

Kendra's Quest



Dingo Morgn

Mask 1: Prologue

The Calm

Sitting up on the edge of the bed rubbing the sleep from my eyes. A well-built man walks over and slaps me on the shoulder with a hearty smile stating “Finally awake?!”. I glance at my Utility Watch to check the time and confirm that I have slept in. “Just trying to get some beauty sleep” I chime back.

Hector is a huge man in height and weight. He is strong and gentle, a perfect father figure for the squad. Probably a side effect of being slightly older than the rest of the people in our squad and having children of his own. “Oh! That’s right, I almost forgot. Squaddie said that we’ve got a mission briefing at ten hundred” Hector informs me while brushing a hand through his thick bushy beard. “I bet it’s something to do with those *random* attacks on the defence grid” I reply while gathering my things to prepare for a shower. “Seems like probing to me, but hey the higher-ups say that it’s nothing to worry about. Anyway I’ll see you in the mess hall” Hector comments as he makes his way to the door. “Save me a seat” I yell back stepping into the bathroom.

I was currently on The Outer Shell, which is the main base of operations for the system. It lies in an asteroid belt around Skorth Prime, a planet being terraformed by the

AUS Unity branch. It was a newly allotted constellation for them to make their own. I was shipped off to The Outer Shell after finishing my training just over a year ago. While getting dressed I check the date and time on my Utility Watch 11/08/3260 08;23. *Plenty of time* I think to myself.

Along my way to the mess hall for some breakfast, I always stop at a window to look out into space. I regularly needed this as kind of a mooring ritual and today was no exception. The way light shines on the horizon of Skorth Prime and illuminates the asteroids around the base. Its beauty was always breathtaking, I often wondered to myself if I'll ever get bored of the picturesque view. The sandy desert planet below has a green patch on its northern face, everyday it grows slightly bigger. The 'Egg-heads' planet side started terraforming the planet's surface about two months ago. I've never seen their work first-hand. I've only been stuck in the stupid desert guarding endless miles of pipelines and pumping stations.

While still looking out the window a cargo ship comes into view and makes its way towards the base. *Guess it's time to get a move on.*

Arriving at the mess hall, I spot Sargent Frank Townsend or "Squaddie", Hector, and Mike sitting around a table eating breakfast. Squaddie was the Ideal leader. When times get tough, no matter how messed up the

situation is, you could always count on him. Without Squaddie I would have died ages ago. Mike, our corpsman, on the other hand, loves to joke around whenever he can. Whether at the mess hall or stitching you back up you can always count on him to crack a joke.

Grabbing my breakfast of 2 slices of toast with jam and a glass of water I then sit down opposite Mike.

“Saw a huge cargo ship on the way here” I cut into their conversation. “What do you think the chances are that we have to babysit it?”

“Pretty high I recon, considering we have a mission brief in a bit” Squaddie mumbles before shovelling egg into his mouth.

“What do you think is in it?” Mike probes while pointing a fork in my face.

“I don’t know! It could be uuuuhhhh” Before I could think of an answer, Mike continues “I hope it’s slow-cooked bbq ribs”

“I hope it’s more cigarettes!” Oscar states while placing his food tray on the table.

“Well I bet it’s more of that purple Slerp” Hector proclaims crossing his arms with a nod.

“Amen to that brother!” we all exclaim.

Out of nowhere Commander Owen wraps a hand on my shoulder, startling me. “Sorry to burst your bubble gentlemen! But it’s medical supplies”

“Aww, come on man” Mike heckles back.

“Hey, it’s not my fault! I would love to have ordered more Purple Slerp!” jokes Owen.

“You better next time” Hector pouts.

“A bunch of medical supplies?” Squaddie questions Owen

“Well, its new arms, legs, even hearts, you name it, all kept in stasis chambers” Owen happily answers back.

“Oh kark, what for?” Mike blurts out while covering me in half eaten food.

A stern look crosses Owen’s face “The local wildlife has been... increasingly less friendly, ripping guys apart”

“So what? Get an arm ripped off and then replaced and sent back down all over again?” Mike jokes back.

“Something like that” Owen lets out a long sigh
“Look, I know things aren’t great. Between Sandworm and pirate attacks, you guys and girls are laying the groundwork for generations to come. Without you tough mother fuckers protecting everyone in this ENTIRE SECTOR none of this could be possible”

“Look at the Commander buttering us up” Mike scoffs.

“Well it’s working on me” Oscar mumbles in between mouthfuls of food.

“Well, ladies. I have to go. I have a briefing with a bunch of Neanderthals in 20 minutes” Waves Owen with a big cheeky smile plastered on his face but out of the corner of my eye that smile quickly changes into a more concerned expression.

“Well, you heard the man! Finish up and make your way to briefing room 2” Orders Squaddie as he gets up and leaves.

Shoving the last bits of toast into my mouth I stand up putting the food tray away. Walking through the hallway

I start navigating my way to the briefing room. The hallway looked mismatched with a plastic alloy making up the floor and the wall up until about hip height which then gave way to roughly cut stone. Most of the Outer Shell was like this, apart from special areas like the Medbay and around the windows.

Stepping into the Briefing Room, Squaddie and Ashley were already there standing around a table going through a holographic diagram of terrain. Oddly enough Commander Owen was nowhere to be seen. *Shouldn't he be here by n-* BOOM!

Before I could even finish my own thought a huge explosion rocks the station, throwing me to the floor. Dusting myself off, I Hear Squaddie yell out over the blaring sirens "Is everyone alright?!"

"I'm alright" "Same here" "Just a bruise but I'll be fine" answers those present in the room. Lights then start flickering on and off as the station starts losing power.

A trooper; Connor sprints into the room "WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!"

"No shit" Ashly spits back.

“Alright. Everyone, Gear up! We’ve practised for this. Do your job and we’ll make it out of this” Squaddie barks.

With no time to waste, I almost go into autopilot as years of training start kicking in. Sprinting through the halls to our armoury wasn’t as easy as the test runs had been, Some Civvies panicked and others just stood there in terror. I couldn’t blame them. Nothing could prepare you for the real thing. To be honest we shouldn’t have been taken by surprise. There were advanced warning systems in place, and then fighters would have been sent to intercept long before we’d even know. *Just what the hell was going on?*

After much delay, I finally arrived at the armoury. Army personnel were everywhere, some still in their pyjamas. Approaching my locker I stick my thumb up against the scanner and with a click it unlocks. I Equip my body armour, throw on my backpack, grab my Battle Rifle and adjust my headset to the agreed-upon comms channel.

Over the radio, I hear Squaddie say “Spooky One Comms Check”

After everyone responds I reply “Spooky Eight checking in”

“Any news on what we’re up against?” Squaddie asks
Ashley

“I’ve tried contacting command but all I’m getting is static, we’ll be going in blind, Sir”

“So what now?” Connor worriedly asks Squaddie.

“We need to secure the power station, without it, we’re screwed. Just be prepared for anything” Squaddie affirms Connor wilst a pat on the back.

“Alright let’s get into some shit” Mike exclaims.

Making our way to the power station we pass the same window I passed on the way to the mess hall. Even in this chaos, the view was still as beautiful as ever but there was no time to stop, I had a job to do. A lady in a worker’s uniform lets out a loud cry, gaining everyone’s attention. Following her gaze out the window, a Dreadnaught with unfamiliar markings on it disturbs the once peaceful scene. Another worker falls to his knees beside me. An armada of Dreadnaughts, battleships and destroyers appear out of hyperspace, all with the same markings. What looks like boarding ships start making their way towards our base. Taking a step back, eyes wide in shock, *How the fuck could this of happened? Is this survivable? Am I going to die here?*

A trooper from another squad calls over as they run towards us “What’s the holdup?”

Another from the same squad stops in their tracks “Get a move- holy shit!”

Hector bumps Mike’s arm “Well you WANTED to ‘get into some shit’ and here we are!”

The Rain

Wide-eyed, I look at the people around me. Finding Oscar, disbelief briefly flashes across his face, almost making his cigarette fall out of his mouth.

“Ok ok alright, you’re alright, you got this” Squaddie whispers nervously to himself under his breath next to me. He then yells out to quell the murmurs “Everybody! Listen up! We need to stop those Bastards from getting anywhere near the power station. Everyone with me”

Tightening my grip on my rifle I start jogging with everyone else towards the power station, ready for the worst. While running, the muffled sound of artillery exploding outside rang out like a crescendo through the kilometres of walkways only to abruptly stop. A part of me felt strong feelings of relief at the stop of the artillery bombardment. That brief moment of respite was shattered by multiple loud thuds followed by a low rumble.

“What the fuck was that?” a trooper questions.

The lights flickered off for the last time. Emergency lights turned on, barely illuminating the hall, bathing everything red.

“Whatever it is, it can’t be any good” Hector answers, readying a light machine gun off of his back.

Continuing to run through the zig-zagging halls, I can hear gunfire off in the distance getting louder and louder as we approach the powerplant. Squaddie radios “Enemies in the wire. Enemies in the wire”. I switch the safety on my rifle and pull the charging handle, cycling a round into the chamber with a satisfying Ca-Click. I hear everyone around me doing the same.

‘Enemy in the wire’ is an old code phrase from a very long time ago, probably way before Earth’s Fourth world war. We used it specifically for when there was an enemy force inside the base.

Rounding a corner we are faced with a drop ship that is blocking our path. The ship is adorned with similar eagle-like markings to those of the armada waiting outside. The front has an oversized drill which it used to tunnel deep into the Outer Shell. I take position lining up towards the door of the spacecraft. I feel a light squeeze on my shoulder from the trooper behind me. I then repeat the same action to Ashley in front of me, signalling that I’m ready to go. Jess tries the door to the ship to find it locked.

“Baxter, place a charge on the side of the ship, we’re blasting our way through” Squaddie orders

With no need to ask, Baxter takes out a cylindrical object from his backpack and affixes it to the hull of the ship. The object unfurls to a rectangular shape, Baxter then rips out a pin, and a light on the explosive turns red. All of us take a step away from the armed explosive.

“Ready” Baxter calls out to Squaddie.

“Let’s rock” Squaddie answers back

With a cheeky smile, Baxter squeezes the detonator.

Fiss-BOOM!

The explosive punches a fist-sized hole into the drop ship’s lock, Jess pulls on the door while Baxter throws a banger through the doorway, a loud bang and a flash of light was our signal to move into and clear the ship. Scanning through my sector of the fuselage, there are rows of seats with crash bracing set to the open position, a wide open door leading further down the corridor and sparks dancing on broken wires hanging from the ceiling but no hostiles insight. Whoever was in here has left. Lowering my rifle I can feel the adrenaline leave my body “Clear!”.

“Nothings here” Oscar states while testing the sturdiness of the ship’s hull with his boot.

“Must of got bored and left” Mike jokes back.

Yeah right.

“Where do you think they’ve all gone to?” Jess asks.

“My guess is that they’re probably headed off towards the power plant” Hector responds walking through the drop ship’s doors.

“Form up on me, we need to get a move on” Squaddie motions with a wave of his hands.

After some time clearing eerily abandoned dropships we come across an intersection leading to the power station. I take a position lined up on the left wall looking into an intersection. Oscar moves up to the front, he then takes a mirror out of his chest rig and looks through it down the hall.

“Boss, we’ve got trouble up ahead,” Oscar whispers over to Squaddie.

“What’s their strength?” Squaddie whispers back while trying to take a peek in the mirror.

“Three, two with rifles and one with an LMG” Oscar confirms.

“Keep an eye on them, alright we’re going to bang and clear” Squaddie tell the rest of us, “we’ve done this a hundred times”

Bullets whizz through the air, smashing Oscar’s mirror.

“Oh Krak! Oh shit! Whoo that was close” Oscar drops what remains of his mirror on the floor, his hand bleeding from fragmented glass, his adrenaline is probably so high that he probably doesn’t even feel it.

“Contact!” Ashly yells out.

What followed was the ungodly raw of machine gun fire tearing through rocks, covering Oscar and Squaddie in dust and debris.

“Throwing a flash!” Connor yells barely audibly over machine gun fire.

A bang caused the machine gunner to pause and cover his eyes. Taking this opportunity I sprint across to the other side of the intersection and squeeze off a few rounds hitting the gunner just below his left collarbone. The force

of the impact causes him to spin as he falls to the ground. One of the hostile riflemen starts shooting towards me, forcing me back into cover. When he pauses, I return fire shooting off 4 rounds before taking cover again. Laying down on my belly, I crawl slowly back towards the corner. Bullets impact the wall 4 feet above my head. I steady my rifle and take a single shot ripping a fist-sized hole through the rifleman's lower abdomen. Bullets slam into the hard plastic alloy floor mere inches from my face. Rolling back into cover I sit up trying to spit out the dust from my mouth. While kneeling I peak back into the hallway, letting off a few rounds, taking a quick note of multiple enemy combatants before ducking back.

Reloading my rifle I look up towards Conner and tell him "We're sitting ducks here, there's a dropship just a few metres back" I point towards a downed ship

"I see it" he replies

Continuing on, "I'll cover you, while you make a break for it". But before he can answer he's shot multiple times in the back, and his lifeless body falls on top of me. Rolling Connor off of me, I look back down the corridor to where he was shot from. 15 soldiers in foreign camo are set up at the end and are slowly making their way closer.

“Our left flank has been compromised, fall back, fall back” Squaddie barks

Emptying a whole magazine down range as I get up off of the floor, I then sprint back down the hallway towards the dropship. Hector shoots a control panel for the blast doors. Causing them to slam shut. I brace myself for the insurgents to start cutting their way through. To my left, Mike is leaning over Oscar who’s lying on the floor, covered in blood and shaking violently.

Mike snaps his fingers and points to me “Oi come over here, help me with this”

Turning on the safety of my rifle, I run over to Oscar’s side. “Put pressure on this” Mike hands me some gauze and guides my hands to an open wound on Oscar’s chest.

“Mate, give me a cigarette” Oscar coughs up through gasping breaths.

The gauze is designed to absorb 400% of its own weight in fluid, but it is already dripping wet. While using one hand to apply pressure to his chest wound, the other searches his body for more gauze. Instead of bandages, I find his packet of cigarettes.

“All I want is a cig, give... give me” Oscar whispers between ragged breaths.

I place a cigarette in his mouth and light it. He takes a short puff.

“Fuck, fuck, that’s not good” Mike states as he jabs a stick of morphine into Oscar’s arm “Well buddy, I did say that all those cigarettes would kill you one day”

Following Mike’s gaze I see smoke bubbling up from the wound, I look back to Oscar’s face and the cigarette lays limp on the floor, his eyes and mouth wide open, not breathing. I slap his face trying to wake him. “Wake Up Oscar, Wake up buddy”

Mike puts two fingers on Oscar’s neck and shakes his head “he’s gone”.

With tears running down my cheeks I cry back “What do you mean he’s gone? He was breathing just a second ago?”

Defeated, Mike sits up “there’s nothing more I can do he’s gone”

Oscar and I have been friends since high school, we signed up together, and went through basic together. I always hated his awful habit of smoking, he never spoke

much but he did. It was always these small nuggets of wisdom, a little something to keep me going.

“AHHH”

A loud scream draws everyone’s attention towards Banks lying on the floor screaming, his leg caught in a blast door now blocking our exit.

“Medic!” another trooper calls out to Mike.

“Looks like i’m needed elsewhere” wearily he smiles as he runs over to the wounded trooper.

“Someone start cutting through that door! Just what is going on here?” squaddie commands pointing round “Ashly get on comms and see if we can get back up, or something, ANYTHING!”

Ashly brings out her radio pack and starts adjusting knobs and dials on it “This is Spooky two Calling TOC, This is Spooky two Calling TOC... sir there blocking our comms.”

“FUCK!, keep trying” Squaddie comments

The Blast door between us and the insurgents slides open revealing a substantial force of hostiles on the other side.

“How in the hell did they do that, we destroyed the controls?” Hector comments in surprise.

As another firefight erupts, I find myself standing out in the open. Running to the closest wall making myself as small as possible as bullets and blaster fire scream past. Any movement I make, no matter how small, only ensures another barrage. A bullet grazes an ammo pouch on my chest rig, denting the magazine making it inoperable. Digging out loose rocks into the wall to make myself even smaller Hector calls out to me “I’ll create an opening, when I do you move to Baxter”

Looking to my left I can see Movement behind a mangled dropship bay door. I try to open my mouth but another hail of bullets forces it shut. “I’ll take that as a yes then” Hector steps out and with his light machine gun lays down some covering fire. Not taking this opportunity for granted I sprint over to the drop ship door and clamber over. Ashly hands the radio phone to Squaddie “I got through to TOC”

Dodging incoming fire Squaddie grabs the phone off of Ashley and starts speaking “This is Spooky one, we are facing a force three times my callsign, the Power Plant is lost, we have multiple K.I.A. and wounded. I am requesting immediate assistance. I say again we are facing” A bullet

flies straight through his jaw and comes out the other side almost severing his head from his body, Squaddie crumples unceremoniously to the floor.

A voice on the other side of the radio can be heard before Ashly picks it up and answers “Spooky one is dead. This is Spooky two requesting reinforcements!.”

The Thunder

Peeking back through a hole in the mangled door. The infantry in the front has shields protruding from the gauntlets creating a wall protecting those further in the back. One of them is a little out of formation. Baxter seems to also notice this as elbows me in the arm “Take that wanker out, the one in the middle. I’ll shoot a frag in there”. Using my knee to support my arm, I take aim at the shield bearer’s exposed leg, I take a couple of long drawn-out breaths and squeeze the trigger.

The Shield bearer’s shin explodes sending fragmented bone everywhere, he falls to the floor, clutching what remains of his leg, yelling and screaming. Without missing a beat Baxter stands up and thumps over a grenade. Landing in the middle of their formation. A flash of fire sends shrapnel through the ranks of the insurgents. An almighty rawr of machine gun fire rips through those left standing.

But just as we think we’re in the clear, a missile passes over my head, detonating on the stone wall, spraying everyone in debris. Peering back through the hole I can barely make out what looks like a small tank. “Get that Flaming door open! Right Now” Ashley screams, one hand holding her head the other on the radio. I fire my rifle, rounds ineffectively bouncing off of the armour of the

hovering tank. “Baxter! blow that thing the hell up!” I yell as I shove a fresh magazine into my rifle.

“Shut up! What do you think I’ve been trying to do?” Baxter yells while pulling out a still smoking empty grenade shell from his launcher.

Calming myself I squeeze the trigger, the bullet smashes into the thick glass, cracks like lightning form across its surface. But as I try for a follow up, nothing happens. Quickly inspecting my rifle I find the problem, fragmented remains of a bullet are embedded into the magazine.

That’s it.

Rage takes over as I rip the magazine out and throw it at the Tank “Fuck You!” I scream. The magazine comically bounces off of its hull and lands on the floor. Baxter grabs me and pulls me back behind cover “What the hell are you doing?! Trying to get yourself killed?!” “I... I don’t know. Something came over me” I answer, shocked at my own panic and rage. My hands still shaking, I pull on the charging handle hoping to eject the unfired round from the chamber but as I release it gets stuck halfway. “Fuck” I mumble under my breath. *I need to get this working or I’m done for.*

Using the tip of a bullet to push an disassembly pin, my Rifle opens up and I can see the caseless round wedged half way between the magwell and the chamber. Shaking the round loose, I then close it back up. Insert a new magazine and make sure it cycles properly. *Good to go.*

Aiming my rifle back towards my enemies. The tank is hovering significantly closer than it was before, Aiming to break through the cracked glass, pulling the trigger more cracks form but it stops the bullet from getting through. “I’ve tried getting through the glass on the porthole. But I can’t punch through ” pointing to the tank as I continue “ think you can get one in there?”

“Can do, but I’ve just used my last hurt” Baxter frowns

“If we don’t do anything we’ll be over run” Annoyance evident in my voice “I can deal with the bullshit infantry but... but a fucking TANK?!” I fire a round hitting a slightly exposed rifleman in the arm, making him stumble out of cover for only a second, A follow up shot rips a hole right through his left lung.

“How did they get it in here? I continue to complain “Bloody bogans! The lot of ya!”

“Ay! Oi! Shut up! I thought of an idea, just get ready to move” Baxter pulls out a familiar cylindrical breaching tool.

“What are you planning to do with that?” I ask, confused.

“Just be ready to move,” Baxter barks while tinkering with the device. He unfolds the device, laying it upside down on the floor “pass me that”

Looking to my left there’s a mangled pole that has come loose from the rubble. Grabbing it I hand it to him. “Here you go”

Baxter gets on all fours and using the pole pushes the breaching charge into the path of the tank. “Alright let’s go”. We begin a leapfrog manoeuvre back to where Hector and Jess are. Diving back into cover, I peer back to the dropship door which was our little fox hole for 10 minutes, it’s already overrun.

As soon as the tank hovers over the breaching charge, Baxter presses the detonator. BOOM! The explosion violently rocks the tank, before it slams into the ground. “Looks like it stopped moving” Jess says, impressed with Baxter’s ingenuity. A loud Hiss from behind startles us. The blast door blocking our exit opens up.

Seeing our Ashely barks orders “Throw smoke! We are leaving!”

“Throwing smoke!” two troopers yell out.

Thick white smoke bathed in red lights fills the hallway. Obscuring our movements. Running back through the halls towards the armoury, static comes over the base’s speaker systems. Barely audible over radio static “The Command centre is gone. The defence grid is completely offline.” It was Brad, Commander Owen’s assistant “Any personnel capable of fighting should help the injured evacuate.” A bang over the radio cuts Brad’s announcement short. “That’s quite enough out of you. Now. Hello Ladies and Gentlemen, If you still haven’t been captured or surrendered, I congratulate you for making it this far. BUT it is time to lay down your weapons. Commander Owen out”.

Everyone let out a collective ‘WHAT?’ including myself. “Commander Owen sold us out?” Hector bleats out in shock.

“Alright everyone! We are getting off of this rock!” Ashley Barks “First. We need to find a pilot.”

A man in a fighter pilot's uniform raises his hand "I can fly!"

"Where did you come from?" Mike asks the man.

"I got sealed off from the gets and then got swept up with you guys" the pilot rebuts.

"Ok. So we got a pilot. Now what?" Hector asks Ashley.

Ashley, a little surprised, continues "Second! We'll find a ship. Third we'll go to Australis and get reinforcements, take this rock back and make those fuckers pay!"

Everyone yells out an approving "Hell yeah!"

With renewed purpose, we almost gallop through the halls towards the closest docking bays, four, five and six. Looking down the corridor we spot some friendly faces. Its Emu squad, but there engaged in a firefight out in front of the entrance to docking bay five and barely holding out. Ashley gets on her radio "Spookie two to Emu one come in."

An exhausted voice comes through "Emu one here, we could really use some help. Shit! We're getting over run"

“We have a visual on your location, we’ll be reinforcing from the south west, try not to shoot us” Ashly puts the radio away and looks back at us “Banks, Jess and Fly Guy you’re with me, we’re going to check if there’s anything flyable in bay six. The rest of you reinforce Emu.”

“Solid copy” I nod. Running out into the corridor I take a Knee and find a target. Bang! I hit an unlucky enemy rifleman in the back, they died before they even hit the ground. Shocked, the platoon of infantry stupor in their confusion. Hector, Baxter and Mike run past me. As soon as they stop I get up and run a short distance in front of Hector and take another knee. One Insurgent has discovered that he has been out flanked but before he can return fire, I shoot, hitting him in the liver. He gets off one round before collapsing. Hector opens up with a short volley of machine gun fire, Baxter and Mike rife off a couple of rounds, the result; is cutting their fighting force down to shreds and opening up a clear path to Emu.

Hector takes a position. Providing suppressive fire. Mike takes the opportunity to drag an injured member of the Emu squad to cover and starts doing first aid “What’s your name soldier?”

“Jasper” the injured trooper responds a little less painiced than before.

“Well, Jasper. You’re going to be just fine” Mike Smiles, hands stained red with blood.

“Boy! Are we glad to see you lot” Sargent Davis comments with relief. “It’s just the 4 of us left, including Jasper”

Baxter looking around responds “We’ve found a pilot, Ashley and a few others are checking out bay six for anything we can fly”

“They better. Bays four and five have been completely destroyed.” A trooper from Emu squad comments in between firing.

zzzzzZZZZZTTTT “Spookie Eight. Come in.” It’s Ashley on comms. I press a button on my headset “Spookie Eight revicing”

“Thank the stars, I was able to get through to someone. Alright, bring everyone in. We’ve found a bird. I’ll meet you at the door.” Ashley ends her transmission.

“Hay listen up! They found a bird at bay six! Let’s go!” I yell over gunfire. “You heard the man! Let’s move” Sargent Davis reinforces my statement and everyone seems to have heard it this time. Except for Hector, his Light machine gun is making such a racket he can’t hear

me. I run over to him and shake his shoulder “What?” he asks.

I tell him “We’re leaving, they found a bird”.

His eyes wide “why didn’t you say so earlier?”

“I did! Now get your fat ass up off the floor!” I state a little annoyed as I help him up off of the floor. “Let’s go Hector”

Looking around through the kicked up dust and debris, I can see that Hector and I have been left behind in the confusion. Sprinting back down the hall, dodging in between incoming gun fire we somehow make it to the others. Ashley ushers me and Hector towards a cargo ship. It’s similar to the one I saw earlier today. “Help Banks and Jasper to the ship, secure it and get it operational. Me Thomas and Baxter will open the bay doors”

I give a confident “Can do” and wrap one arm around Banks, helping him with his one leg. It’s slow progress but we hobble most of the way there before enemy infantry start spewing out of the doors and passageways. Over to my right I see the Pilot take a round in the back making him stumble but he somehow, miraculously keeps going and makes it inside to the cockpit. *What a legend.*

Hector pulls a lever and a two huge loading bay door slides open revealing the cargo area. Inside there are shipping containers, some are open and others are still in the middle of being unloaded, all filled to the brim with medical supplies and stasis chambers. I put Banks down behind cover, turning around. I shoot off a whole magazine into a group of hostiles in a doorway, a couple of my rounds connect, forming a human barricade blocking the door. Ducking back into cover I count how many magazines I have left, two. *FUCK*. Pulling the charging handle on my rifle I take a quick step out. Spotting movement at the base of the ramp, but just before I shoot, I notice it's Jess, her legs shot to ribbons, crawling towards us. I scream "Sit tight Jess! I'm coming to get you"

Ducking back in behind a shipping container, I lock eyes with Hector who is to my right across the way. All he does is nods. I throw off my backpack, it'll just be extra weight. Jumping up and down and shaking my hands I sike myself up. *You got this, She needs you.*

Three, shit

Two, Bloody hell what am I about to do

One

GO! GO! GO!

I scream “Cover me” as I dash out. Hector lets out an almighty cacophony of hell fire from his machine gun, walls of the cargo bay create an deffing echo. Sprinting down the ramp and sliding to Jess’ side. I attach a carabiner from my chest rig to hers. With my left arm holding onto the cord I begin the Arduous task of dragging her ten metres up a ramp and back into safety. Jess pulls out her pistol and shoots indiscriminately at incoming hostiles, My right arm aches with every pull of the tripper, sending recoil through my body.

Bleep “we’ve got the docking bay doors open! Come around and pick us u-BLAM BLAM BLAM” Thomas’ transmission ends abruptly. Looking back over my shoulder, an attack craft with the same foreign eagle markings on it, turns away from the smoking remains of the Bay Six control centre, to face me and the cargo ship.

I gasp “Oh, fuc-” An explosion of light and sounds dumbs my senses. I can feel myself flying through the air and hitting something squishy. When I come too I find what has broken my fall, I’m lying amongst hearts and lungs, inside one of those pod thingies.

The lid closes and a fine mist begins to fill the chamber, bashing at the clear glass in a desperate attempt to escape,I scream at the top of my lungs “SOMEONE! HELP

ME!” My eyelids become unbearably heavy, and I feel my consensus slips away.

End of Prologue

