

STO ACADEMY

POWER STRUGGLE



AN ORIGINAL STORY BASED ON STAR TREK ONLINE

Jstagg

Stardate 87378.08

"Rift On Sensors."

Ensign Lynch squeaked out, the anxiety in his voice spat across his conn panel. The bridge was fluorescent with the amber light of yellow alert, as Vice Admiral Chris Herr got to his feet, and walked to the front conn panel where Ensign Lynch was seated. Leaning across with his right hand rested on the back of the chair, he looked on.

"On Screen."

The screen zoomed in on the rift that was opening. It was exactly what Kurland was talking about in the briefing.

The Terrans were trying to enter Federation Space.

"How long has the rift been forming? Can we tell?" Herr asked. A stern look overcome his face. The tension on the bridge was rising by the second.

"It is at least 1 hour old, we've caught it early, but it won't be long until it is big enough to allow ships to pass through."

"How long?"

"2 hours, maximum. It's too far gone for us to attempt to close it."

Chris stood upright and walked back to his chair in the centre of the bridge.

"Red Alert!"

The bridge instantly went dark and flared a pulsing red, filled with the Admiral's hasty decorum.

Fleet Admiral Attilio sat in the Captain's chair. The bridge was dark and quiet as preparations to travel to the alternate reality were underway.

Attilio had been to the alternate reality before in a failed attempt to kill his Federation counterpart. He scowled as he thought of him.

"Logical Perception..." he muttered to himself. "What utter nonsense."

The helm officer was the first to break the silence, "Admiral, we are approaching the coordinates now."

"Full stop. Prepare the deflector dish and let me know when it's ready."

The science officer typed on her console and read the display, "deflector dish ready sir. We can begin on your command."

"Begin opening the portal."

"Activating now," she entered the command to activate the deflector dish. About 15 kilometers in front of the Potentia a strange anomaly began to form. It was almost rectangular with an orange and black hue. In the center it was bright white, almost blinding to look at. The bridge crew stared at it through the view screen. "The portal is opening but there is a slight fluctuation, attempting to stabilize."

"Do what is necessary." Attilio said, calmly.

The science officer began to press a complicated series of commands into the console, stabilizing the rift as it began to increase in size.

"Stabilized now sir. The rift will take approximately 3 hours to become big enough for us to pass through."

Attilio nodded.

"Sound Yellow Alert."

Chris turned to his Operations officer.

"Commander, get me the Office of the Admiralty, now."

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Admiral Hastler stood upon the mezzanine of Earth Space Dock, admiring the empty space as he stared, glacier-like through the glass. With war efforts still ongoing against the Iconians, James tried to take at the very least 3 minutes to himself to slow down.

The fleet was suffering, but fighting strong. With most of its ships on the front-line and Quinn ordering most of the Admirals and Fleet Admirals to stay behind and order from ESD, tension in each office was at the brim.

With a deep sigh, Hastler brought himself back to reality, just in time to hear his combadge chime.

"Bryce to Admiral Hastler."

"Hastler here."

"Attilio needs you on the Scientia immediately."

"On my way, Hastler Out."

•

The bridge of the U.S.S. Scientia was brightly lit, as Fleet Admiral Attilio sat in the Captain's chair, tapping commands into his panel, as officers moved quickly about, passing in and out of turbolifts and snapping quick instructions to each other, hastily trying to complete their tasks.

Attilio was patient. Amongst the stress of the War, he maintained a Logical Perception which stood him apart from the majority of Commanders wading their way into the Herald's grasp.

"Bryce," he said, peering to his left slightly to acknowledge the officer at Ops, "do we still have Chris's signal?"

"Yes sir, I am still trying to clear some of the degradation, but I can get him through as is."

"Acknowledged."

Attilio raised his right eyebrow, and turned back to his panel. Seconds later, Hastler had made his way to the bridge.

"XO on the Bridge!" the Benzite Ensign at the helm snorted.

Hastler stopped in his tracks and looked at him with slight disdain, before carrying himself towards Attilio.

"I'm going to safely assume something is going wrong..." He chimed whimsically to Attilio.

Attilio got up from his chair and turned to him, "You assume correctly Admiral. The Potentia has been trying to reach us. Earth Spacedock's long-range sensors show an instability in their comms and deflector matrix. It is certain that the ship is in trouble. We are going to ascertain why."

James raised an eyebrow, "You know exactly what I'm going to say next, don't you?"

Attilio smirked at his reference to Quinn's ruling. "I do," turning around and sitting back in the Captain's chair, "and I do not care."

Laughing, James took his place next to him. "Let's get on it then. Ensign, take us out of drydock."

•

"Sir, I still can't get a signal through, the rift is causing too much interference. If we could jus..."

"No!" Chris interrupted. "We cannot leave this rift unchecked. Keep trying them. If any Terran ship passes through we have to stand our ground."

"Aye!"

Chris looked worried. He knew the rift could logically only allow one vessel through, but knew that those in the Mirror Universe were of a different kin, and their craftiness knew no bounds. It was likely that they knew of the Alliance's War with the Iconians, and another threat to the Quadrant is not what they needed.

Not now. Not ever.

"Sir, I'm getting a signal through, it's very faint..."

The Admiral turned around to face his officer, curiously.

"It's...it's the U.S.S. Scientia, Sir! It's not clear what it is, but it seems as though they got, if not most of the signal we sent to Earth Space Dock before."

Chris breathed a sigh of relief at the news. If he knew Attilio like he thought he did, that means they're on their way here. With any luck, it will be before anything comes through the portal.

Attilio stood up abruptly from his chair, peering around the bridge of the I.S.S. Potentia.

"What is the status of the anomaly?" He snapped at the Ensign handling the conn.

"We should be able to pass through now, Sir. The portal is stable...Sir, sensors indicate there is another vessel on the other side...they could be waiting for us."

"Oh?" The Fleet Admiral raised an eyebrow, walking over to the helm officer to take a look for himself.

"What do we have here..."

"The U.S.S. Potentia, Sir, it's them. It's exactly what we wanted to see."

Attilio had a glimmer in his eye at the news. All these years of planning come to fruition. Not only could he stop the Iconians in his universe from waging a war of peace and prosperity, but he could finally seek revenge on his counterpart.

Attilio missed him last time. His counterpart would not get away so easily this time.

Straightening up, he turned back to his chair.

"Take us in," he said solemnly, and watched as the anomaly in front overcame his ship, as they passed through to the other side.

"Sir, the portal is closing."

"On Screen!" Chris bellowed.

The viewscreen made it's audible nuance as it became active once more, showing the portal closing in on itself. The now familiar orange and black hue gradually fading away leaving the remnants of what passed through it behind.

A ship. A single ship.

"Magnify," Chris demanded, quietly.

The viewscreen zoomed in on the object, showing a similar Armitage class Escort, with red markings all over the hull. Towards the front of the saucer section it read:

I.S.S. Potentia.

The familiarity in the name brought a thin atmosphere to the bridge.

"Looks like we're about to meet ourselves...Helm, what is their status?"

"Shields are at full capacity, but weapons are currently offline...Sir, we're being hailed."

"Alright," Chris said eagerly, "Let us see what they want."

The I.S.S. Potentia waded through the orange and black hue of the portal, dismissing it into the space from which it was summoned.

"Sir, the portal is closing, we're through."

The Fleet Admiral could not quite keep himself still. His blood was racing, his heart pumping voraciously in his chest.

"How poetic. What is the status of their quaint vessel?"

"Shields and Weapons are offline. They are not a threat."

"They never were," Attilio quipped. "Put it on screen, and hail them."

The conn officer put sent out a message on all known Starfleet hailing frequencies.

"They are responding."

"Leave it to Starfleet to talk first and shoot later. If they were smart they would've attacked us by now. Put them on screen."

The bridge of the U.S.S. Potentia appeared on the view screen. Standing there was Chris.

"Ah Chris, I was hoping to meet myself, but I guess you'll suffice. How are you?"

"What are you doing here?" Chris asked.

"Straight to the point! I like it! You're nothing like my Chris was, that sniveling toad. We're here because of the Iconian threat!"

Attilio watched as this unfamiliar version of Chris stood on his screen, watching him closely.

"We don't need the help of the Terran Empire to deal with them. Return to your universe."

"My dear Chris, you misunderstand! We're not here to help you! We're here to ask for your help."

Chris stared at him in surprise, then motioned for his comm officer to mute the transmission. The screen went black and no audio came through.

After waiting a couple of minutes Attilio opened an audio channel to the Potentia's Federation counterpart.

"Oh Chris, where did you go? It's rude to end a conversation and not say bye."

Chris materialized on the screen again with a less than amused expression on his face.

"Ah there you are!" Attilio laughed. "You shouldn't run off like that, you had me worried."

Chris sighed. "We'll beam you, and you alone, over to our ship to discuss what we can do to help."

"Excellent!" Attilio snorted, "We'll lower our shields! I hope we can trust you!" He smiled, and ended the transmission.

The screen turned black. Chris turned around to blank stares around him.

"Sir..."

Chris turned to see his acting First Officer rise from his chair.

"What were you thinking!?"

Chris straightened his shoulders.

"He's less dangerous on our ship than he is over there. We'll beam him over, and bring up a forcefield on the transporter pad. We can keep him here until the Scientia gets here, and sort this whole thing out. Jack, you're with me. Natal, you have the bridge. If that status of that ship changes at any point I want to know right away."

The young Commander nodded, "Good Luck, Sir." Taking his place at the fore of the bridge.

Chris and Jack promptly left the bridge into the adjacent turbo-lift. The doors closed as they heard the de-facto Captain start pelting orders around the bridge, maintaining control.

"Deck 8."

Chris commanded the computer abruptly, as the lift juttred into motion, and slid off to it's necessary destination. He tapped his combadge;

"Security team, meet me at Transporter room 2. Arm yourselves."

"On our way, Sir," Security replied eagerly. If they can stall the Mirror Potentia long enough, then they may be able to prevail.

Arriving at the transporter room, Chris immediately went over to the console with the on-duty transporter chief.

"Do you have a signal lock?"

"Yes, Admiral."

"Erect a forcefield around the transporter pad. The only way he leaves this room is through the transporter."

Looking over to the security team, he beckoned them into position.

"Phasers ready. Energise."

In a shimmer of light, the Mirror Fleet Admiral Attilio materialised on the transporter pad. Walking forward with his hand outstretched to meet Chris, he was quickly snapped back with the abruption of the forcefield in his way.

"Ah yes!" He laughed. "Why should I be so surprised? I would have done the same."

Wasting no time, Chris stood forward to reply.

"How is it we can help you against the Iconians?" He asked, sharply.

"It's always to the point. What about common pleasantries that you Humans are supposed to share? For example, don't you want to know about yourself from my universe?"

Chris just stared at him, partially curious but mostly annoyed.

"Well I had to kill him of course. The great Fleet Admiral who only bought his way to the top. Killing him and taking his rank was rather easy, with the right motivation for his guards. Poor fools. They died as well. Call them...victims of circumstance."

Visibly annoyed, Chris stared into Attilio's eyes. Speaking to the transporter chief,

"Prepare to send him back to his ship..."

Jack turned to him, surprised. Putting a hand up, Chris silenced his colleague, sensing what he thought Chris was doing, even though it was the exact opposite.

"Wait! Alright, alright, you've got me!" Attilio bellowed. "We have intelligence that your *Starfleet*, has come into possession of technology that can fight the Iconians, that you have even managed to kill one! We want it. We want to stop the Iconians in our universe."

Chris raised his eyebrow.

"Do you honestly think we would give you a weapon that you can use against the Iconians? That you could even use against us?"

"Borrow, perhaps? We just can't stand them!" Attilio began to get angry. "How dare they come to our territory and dictate peace and diplomacy! The only diplomacy is at the edge of a blade!"

There were several muffled laughs from the officers in the room.

"Let me get this straight," Chris said, almost amused himself now. "The Iconians in your universe wish to bring peace, where ours bring war?"

"OH!" Attilio chuckled. "I never thought of it like that. Our worlds are opposites, so our Iconians must be too!"

Just as Attilio finished, Chris's combadge sounded.

"Natal to Chris."

"Chris here."

"Sir, we have company."

Attilio crossed his arms. "Company? Let me guess, one of your *Herald* friends come to *threaten* you?"

Chris smiled.

"Just you wait and see..."

•

“On Screen.”

The Scientia’s screen wiped into action, and zoomed in on two ships not far from where they were.

The screen showed two, Armitage class vessels, nose to nose, with very specific differences.

“There they are,” Attilio said. “Can we hail them?”

“Attempting now, sir.”

Attilio waited as his officer sent a signal, James audibly sighing beside him.

“Something the matter?”

James looked over with an eyebrow raised, “Just waiting for the punchline.”

“Sir, there is no response from the Potentia. Your orders?”

James got up from his seat, “and there it is! Ensign, scan the ship, we need to see what’s going on.”

“Aye, sir,” the ensign responded diligently, tapping through sub-menus on his console.

Attilio got up to stand beside his First Officer.

“This does not feel...satisfactory.”

At that moment, the ensign assigned to scanning their sister ship chimed into the conversation.

“Sir, it appears that the shield frequency of the Mirror ship is distorting our hail from reaching the Potentia. We can send our messages as much as we like, but they cannot respond, and vice-versa.”

“That would explain the signal we got from them at Earth Space Dock...What can we do?”

Attilio straightened his back, “Red Alert. We must wait and see what comes.”

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No one had to tell Attilio who had arrived, he knew full well his Federation parallel had arrived to swoop in and save the day.

Attilio grinned, and hummed to himself as he potted about the transporter pad, inspecting the construction around him.

Chris had his arms crossed with two officers in front of him, discussing in hushed tones what Attilio guessed would be a feeble plan of action.

“So, what is this made of?” Attilio asked loudly, to be deliberately distracting, running his hand against the transporter wall.

“Hmmm...”

Attilio took a small grey cylinder out of his pocket, and looked down at it. A small indent ran from one edge to the other with a small circle on the base, like a button.

The whole room’s attention perked at what he was doing.

“How did that get through our transporter!? What is that!?” The transporter chief shouted.

Chris stepped up. “Attilio...?”

Attilio just smiled, and tapped his combadge. Out of nowhere a shield formed, surrounding him completely.

Attilio walked to the back wall and placed the grey device on the floor, pressing the button on the base.

The room capsized in confusion, watching Attilio silently, jaws ajar, switching focus from him, to the grey object.

Five seconds went passed, and the device exploded, taking out the forcefield. Attilio flew forwards knocking into Chris while 3 officers dissolved into the explosion.

The ship sounded red alert. The glaring noise blaring automatically.

The U.S.S. Potentia jostled on it’s side at the explosion. Sparks flew from damaged consoles and EPS Conduits.

The ship churned in space like an empty stomach, and fell lop-sided into the black.

Destruction had entered the room.

The shield Attilio had erected for himself had saved him. Getting up slowly, he looked at the chaos strewn around him.

His plan was working.

Chris lay unconscious on the floor. Kneeling down, Attilio checked there was still a pulse.

“Good,” he whispered to himself. Picking him up by his under-arm, Attilio tapped his combadge.

“I.S.S. *Potentia*,” he gasped, panting heavily, “2, now.”

•

Attilio and his bridge watched in horror as an explosion blew from the side of the *Potentia* on their screens.

“Shields up! All hands, battle stations!” James shouted across the room.

“Helm, bring us around to the *Potentia*’s starboard flank. Ops, what is the status of the ship?”

“There is a lot of distortion sir, I cannot get a full reading. It seems the explosion has shut down their entire EPS grid...shields, weapons, engines, all major systems are going offline. The explosion is literally rippling through the ship.”

“Can we hail them?”

“No sir, complete blackout.”

The *Scientia* watched on through the viewscreen as she moved towards the ships in front, as the light slowly went off throughout the U.S.S. *Potentia*, as she started to sway on her side, falling. Whoever had done this, they knew exactly where to strike.

“We are being hailed...”

Everyone looked to Attilio, whose eyes shone red with fire, staring at the U.S.S. *Potentia* moving towards them at the screen.

Turning to Ops, he asked “It’s him, isn’t it?”

The operations officer nodded. “Yes. The *I.S.S. Potentia* is hailing us.”

“Ignore him. We need to save the *Potentia*.”

“Sir,” James interjected, “we can’t save the *Potentia* and fight him as well. We drop our shields to transport they can attack us. We attack them and the *Potentia*...”

Attilio threw his hand up to silence his XO, and went back to his chair.

“I know the consequences, James. Do not worry.”

"Sir, I suggest we signal the *Potentia* to abandon ship. We can try and pick up what we can while we distract them...I have an idea."

Attilio turned to him bemused.

"It's time to use an old trick." James said.

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Chris lay in agony in the I.S.S. Potentia's brig with the Fleet Admiral for company.

"Looks like your beloved Attilio doesn't want to talk to me! What a shame. It will be too late once he realises I've taken you."

He walked back and forth, staring Chris down like an animal in the wild.

"Your ship lies in ruins. Every system is failing and you can't do a single thing about it. But you won't even talk to save your own life! TELL ME ABOUT THE ICONIAN WEAPON!"

Attilio shouted, enraged at Chris's ignorance.

"Fine. Have it your way."

Attilio turned and left the brig, hastily walking towards the next turbolift for the bridge. If Chris would not give him the information he sought, he will find a new way.

"Bridge to Attilio"

The computer chimed, beckoning the Fleet Admiral's attention,

"What?" He demanded.

"The Scientia has cut the hailing signal. They have raised shields and appear to be charging their Phaser Lance."

Attilio grinned from ear to ear.

"Logical Perception...finally traded for the edge of a blade! Evasive Maneuvers, I will be there shortly."

Getting into the turbo-lift, the motion swung into action.

Through the peripheral vision of the *Scientia's* viewscreen, the U.S.S. *Potentia* could be seen ejecting its escape pods.

“Search for lifesigns. Is Chris in those pods?”

The ensign rapidly bashed commands into his console.

“No, sir...if I’m reading this correctly...Sir, I’m getting a very faint Federation signal from...the I.S.S. Potentia...”

“He’s been taken. What is the status of the Phaser Lance?” Attilio questioned.

“54%, sir.”

“James, in my ready room. Bryce, you have the bridge.”

The young Ops officer removed from himself from his post to stand at the bow of the ship. Nodding at his seniors, James and Attilio moved into the door at the far side of the bridge.

Attilio sat in his chair and turned to face his window. Outside he could see his foe swimming around their sister ship. No moves, but silently plotting.

“Old tricks, you say?” Attilio turned to James.

“Yes, sir.” James smiled back.

“What are you thinking?”

“In 2375, during the Dominion War...the Enterprise Crew used a series of Tachyon bursts from the deflector of a small craft, into the shield grid of the Son’a ship, forcing them to reset their shield harmonics, punching a hole that they used for their transporters.”

“Go on...”

“Let me take the M.A.C.O’s with a squadron of Peregrines. We can fire Tachyon bursts at the I.S.S. Potentia and beam aboard. There is no way we’ll be able to pinpoint where Chris is on that ship. We have to go looking for him.”

Attilio stood up and crossed towards his first officer.

“I’m ready to try anything at the moment. Proceed.”

James tapped his combadge,

“MACO Delta Section, prepare for boarding party. Rendezvous in Hangar Bay 2.”

“Aye, sir.” The MACO’s were diligent in their response.

James nodded at his Fleet Admiral, and left the room. Attilio followed shortly after. The pulsing red lights of the red alert thickened the air as his plans set into motion.

This was no ordinary fight, this was now a rescue mission.

Amongst the somber faces of the bridge, was Attilio's.

"Bryce, prepare to open the doors in Hangar Bay 2. Conn, prepare for Evasive Maneuvers Attilio-Theta on my command. Quarter impulse, heading 42 mark 167. Engage."

Attilio stormed onto the bridge.

"STATUS REPORT!" he yelled sharply across the room.

"The U.S.S. Potentia has ejected its escape pods, and the Scientia has started to move towards us, heading 42 mark 167. She is slow, but she is coming. Shall we take care of the escape pods, sir?"

Attilio stared out of the view screen.

"To hell with the escape pods, we do not need those tools. Match the Scientia's heading. Attack Pattern Attilio-Theta."

The officers began their ferocious engagement with their consoles to put their Admiral's commands into play.

"Ready to fire at your command."

The Potentia was coming nose to nose with the Federation's Scientia before Attilio barked out another order.

"Hard to starboard! Fire phasers!"

The Scientia was about to come nose to nose with the Terran's Potentia. Attilio marked out his target through the viewscreen,

"Open the hangar bay doors. Attilio to James, you are clear to launch."

"Affirmative." The response came quickly. The next few minutes would be crucial."

The Scientia was much closer to the enemy now.

"Hard to port!"

The Scientia billowed a wide left to pull it alongside the Potentia, when the Potentia's phasers crashed into their ship.

The Scientia felt this hit hard. Across the bridge the starfleet personnel flew backwards, sparks flying from the consoles as the bridge rumbled, lights flickering under the phaser fire.

Attilio clambered back to his feet.

"Damage report!"

"Shields at 86%. Decks reporting 0 fatalities, only a few wounded."

"What is the status of the fighter squadron?" Attilio asked, tensely. Acutely aware they were hit just as the wing was flying from the hanger bay.

"They made it out, sir!"

Attilio breathed a sigh of relief.

"Bring us about. Return fire!"

•

The Scientia jolted with the force of the Potentia's phaser fire. The ship's two Peregrines struggled to compensate for the unexpected motions of the Federation Dreadnought as they stumbled out of the hangar bay.

Repelling off the boundary of the hangar bay doors, they made it out of the ship, and into the depth of space.

"Clear. Peregrine Omega, status?"

"Clear, sir. Just a scrape after the hit."

"Scanners show the Scientia was just hit. We don't have a lot of time. Start charging the deflector to fire Tachyon bursts and be ready on my mark. Echelon formation."

The second craft moved to James' six, before banking left to come into its ordered formation.

"Peregrine Alpha, formation engaged. Deflector charging."

"Let's go."

The two peregrines came about and underneath the Scientia which was banking above them. The ship violently blared with outgoing phaser fire, thundering across the vast expanse into the Potentia.

Above and in front, was the *I.S.S. Potentia*.

“Hastler to Scientia.”

“Scientia here, what is your status Admiral?” Attilio responded.

“We are in formation approaching the Potentia. We are ready.”

“Proceed, Admiral. Scientia Out.”

James repositioned himself in his seat and furrowed his brow.

“Prepare to fire Tachyon bursts on my command.”

The panels in front of him lit green with Peregrine Omega’s affirmation of the order.

“Evasive Pattern Gamma 4. Fire.”

The two peregrines began their assault. Blue cones of light blared towards the Terran ship.

“Sir, I am detecting spikes in the Potentia’s shield grid. It’s working.”

James looked to his officer and smirked briefly.

“Here we go...” he muttered to himself...

“Sir!”

Attilio looked around to his officer calling him, bringing him back to reality.

“The Scientia has launched 2 fighter ships! I don’t know how we didn’t notice them launching before. It looks like a much different shield configuration than we’re used too...”

Attilio walked over rampantly and struck his officer over the head, before kicking him out of the chair.

“THAT’S BECAUSE THEY ARE SMALLER YOU IMBECILE.”

Taking his phaser out of it’s holster, Attilio thrust it in front of the ensign and fired.

The officer vapourised instantaneously.

Attilio turned round to the operations console.

"Replace him!"

Turning around, he steadied himself and approached the officer that was still alive at the conn.

"What are the fighter's doing?"

They are firing disrupting our shield grid, we won't be able to maintain distribution for much longer with this barrage.

Attilio tutted loudly and sighed.

"Fine. Reset our shield harmonics and target the fighters."

"Aye, sir!"

"Admiral, it's working. They are resetting their shield harmonics...they have locked phasers on us!"

"Peregrine Alpha to Gamma, activate transport!"

Time slowed down as James and his MACO in the alpha peregrine watched as a strand of violent orange light came towards their fighter. In an instant, the blue particles overcame them.

They made it just in time.

Re-materialising, James and the MACO adjusted themselves to find the other two MACO's from gamma peregrine materialising beside them. Taking in their surroundings, the MACO Commander read from his tricorder.

"Sir, from what I can gather, if these specifications are the same as Federation Armitage class starships, we are in the sub-junction of jefferies tubes above the crew deck."

"Can you pick up Chris's signal?"

"Yes, sir. It seems he is in the brig."

The 4 officer's sniggered to themselves. Of all the places they could have put their prisoner, it was in the most unimaginative.

"These guys really are opposites...we don't need directions then. Commander, on point. I will form up behind. Move out."

The MACO's all nodded. Leading the way, the Commander used two fingers to point at his soldiers, and acknowledged them with a thumbs up. Raising their rifles, the officers moved forward.

“INTRUDER ALERT. SECURITY TEAMS TO DECK 12. INTRUDER ALERT.”

The computer blared above them, out of nowhere. Keeping steady, the away team moved forwards towards the ladders ahead of them.

The commander knelt down and raised his fist. James turned behind him and aimed, silently, breathing calmly. Waiting.

“FIRE AT WILL!”

Attilio blurted loudly and turned towards the turbolift, stumbling over as the bridge shook under the joint barrages of fire from the ships. He fell into it, with his back almost shattering as he was flown against the back wall.

“Brig!” He demanded.

Tapping his combadge, the Fleet Admiral continued, straightening his jacket in the process.

“What is the status of the intruders? Have you found them yet?”

“No sir,” the officer’s chimed back. “They are somewhere on deck 12, but we have yet to find them.”

Attilio fumed even further. Scratching his head and clenching his teeth, his fists, he flew out of the turbolift and into the brig.

“RIGHT, WHERE IS...”

Attilio stopped in his tracks. Stunned at what he saw.

His brig was torn apart. Dead officers on the floor, and a cell...an empty cell.

“Looking for someone?”

James crept up behind the Terran Fleet Admiral, rifle aimed square at his head.

Attilio burst out laughing, and started slowly applauding, Turning around to face James.

“Well done! Well done indeed!” Sighing, Attilio took a step back towards the empty cell where his prisoner used to lie.

“I was told you were still on Deck 12! How did you do it?”

James’ face grew a sly, half smile.

“You can do a lot of things with a phaser power cell and a combadge. A fake signal was only too easy to create for your officers to find. The bait they couldn’t refuse. By the time they found it, we were already here. My officers are already back on the *Scientia*, Chris included.”

James squared up to the Terran until they were face to face. Inhaling heavily, he took his rifle and struck the Fleet Admiral in the chest with it’s butt, and then broadly across his face, rendering his inert.

“Admiral Hastler to Attilio...”

There was no answer. Looking down at the unconscious enemy, he tapped his combadge again.

“Admiral Hastler to Attilio...”

Nothing.

“Hastler to *Scientia*, where is the Fleet Admiral?”

“He’s not here sir, he’s left the ship...Sir, we’re having an unauthorised shuttle launch! Scanning...It’s Attilio! He’s heading for the U.S.S. *Potentia*!”

“Get me off this ship, now!”

The internal attacks James and the MACO’s had laid to the *I.S.S. Potentia* had left the ship weak. The familiar blue aurora of particles breaking him down atom by atom flowed over him, and re-materialised him on the transporter pad of the *Scientia*.

Rushing out of the transporter room, he rushed to the bridge.

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Attilio knew what he was doing. Coming within transporter range of the U.S.S. *Potentia*, he opened a channel to the *Scientia*.

“U.S.S. *Scientia*, this is Attilio.”

James responded quickly.

“Sir, what the hell are you doing?”

“Admiral, get some distance between you and the *I.S.S. Potentia*. Don’t question me, just do it.”

The barrage from the Mirror ship had stopped as the Terrans clambered to reorganise themselves, their leader hopefully, still out for the count in his own prison cells. James hoping the irony would be appreciated.

Attilio cut the line, and set co-ordinates into the shuttle's computer.

“Computer, full stop.”

The shuttle came halted slowly. Out of the window, the hull of the U.S.S. *Potentia* could be clearly read. The ship, on her side, hurting from the implosion that manifested itself. From Attilio's scans, life support was still online, and some basic functions were still in operation. The majority of the crew made it off, except of course, the dead.

“Energise.”

Attilio faded off the shuttle, and into the Engineering deck of the U.S.S. *Potentia*. The ship, lumbered sideways, caused Attilio to lose his balance, falling on his side.

Slowly, Attilio got himself up, and made it over to the auxiliary control panel.

“Computer...”

The computer chimed in acknowledgement.

“Reroute all command functions to this terminal. Authorisation Varrak-Alpha-1.”

The computer chimed once more, and the panel in front of him lit up with new sub-menus and options available to him.

“Computer, are there any working transporter's left on the *Potentia*.”

“Yes. Transporter's 2 and 3 can be brought online.”

“Isolate them, and re-route their power through the auxiliary processor to this point.”

The computer acknowledged the request. Attilio took a moment and looked around him. The chaos was all around him. He would soon end that where it stood.

“Computer, take the rerouted power and lock on to the *I.S.S. Potentia* with a tractor beam. Take all the power you need.”

The view-screen on the panel showed Attilio the product of his work; a long, blue hue, reaching out towards the terran ship, and latching on. The U.S.S. *Potentia*, started lurching forwards, toward the ship.

The nuts and bolts holding the ship together by a string, churned loudly as the ship started its ascent. Attilio had one final command.

“Computer, initiate self-destruct sequence. 5-minute, silent countdown. Command structure override Attilio-Delta-Gamma-1-2. Authorisation, Fleet Admiral, Varrak, Attilio.”

“Self-Destruct initiated. T-minus 5 minutes. There will be no further audio warnings.”

The computer stopped. Red lights shone everywhere. Attilio looked around, solemnly.

The sister flagship of the STOA. She served her fleet well.

Attilio tapped his combadge, his emergency transport kicked in, and beamed him back to his shuttle.

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Chris had joined James on the bridge. Together, with the crew present, they watched as the two *Potentia*'s slowly move toward each other.

“Sir,”

James looked at the Ensign at the conn.

“I’ve picked up a warp signature, it’s left the system. Looks like Attilio made it off the *Potentia*.”

James nodded, and smiled. Their Fleet Admiral certainly had his moments.

Chris turned to James placing his hand on James’ shoulder. James christened the *Potentia* himself, that ship meant a great deal to both him, and Chris.

“There are plenty more letters in the alphabet,” Chris reassured him.

The silent countdown ended.

As the U.S.S. *Potentia* once again screamed havoc into the space around her, her explosion engulfed the *I.S.S. Potentia*, the two becoming one.

The shockwave rippled outwards and blew past the *Scientia*, rocking her lightly from side to side.

James sat back in the Captain’s chair.

“Ensign, set a course for Earth. Warp 5.”

The ensign plotted the course into his console, and waited.

The bridge paused ever so slightly, watching the viewscreen clear, and letting the stars shine once more.

“Engage.”

The End