

Blood On The Highway

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by Kyle Eggleston

"If you're just tuning in, Earth is in a state of emergency. The United Earth Force Alliance heavy cruiser U.S.S. Fearless has attacked Earth. Major cities were targeted in the attack. Earth defense systems have destroyed the Fearless successfully with all hands lost, but it doesn't help that cities have been destroyed and people have died." The news reporter tried to keep her calm but found it difficult to do. "Active Military ships are ordered to return to the sector in case another ship makes a run for it. We don't know if this is an isolated incident."

"Pause playback." O'Brien ordered. He swung around in his chair to face his senior officers and other dignitaries. He had called them all into his office to watch the news feed so they could see with their own eyes what had happened seemingly overnight.

Matt Allen and Jeff Killpack sat there with their mouths hanging open. Madison paced back and forth unsure of how to feel about it all. Norev held her head in her hands as she wept, and Grilka had a weird small grin on her face. Like she had expected it to happen. Her reaction made Jack feel uncomfortable. How could she grin at something like this? Was it just how she was? He wasn't sure.

Doctor Allen spoke up. "The Mind Frag." He said. "They were programmed to attack Earth, I'm certain of it." He had heard of brainwashing techniques being used during a Mind Frag. It's virtually impossible to detect with a deep neural scan like the one he had performed on some of the Fearless crew. Matt blamed himself, he should have seen it.

It had been over a week since the Fearless had been docked with the station. O'Brien had ordered her crew home to get the help they needed. *He* sent them there, allowing them to carry out their mission of destruction. O'Brien felt he should have kept the Fearless in dock a bit longer, tried to help them out further than just sending them on their way. But, no, he couldn't second guess his choices now. It was too late. What was done, was done.

"Don't blame yourself doctor." O'brien said. "I'm heightening station security as of now." He continued. "Who knows what other targets will be hit. We could be next. Any ship that doesn't check out will be kept here and searched. If they check out after that, they can leave and go on their way. If not, then we will hold them here."

No one objected to the orders. It was an Earth outpost, Jack was only doing what he felt was necessary in an uncertain time of need. Someone had attacked Earth. Jack was dead set

on finding out who ordered the attack. He had a few ideas of who could do such a thing. Earth had its share of enemies, that was no secret. If he had a star ship at his disposal, he would be on it headed towards Earth to help defend his home. But there wasn't a star ship in sight. No Earth cruisers were scheduled for another month or so. Now with Earth under attack and ships recalled, O'Brien doubted he would see another Earth ship for even longer than that.

Norev stopped sobbing long enough to point a finger at Grilka. "It's your people's doing." She said quietly. "Attacking the Shuka home world wasn't enough. You had to go after Earth as well!"

Grilka took a step back from the attack to her. "I had nothing to do with this! I am as innocent as you are ambassador." She said.

Norev wouldn't have it. She couldn't bring herself to attack the delegate, but if she could she would have. Instead she stood from the couch and walked out of the office. Tears streaming down her face.

O'Brien couldn't help but feel that Norev had pointed a finger at him as well with him being part Dubor. He made a mental note to talk to her about her accusation later. Now was not the time to point fingers and blame. No, now was time to fortify his defense systems, get ready for a possible attack. He needed to get his people ready for an attack as well.

Earth wasn't ready for another war. It was still recovering from their last Civil War that has lasted longer than it should have.

O'Brien frowned. "People are going to be wanting to contact home. The lines are going to be tied up during all hours of the day, that is if they aren't already. Keep the priority one channel clear of any civilian communiqües as usual. No matter what." He paused. "Most importantly, keep those under your command at ease. Reassure them it will be okay, even if you don't know that to be the case. Do it anyway. Dismissed."

As the office cleared of the personnel, Grilka stayed behind. She inched her way towards O'Brien's desk. He sat and watched as she walked up to him uncertain of what to say. What could be said at this point? Someone was responsible for the Mind Frag of an entire crew. Yes, he had a hunch it was the Dubor but Jack wasn't about to start pointing fingers because of a hunch. He needed proof in order to take action.

Grilka knew this. But she also knew her people. They were capable of doing something like this. Grilka wouldn't put it past her people to do this. She was actually quite certain that they were the ones behind the attack. It was their way of doing things after all. Silently attacking from within, waiting for the right moment to strike.

"I know what you're thinking Jack." Grilka finally said. "It's the same thing I'm thinking. It is our people who have done this." She sat down in a chair across from Jack's

desk. "You have to retaliate against the Dubor." Grilka said. "Show them they can't do something like this and get away with it. It is expected of you. The Dubor will see it as a sign of strength of you. Doing nothing would be a sign of weakness."

"I can't make that decision by myself." O'Brien said. "There are certain channels I have to go through to receive orders for such an attack. There's a chain of command that has to be followed."

"But you are Dubor." Grilka said. "It is our way."

O'Brien shook his head. "It is not my way."

"Your way." Grilka stammered. Her hands on her hips she shook her head in disapproval. "But you are Dubor."

O'Brien held up a finger. "Do not forget, I am also human, and that human side is winning out on this one." He paused. "Besides, I do not attack unarmed civilians. Either they are in a warship or I do not fire at all."

Crossing her legs, Grilka rested her arms on the sides of the chair. She was clearly not done with this conversation. O'Brien wished he could just dismiss her like one of his officers when he was done speaking with them. Unfortunately she was a delegate, not an officer. Jack would be lying to himself if he didn't see Grilka as something more than a delegate. They had a bond, they experienced a prison break together and were growing closer together every day.

Ever since he broke up with his ex wife, O'Brien had managed to brainwash himself that he would never find anyone as good as her again. Maybe there was something there with Grilka, he wasn't sure. Jack knew he wanted to find out though.

"Look," Jack said. "We just have to do this my way. I have orders. I have to follow those orders." He tried his best to explain. "I know your way is to shoot first and ask questions later, but that's just not how we are going to handle this situation."

Grilka laughed, "Who would ever shoot first and then ask questions. That is the most stupidest thing I have ever heard. Must be a human term. Your terms are stupid." Standing up, she crossed the room in a great stride. Her walk was like a glide, she glided across the room elegantly. Looking back at Jack she shook her head. "Fine, we will do it your way. But if it fails, remember this moment." Grilka left Jack's office, leaving him alone with his thoughts.

Turning in his chair, Jack looked out the window down at the Shuka home world below. He had a feeling if it weren't for these aliens, Earth probably wouldn't even be in this predicament. But he had a job to do, a role to uphold. Keeping your borders closed to aliens was not the way to conduct business. Jack knew this, he hoped the rest of Earth realized this as well.

The station shook with a tremor, it was something that felt like an earthquake back on Earth. No, it was something worse than an earthquake. It was the fusion reactor of a star ship, a fusion reactor that wasn't shielded. It was known star ships ran hotter without the shielding on their fusion reactors, but it also made them go faster for short bursts of time.

Jack realized what was happening. A star ship was dropping out of FTL right on top of them. As the Red Alert sounded, Jack bolted out of his chair and headed straight for his emergency transport tube that would take him to C&C direct.

C&C was bustling with activity. Crew members were rushing here and there across the room trying to get a grip on the situation that was happening around them. Just above the station, the U.S.S. Franklin hovered, she was surrounded by two squadrons of fighters as escorts.

Entering C&C, Jack rushed to the main control station. "What the hell is going on here?" He demanded. "Get a channel open to that ship! Now!" He pointed above them to a small dome, through the dome the Franklin could be seen simply hovering there.

As a channel opened, Jack strained his eyes to see through the cloud of smoke that filled the screen. It was the bridge of the Franklin and it was on fire. An ensign was seated in the command chair, trying to keep their shit together. "Hello? Uh this is Ensign Travis Copperfield, everyone on the command staff is dead. I... I'm not sure how many others survived the attack. We got here as fast as we could, the general...oh god the general...he said we could trust you."

Jack sighed. The general was dead. As the station shook again, hard, Jack kept his cool. "Get in a parking orbit, shut down your engines before you tear this station apart. Now!" He ordered.

The ensign did as ordered. The fighters docked back in their bays aboard the ship. As the fusion reactor shut down and the ship drifted in orbit of Shuka, the station stopped rocking back and forth. Ensign Copperfield could be seen grabbing fire equipment and putting out fires across the bridge.

Jack jumped into action. "Get a damage control crew over to the Franklin. Help them out where needed." He opened a channel down to Med Bay. "O'Brien to Allen, prepare for incoming casualties."

"Let's go." Jack said as he walked out the door to C&C. With the teleporter being down they would have to take a shuttle over to the Franklin.

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The Franklin was a mess. Most of the fire was out on the bridge with a few small flames still burning here and there. Ensign Travis Copperfield was in a state of shock and panic. He was running on pure adrenaline. As he watched Major O'Brien enter the bridge, he stood at attention.

Jack waved him off. "As you were. What happened here ensign?" He looked around at the dead bodies just left where they had died, at their posts. Looking down at his feet was General O'Neil's lifeless body. There probably wasn't time to move the bodies to an appropriate place like Med Bay. Who knew which of the crew was still alive.

Another ensign sitting at the helm was frozen with fear. Unable to move, they simply stared forward waiting for their next order. Travis walked forward to the helm and physically lifted the ensign's hands off the controls. "Hey, hey. Amber, we're safe. The major's here."

Amber was in shock. One of Jack's med teams approached her and talked to her softly. Coaxing them to let go of the helm so they could take care of her.

Travis turned his attention back to Major O'Brien. "We were attacked sir. Out on The Rim." He explained. "We tried to hail them, but they just opened fire. We don't even know who they were." His hands were shaking now. "The ships recorders should have a record of it sir. Um we have casualties. Med Bay was destroyed in the first wave of the attack." He paused as he gasped for breath. "So many ships, we launched our fighters but there were too many of them. They took out three of our squadrons in less than a half hour. After the bridge crew was killed, I took command and got us out of there. Barely in one piece."

Jack nodded. It was a brave thing the ensign had done and faced. Not many would have kept a cool head during an attack let alone plot an escape route. "It was a gamble running your engines that hot." He said. "You could have fried."

"It fired our communications subspace relay." The ensign said. "We tried contacting you, let you know we were coming. But we couldn't." Grabbing onto the command chair, he fell to the deck unconscious.

Jack looked to another med tech. "Get him to Med Bay."

"Yes sir." Came the reply.

"Park to O'Brien." Madison's voice came in through the communications system.

Jack opened a channel. "Go ahead Madison, what did you find?"

"A mess. Their fusion reactor is almost critical. If I can't get it under control soon we'll have to navigate the ship away from the station. She could blow." The woman said. She was professional in her tone. There clearly was a danger onboard the ship still.

"Understood." Jack said. "Keep me informed. O'Brien out."

"O'Brien to Allen, report." Jack called to his chief of medicine.

Matt Allen was up to his elbows in trying to figure out who was alive and who was dead. His scanner wasn't working properly for some reason. Possibly due to the reactor core not being shielded. It would have caused havoc on so many systems. "Having troubles with my equipment." He said. "Having to check people the old fashioned way. It's going to be a minute."

He would have to listen for breathing, feel for air coming from their mouths, and check for a pulse. Hopefully their hearts were still beating, although rapidly from the trauma. As he shifted through the bodies, Matt frowned at all the dead ones he was coming across. So far no one was alive. The deck was in shambles, it was wishful thinking as is. But still he hoped for someone to be alive. Someone to tell them all what had happened.

Matt was about to move onto another section of the ship when he heard a whimper coming from a fallen bulkhead. Matt rushed to her aid. "Don't struggle." He said. "I've got you." Moving the bulkhead aside, he found a woman. Her left leg was pinned down by another piece of fallen debris. Matt tried to move it but was unable to. Pulling out a laser torch, he proceeded to cut into the debris in order to move it out of the way. "Hang in there, I'm almost through."

The woman gasped as she realized what was happening. "You're cutting my leg off? Oh please don't cut my leg off, anything but that!"

Matt tried to quiet her. "No no, I'm cutting into the thing that's pinning your leg down. I'm not cutting into you. I promise." As he continued to cut, the debris made a screeching noise like it was unwilling to be cut into. Matt just forced his way deeper and kept cutting. Finally she was free from that which had been obstructing her movement.

Offering her a hand, Matt helped the woman up. He noticed her rank insignia "Lieutenant." He said. "How many others were in this section?"

She shook her head. "I don't know, maybe one hundred, hundred and fifty. She pointed to an open area leading out into space. A force field kept the ship pressurized. "When that bulkhead exploded, I thought I was dead." She said. "Fortunately the force field did its job and held in place." It then dawned on her. "All those people being blown out into space, there was nothing I could do about it." Putting her head in her hands, she wept.

Matt placed an arm around the woman supporting her up. What she saw was unimaginable. Watching those people you work with die in such a horrific way. Matt couldn't think of a worse way to live. "Let's get you to a shuttle, I have a team ready to check you out."

The woman held onto Matt's hand. "No, I'd like to stay with you." She said. "If I could."

Matt understood, the woman was facing a lot of trauma. The first person to come help her she could trust. It was classic textbook stuff. He agreed. "Alright, you don't look in too bad of shape physically." He said. Mentally she was probably a mess. The station's psych team would have to help her through this ordeal. For now she was stable. "You can help me help your shipmates."

She was grateful. "Thank you sir." She said.

Matt smiled. Sir. He thought. "No, I don't outrank you lieutenant. We're the same rank. My name is Matt."

"You're my hero." The woman said. "Miranda." She said. "Miranda McDuff."

McDuff. Matt Thought. "Any relation to Commander Bert McDuff?" He asked.

She nodded. "My brother. I haven't spoken to him since we left for The Rim. I hope he's doing alright in rehab."

Matt paused. How could he tell her that her brother was dead along with his entire crew. He decided to table it for now. That discussion would have to take place at another time. Now, they had work to do.

Down in the engineering section, Madison Park was busy at work trying to stabilize the engine core. It was shut down for now, but was still reading high heat temperatures. She had heard of ships running hot with little to no shielding, but never actually saw it in practice. Gutsy move by that kid Copperfield. His quick thinking probably saved their lives, well those who had survived the attack.

A man approached her. His face was cut in several places and his left arm was dislocated. He limped favoring his right leg. He wore the rank of ensign. Like the others, one of the lower decks. "I can help you get the reactor under control." He said. "I had to do some unorthodox procedures to get it to run without shielding."

Madison turned to face the man. He couldn't been more than eighteen. "Alright, ensign..." She said. "Sorry I didn't catch your name?"

"Maddox ma'am." He said. "Ensign Murphy Maddox. Chief Engineer's Mate." He looked at the engine core and admired his handy work. "The chief taught me everything he knows. I was a quick study." Looking down to the deck, a man with the rank of lieutenant commander laid dead. "He was next to the main console when it exploded. Took his life instantly." He knelt down and closed the chief's eyes.

"Who attacked you ensign?" Madison asked.

Ensign Maddox shrugged his shoulders. "Don't know. They hit with full force before we could do anything about it. With our shields down we took the full brunt of their assault." He

paused. "I've never been in battle before. Sure they drill you at the academy and all, but it didn't prepare me for this." He gestured around the room. The engine room was in shambles.

Limping over to a small console, he pointed at it. "I had to reroute all main functions through here. Even managed to get some of the bridge functions routed down here. They were short staffed up there. Figured it would at least help them out some."

Madison admired his handy work. It probably helped save the ship.

"I managed to get shields back up and running rather quick. It didn't prevent the hull breaches we experienced." The ensign continued. He started pressing buttons on the console.

"Warning, heat exceeding regulation standard." The computer alerted. "Recommend shutting down secondary reactor."

The main reactor core was offline, but the secondary reactor was still going strong powering most of the ship's systems. Including life support. It was running way hotter than intended.

Madison took out a scanning device and ran it over the console. She looked at the readings. "The secondary reactor core is one hundred twenty percent above normal. We need to get that back under one hundred at least. Eight-five should do it."

Maddox nodded. "Right." He said as he got to work. Within minutes the secondary reactor began to lose power, he compensated by shunting additional power from the reactor assembly grid. Once it was stable again, he was able to bring the temperature levels down to the recommended eight-five percent of operating normal.

"Good." Madison said. "I'm glad you came along. It would have taken me a while to figure that out." Pocketing her scanner, she smiled at the ensign. "Let's get you to a shuttle, the doc can fix your shoulder and your leg."

"A shuttle?" The ensign asked. "Can't you just teleport us? I mean I'm not sure I'm up for a bumpy shuttle ride."

Madison shook her head. "Nope, no teleportation occurs on Crimson Gamma. Major's orders." She said. "We have a good shuttle pilot, she hasn't killed anyone this week." Madison froze at the joke she had just made, she tried to laugh it off. "Anyway, she's a really good pilot. I promise."

The ensign hobbled towards the door. "If you say so." He said. "Let's go." They walked out of the engine room slowly.

"So," Madison said. "Tell me about yourself."

The ensign smiled at the question, he loved talking about himself. The dock worker didn't know what she was in store for.

Three hours later all survivors had been accounted for. They totaled twenty-five in all. Twenty-five out of three hundred and sixty souls. One lieutenant and four ensigns and a handful of fighter pilots. None of the command staff managed to survive the attack. Over a hundred officers had been blown out into space caused by hull breaches. Doctor Allen didn't know if he had enough body bags and flags to cover the dead. He would eventually find out that indeed he did not have enough.

Ensign Travis Copperfield stood in the major's office. He had refused to go to Med Bay claiming he didn't want to see all the death that had been caused. He had a compound fracture in his arm and yet he still refused medical treatment insisting that the other survivors be taken care of first.

O'Brien looked at the ensign holding his arm. "I really think you should have the doc take a look at your arm. It's not going to get any better just standing there." He frowned not understanding why the ensign wouldn't go to Med Bay to get checked out.

The ensign stood his ground. "No sir, I'm fine sir."

"I could order you to Med Bay." O'Brien threatened.

"I..." The ensign stammered. "No, please sir. I'll get there, just give me...time."

O'Brien nodded. "Alright, have it your way ensign. Just don't let it go too long, it'll heal wrong and the doc will have to break your arm all over again just to set it properly." He said. "Trust me, I know from past experience."

The ensign simply nodded.

"Now, what's the reason you came to see me?" O'Brien asked. It clearly wasn't be dressed down by a senior officer. The kid had already had a bad day as it was. He didn't need anymore stress added to his plate.

The ensign held his broken arm with his hand. It hurt like hell but he wasn't about to show that the pain was getting to him. He had to be strong in front of the major if he was going to get what he wanted. The real reason for showing up to the major's office.

"I want revenge." Travis said. "I want to get back out there out on The Rim and find those bastards that did this to us." He paused. "Sorry sir, that's just how I feel."

O'Brien understood where the kid was coming from. If he had been in that situation with his ship all but destroyed, he would want to get some payback too. But these were some difficult circumstances, with the fleet recalled to Earth there would be no more ships going out to The Rim to begin with.

"Look, I understand your need for revenge. But revenge won't get you what you want. That revenge will never be satisfied. You'll be always looking for the next thing to avenge."

O'Brien explained. "Besides your ship is in no condition to go back out there. She would be pummeled in a heartbeat. You're asking for the impossible. Ask for anything else and you might get it."

Travis hemmed and hawed over the response. It clearly wasn't what he wanted. "I just want my crew to be remembered for something besides losing a battle they were unfit for." Travis admitted. "Is *that* too much to ask for?"

O'Brien shook his head. "Not at all son. Your crew will be remembered alright. Just with the attack on Earth, it's fallen by the wayside for now. But trust me, people will remember the sacrifice your crew put forward. I promise."

Travis nodded. "Yeah." He said. "Thanks anyway sir." He turned to leave.

O'Brien called out after the ensign. "Tell you what, what if I pulled some strings and got you assigned to Crimson Gamma. I know it's not the same as a star ship, but what you find here might surprise you."

Travis turned around with a suspicious smile on his face. "Really sir?" He asked. This news was rather exciting. Sure it wasn't a ship on The Rim, but it was Earth's furthest outpost which was a close second. "Yes, I accept sir. I accept!" He almost shouted in excitement.

"On one condition." O'Brien added.

"Anything sir." The ensign said.

"Go to Med Bay." Jack smiled.

Travis nodded. He turned and exited the major's office heading to Med Bay as ordered. He hoped he wouldn't see any of his crew mates in Med Bay. Travis wasn't sure he could handle that right now. As Travis walked down the corridor, he ran into another ensign. Another survivor of the attack.

They stared at each other for a brief moment.

"Sharon." Travis finally said. "I heard you were pretty banged up. How are you doing?"

Ensign Sharon Donaldson shrugged. Her left leg was in a brace and she was walking the best she could. "The doc managed to patch me up pretty good. Said I should heal in like a month. Until then I'm on limited duty assignments. Kinda boring if you ask me."

Travis nodded. He understood completely. When you were sick you had to take care of yourself first. Your duty came second. At least that's how the doctors felt about it all. Travis wasn't sure that's how he would want to handle things, but he wasn't in charge of it all. He was just a lowly ensign with his whole future ahead of him.

Grilka walked passed the talking ensigns towards O'Brien's office. She didn't care what they were doing or why they were standing in the hallway. Only that they moved out of the way quickly as she approached. She walked with determination. She had something important on her mind to talk to the major about, and wouldn't rest until she said her two cents.

Entering Jack's office, Grilka stood there in the doorway. "You son of a bitch." She said as she stared him down.

Jack looked up in surprise. He was not expecting to be called that today. He looked at Grilka with a frown on his face. Yeah, he definitely didn't deserve being called that. Or any name for that matter. "What did you call me?"

Grilka spat on the floor. "Is your translation orb malfunctioning? You heard what I called you, you Gracknor. I should kill you where you stand. You side with the enemy. You side with your own people."

O'Brien was confused. Which people was Grilka talking about, humans or Dubor? He wasn't certain and didn't really have time for such a conversation. But here they were, and this conversation was going to happen whether he liked it or not.

"What are you talking about?" O'Brien asked. "I'm not siding with anyone."

"You refuse to attack the Dubor, they who attacked your home world. You refuse to attack the Dubor, they who attacked the Franklin. You refuse to attack your own people when it is within your right to do so." She spat on the floor again. "I did not switch sides for you to be soft *major*." She yelled. "Even our greatest leader knew that if your own people did something wrong, you were within your right to attack them. No matter the cost."

"If you're talking about Ketish," O'Brien said. "I wouldn't call him a great leader."

Grilka laughed. "I'm not talking about Ketish, he is a puppet. Our greatest leader's name was Mukof. You don't even know your own history. Pathetic." She folded her arms across her chest. "What are you going to do?"

O'Brien stood from his chair and approached Grilka. "Look, it hasn't been confirmed that the Dubor have attacked Earth or the Franklin. I haven't seen any news feed to indicate otherwise."

Grilka turned on the vidset behind O'Brien and trained it on a channel broadcasting from Dubor. "It's all over the news major, you just have to know where to look!"

Ketish stood before a podium, he was addressing a crowd of people. "My friends." He said. "We have launched our first attack against the humans, on their home world of Earth and have destroyed two of their star ships in the process." The crowd cheered and applauded. Ketish waited for the noise to subside.

"Our attacks will not stop there." He continued. "Any human outpost within the Comeki Star System will be neutralized. This includes the station orbiting the Shuka home world and the one orbiting the eighth planet in the system. We will retake our star system back. The aliens must be pushed out of our borders. To those within the sound of my voice, resist these oppressors. Fight with all you have until you can't fight anymore. That is all." He stepped away from the podium and walked into a large building, probably the presidential palace.

Grilka switched the vidset off. "You see major?" She said. "Our people have announced war against the humans. What do you plan on doing about it?"

Jack O'Brien stumbled back into his chair and sat back down. Grilka crossed the room and faced Jack from the other side of his desk. She placed both of her hands on his desk and leaned forward waiting for an answer.

"They have declared war against your human side, major." She reiterated. "What are you going to do?"

Jack placed his head in his hands. Grilka had been right, it had been the Dubor all along. Something deep inside of him felt a divided loyalty. He couldn't explain it, it didn't even feel right considering he had only found out he was part Dubor a short while ago. All he knew was how to be human. His loyalty should be clear, but it wasn't that simple.

Lifting his head up, he grabbed a station wide communications device and switched it on. "Attention crew and civilians of Crimson Gamma, this is the major. As of this moment, we are at war with the race known as the Dubor. They have attacked two of our star ships, destroying one and badly crippling the other. To anyone within the sound of my voice, if you do not wish to be part of this war, I suggest you evacuate this station immediately. It has just become a target of the Dubor attacks. Major O'Brien out." The line went dead.

Down in the Main Gallery aliens rushed around in confusion desperately trying to reach their transports as quickly as possible. It was pure chaos.

Grilka looked at Jack in the eyes approving of his actions. He wasn't finished yet.

"O'Brien to Park." He said calling the dock worker.

Madison picked up the horn and answered. "Aye, Madison here sir."

Jack continued. "I don't have to tell you what's at stake Madison. I need crews working around the clock to get the Franklin back in a fighting stance. We are going to need her to help protect this station."

Madison nodded. "That's what it will take major, around the clock work. I'll see that it's done. It'll take weeks."

"I know." Jack replied. "Thank you Madison for all you do. O'Brien out." That communications line went dead.

Grilka eased up on the table and stood tall. "What do you plan on doing with an Earth Star Ship?" She asked. "They are no match for the Dubor, that has already been made clear." She said. "And that Shukan warship was destroyed or badly disabled as well. You are no match for the Dubor and what they have armament wise. What are you going to do?"

O'Brien shook his head with uncertainty. He had no clue what he was going to do. What he did know was the Dubor couldn't be allowed to overtake Crimson Gamma or her sister station Crimson Delta. The planet Crimson Delta orbited was in worse condition than the Shuka planet, they were farmers nothing more.

"I don't know." O'Brien said. "But I know one thing, I can't sit here and do nothing." He looked out at the Franklin in orbit of Shuka next to the Crimson Gamma. Hell was coming, and it was fast approaching.

The End