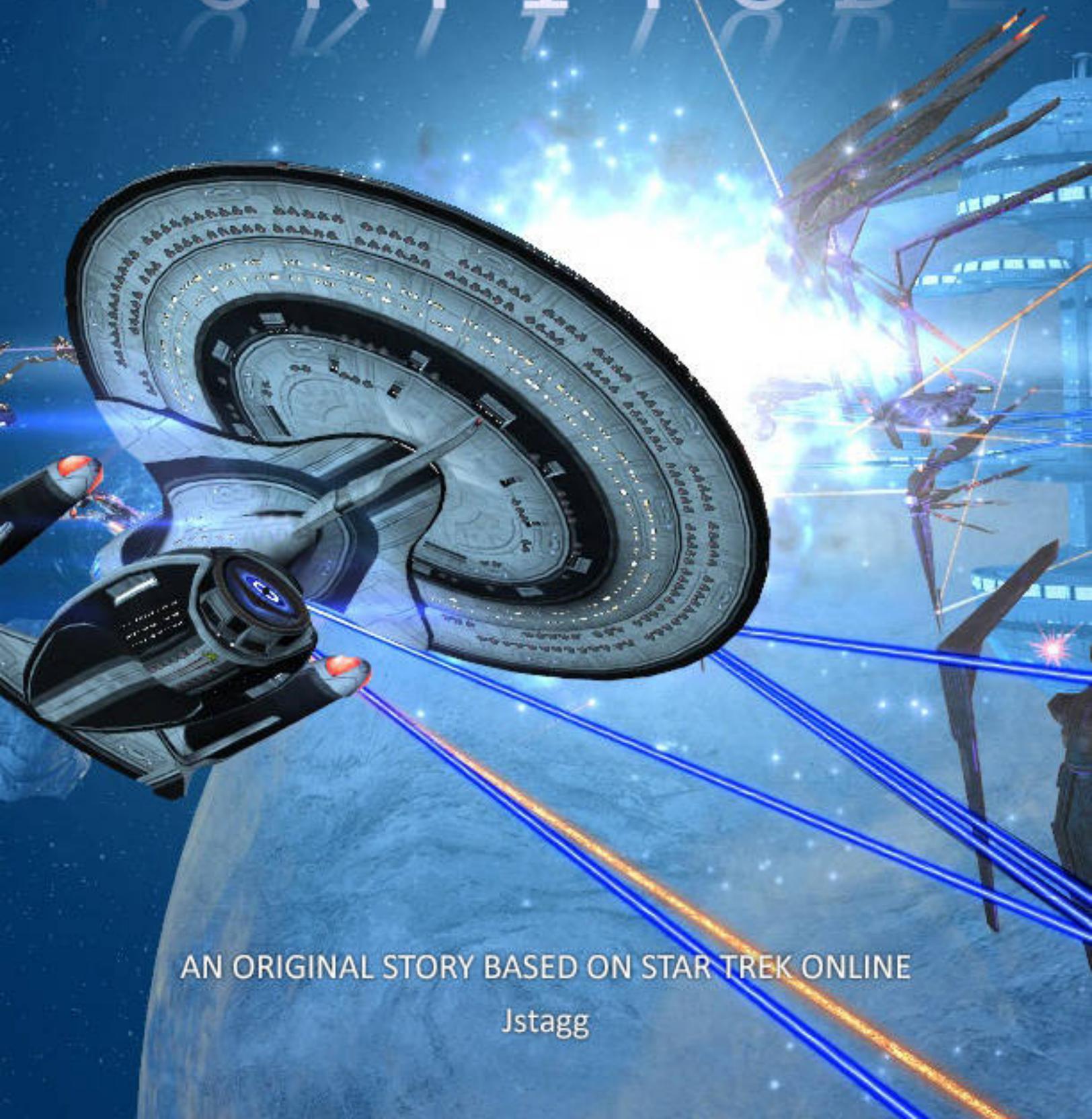


STO ACADEMY

FORTITUDE



AN ORIGINAL STORY BASED ON STAR TREK ONLINE

Jstagg

Attilio and James occupied the two vacant seats at the end of the table, facing Captain Kagran.

“The enemy has chosen our battlefield...” the Klingon talked on.

Attilio turned so his peripheral vision opened up to the vast, open window. With all due respect to Kagran, he was giving information Attilio already knew.

The prideful U.S.S. Scientia patrolled the space outside whilst the briefing went underway.

James looked over at Attilio. He knew amidst all that pragmatism, was an Admiral that just wanted to get on with things.

This meeting was inconsequential to them.

Kagran leaned forward in his chair.

“Admirals Varrak and Hastler, you will take the Scientia with Gamma team, and line up at Utopia Planetia, try and hold the Herald’s there!”

Attilio and James were barely listening. Turning to Kagran one at a time, they both nodded at the towering Klingon at the fore of the table in acknowledgement, their thoughts not on the briefing, but on what lay ahead of them.

“Admiral Attilio, your plan.” Kagran showed his hand over to the Vulcan, whose attention suddenly perked up.

“Yes,” Attilio got up from his seat and turned his back to the table, simultaneously clearing his throat and straightening his jacket.

“As the Captain explained, the Heralds are known to be moving in on Earth Spacedock...” a holographic image of the space station appeared in the middle of the table. The image hummed a delicate blue, standing 6 foot tall.

“...we already have teams there dealing with the first wave of Heralds. You will need to break through and reach them so the timeship has the opportunity to get to you.”

The image on the desk changed to the Krenim timeship that the Alliance had slaved over for months. The previous trials had not bore the fruit they had expected. This plan would hopefully change that.

Attilio changed the image to show Mars, and the Utopia Planetia shipyards around the red planet.

“We are aware however, that the Heralds have other targets than just Earth. We have recovered a datacore from one of the Iconian’s Harbringer’s, which was quite insightful. The Heralds want

our obliteration, the shipyards must be protected if we are to be able to send reinforcements to Earth Spacedock. The U.S.S. Scientia will fit the purpose of that. I will lead the teams on foot, and Admiral Hastler will command the Scientia above.

Kagran leaned back into his chair.

"It is settled then. Depart as soon as you are ready. Q'apla!"

Standing straight, the Klingon clenched his fist and held it to his chest.

James got up from his chair impatiently, and followed Attilio out of the conference room.

The walk to the transporter pad seemed to take a lifetime. The pair walked slowly, checking PADD's and exchanging what little information was on them.

"This won't be even nearly enough. You know that, don't you?" James asked, passing another PADD to Attilio to scan.

Attilio raised his familiar eyebrow.

"I do."

The Vulcan handed the PADD back to James.

"Fleet reports ready to depart, sir."

"Let's go then." Tapping his combadge, Attilio beckoned to the ship.

"Scientia. Two to beam up."

Almost instantaneously as the command was given, blue light commanded the 2 officers, consuming them as their matter was broken down, re-materialising in the Scientia's transporter room.

The two officers walked side by side silently, PADD's being handed to and fro, taken off officers greeting them in the hallways. Signatures on arrangements that the senior figures needn't look at, authorised with the slightest glance, and passed back to the officer rushing to their departments, all in preparation for what was to come.

The Scientia was getting old. She had seen her fair share of disagreements. Her fair share of officers, dead and alive. She was a figurehead for what the fleet stood for. Attilio had high hopes that that belief would pull them through this bought, be it their last or not.

James and Attilio grazed into the turbolift.

“Bridge,” James ordered, smoothly. The familiar whirr of the lift sprung into motion.

“Sir,” James turned to his Vulcan counterpart, “does the ship know you’re leading the ground defence?”

Attilio raised an eyebrow, and in a rare sign of discomfort, put his hands behind his back.

“They will,” he replied, abruptly.

There was no time to acknowledge the feelings of everyone. Some would accept their leader leading the ground effort, others would not, but orders are orders, and in time of war, orders get followed no matter what.

The turbolift came to a stop. The doors decompressed immediately to allow for the Admiral’s entrance.

“Admiral on the bridge!”

The bridge was laden with busy officers, rushing back and forth like James and Attilio had seen so many times before.

Out of the viewscreen, legions of ships could be seen, lying in wait for their order to depart. You could barely see the space between them.

Drones and shuttles liaised and danced between the ships, preparing them for what could be their final time in space.

James crossed his arms and stood at the head of the bridge, looking out. Attilio went and sat in his chair like he had so many times before, and pressed a single button on his arm.

The ship’s whistle blared out across the entirety of the vessel. Every deck stopped what they were doing, and fell silent.

“This is the Fleet Admiral.

We have been ordered to the Utopia Planetia shipyards, as we believe the Iconians are not only coming to greet our forces at Earth Spacedock. Our mission is to aid in the evacuation of all personnel and repel any Iconian forces that attack. Admiral Hastler will command the ship, whilst I will command groups on the ground. All MACO teams, brief and prepare. All hands, battlestations.”

The crew looked at each other, puzzled by the notion Attilio would be on the ground.

Noticing their nauseated looks, Attilio stood to attention.

"I gave you all orders."

The officers dropped their daze, and carried out the command given by their Admiral.

The bridge turned dark and blared with glowing red lights at the turn of the phrase.

"Sir, the fleet has signalled they are ready at your command."

Hastler nodded to the ensign blurting the sentiment.

"Signal the groups to warp at my command..."

The ensign heard James and quickly began to transmit the instructions.

"Set course for Utopia Planetia, maximum Warp. Engage."

In front of the ship, the armada of Starfleet, Klingon, and Romulan vessels glowed in response to their command, and without a moment's notice, shot off into the dark expanse ahead of them. The U.S.S. Scientia, followed suit.



The Alliance Fleet punched it's way through space, leaving it's wake amongst the stars. Every step closer to their target was another level the tension rose.

One way or another, this would be the final battle.

James could only watch through the viewscreen as he stood attentively on the bridge. There would be no sitting down, unless he was going to be perched onto the edge of his chair.

"Lieutenant," he motioned to the officer at one of the operations consoles.

"Open channel Alpha 016X-Ray."

The Lieutenant looked onwards at James hesitantly, as she punched in the command to open her superior officer's channel.

This was the designated channel, for the current battle at Earth Spacedock.

"Fire on my mark..."

"Dizzzzzt...come about heading 243 mark.....diiizzzztt"

“BRACE FOR IM-”

“There are too many of them! We need reinforcements!”

“Commander! I...AAAAHHHHHHHHHH...diiiizzzt”

“Abandon shi-...dizzzt”

The bridge winced as they listened to the audible onslaught over their comm system.

James lifted his head,

“Close the channel.”

The officer at operations smoothly pressed the button on her console, slowly wiping a tear from her left eye.



Beyond the steel of his Vulcan’s cowl, Attilio paced his ship.

The crew gearing up around him, had served him with the same tenacity and respect he had come to expect from one’s crew. One way or another, for either the Federation, or the Iconians, this would be the final battle. It was traditional for a Captain to walk his ship during these times; their heads surfacing.

But like a thousand other commanders, on a thousand other battlefields, he waited for the dawn.

Attilio approached the turbolift to the bridge, illuminated by the incandescent glow of the ship’s red alert.

“Bridge.”

The lift sprung firmly into action. Within moments, the lift arrived at the bridge.

“Admiral on the bridge.”

“Status,” Attilio asked silently of his first officer.

“Nothing new on sensors. The first parties of Gamma team have reported beamed down on Utopia Planetia and have begun initial evacuations.”

“How long until we can get the facility entirely evacuated?” Attilio responded.

“It may take approximately 2 to 3 hours. We will arrive in the system in 22 minutes. However...”

James brought Attilio over to a communications panel, beside the entrance to the ready room.

“...the U.S.S. Belfast have reported that personnel are refusing to leave the facility. They want to stay and fight the Iconians.”

Attilio arched back, with a gleam on his face.

“It seems we may need all the help we can get. Send a signal to the Belfast. Inform them that any Starfleet personnel that wish to stay, can stay, but civilians will evacuate as ordered. Have them armed and ready. We can carry support when we arrive.”

“Understood.”

James relayed the message into the communications panel. The computer chimed in acknowledgement.

Desperate times called for desperate measures. Attilio was buoyed by the determination to fight and stop the Iconians.

Attilio stepped towards the turbolift once more.

“Admiral, I will be in the loading bay before departure.”

James nodded at the Vulcan.

“Aye, sir. I will be down to see you off shortly!”

Attilio entered the turbolift. The bridge watched as the door closed, and their leader departed to brace himself for battle.



Attilio made his way to the weapons lock-up, where his M.A.C.O. teams were gearing up, and briefing out the specifics of their mission. The lock-up on the Scientia was a massive space, almost the size of a shuttle bay, with a significantly smaller ceiling.

In lieu of civilian space aboard the Scientia, being a ship of war, the capacity was instead used for security and military personnel, storage, weapons and training facilities.

Attilio's locker was right beside the entrance.
Being the commanding officer, certainly had it's perks on occasion.

The M.A.C.O.'s were huddled around in their blue suits. Some of the senior officers wore silver, with slits of blue, yellow, and red discerning their department.

Attilio's suit was a stark contrast to those however.

Opening the locker, mercury grey suit, with red neon strips alighted in front of him. The foreboding suit emulated command and strength.

Not unlike the holographic officers seen on some of the Federation's secret penal facilities, the suit awarded to Attilio the respect his position deserved.

And he was never an Admiral to fly a desk.

A familiar voice chimed over the comm line.

"Hastler to Attilio..."

"Go ahead"

"Arriving at Utopia Planetia now, sir."

"Very good. All landing parties, rendezvous in Cargo Bay 3. Notify the fleet to start phasing their transports"

The line closed. As Attilio turned behind them, he saw his crew of officers leaving the lock-up, and making their way to the Cargo Bay.

The Cargo Bay was the only place on the Scientia that could transport the amount of people needed.

Admiral Hastler was waiting for his commanding officer, helping to arm the crew being transported to the surface.

The transporters were in full swing, transporting groups of 15 at a time to the shipyards.

"Sir!" Hastler walked over to Attilio.

"The last groups are leaving the station now. We have not had any signs of Iconi..."

The pair were interrupted by the bridge coming through.

"Admiral...we..."

The ship shook uncontrollably. The ship was under attack.

Hastler nodded at Attilio, and left the cargo bay.

As Attilio stepped into the transporter, blue light consumed him, and disappeared.

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Hastler stumbled through the turbolift to the bridge, grasping the sides of the entrance as the Iconians hurtled blasts of energy towards the ship.

"Status report!"

The admiral clambered to the middle of the bridge.

"Shields at 88%. Several raiders and one Quas cruiser appeared through an Iconian portal moments ago, sir."

"Bring us about! Defensive pattern Hastler-Beta 1!"

"Hastler-Beta 1 confirmed, sir."

The officer at the conn input James' commands without delay.

"Sir, more Iconian forces coming through portals."

"Onscreen!"

The bridge of the Scientia watched as Iconian portals opened around them, surrounding space. The fleet was engaged on all sides, with station defenses barely keeping up.

"Send a message to the fleet. Maintain formation and co-ordinate in groups. Scientia to Attilio..."

The channel to the station opened. Mounds of phaser-fire could be heard in the background.

"Admiral, the Iconians have stormed the station. Continue defensive measures. We must make sure the Annorax passes to ESD safely."

"Understood," James responded, and closed the channel.

Sitting in the Captain's chair, James stared out of the viewscreen.

Attilio dived behind cargo boxes to reach a fallen Romulan. The Romulan's chest had caved in under the pressure of the energy blast sent by the Herald's weapons. The body seemed exsanguinated, as no blood seeped from the body.

Iconian blasts bludgeoned the walls of the station as Attilio removed the plasma grenades from the dead Romulan's combat belt, throwing them over the cargo towards his attackers.

Attilio peeked over his cover, as the grenade lodged itself into the chest piece of the Herald, and could only watch as the resulting explosion destroyed the Herald, and sent it flying languidly into another of the enemy soldiers, breaking them apart with it.

The plasma burned them into the ground, leaving visible scars on the deck.

Attilio and his officers moved into position at the end of the cleared corridor, setting explosive charges on the entry to the main hangar bay.

Alliance forces had already retaken several other cargo bays and a few minor hangars. The onslaught the Iconian's had wrought on to the station so far had been bloody, and nothing short of demonic.

Section by section of the shipyards blinked as their power fluctuated. On the ground, the Alliance were suffering, hard.

The space above Utopia Planetia lit up with the harboring light of Antiproton and Phaser fire. The Romulan's and Klingon's disruptor fire added an interesting mix into the chaos of the war.

As the Scientia flanked the opposing Quas cruiser, the Klingon's wings of Birds of Prey mounted carpet torpedo attacks in their synchronised Delta formations, taunting the cruiser away from Hastler's flagship.

Barrages of fire pummeled the Scientia's shields as she banked away from one bout to the next.

"Status report!"

"Shields down to 54%. We need to recharge our phasers, sir. We won't have much left at this rate of fire."

James took a stride towards the upper level of the bridge he had commandeered. The ambient red lights filling the broad expressions on the faces of those on the bridge.

"Reroute auxiliary power to the weapons array. Take it from life support if you have to..."

The officer at Ops immediately responded,

“Aye, sir!”

James turned round to the engineering bay on the bridge,

“Lieutenant, tap into the EPS transfer. Take the transporters offline and reroute available power from those systems into the weapons. Take it from the cargo bays as well,”

Hastler tapped on his combadge.

“Hastler to Engineering.”

The computer chimed in Engineering to the Admiral’s call. The ship shook as it took attack after attack. Officers falling over at their posts, clambering to regain their stature.

“Eddison here,” the Officer in charge of Engineering replied diligently.

“Commander, I want you redirect all the power we don’t need to shields and weapons. Take lighting offline on all unnecessary decks.”

“I take it you don’t expect us to be coming back from this fight, sir?” The Commander replied.

“Don’t put words in my mouth, Eddison. Reroute the power. Hastler Out.”

The line closed, as Hastler stared once again through the viewscreen.

“That’s it, sir. The power is coming through. Weapons are recharging.”

Hastler nodded. “Send a message to our Peregrine squadrons. Tell them to split up into Echelon formations to surround the cruiser aft.”

“Acknowledged.”

Looking through the viewscreen in front, the Federation fighters broke formation and split up into groups of two, surrounding the Harbringer’s Quas cruiser. Maneuvering too fast around the Quas for it to repel, the massive ship was soon overwhelmed by the small craft. The Scientia watched as the cruiser exploded into pieces.

Hastler moved back into the Captain’s chair.

“Bring us about heading 228 mark 76. Engage Attack Pattern Beta-2.”

“Pattern Beta-2 confirmed.”

The ship moved into it's heading, firing in sequence with it's allies.

“Charge set, Admiral” the young M.A.C.O. shouted to Attilio.

“Affirmative. Stand well back.”

The group of soldiers moved back in formation to the boxes of cargo at the other end of the corridor and into cover behind them, and the corner of the corridors running behind.

Attilio nodded at the officer next to him.

“Blow the door,” he instructed.

The officer set the command into the wrist of his combat suit. Quick fire beeps were loudly blared from the device, as the the door exploded off of the doorway, hurtling the reinforced steel doors into pieces in all directions.

As the smoke cleared the officers moved in two by two, aiming closely.

“Fire!”

The Scientia abruptly fired it's Phasers into the heart of a group of raiders. The resulting explosion engulfed the other raiders, bring them down with it.

The group was not immediately destroyed.

Power lost, and the Harbringer's controlling the raiders dead, the 5 ships plummeted downwards towards Utopia Planetia, careering into the main hangar bay.

The hangar bay lit up the space like the 4th of July. Ships sucked into the explosion, dry docks torn apart. Metal flying through space ricocheting off the shields of Alliance ships far enough away to not be caught up in the explosion's wake...

The corridor lit up in flames.

Attilio immediately dropped his rifle and held on tightly to the railings along the corridor as he heard the screaming of the soldiers that were following him, as they were sucked into the abyss.

Proximity shields quickly came into action, sealing the breach, and the remains of the cargo bay floated away from the station.

Attilio let go of the railings, and sat against the wall, breathing heavily.

Taking his helmet off, he took stock of his surroundings.

The thunder of energy weapons rattled the station. He could see ships firing, being destroyed, the clashing of titans outside.

All Attilio could hear was his heartbeat, and the pant of his heavy breathing.

Holding onto the right side of his abdomen with his left hand, and grappling the railing above with his right, Attilio grimaced as he pulled himself up.

Sparks flew from the edges surrounded the new hole in the corridor, as Attilio watched the fighting outside through a makeshift viewscreen.

The Vulcan slowly pulled himself along the railings whilst the station continued to shake loudly from the firefights outside.

“Attilio to Alliance Ground team.”

No response.

“Attilio...,” he continued to grimace in pain pulling himself along the railing towards the intersection he had come from...”to Alliance Ground team.”

No response.

He began to wonder if he was the only one left on Utopia Planetia. Surely that could not be true.

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“Fire suppression systems are offline.”

James rolled his eyes at the computer’s pedantry, waving an officer to put out the fires manually on the bridge.

The ship rumbled. Sparks flying from consoles, and what felt like a new system going offline every minute.

“Sir, I have lost phaser lock! Attempting to compensate!”

“Bring us about!”

The Scientia turned around at its command.

“Sir, another portal is opening right ahead of us.”

“On screen.”

The viewscreen cleared to show the luminescent visage of the Iconian portal. Before anyone had the chance to blink, the Herald’s raiders shot out of the expanse like a bullet.

“Sir! The raiders have locked on to us! They are on a collision course!”

James stood up from his chair abruptly.

“ALL HANDS, BRACE FOR I...”

Everything turned white.

The raiders struck the Scientia mercilessly, rendering the ship immobile.

James could only hear a ringing in his ears as he flew from where he stood to the other side of the bridge.

The Scientia’s Saucer section buckled under the impact of the raider’s kamikaze notions, peeling away from the dorsal section of the ship in an explosive measure.

Regaining consciousness, Hastler peered through beaten eyes to see his bridge in tatters.

Officers lay dead on the floor. Others who were more fortunate, clambering to help each other up.

Hastler braced himself against the wall and pulled himself up.

“Hastler to all hands...”

James gulped, and took a heavy breathe.

“Abandon Ship.”

Attilio fell to his knees.

The thundering of particle energy weapons battering the station became white noise, as Attilio watched his ship crumble apart under the impact of the Herald’s last ditch attempt to plunder the Federation into servitude.

His mouth ajar, the space filled with white light, as the Scientia's warp core breached and exploded, dissolving the old dreadnought and whatever else was unfortunate enough to be caught in it's wake.

With the labouring thought of his entire crew likely to be dead, Attilio could only sit in shock.

Attilio didn't have the time to sit around.

Turning his head, a group of Herald's came around the corner.

His heart sank, as all he could do was stare at the Herald standing over him. Their shadow masking Attilio in darkness.

As Attilio closed his eyes to accept his fate, nothing happened.

In an instant, the Herald's disappeared.

Attilio opened his eyes.

Outside, the remaining Herald forces, disappeared into thin air like the soldiers just did.

The fight was over.

Attilio clambered to his feet and leaned against the wall.

"Attilio to..."

He rolled his eyes. For once in his life, he did not know who to contact.

"Attilio to any Federation ship in range."

His message, somehow, was heard.

"Admiral. This is Captain Hughes of the Ramsay."

"Captain, what just happened?" Attilio asked with stout confusion.

"Sir, we just received a message from Earth Spacedock. The Iconians...the war is over."

Attilio was astounded.

He thought it would never happen, but it did. The war with the Iconians was finally done.

"Captain, the Scientia..."

“We tried our best to scan for any escape pods, Sir. Unfortunately, we could not find any.”

“Thank you for trying, Captain. If you wouldn't mind, I will need a lift to Earth.”

“Acknowledged, Admiral.”

The line cut off. As quickly as the order was given, Attilio was embraced by the blue light of the transporter, and taken off Utopia Planetia.

•

Attilio was led quickly from the transporter room to the medical bay on the Ramsay. Attilio's view was hazy as the officers supported him through the corridors, other officers repeatedly passing by busily chattering to clean up after the battle before.

The medical bays opened with the familiar spray of hydraulics, and Attilio was led straight to the first available bed.

Lying down, vision still blurry, he could just about make out the nurses towering over him. Tricorders whirring in his ear.

The Doctor turned to her officer,

“Give me 50 cc of hydrocortiline.”

The officer immediately turned to the bay by her side and prepared the hypospray, quickly passing it back to the Doctor.

Doctor Valen pressed the hypospray lightly against the Fleet Admiral's neck.

“Admiral? Can you hear me?”

The patient opened his eyes as his vision started to return to him. It seemed the Admiral was in no immediate pain.

Attilio felt a small tingle in his neck, as the medical staff issued a pain relieving hypospray.

Hearing his name, Attilio opened his eyes as his vision began to clear.

“Doctor.”

The Doctor smiled.

“Good. Your body was just in a bit of shock after the attack. Your vitals are starting to return to normal now.

All that ran through Attilio’s mind was the image of his ship breaking apart. The lives that were lost.

He didn’t even have the chance to stop it.

Attilio turned to Doctor Valen.

“Doctor, if you will excuse me, I need to visit Captain Hughes.”

The Doctor peered at him.

“I won’t stop you! Be careful on your way up. Your vital signs are still returning.”

“Thank you, Doctor. I am half Vulcan and Human. It is in my nature to heal quickly.”

Doctor Valen nodded at Attilio in acknowledgement as the Vulcan slowly got up off the bed, and made his way to the bridge.

All Attilio could see, over and over again in his head was the destruction of his ship.

Where were the crew? Did they escape in time? Did they escape at all?

The turbolift doors slid open. Captain Hughes was there to greet him.

“Admiral on the bridge!” He announced, casually.

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Hastler and two of the crew sat together in the escape pod.

The conn in the pod beeped loudly with the repetitive signal being broadcast on the Starfleet Emergency Channel.

Someone was yet to respond to their hails. It would not be long however, until they reached Earth.

“Computer, time to destination?”

The computer aboard the pod chimed in acknowledgement.

“We will reach Earth in approximately 31 minutes.”

James turned off the emergency hail.

“Not much point at this rate,” he said, under his breath.

The lieutenant on board was busy using a dermal regenerator on the forehead of the other officer. He had been hurt badly in the attack. There was no time to stop during the escape.

“Hold still!” She snapped at him.

The officer grimaced as he struggled with the pain, laughing.

“Stop hurting me then,” he chuckled.

Hastler smirked as he watched his officers make light of the situation they were in. An escape pod hurtling towards Earth was never the most comfortable of situations.

At that moment, the computer chimed again.

“Scientia Pod, this is Earth Orbital Control. What is your status?”

James raised his eyebrow and straightened his back, tapping one of the buttons on the side panel to open the channel.

“Orbital Control, this is Admiral James King Hastler of the starship Scientia. Our ship was destroyed in the fight at Utopia Planetia. Have you picked up any other pods?”

“Yes, sir. All your pods have been accounted for now that you have arrived. The fleet has mobilised at Earth Spacedock. I am sure your crew will be glad to see you alive.”

“Any word from Fleet Admiral Varrak?”

The line paused for a second.

“Unfortunately, there has been no report as of yet, Sir. Once your pod reaches Space Dock, we will beam you and your party aboard. Orbital Control out.”

The line closed abruptly.

James hunched back over and clasped his hands together.



“As you can see here, Sir...”

Captain Hughes was running Attilio through the findings of their system scans for the escape pods.

“...the pods have already arrived at Earth Spacedock. Mostly accounted for.”

Attilio raised his eyebrow.

“And what of Admiral Hastler?” the Vulcan asked inquisitively.

“Starfleet have not issued the list of those checked in from the pods, Sir.”

The Ensign at the conn interrupted the conversation.

“Sir, Earth Spacedock Orbital Control are hailing us.”

“On Screen.”

Captain Hughes looked up as the viewscreen opened to show a Tellarite Starfleet Officer.

“Captain, you are cleared to dock at Bay 4 when ready,” the officer said, in distinct Tellarite abruptness.

Hughes nodded in response.

“Thank you. Hughes out.”

The viewscreen closed.

Captain Hughes turned to his Wayfaring Admiral with a smile.

“Looks like you may see your crew soon enough!”

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“Captain, may I use your Ready Room?”

Captain Hughes lifted his head up slightly, and put his hands behind his back in submission.

“Of course, Sir. Please, be my guest.”

The Captain extended his right arm in the direction of his ready room.

Attilio raised his eyebrow.

“You have the bridge,” he chuckled, as he turned and walked to the office to the left of the conn.

Walking into the room, Attilio quickly took an unloaded PADD from the Captain’s desk and opened the computer.

“Computer,”

The computer chimed as it heard it’s beckoned call.

“Access private documents: Fleet Admiral, Attilio Varrak.”

The computer screen quickly blitzed through the data to find the requested files.

“Please provide voice authorisation code.”

Attilio clasped his hands together on the desk.

“Varrak Epsilon-34-Theta.”

The screen blinked in response as the computer accepted Attilio’s voice.

“Computer, open file 87890.”

The screen blinked once again, as the file the Admiral requested popped onto the screen.

An image of a large ship, banked left to right in front of him.

Attilio stared at the file. His eyes following the curves of the image, and the data surrounding it.

Without a moment's notice more, he transferred the image onto the PADD.

Captain Hughes entered the room.

“Sir, sorry to interrupt. We are ready to board Earth Spacedock. Fleet Admiral Quinn has requested we beam you down to Starfleet Academy. He says he has someone who wants to see you.”

Attilio stood up.

“Thank you, Captain. I am ready whenever you are.”

The Captain nodded at him.

“Yes, Sir!” He replied, happily.

Captain Hughes tapped his combadge.

“Hughes to Ops.”

“Ops here, Captain.”

“Beam the Admiral down to the co-ordinates we received from Admiral Quinn.”

“Acknowledged.”

The Captain took four steps towards Attilio.

“All the best, Admiral.”

Attilio nodded in response.

“Thank you, Captain. And thanks for the lift.”

At that very moment, the all too familiar blue light that had enveloped him many times before, shone again, whisking the Admiral off of the ship.

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Admiral Hastler stood with Fleet Admiral Quinn at the steps to the Mark Valentine Memorial.

Out of thin air, the blue light of a transporter beam greeted the two Admirals, and faded away to reveal Admiral Varrak.

Hastler grinned.

“Admiral!” he shouted, delightfully. “Good to see you alive,” he said, laughing.

It was a relief to see he had survived the battle at Utopia Planetia.

Attilio cleared through the blue haze to see his friend at Starfleet Academy.

Even for a Vulcan, it was difficult to hide his smile, especially after thinking his crew was dead after the destruction of the Scientia.

He wasted no time at all.

“Here. I have something you might be interested in.”

Attilio had a crooked smile as he handed James the PADD.

Hastler looked somewhat confused at his superior, and took the item from his hands.

James’ mouth opened in shock, and he nearly laughed.

“You don’t waste any time!”

Studying the data on the PADD, and running his fingers along the sleek curves of the image he was presented.

Looking up at Attilio, he murmured the word that branded the PADD, smiling.

“Fortitude.”