard engine of the Raptor, the nozzle of the turbine closed itself down and reversed all of its thrust forwards while the port engine went to full power, sending the Raptor spinning wildly at more than 250 knots. The hull shuddered under the immense strain of the maneuver and just as quickly as he had started it he finished by releasing the stops on his starboard to find himself barreling towards the closing Lysander after completing a full 180 degree pin-head turn in less than two seconds. Between the two fighters, they were now coming at each other at a speed in excess of 500 knots: The ultimate game of chicken.

Hayden wasted no time in making this little fact known and immediately squeezed the trigger on the flight yolk to send hundreds upon hundreds of rounds from the Hades rail gun screaming towards the Lysander.

...The pilot of the Macronesian fighter was stunned as the glowing blue, explosive incendiary of the UEO interceptor's gattling guns shot past it at a speed so fast that even their incandescent trails became a blur. Whoever the UEO jockey was, he was *insane*. But insanity was perfect for anyone who would strap themselves in to a twelve-meter-long fighter at a depth of over 3000 feet doing 300 knots, and this time, the Alliance pilot had little alternative but to bow to the greater truth of his situation and pull out of the head-long charge against the Raptor fighter. He snapped his Lysander up quickly and made every attempt he could to evade the lethal fire that still traced him.

Hayden grinned. At over eight hundred yards, the 25mm shells from the gattling guns had long begun ripping themselves apart under the friction and strain of their ridiculous velocity. Even if the shells did hit, they would not be any where near as effective as they were meant to be. (The maximum 'effective' range of the Hades guns was little more than 300 to 400 yards.) But, as he had hoped, the Lysander had panicked and pulled up and away from his suicidal collision course.

Arming another torpedo, Hayden accelerated the Raptor to its top speed of just over 320 knots and swung upward to find himself on the tail of the Lysander.

Watching the range close as the faster Raptor pursued the Alliance fighter, he saw it hit “200” and depressed the trigger again; sending another torpedo powering ahead to hunt down the Lysander. From 200 yards, there was no time for the Macronesian to do anything but wonder what he had done wrong as the torpedo behind stripped its nose cone away to reveal a lethal warhead of twenty sub munitions that drove themselves deep in to the fighter’s tail and exploded one by one; setting off a chain reaction that reduced the formerly-rigid fins and engines in to shredded metal. The Lysander began spinning as the main part of the torpedo closed the final distance and impacted cleanly dead-center. The Lysander disappeared in a ball of flame and debris that quickly turned to incendiary, taking the pilot with it. Hayden’s Raptor flew threw the debris field at the better part of 300 knots and the marine pilot felt nothing for the act he had just carried out. No, in his mind, the pilot had deserved what he had received: In naval warfare, it was generally a very impersonal affair, but for a fighter pilot, the way a fighter moved was a testament to the skill and endurance of the man who was flying it... when someone tried to out fly you, it was a demonstration of what embodied that person as a fighter pilot. This, for Hayden, was *always* personal.

Aquarius was in the thick of it. Torpedo after torpedo thundered from her tubes as the escort submarines closed their formation and defended the DSV from torpedo attacks with their own volleys of intercepts. Captain Hornsby watched the battle progress on her tactical map which lay displayed on the center console of the command deck. The bridge was bustling with activity now as flight directors coordinated the squadrons of fighters that operated in the dark waters outside the ship. Commander Barry and Hornsby were equally engrossed in their respective affairs, exchanging battle telemetry and fleet dispositions at the plotting table.

Unlike most other line captains, Hornsby did not like to be sitting down in the center chair in times of battle, but rather preferred to be in the same place as her crew; directing the ship in to battle by doing it *herself*. Besides... Sitting down in such a situation only made her extremely anxious and uncomfortable. Some officers on her bridge staff would likely put that down to inexperience in command... a comment she would otherwise have to agree with. *Aquarius* was only her first combat command as a *Captain*, and she had no trouble in admitting that she *was* inexperienced in that regard and still found herself unable to distance herself from her crew; one of the supposed ‘requirements’ of being a Captain. Despite that, she knew how to handle a warship in battle, and curiously, it was the close, personal relationships with the crew that had gained her such respect, and in turn, it was that respect that had won her the *Aquarius*.

“Captain?” said one of the officers from the sensor station below the command deck. Hornsby looked to the officer and nodded. “Yes Lieutenant?”

“Ma’am, I just picked up what looked like it may have been a contact at bearing two-one-seven. I’m... not sure, Ma’am... but, it *may* have been an Honorious class fleet carrier.”

Lauren Hornsby’s blood ran cold. In the entire Alliance fleet there was only one class of submarine that could worry a DSV commander, and the Honorious was it; a massive fleet carrier that even dwarfed the mighty UEO Reverence class battlecruisers. Whether the report was accurate or not, it was a possibility that had to be investigated. She straightened and looked at the officer seriously, making the situation perfectly clear to him without needing to say a single word. “‘Not sure’ is not good enough, Lieutenant. I need a definite answer. Explain what you saw.”

The sensor officer raise his eyebrows, not sure where to begin. “It was... only for a second, Captain. It’s possible it could have been a glitch in the hypersonar array... or possibly a whale. I checked the area again to make sure, but it was gone.”

Hornsby frowned and then pulled up the sensor displays on her own personal console beside the command chair. Examining it, she confirmed from the logs that there *had* indeed been something – if only for a moment – on that bearing at a distance of about ten miles.

“Combat arrays do not pick up whales, Lieutenant... And I doubt that *this* ship’s sensors are prone to ‘glitches’. Are there any trenches or sink holes in that area?”

The sensor officer didn’t even need to look down. “No ma’am. We’re on a plain, and the nearest island or significant landmass isn’t even within 40 miles of our current location.”

Without any kind of further information, the Captain of the *Aquarius* could only be careful. Something the size of a Honorious carrier did not simply vanish without trace, and she was inclined to trust the sensors of the DSV as they were the most advanced arrays ever deployed on any boat in the world. “Alright, Lieutenant; detach WSKR alpha from its current duties and keep an eye out. I don’t want to get caught in an ambush.”

“Yes, Captain.”

Hornsby returned to the plot and Commander Barry and frowned. Something about it wasn’t right. Barry noticed her edge, and put down his small hand-held personal computer to look his Captain in the eye. “Is something wrong?” he asked simply.

“Maybe, Tim... Not sure what it is yet, it might not be anything.... Do you have those sit-reps on our weapons status done...?”

Another Lysander was reduced to shrapnel by the guns of Captain Hayden’s fighter and he broke away to suddenly find himself in an oddly familiar situations as his rival and ‘friend’ – Blackhawk One – pulled up along side his raptor at more than 150 knots. “*Hey! Slow poke!*” - came the inevitable insult. Hayden looked incredulously to his right and out the canopy of his Raptor’s cockpit to look at Adrian Keyes who waved at him from no more than fifteen meters to his side. This was growing tiresome.

“Keyes... don’t you have anything better to do? Like... taking out those subs like the Wing Commander ordered?”

Keyes laughed as he pulled ahead slightly. “*Hayden, last I checked, the Blackhawks were not assigned to the Aquarius... I’ve got my orders, and they didn’t come from Commander Roderick!*”

“Great, so your orders are to annoy me for all eternity?” inquired Hayden incredulously as he pulled up speed to come along side Keyes once more.

“*Oh, no... as tempting as that sounds... Actually I was thinking-*”

Keyes didn’t have time to finish as a round of subduction gun fire rippled past the water beside his fighter. Both Raptors instinctively broke away as the shots continued and Hayden blurted out a curse in surprise. “What in *hell...*? Where did *that* come from?” His Raptor continued to move at its high-paced slalom between the unseen weapons fire and finally broke up and over it. He noticed Keyes had done similar.

“*NFI! My sensors just picked up something big coming in from two miles.*”

Hayden was already on the radio. “Command, this is Widowmaker One, we have incoming. No identification of the contact but can confirm; it *is* hostile. Please advise!”

Hayden and Keyes both swung low and rolled their fighters under the hulled bulk of an Orion attack submarine that slowly sank to the depths below them – a victim of one of the UEO submarines that were less than a mile distant...

...“Widow One, this is command, we are picking up *no* new contacts in your area. Say again, we have no sensor or visual contact on any new hostiles.” - said the flight director at the EVA control station on the bridge of the *Aquarius*. That got Captain Hornsby’s attention. She spun on her heel and immediately jogged down the stairs of the command deck to the EVA control station. She pointed to the sensor operator who was looking at her expectantly and she nodded, confirming his unspoken thoughts. He then got up from his station and walked up the stairs to join Hornsby at EVA.

“Lieutenant Franklin, I’ll handle this.” - pronounced the Captain from behind. The flight director turned and looked up in mild shock to find the small gathering of officers who had seemingly gathered around him. “Well... urm... yes ma’am.”

He vacated the seat and Hornsby took the headset and put it on...

...The voice came through loud and clear on the radio for the pilots of the fighter squadrons outside. “*Widowmaker One, this is Captain Hornsby. Repeat what you just said.*”

Hayden raised his eyebrows in slight surprise. It was rare that the Captain would opt to personally deal with squadron-level commands. Despite his surprise, the second volley of unknown fire that shot past his Raptor reminded him that this was not the time for questions. “Yes ma’am... We have an unknown contact at bearing two-one-seven. No visual communication... sensors suggest there is... *something*... but we can’t identify. With all due respect, ma’am, we *know* its here, ‘cause *something* is shooting at us and it isn’t those carriers!”

Hornsby’s voice returned without much delay. “*Archangel, are you reading this?*”

“*Angel lead here. Yes Captain, I am.*”

“Good, what’s your position?”

“*AR seventeen-delta: about three clicks from the Aquarius ma’am.*”

Hayden swung around hard and brought the Raptor fighter back towards the *Aquarius* and away from the unseen source of fire. He noticed several Lysanders explode ahead of him as two pursuing UEO Raptors put several hundred rounds of gun fire in to their tails. He couldn’t tell what squadron they were from at this range, but the pilots obviously knew what they were doing.

“Ok,” said Hornsby, “*All squadrons, this is command, standby to receive further orders. Evade that incoming fire, and stay on top of the enemy flight groups; if you can engage their fighters at close quarters, there is a good chance they will not fire unless they want to hit their own units.*”

Captain Hornsby quickly moved away from the EVA station and turned to run to the other side of the bridge and the sensors station that resided on the middle deck. She called out as the bridge trembled slightly from the explosions outside the mighty DSV. “Sensors, give me a full analysis of sector zero-two-foxtrot.”

The sensor chief confirmed the order as the Captain walked self up the stairs quickly and reached the station before leaning over their shoulders to watch the screens in front of them.

“Sir, we’ve got... *nothing*. Sensors have traced the source of those weapons... which by the way are very large subduction waves... to *this* location.” -said the chief pointing to a location map on a large display on the wall before him.

Hornsby frowned. It was a large area of about one square kilometer and didn’t give away anything that was useful. Whatever it was, the technology was something she – and most likely the entire UEO – had never seen before. “Alright... Have you tried thermal scanners?”

The officer nodded and then sighed helplessly. “Captain, I’ve gone so far as doing a full-ship sensor analysis on that area including long range, short range, thermal, audio and even basic hypersonar. As far as this ship is concerned, there is *nothing* out there.

The Captain nodded and let a small, lopsided smile escape on to her features. “As far as *the ship* is concerned... no, there isn’t. But *we* know better.”

Stepping away from the sensor station, Hornsby returned to the command deck and, for the first time in the battle, sat down in her command chair and pulled up several displays on her personal command console. “Tactical: arm all pulse cannon batteries and prepare for a fire mission on the following coordinates. Commander Barry? Put this up on the main screen through the WSKRs.”

The *Aquarius* bridge screen changed from a series of tactical maps and systems displays to show the view outside the submarine. UEO attack submarines and sub fighter dueled with their Alliance counterparts in a chaotic ballet that was all but impossible to see who was winning. And in the center of the screen, distorted and blending almost perfectly with the surrounding seascape, was the unmistakable and undeniable shape of what they were hunting.

“Pulse cannons ready, Captain.”

Hornsby nodded her approval. “Fire at will.”

The *Aquarius*, which was now moving at a steady speed of only thirty five knots suddenly shot out with a series of glowing white and blue pulse cannon charges that vaporized the water around it. The muzzles of its guns sent shockwaves of steam radiating around the bow of the submarine. By the time it was done, the sea was filled with glowing charges of energy had been fired with awesome precision in a set pattern designated by the ship’s computer to saturate the targeted area and hopefully stir whatever it was that was hiding.

...And they did that perfectly.

Hornsby and her bridge crew watched in stunned silence as the pulse cannons did their work and revealed something that sent shivers down everyone’s spine: The water, previously an unremarkable blue haze broken by the occasional passing sub fighter seemed to be torn apart as if a curtain had been dropped. Ripples of energy from the laser cannons that had found their marks lit up the area in a bath of plasma fire, and, if only for a moment, revealed what could only be a *very* large submarine the likes of which none had ever seen. And then, just as quickly as it was revealed, the water seemed to ripple once more and concealed it beneath a veil of darkness.

For the first time in her command career, Hornsby did not know what to do, so she gave the only order that made any sense. “Flood all tubes... and *Fire!*”

And she did. The same fury that began to roil up in the soul of Captain Hornsby filled that of the ship she commanded as the *Aquarius* roared with a blind,

ballistic volley of torpedoes from every tube across its massive bulk. Twenty four Torpedoes shot out with a piercing scream as they ignited their plasma-fuelled engines and tore open the bounds of their underwater prison. Less than a second later, the torpedo tubes had rotated and a second volley left them... then a third, and finally a fourth. In the space of just a few short seconds, the *Aquarius* had fired a total of ninety six torpedoes en-masse toward the Macronesian fleet.

The action was enough to make every submarine at the spearhead of the Alliance formation turn and make a desperate run for safety. It was a futile act as the ballistic, unguided torpedoes indiscriminately ripped past at over 200 knots. The detonations of torpedoes that blindly slammed in to unsuspecting Alliance submarines sent subsonic shockwaves through the water that tossed the Raptors of the *Aquarius* escort aside like rag dolls. In the next ten seconds, six Orion class attack submarines and four Aleus carriers were ripped in to pieces by the lethal supercharged plasma warheads. But this damage was not what caught Hornsby's eye; it was the impacts of torpedoes against what appeared to be *nothing* that made her sit up and silently whisper a word of both disbelief and triumph.

The torpedoes that sailed in to the darkness had hit an invisible brick wall, and volleys of shattered metal alloys and clouds of vaporized debris came out from the points of impact. The tell-tale camouflage skin of a stealth warship flickered and erratically revealed the sharp-lined dagger that lay beneath.

"What the hell is that?" exclaimed Commander Barry who stood from his chair slowly to watch the strange but terrifying sight. Hornsby too, who was also rising from her chair, noticed that every pair of eyes on the bridge were glued to the main view screen with unwavering awe.

"I've seen this kind of technology before," she explained aloud. "The UEO experimented with a chameleon bio-skin back in the 2020s...It looks like that's what we're dealing with."

Barry shook his head. "But... It's *flawless!* We can't even see a shadow beneath the damned thing!"

The *Aquarius* Captain nodded. "That's the idea." She turned to the sensor station and put this revelation in to her next order. "Sensors? What did you read at the points of impact?"

"At least nine confirmed direct hits ma'am. Statistically out of a hundred torpedoes, that isn't that great... but I'm betting it was enough to let them know who they're dealing with."

...In a case of terribly bad timing, an alert klaxon sounded at tactical, and before the officer even had a chance to explain, the shimmering, half-shrouded ship seemed to distort as pulses of energy shot out from its hull and sped towards the UEO DSV.

"Captain! We've got incoming subduc--"

"-I see it!" she interjected without needing any more of an explanation. "All hands, Brace for impact!"

...Subduction cannons. The most lethal submarine weapon ever devised: No countermeasures, no possible defense. All they could do was ride out the storm...

...Nick Hayden watched in horror as the distorted, sizzling masses of blue energy splashed over the hull of the *Aquarius*, vaporizing the bio skin and sending molten masses of metal flying from the hull. Subduction weapons broke down structures at the molecular level and effectively turned the target in to a thick soup...

literally. The *Aquarius* reeled from the impacts of the weapons and as the clouds of debris and flame dissipated, the extent of the damage became apparent. Gaping wounds were ripped straight through the hull to the inner corridors of the bow. Whoever was stationed there had just met a fate more messy than anything he could imagine as their bodies became little more than part of the molten mess that was the ship's hull... Hayden shook the thought away as he saw more of the subduction energy bolts rip out of the partially-'cloaked' ship and impact again and again on the *Aquarius's* mid ship hull. The DSV was taking a pounding, and there was very little they could do. But *he* could

"All flight groups, this is Widowmaker One. Do you see that?"

"*Bloody hell, Captain,*" was the reply from another pilot. "*You've made an art form of stating the obvious!*"

Hayden was in no mood for snide comments. "Shut the hell up. *Aquarius* is in deep this time. She's being pounded and I'm betting there isn't much they can do about it. All squadrons; converge on that ship and coordinate your strikes on where that fire is coming from!"

The reply from Commander Roderick was quick, and her voice held a great deal of optimism. "*The Captain is right. Close to point blank range and hit that thing with everything you've got!*"

Captain Hornsby struggled to pull herself from the deck of the bridge as the rounds of subduction fire continued to pound her ship; rattling the bridge constantly. Smoke streamed from a few power conduits that ran through the walls and ceiling. "Damage report Mr. Barry!" she cried over the wail of the alert klaxons.

There was no reply. She asked again, and concerned, turned to face where the *Aquarius XO* had been standing only moments before. A gasp escaped her lips as she saw the image of the Commander sprawled over the deck, his neck at an extreme angle and blood slowly trickling from his mouth – his eyes wide and glazed with shock. Rushing to his side, she placed her fingers against his neck and closed her eyes. He was dead. The bridge shook again and she got up and looked to the tactical officer in front of the command deck. "Commander Akara: *Report!*"

The tactical officer turned and grimaced as he braced himself against the console. "We've been hit by at least ten subduction rounds! The hull has been compromised throughout lower decks, flooding is contained and the bio skin is sealing the breaches. It's only superficial Captain, but we can't take this sort of punishment forever."

Hornsby looked around her bridge which was still recovering from the first volley and took several quick breaths. She realized her hair, which had previously been pulled back in to a tight bun had fallen in to her face and she brushed it aside and found her hand come away with blood. '*It's not that bad*' she thought silently.

Subduction weapons were infamous for being extremely effective against submarines. Weapons composed of highly charged energy; there was no defense against them. Intercept torpedoes were merely turned to molecular slag in their wake and every other countermeasure the UEO had was ineffective. Hornsby knew this all too well and didn't dwell on it for too long.

"Commander Akara, continue saturation fire with the pulse cannons. Do *not* bother with torpedoes! We're only going to waste ammunition. We can't track it, so we'll have to do this the old fashioned way. Match all your known bearings and use manual targeting!"

"Yes ma'am!"

Hornsby shot her arm out and pointed to the sensor station, her features hard with cool determination and certainty of what she needed. “Sonar: Give me everything you’ve got on that bastard!”

“Captain, from what we can gather from its profile and weaponry, we can only assume it’s most likely a Tempest class Heavy Cruiser.”

Hornsby frowned. The Tempest was certainly a possibility as they were very large vessels, but never before had she heard of them being equipped with stealth technology on any level, let alone a complete visual and sensor masking system.

“You’re certain?”

“Yes ma’am. There is nothing else it could be.”

“...You’re sure?”

“That’s affirmative Widow Lead. Command confirms identification as Tempest class heavy cruiser. Proceed with caution and terminate with extreme prejudice.” The order from Commander Roderick was simple and direct. The Tempest was perhaps the most feared line-cruiser of the entire Alliance fleet and boasted an impressive armament in excess of a dozen heavy subduction cannons, heavy ER Lasers and multiple torpedo tubes. It was a double-hulled, highly maneuverable and very fast predator that could stare down anything the UEO had... with the exception of a DSV or possibly Reverence class Carrier.

“Roger-Wilco, Archangel. Alright, all Widow flights; *floor* it. Come in low, fast and hard. Strafe with cannons to find the target then drop your torpedoes. *Move!*”

Without any further delay, the Raptors of the Widowmakers broke hard and swept down low and fast at more than 300 knots. Not far behind and making equal pace were the Blackhawks and Dark Angels. Hayden watched his Heads-Up-Display carefully as the Raptor’s on board computer began actively analysing and highlighting the unseen, perfectly camouflaged Alliance ship. He watched the targeting data spill over the screen as more subduction cannon fire erupted from the hidden turrets over the cruiser’s hull. Grinning wickedly, Hayden snapped the Raptor around quickly and felt his stomach fly up to his throat making him take a breath and mutter under his breath. Squeezing the trigger, the Hades guns again roared to life and sent glowing streaks of superheated shells flying towards the cruiser. Ripples began swirling over its hull like a perfect, glistening pond as the optical distortion fields were disrupted by the heavy cannon fire that raked its hull. With a quick flip of his hand, he flipped the cap on the torpedo arm and waited... by this time, over a dozen Raptors were raking the hull of the invisible ship with cannon fire and the distorted hull continued to ripple like a pond as the field broke down... until finally the disturbance was good enough that the Raptor’s targeting radar got a solid lock. The ringing had only gone off for a split-second before Hayden, out of pure instinct, squeezed the trigger and with his free hand, armed the second missile before squeezing it again, sending two torpedoes screaming away from the belly of his fighter.

“Widow One: Fox three!” he cried as he peeled away and let the torpedoes do their work. Looking over his shoulder, he saw the bright blue flashes as the torpedoes found their mark and sent debris flying from the hull of the ship, which was now obviously in such a bad shape that its chameleon camouflage was failing.

Hayden checked his displays briefly and winced. He quickly thumbed his radio. “This is Widow Lead. Winchester, I repeat, Winchester!” He cursed again as he broke off and brought the Raptor around for a visual on the other fighters.

“Winchester” was the general term meaning he had just run out of torpedoes. It was down to guns.

“*I copy, Widow Lead,*” came the reply from Commander Roderick. “*All squadrons, report in.*”

“*This is Blackhawk 1. We’re dry, no casualties.*”

“*Banshee lead here, we’re good for another 4 rounds... but we’re light 5 birds...*”

The reports from the squadrons continued to come in until it became apparent that there was very little the Raptors could continue to do against the bigger Alliance attack submarines. Most squadrons were low on ammunition and some over zealous pilots had just about emptied the magazines for their Hades guns too. Hayden rolled the fighter around and watched as the mysterious cruiser continued to limp away. Its camouflaged hull was showing bare metal in places, and something about it bothered him... For a Tempest, it had a remarkably large amount of fins, and seemed abnormally large. Slowly, the camouflaged curtain concealed it once more, and it was gone. No longer firing, it had dropped in to a trench and slipped away.

“Archangel, this is Widow Lead. What do we do about that cruiser?”

“*Let it go,*” commanded Roderick sharply. “*She might be wounded, but we aren’t in any shape to finish it off. Blackhawk and Banshee wings, you’ve done all you can. Watch each other’s backs and RTB.*”

“*Roger, lead, nice to be with you. RTB in five mikes.*”

Hayden silently watched as the Raptors of Banshee and Blackhawk squadrons snap rolled around and headed back towards the UEO fleet that was barely visible in the distance through the haze of the debris-strewn water. The radio again came to life and Hayden returned his attention to the matters at hand. It wasn’t over yet.

“*All squadrons, this is Command, the cruiser has broken off; do not pursue. Return to grid six-delta and defend the Aquarius. We have incoming Lysanders.*”

Captain Hornsby looked the bridge, in which a fine mist had settled in some of the alcoves of the walls. The DSV had taken just over a dozen hits from the Tempest cruiser, and she was amazed as to how well it had held up under the pounding. “Tactical: Give me a full SITREP.”

The bridge still rumbled slightly as more torpedoes shot out of their tubes and continued to harass the Alliance fleet which still stood at a good strength around the *Aquarius*. The tactical officer didn’t look up from the panel, but read what he found. “That cruiser gave us a good bruising, Captain. It’s only minor damage, but we’ve got substantial hull buckling in sections 20 through 32, and four minor hull breaches on decks E and F on our starboard bow quarter. The bioskin has sealed the breaches and hull siphons are handling the flooding. We’re down to 84 torpedoes in the primary holds and tubes 20 through 24 are still at full strength with 6 torpedoes locked in each, and good to go. Tubes 1 through 10 are empty and reloading, the rest are at half strength.”

The report went on for a while longer and Hornsby interjected, convinced that the *Aquarius* was in more or less perfect order. “What about the fleet?”

To that, Commander Akara seemed to twist his face in a pained expression. She knew it wasn’t going to be good. “*Castle* has been hulled and *Triffid* has taken severe damage and is pulling to the rear. The *Springfield* is a wreck, *Titan* is reporting she is so far without damage as is the *Morningstar*... it looks like we’ve lost the *Collins* as well, ma’am... she’s off our scopes completely.”

Hornsby didn't have to get an answer to her next question; she knew exactly what it would be. "Was it the cruiser?"

Akara looked up with forlorn, tired features and merely nodded. "Yes, Captain. It seems we weren't exactly a priority target."

Hornsby nodded and walked to the Conn. There would be time to mourn their losses later. "Distance to those Lysanders?"

"Two kilometres and closing fast."

"Hornsby silently nodded and looked back at the deck where Commander Barry lay. A medical team were entering the bridge just as she did, pushing a gurney as quickly as they could. She looked icily back at Akara. "Lieutenant Commander, you've just been given a field promotion to Commander. Consider yourself my new XO."

Akara looked at the vacant XO's chair and nodded grimly. "Yes, ma'am."

Hornsby looked over at an ensign who seemed fairly redundant at Operatinos and waved him over to the tactical station to replace Akara. "Ensign Reyes? Take the Commander's place. Commander Akara, take the command deck, if you will."

Akara showed little emotion as he walked up the flight of stairs and passed two marines who were picking up Barry's limp body to rest it on the gurney beside them. Akara paused and took a deep breath as he sat in the chair and suddenly found Hornsby's hand resting gently on his shoulder encouragingly. The Captain nodded assuredly, and he simply stared at her vacantly. Hornsby stopped, and realised that her constant movement over the bridge would probably wear a hole in the deck, opting instead to simply sit down in the command chair a few feet behind her. "Sonar, what's the range to those Lysanders?"

"One kilometre ma'am."

Hornsby put a hand to her chin and thought for a moment. Where the hell were those Raptors? "Ensign Reyes, do your best to get locks on those Lysanders with the pulse cannons. If those Lysanders cross our defence perimeter, I want a full-strength barrage on their heading. EVA command; what's Zeta Squadron's status?"

Zeta Squadron, the VF-97 Cobras, were the *Aquarius's* lone Spectre sub fighter group, they were slower, and no where near as well armed than the newer Raptors, but at this point, they were the only option remaining. "Zeta is on the cat and ready to launch, ma'am. Should I give them a go?"

Hornsby looked at the small console on her command chair and noticed the thirty-odd red blips closing quickly on the sensor readout. Twelve on *thirty*... If she gave them this order, they would be cut to shreds, but there was little choice.

"They have a go."

The Raptors of the Widowmakers and Dark Angels tore in towards the *Aquarius* as fast as their powerful engines could take them. Hayden knew that the Lysanders would get their first, perhaps by five minutes or more, but he also knew that if they allowed the Alliance fighters to continue their run unopposed, the *Aquarius* would be in a world of trouble before anything could be done for her. His thoughts came to linger on the lone squadron of Spectre sub fighters that defended the *Aquarius*... he knew the commander of the Cobras well, and he knew that his pilots were well trained. He only hoped it would be enough. Badly outgunned, it would only be a matter of time before they were overrun. The radio cracked to life as Commander Roderick again addressed the pilots.

"Dark Angel and Widowmaker squadrons, we'll be cutting it fine. We can't afford any screw ups. A lot of lives depend on it. Commander Henrikson's boys are

doing their best to hold off the Lysanders, but if they don't get relief soon, they're finished. As soon as we engage, break by flights and attack targets at will. If your wing is under strength, reinforce the Cobras wherever you can."

As the different flights of the two squadrons confirmed that they had understood, Hayden switched to the Cobra's radio frequency and listened to the garbled chaos. At this range, and without a laser relay, direct and clear communication would be impossible.

"This is Three, Scratch one bogie. Wait... I've got-"

"Cobra Three is down! Flight One, what's your status?"

"This is flight Three lead. We're taking heavy fire from enemy fighters. We request immediate-"

"-Two flight lead here, standby Three... we're on our way..."

"This is Cobra One, I've got a bogey on my six. I can't shake him!"

Hayden switched his radio back to his squadron frequency and cursed under his breath. This would be over before they got there...

...Lieutenant Haru Ishikawa was sweating and breathing hard as he banked the pudgy Spectre around and flipped the safety on his missile console. The three Lysanders came in to view and he whispered a silent prayer and bracketed the closest with his HUD. Immediately the computer tracked the Lysander and he got a solid lock within seconds. Squeezing the trigger, a single miniature torpedo shot out from under the belly of the Spectre and closed with the nimble Alliance fighter. He broke off and switched to his twin pulse lasers and quickly depressed the trigger to send several quick plasma-laser rounds raking past the other Lysanders. He watched his first torpedo impact on the first Lysander with a satisfying blue halo of debris that sent the craft in to an uncontrollable dive to the ocean floor, but his relief was short lived as the other two broke away and made a wide, sweeping turn back to his location. He cursed and tried to evade, but he knew that against two of them, it would be a futile gesture.

'With these kinds of odds, it's no wonder we're losing this damned war...' he silently whispered in his head. Acting quickly to avoid the more manoeuvrable Lysanders, he snapped the nose of his Spectre upward and aimed it straight toward the huge, ridge-lined dorsal hull of the *Aquarius* that sat a mere 500 meters in front of him. He glanced at his speed indicator, desperately searching for more speed, and again cursed as he read its speed: 220 knots; the fighter's maximum speed.

He knew the 300-knot-capable Lysanders would already be closing fast, so his only hope was the massive DSV that bore down in front of them. Staring it down at the bow, it was easy to see why the *Aquarius* was so feared. He didn't have much time to dwell on it as the range to the DSV closed quickly and he snap rolled up and over the bow... a mere twenty feet above the bioskin-covered hull beneath him. He knew that Captain Hornsby would have had a "Plan B" in case the Lysanders got that close, and he was right;

Aquarius's laser batteries erupted in rapid succession; putting up a ferocious barrage in Ishikawa's wake, threatening to bring the Alliance fighters down in pieces. But there was no such luck as the Macronesians dove and weaved through the torrent of fire, staying tight on his tail.

Hugging low to the curves of the big submarine's hull, he snapped around the side of the bow and brought the Spectre in a tight slalom run between the big submarine's fins. Sure enough, the enraged Lysanders fired their cannons and his cockpit shook as they impacted harmlessly on the *Aquarius's* hull behind him.

Snapping around the ship's ventral fin assembly he brought the Spectre around as hard as he could and just caught a glimpse of the Lysanders that were hot on his tail. If this were training run, he'd be having fun... but this was real... as were the super-heated rounds of magnetically-contained subduction plasma that burned past his tail. With no chance to shake them, he again rolled his fighter down between the gaping engines of the DSV and pulled up again... heading straight down the submarine's belly towards the bow. It was a straight, gauntlet run between the two long arrays of the DSV's pulse cannons.

He spun the Spectre wildly as he passed under the arrow-head bow of the *Aquarius*, and predictably, the Lysanders followed... straight in to the jaws of the waiting beast. Haru gritted his teeth as he knew what was coming and again, much to his pleasure, the huge pulse cannons of the *Aquarius* opened fire. The Lysanders were caught in the blast nightmarish fire unawares – disbelieving that the DSV could attain a lock so quickly, and at such short range - and the pilots visibly panicked as their flying became uncertain and erratic. It was a mistake that cost them everything as the fast tracking turrets finally impaled the two fighters within a split second of each other, turning them in to driftwood. The radio that followed came as a surprise to Haru, who was so engrossed in the moment that he forgot he even had one.

“Cobra Ten, nice flying... but you owe me a drink,” said the unfamiliar voice. It was from the *Aquarius*, and no doubt whoever was at tactical controlling those guns.

“Thanks for the help, command. It's appreciated.” Haru noticed the WSKR satellite that hovered several hundred meters away like an inquisitive eye. He allowed himself a small smile... that little 'eyeball' had probably just saved his life. To show his appreciation to the watching bridge officers, he jostled the rudder pedals a little with his feet and wagged the fighter's tail as he again pulled out to rejoin what was left of his squadron... That was when things turned bad for Lieutenant Ishikawa.

His entire HUD flashed red and Lieutenant Haru Ishikawa was suddenly faced with the sight of his own mortality as the Lysander came out of nowhere behind him. On pure instinct, he put the Spectre in to a sharp dive and then saw it: *another* Lysander, coming straight towards him. He uttered what would probably be his final curse when the Radio cracked again.

“Cobra 10, Break right NOW!”

He wasn't about to argue, and snapped up the Spectre's wings to roll away. Half a second later, he caught a glimpse of the SF-37 Raptor which screamed passed him, recognising its black fuselage instantly...

Corinn Roderick smiled wickedly as she watched the pudgy little Spectre break away and give her clear line of sight to her target beyond. She gently depressed the trigger and in just one second, sixty rounds of 25mm cannon fire ripped out of the gun barrels and tore the unsuspecting Lysander to shreds. The spectacular death of the Lysander was almost pleasing to watch as the magnetically-driven cannon rounds sheered off the wings turned the entire fuselage to shrapnel; breaking its hardened endoskeleton and obliterating the cockpit in the space of just one-and-a-half seconds. *“All remaining fighters of Spectre flight Zeta, this is Archangel. Converge on my position and regroup.”*

“Wing Commander, if I knew you wouldn't shoot me for it, I would kiss you!” said one enthusiastic pilot with a laugh.

“Too right, Four. How about it, Quinn... Pucker up?”

Corinn ‘Quinn’ Roderick allowed herself a small smirk and snap rolled the Raptor around to target another Lysander fighter. “Boys... back home, such a comment would get you a pair of black eyes... It’s a pity I’d be up on charges for trying it.”

A few pilots chuckled, and Roderick found another target and quickly made chase. A second later, she was disappointed by the fact her prey was then turned in to a bright little nova by a torpedo of another Raptor. She looked at its tail markings and grimaced.

“Gee, Wing Commander. What’s wrong? Did I take something of yours?”

Hayden.

Roderick rolled her eyes and brought her fighter into a steep, banking turn back around to face another Lysander. The one she picked seemed to be making a run for Hayden.

Accelerating to full speed, she closed the gap with the Alliance fighter and swept the Raptor downward in a long, arcing dive. Coming in from above and to the side, it was a good position to kill it. Quickly switching to the Hades guns again, she loosed off more rounds that caught the Lysander totally by surprise and blew it clean in half. The range was so close that Roderick had to break away to avoid colliding with the shattered nose of the Alliance subfighter. Again, she quickly closed the distance with the next closest fighter and steadied her grip on the stick. The Lysander pilot, obviously noticing the Raptor close on its heels, dove sharply in to the black abyss beneath them in an attempt to lose the enraged UEO pilot. Roderick pushed the stick forward and applied full thrust to Raptor’s engines and sent it in to a near-vertical dive that took it on a path straight under the Lysander.

The Alliance pilot, having lost sight of his UEO assailant, panicked and assumed the worst. He pulled up in to a steep climb.

Roderick knew a bad move when she saw it, and silently she eased up the nose again and found herself staring at the belly of the fleeing Lysander at a range of just less than thirty yards. Squeezing the trigger, she sent multiple rounds of cannon fire straight through the centre of the craft; breaking its back and making it instantly lose momentum. Only a fraction of a second later, the fighter detonated in a ball of fire and shattered titanium.

Her sensors chirped a shrill alarm that alerted her to the presence of several more Alliance fighters. Already the Raptor’s sophisticated fire control AI had generated bearings, speeds and projected times for interception on each target, and she rolled away in a tight outside loop to pursue.

The HUD automatically started tracking one of these fighters and this one was coming straight towards her at break-neck speed. The ‘courageous’ (if perhaps suicidal) move by the pilot caught her off guard as several sizzling rounds of laser fire scorched across the fuselage of the Raptor. Roderick grimaced and spun the fighter quickly while depressing the trigger – a manoeuvre known as ‘Rolling the Gun.’ The Lysander realised its error and broke away hard to try and flank her from the right, but Roderick would have none of it.

Compulsively, she locked up the bow canards of her Raptor and kicked in full reverse thrust. The fighter spun hard on its nose, almost as if pinned in place, and swung the tail behind. It was a skill that few pilots could complete without becoming disoriented and blacking out as the Raptor spun around a full arc of 180 degrees at speeds sometimes over 200 knots. Even Roderick couldn’t complete it at the fighter’s full speed and this made her marvel at how the machine she flew was only limited by the pilot’s endurance. She made a mental note to practice it more often, and then

focussed on the Alliance fighter that was banking around before her in a vain attempt to get on to the rear quarter... The fact he was not already in a perfect firing position must have come as a complete shock to the Lysander jockey.

Roderick again squeezed the trigger and sent several hundred more rounds in to her current victim. The Lysander disintegrated like a brittle leaf and Roderick again kicked the tail of the Raptor around to continue back towards the *Aquarius*, which was still under siege from multiple squadrons of Alliance fighters. The radio cracked inside her helmet.

“*Bloody hell, Roderick, That’s not fair!*” The objection from Hayden was almost outrage as she noticed his Raptor, not too far away, incinerating yet another Alliance fighter.

“What are you complaining about Hayden?”

“*Commander, to be blunt... I’m running out of targets, and you’re making this look too easy.*”

Roderick had no time for a riposte as she noticed that the fighters attacking the *Aquarius* were realising just how much trouble they were in. The Lysanders turned from the big DSV and began sprinting as fast as they could back to their fleet... which, unsurprisingly, was also slowly pulling away in retreat. “Whoa... Ok, All squadrons this is Roderick, standby... Do *not* engage the Macs. If you’re still engaged, finish them off, but if they try to retreat, let them go.”

One anonymous pilot complained with surprise. “*What? Commander, if we let-*”

“That’s an *order*. We’ve suffered too much today: Return to the *Aquarius* and go in to standard escort formations.”

Hornsby breathed a sigh of relief as she watched what was left of the Alliance task force pulling back. What had once been a fleet of close to thirty ships was now barely a third that... and they hadn’t even managed to make the *Aquarius* budge. Seeing this, several sets of eyes on the bridge turned to look at her, waiting for her orders. She nodded and got up from the command chair to look around the expansive bridge. “Tactical: SITREP.”

The young ensign who now occupied Commander Akara’s position didn’t look up and stammered briefly, clearly not quite used to the position of being in charge of the tactical station; probably the most important part of the ship at that moment.

“Ur... Well, the Alliance ships are pulling back... Their fighters are following and our own squadrons are holding on our wings waiting for their orders. All damage to the ship has been contained and all systems are fully operational... Department heads are...”

Hornsby nodded and interjected. As long as the *Aquarius* wasn’t in any immediate danger, the technicalities didn’t matter. “What about the fleet?”

The ensign’s face suddenly became somewhat forlorn. Hornsby knew it would be bad. “Only the *Titan* remains undamaged... *Triffid*, *Centurion* and *Morningstar* have taken severe damage and require assistance. *Castle*, *Springfield*, *Collins*, *Bowfin* and *Defender* have all been destroyed. The *Titan* and *Triffid* report they have taken aboard survivors... but it looks like most were lost, ma’am...”

A murmur rose on the bridge and Captain Hornsby worked her jaw... It had been costly... and the only reason the Alliance hadn’t gotten through was because of the *Aquarius* and her sub fighters. She reflected on the fact that this was rapidly

becoming the norm in the UEO Navy. With so few vessels remaining unscathed and so many losses... it was really only be a matter of time before the UEO was nothing but a footnote in history...

Hayden took off his helmet and looked around in shock. Back on the flight deck of the *Aquarius*... he had walked in to hell. The once so-organised deck of the *Aquarius* was now a nightmare. He got up in a daze... his head still spinning from the fighting outside, and suddenly felt like throwing up as the familiar scents of burnt fuel, oil and flesh wafted in to his nostrils. Getting out of the fighter, he clambered down the ladder carefully to the deck and was shocked to see the amount of buckled panels and scorch marks that covered his previously pristine fighter. One of the techs, the same who had seen him off, came up to him in a daze of disbelief and his jaw dropped at the sight of the Raptor before him.

“Hayden... What the hell did you *do* to my bird?!”

The marine Captain turned faster than a spinning Hades cannon and looked the crewman square in the eyes. “*Don’t...*” he warned glaringly. “Just... *don’t.*” The technician held up his hands and backed away slowly.

“Alright, Captain...I’m sorry... I’ll see that this gets cleaned up.” The technician stammered as he walked away and Hayden merely nodded. The sight before him made him queasy... the metal grates and plating that made up the floor of the flight deck were now sticky with red bloody and his boots stuck to them with every step. Some technicians did the best they could to clean it away with large fire hoses and buckets of water, but from what he could tell, it practically covered the entire deck.

As he walked onward, something gave way under his foot and looking down, his stomach sank: A dismembered leg; still booted and in what remained of a very tattered flight suit. Hayden could take it no more and his stomach heaved. The marine collapsed to the deck on all fours, and vomited violently. He breathed heavily for a few moments before wiping his mouth. Closing his eyes, he tried to blank the image from his head when a hand came down on his shoulder and was followed by a very familiar voice.

“Cap... Hey, you don’t look so good.” The voice of Lieutenant Jack Waters came as a welcome relief and the Captain raised his head to look his XO in the face. Water’s eyes were glazed, and it was plain to see that he was just as shaken by what he saw.

“You don’t exactly look like a million bucks either, Jack.”

Waters tried to smile, but it was obviously forced. “We did well, sir. Don’t be beatin’ yerself up about it.”

Hayden regarded his wingman and friend with a smile and looked around the hangar once again. Raptors continued to arrive on the deck, some of them in such a complete mess that they required full emergency crews ready to aid any wounded pilots or respond if things went bad at the last second. The amount of damaged fighters and wounded was staggering.

“What the hell was all this for, Jack?”

Lieutenant Waters sighed and stood next to Hayden and looked on to the scene of chaos around them. Despite the both of them being marines as opposed to navy officers, they were still not accustomed to the grisly reality of warfare. They didn’t get the same exposure to this as the other, more jaded marine infantry. Being a pilot may

have had some advantages... but the mental effect it had on you was only more severe when things *did* hit the fan.

The two pilots walked in a sickened daze over the flight deck, avoiding the pilots who lay on the deck with horrendous wounds – the vast majority being burns – in many neat lines... this wasn't a flight deck, it was a triage unit. Then Hayden saw one of his own pilots; Second Lieutenant James Winters, hobbling under the support of two other pilots of the Widowmakers. His left leg, severed at the knee, was covered with blood and the ragged tears in his jumpsuit trailed in to the wound in an unrecognisable mess of a stump. Despite the wave of nausea it brought him, Hayden muttered a curse and quickly jogged over to the pilot. "My god, Jim," he said in shock as he ran to the man's side. Winters looked at Hayden and tried to smile, but could only wince in pain. His face was pale and eyes moist. The pain shouldn't have been so bad because of the shock, but he knew that the sheer knowledge of the injury would be worse in the short term than any physical trauma. Mentally, it could put him in to shock considerably faster than it would otherwise.

"I'll be fine, sir." rasped Winters with a curt nod. Hayden looked to the pilots who were supporting him, and knew instantly that it was far worse than the Marine would have admitted.

"Of course you will," he replied with a warm smile, trying to comfort the man. "Don't worry. They'll take care of you. Just... stay off the leg for a while eh?"

Winters managed a soft chuckle at the morbid joke, and with a reassuring pat on the shoulder, the two Widowmaker pilots took him from the flight deck to a pair of medics who ran in from the corridor outside wheeling a gurney. Hayden could only shake his head and turned to the technician who he knew as Winters' friend. "What the hell happened to him?" he said sharply.

The tech looked at him blankly and then sighed, searching for the right words. "He isn't the only one... The Mac subduction weaponry... it..." The chief looked away. "... It went through him like... Ah *hell*, Captain..." The tech was distraught. "The Macs blindsided him. Two subduction rounds went straight through the fighter and punched through the lower cockpit. It caught his leg right below the knee. It's a fucking miracle he could even fly, let alone land. He's a god damned hero."

Hayden nodded and put a hand on the man's shoulder... he couldn't think of a single thing to say. The horror of the injury was something that was almost as common as burns in fighter accidents. Subduction rounds decayed over distance, and at long range, hits could pass straight through the tough fuselage plating of a Raptor – lacking the energy to destroy it – and then liquify whatever soft material there was inside... namely; the pilot.

On the opposite side of the flight deck, he saw the Dark Angels... the group of pilots were gathered shaking their heads and looking around them in sheer disbelief. One of them hadn't fared much better than Hayden himself and was in the process of leaning over to bring up whatever he'd had for lunch. Hayden and Waters walked across the wet deck and saw Corinn Roderick – her face ashen – speaking to the Dark Angels XO. He could tell in the way any soldier could; someone hadn't come home.

"Wing Commander," he said formally with a salute, coming to attention. Roderick returned the gesture, but without too much enthusiasm. She tried to smile, but just bowed her head. "You can leave the rank at home, Hayden... It's... just not worth it right now."

The marine nodded apologetically and merely asked the one universal question that was every squadron commander's nightmare. "Who?"

Roderick wiped a black, dirty smudge from her forehead and peeled off her flight gloves before rolling up her sleeves and unzipping the jumpsuit to the chest, trying her best to relax, but quite obviously failing.

“Lieutenant Rivers... he... got jumped by one of Gamma squadron’s Raptors... He didn’t even have time to report before that damned cannon tore his cockpit to shreds... We managed to salvage the fighter but...” Roderick’s voice trailed off as she motioned in the direction of the battered Raptor.

Hayden didn’t have to look at it for too long to work out what had happened. The fighter, otherwise intact, showed the grim scars of what the Hades cannon could do; the jagged, torn edges of the metal around the blackened hole that was once the cockpit were shredded and the hole passed clean through the side of the fighter. Judging from the apparent entry points of the shells, Lieutenant Rivers would have been mince-meat instantly... There was no evidence of Rivers himself, the sea having ripped whatever was left of him in to the abyss.

Roderick screamed as she slammed her helmet down on the deck. “Whoever the bastard was that came up with the term ‘friendly fire’ was obviously never mutilated by his own god-forsaken *wingmen*.”

Hayden then noticed that there was a small group of pilots – members of Gamma Squadron, the Banshees – who were walking towards the Dark Angels pilots. Two of the pilots, both with rather grim faces flanked a man who walked with drooped shoulders and a face that looked like it belonged on death row.

One of the Dark Angels noticed this man as well and uttered a curse as he started to storm off in the his direction, peeling off his gloves one at a time and throwing them to the deck. “*Sonuvabitch!* I’m gonna make you regret you were ever fucking *born!*”

Hayden held a hand in front of the enraged pilot and shook his head. “Leave him, it’s not his fault.”

The Dark Angel glared at Hayden and grabbed him by the flight suit and brought him threateningly close. “What do you fuckin’ mean it’s *not his fault?*”

“Jeff that is *enough!*” yelled Roderick from where she stood next to her Raptor. “Hayden is right. We’re on the same side here. Don’t do something you’ll regret. Save it for the Alliance.”

The Pilot glared at his Commander and nodded, releasing Hayden and simply walking away. By this time, the three Banshee pilots had approached and saluted, with the accused looking particularly weak at the knees.

“Wing Commander Roderick, Lieutenant Luke Driscoll reporting.”

Roderick nodded and told the man to stand at ease, but it only came out as a whisper. More than anything, she wanted to hit the man and tear him to pieces, but she forced herself to stand down. “What happened out there, Lieutenant?”

The pilot looked down, almost too upset to look the Commander in the eyes. One of his companions gave him a light jab in the ribs and he looked up and straightened.

“We were... engaging two separate targets. Lieutenant Commander Rivers came in from below and I didn’t see him... he crossed my line of fire and...” Driscoll exhaled and looked away. “It was an accident, ma’am... I screwed up. And I apologise.”

Roderick worked her jaw and nodded. “Alright, Lieutenant... Dismissed.”

Driscoll looked down, and the man on his right shook his head. “Ma’am, we didn’t”

Roderick shot them a venomous stare; one that was enough to send a shiver down even Hayden's spine. "I said *dismissed*."

The two pilots looked at the Dark Angel Wing Commander apologetically, and then nodded. All three of them spun on their heels and marched away.

She then looked at Hayden and motioned for him to follow her to a small engineering bay behind the Raptor they were standing beside. She looked at him and then buried her face in her hands before looking around the chaos of the flight deck once more. She took a moment to compose herself, and allowed her professionalism to return. "How did your pilots fair, Captain?"

Hayden took a deep breath and took his gloves off, setting them down inside on of the engine cowlings. "Not too bad considering the beating that the Cobras took. I lost two pilots from flight two, and one from flight three. They were all good pilots. I'm not going to have an easy time finding replacements."

Roderick folded her arms in front of her. "It sounds like you got off lucky. I got the preliminary reports from the other squadrons a few minutes ago... It looked like Delta Squadron was wiped out to the last fighter. A lot of them managed to eject and were picked up by our speeders, but the simple fact is we are down two whole squadrons... and that's not even considering the casualties from the rest of us."

The marine shook his head. To lose an entire Raptor squadron at this point in the war was practically unthinkable. But to lose over a third of the active fighter squadrons on the ship was nothing short of a massacre... and it was exactly what they had received. Roderick continued, but her voice was tired and emotionless.

"All told we've lost about thirty pilots – give or take - to injury or fatality. We lost even more than that hardware. If we keep taking these kinds of losses whenever we come to blows with the Macs, this war is going to be over in months and Bridger will be signing the constitution of the all-new Macronesian Territories of Hawaii." Her voice dripped with sarcasm and she rolled her eyes.

Hayden managed a small smile, but he knew that she may have been more correct than she would like to admit. It was no secret that the UEO was moving the Command headquarters back to New Cape Quest, fearing that Pearl Harbor was simply too close to the front line. The situation was considered so serious that the flagship *Atlantis* was now actively on patrol in the Atlantic, making it perfectly clear that the UEO's interest in the Atlantic was considered far from 'backwater'.

"I wish Gabe were here," said Roderick; her thoughts detached and distant.

"Ma'am?"

The *Aquarius* Wing Commander smiled, realising she'd said it out loud. "Gabriel Hitchcock. Come on, Nick, I thought you'd know that."

He smiled in reply. He knew exactly what she'd meant, but not in that context. "Commander, I know who you meant, but... we're all only human. I doubt even the Rapiers could have stopped this. Don't beat yourself up..." He laughed lightly and then added; "...Hell, Waters was just reminding me of the same thing not five minutes ago."

Roderick didn't laugh, merely continuing to stare at the gathering of Dark Angels pilots who sat around their fighters, in a genuinely sorry mood. "Yeah, we're only human... But that doesn't make this any easier."

Hayden again tried to lighten the mood of his Commander. "Well... for what its worth, Commander, we didn't go down without a fight. I don't know how many we took down out there, but I can guarantee you we gave a hell of a lot more than we took. With all due respect ma'am, I don't give a hoot *how* badly you think we just got trashed. We made those bastards *cry*. If you think you feel bad, imagine what that

poor son of a bitch in *your* position over on *their* carrier is thinking right now... that's assuming he even made it back *alive*."

Roderick looked at him with a wry smirk. "You know what gets me? It doesn't matter how many we kill... they just keep coming."

Hayden smiled, and was about to say something before he heard a slight 'ahem' come from behind. He turned to find Jack Waters leaning around the corner of the Raptor. "Ah, sorry, sir... but the guys want to speak with you."

Nick Hayden nodded and held up a hand. "Thanks, Jack. I'll be right there. Just give me a minute."

Roderick and Hayden watched the young marine lieutenant smile and then walk away towards the other Widowmakers on the other side of the flight deck. Hayden turned and looked at Roderick with an inquisitive eye.

"About those drinks, Commander... They're on me, How 'bout 19:00?"

Roderick sent one of her well-known predatory smiles towards Hayden and again folded her arms. "Oh, I'm *sorry*... I thought it was the squadron with the *most* kills buying the beer... I thought that was *us*?"

Hayden laughed lightly and picked up his gloves from the engine cowling. "Whatever fancies you, Commander, I'll see you around."

She raised an eyebrow at that and was about to say something, but Hayden had already disappeared. Roderick sighed, and was left alone with her thoughts... staring up to the banners of the squadrons under her command once again...

...Lauren Hornsby stood on the observation deck staring out the panoramic, thick reinforced glass windows that revealed the vastness of the sea beyond. The *Aquarius* now sat at rest a mere two hundred feet below the surface, and the shimmering, blue mirrored surface of the sea rolled soothingly with the fine rays of light filtering down to the blue abyss below. So much had happened in only ten hours, and for the first time that day, she finally had a chance to gather her thoughts. Before her, resting in its cradle as a fine ornament and figurehead of the ship was an antiquated, finely crafted, teak ship's wheel. Set in to it was a brass plaque which bore an inscription that she remembered standing over on the day of the ship's commissioning.

United Earth Oceans Organization
Deep Submergence Vehicle
AQUARIUS DSV 8200. Commissioned November 8th, 2040
Captain Lauren Caitlin Hornsby Commanding.
"*Yesterday I dared to struggle. Today I dare to win.*"

Hornsby ran her fingers softly over the plaque and looked off in to the distance through the *Aquarius's* view ports. The words inscribed on the wheel seemed so hollow now, and yet for whatever reason, she still clung to them. Whether they were simply a vain attempt to glorify a weapon of war, or the hopeless attempt to try and see light at the end of a long and dark tunnel... because for whatever reason, and regardless of whoever said those words, they were the *only* thing the UEO had left. The DSVs were the last hope for a crippled world power, and the final chance to hold that thin line between peace and anarchy.

She gripped the wooden wheel with her hands, and slowly spun it around... While only ornamental and having no real purpose, it did serve as a reminder of the legacy that her mighty ship was to continue... and ultimately, attempt to preserve.

And if she failed, then the events of that day that she had just endured would be for nothing.

Her silent reverie was brought to an end by the quiet foot steps of someone from behind. Without a word, Hornsby turned and faced their source. It was Commander Davis Akara.

Hornsby smiled and looked back to the window and the blue sea beyond it. The azure blue of the ocean was now beginning to show the glistening, golden light of a sunset just above the surface. “You know, Davis... there are times that I wish none of this existed.”

Akara approached and stood beside his Captain while placing his hand on the wheel that bore the ship’s commissioning details and regarded it in the same way she had done only moments before.

“Do you mean this war?”

She merely shook her head as she clasped her hands in front of her. “Wars, the UEO, the Alliance... even this boat.” She clarified simply. “It doesn’t matter where you go in this upside-down world it always seems that the politicians are just as bad as those on the other side of the border. Whether it’s our own bickering Security Council and its bureaucrats or old Alex Bourne and that baby-tantrum empire of his, it seems to me there isn’t a single decent government or decision maker on this whole cursed planet.”

Akara managed a small smile, but it quickly disappeared. He was too tired – and knew Hornsby was probably exhausted – to see it as a joke. Hornsby looked him in the eyes and sighed. “Why are we doing this? All the death... is there some point? Or is it just to pop the ever expanding ego of a man who thinks he is destined to rule the earth like some kind of Roman emperor. Bourne can’t even drive himself to work... hell, he *lives* at work. The man can’t even make himself a *sandwich*. For all we know he might get the plumber to wipe his arse for him. Why the hell do we take him so seriously?”

Akara couldn’t help but laugh at that, and in a way, he knew Hornsby was right. “Bourne might be the most infantile human being in the world... but he is smart enough to know that all that bickering you were just talking about doesn’t get things done.”

Hornsby threw up her hands in defeat. “Great, so suddenly the answer to the world’s problems points to a dictatorship. What have we come to?”

Akara put his hands behind his back and shrugged. “Well... you said it yourself... the democracy we live under isn’t working. Everyone argues about one thing or another and it takes months to decide on the most simplest of reforms.”

Hornsby shot him a look and he immediately held up his hands and moved back. “Hey... *kidding!*”

Hornsby finally laughed and walked around the front of the old wheel to stand in front of the windows. “I’m so glad I’m not a politician... its so simple being a submariner. All you need to do is follow the orders and they pay you stupid amounts of money for doing it... God... I don’t think I’ll *ever* accept a position in the Admiralty. I don’t think I could stand it.”

“They’ll probably force you... or put you in irons... one of the two anyway.”

“I think I’d retire first.”

Akara grinned and couldn't resist a small stab at his Captain who was only a couple of months older than he was. "Well gee, Captain... if you did that you might wind up retiring at 35."

Hornsby burst out in to laughter. "Davis, I don't know if you're trying to flatter me, insult me, mock me or flirt with me, but you are on very dangerous ground. I'm sure there is something in the regs that says 'confusing the commanding officer' is a court martial-able offence."

Akara said nothing, which Hornsby finally decided was probably a good thing. "You know, I'm really glad you got this post, Dave. Life around here would be hell without you."

"It's been hard, ma'am."

She nodded and looked away again. "Yeah... Barry was... He was a fine officer, not to mention a good friend. Finding a permanent replacement for him is going to be next to impossible."

Akara remained silent, not saying a word but merely looking down at the carpeted floor beneath him. Hornsby shook her head and dismissed the unpleasant thought. "You know," she said, changing the subject, "I was reading the fleet reports this afternoon. It seems Captain Ainsley isn't having such an easy time after all."

Akara looked at his Captain with a furrowed brow. "What could be so hard about flying the flag in the Atlantic? I thought they were there merely to 'spread the good will' ... so to speak."

Hornsby shook her head again and looked at Akara. "I don't know the exact details... it seems for whatever reason, UEO Command has decided to keep what happened quiet. But I do know the *Atlantis* was effectively dry docked as a result of it."

Akara's eyes lit up in shock, almost in disbelief. "What? The *Atlantis*?"

Hornsby didn't do much; she just continued to look out the observation deck's view ports and rubbed her chin. "Something is going on, Davis, I don't know what, but... there's a lot more to this war than meets the eye."

Akara nodded slowly. "I take it you noticed as well. That stealth cruiser we stumbled over didn't look much like a Tempest to me."

Hornsby let out a wry smile and exchanged a look with Akara, merely nodding. It was true; whatever the submarine was... it was *not* a Tempest class Heavy Cruiser. Akara went on, "I did a cross reference with all the data we have on the Alliance fleet units. I didn't come up with a single thing that matched the profile of what it is we saw... well... what *little* we saw of it."

Hornsby's chief tactical officer looked uncomfortable. "Do you think we're looking at a new class?"

The *Aquarius* Captain exhaled slowly and shook her head cluelessly. "I keep asking myself that very question, Commander... The only other idea I could come up with was that may have been one of their Honourous carriers... but we've never seen a ship that big with stealth technology like we saw today."

Akara worked his jaw for a minute, and before he could reply, Hornsby's PAL chirped from her belt. Unclipping it, she pressed the receiver and looked down at the image of Wing Commander Corinn Roderick on the screen. Hornsby smiled genuinely for what seemed like the first time that day. "Captain, we... that is to say... the Pilots and I are gathering for a few drinks down on the Promenade on D-deck. We were wondering if you'd like to join us."

Hornsby exchanged an inquisitive look with Akara who returned with a shrug and simply said "Why not?"

The Captain looked back down at the image of Roderick on the display and smiled. “Usual place, then?”

“Yes ma’am.”

“We’ll be there in five.”

Akara turned to leave and then noticed that Hornsby was still standing there, staring out the view ports in to the endless blue sea beyond them. “Are you coming, Captain?”

Hornsby looked back, slightly startled with her mind obviously elsewhere and sighed. “I’ll follow in a few minutes, Commander... you go on.”

Akara nodded slowly, hiding the frown that wanted to creep on to his face. Something in the Captain’s face was still uncertain... and it was something that deeply troubled her. “Yes, ma’am...”

Hornsby watched Akara leave the observation deck and then pulled out a small data pad from her jumpsuit and looked at it. What was displayed on its screen sent shivers down her spine; a large, sharp-lined ‘Battlecruiser’ ... larger than even an older seaQuest class DSV. Its striking, raptor-profile, back-swept wings and fins off of every surface made its appearance that of a sharp, vicious dagger. At the top, marked in bold letters was simply: “Classified: UEO Fleet Intelligence. Eyes only: Captain Lauren C. Hornsby.”

For all intents and purposes, the *Aquarius* had found the knife in the dark, but she couldn’t tell anyone.

Hornsby could only shake her head silently, and she turned off the pad, and the unknown vessel vanished... *just as it had a few hours ago...* Replacing the data pad in her Jumpsuit jacket pocket, and with one final glance out to the sea before her, she turned and headed for the door.

To be continued...

Atlantis DSV Episode III: Rising Thunder

Storm Warning

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