

Chapter 1

Newport Inbound

“General Ashtan Torre, are you there?”

Someone asked as they knocked on my door, waking me. I leaned up on my pillow of my bed only half lucid laying in bed, my head full of fuzz as my eyes burn hotter than a star. My room laid amiss with clothes, documents, and other miscellaneous objects. I shuffled

“I’m here.” I loudly whimpered.

“Well you are needed, high command has orders to-”

“Give me ten minutes!” Scrambling out of my bed as I reach for my closet.

‘Of Course the brass wants some shit today, after I drank myself to sleep.’ I grumbled in my head.

I slid open the closet shuffling blindly until I felt my Uniform. Throwing on deodorant and some dry shampoo so I would smell slightly less atrocious.

‘Stupid dress codes, making me do so much shit for some meeting. At Least the Beret and Cape are cool, in this gorgeous red. I feel like some space pirate or something from books I read as a kid. Too bad I am working with the GSR for now, would

make me enjoy this a lot more.'

I grabbed for my Pistol about to attach it to my belt as I got a whiff of myself taking a step back.

'Jeez, I still smell awful, I don't got time to shower either, getting off this ship and then on the monorail to high command is already half an hour. I can just lie and say I have been sick, I will get looks but better than explaining I got stupid drunk while surfing the web.'

I rushed to the door preparing myself.

"H-Hey, sorry I'm overcoming a sickness and only J-Just started to get better... don't worry I can make it to the meeting though!"

Looking away and coughing I spoke.

"Ah I understand... well, let's get to the meeting."

He looked at me visibly concerned.

'Damn I thought I wouldnt have to go, let's just get this over with.'

We walked to the monorail I followed behind. The station lights had a low hum, small scraps of trash littered the floor, as a few soldiers waited with us. Information terminals lined the wall and hung from the ceiling spewing propaganda, upcoming events, and talking about recreation on the station. I looked around playing with my body to try and distract

myself as I waited.

‘What day is it? September 12th, I think? It’s at least nice I have to only look at the Galactic Year and not a Planetary Year. Gets confusing when you add all that on top.’

The monorail pulled up as my body immediately felt hot, never have I seen it this packed. I uncomfortably squeezed past waves of soldiers, many wearing tank tops and shorts that are too short. For the first time In my life I entered the officers lounge in the monorail. Dark brown wooden panels lined the bottom half of the wall intricately carved by hand, on the top half was a pleasant olive green wallpaper filled with chrysanthemums, the republic’s flower. It even had a small but extravagant chandelier in the middle. I sat down on a chair near one of the windows, dumbfounded at the sight.

I took a breath still recovering from the wall of soldiers that stripped the monorail of its steel interior. I looked out of the window gently resting my head against it, as we flew down the track.

‘Wonder why they are dragging me here, don’t think I broke any protocol? Hopefully I am sent to the Galean Edge, or some “Protection” deployment on some planet to give my troops a change of scenery. Somehow I doubt it.’

“I have heard of your work general, it is a great honor to meet you.” He saluted me, quickly sitting afterwards.

I snapped back to reality looking at him. “Lieutenant General, but thank you. So, what's your name?” Asking him, trying not to be awkward.

“I am Commander Locke, head logistical officer of the Hampton Space Port.” He said proudly showing off his medals. I looked at the medals, most of which I had only seen once or twice.

“Huh, Never seen those medals before, where are they from?” I questioned.

“We try to be as unnoticeable as possible, the port wouldn't be as efficient without us wouldn't it? I have kept this base up and running for nearly twenty years General.” He softly chuckled after gently rubbing his thick and greying handlebar mustache.

“Well thank you Commander Locke, you do a lot for the space port.” I nodded before leaning back against the wall thinking to myself.

“Now arriving at “The Pod” Please bring all belongings off the monorail, and have a very safe and productive day.” The monotone voice rang on the Monorail.

I gently stepped off the now empty carts stepping on to The Pod, stuck in one of the most

highly secure places in GSR.

“Why are you Late Ashtan?” A calm but daggering voice came towards me.

Captain Flint looked down on me towering over me. Atop his scarred face lay a black beret adorned with the GSR Honor Guard patch, his standard issue duster covered by a thick ceramic chestplate and large shoulder pauldron.

“Overcoming a virus, I wasn't able to wash up properly, but I am fit for this meeting. Now shall we go?” I gently gestured to the door behind him. He grunted, pushing me towards the door.

I slowly walked through the hall only accompanied by the sound of my footsteps and thoughts, everything else smothered by the humdrum of white noise. I quickly walked down the hall trying to enter the antechamber as fast as I could, the dim lighted chandelier watching me as I did. The posh chamber was almost like a false sense of security styled more like a waiting room, except filled with guards and a massive stylized metal double door towering over any visitor.

“Good to see you Ashtan!” a welcoming voice called out, as he pulled me in for a hug.

“They were getting almost damn feral in there.” He mumbled to me trying not to laugh.

‘Oh damn, I must have really pissed them off this

time. Fuck what if they found out?’ I pulled away from the hug.

“Sorry I was late Bosque, I was overcoming a “cold”.” I jumbled out trying to straighten my uniform out.

I took a deep breath, my palms shaking as the doors opened. A grand room opened with extravagant murals of the GSR’s greatest accomplishments, medals lining the wall, and a massive pill shaped table made of fine wood with terminals built into every station. Some of the most powerful figures in the republic sat there eyes darting me down with a silent fury. There he was the Chief of War, General Stewart K. Beckly, awaiting me with a dead look.

“I apologize for being late, shall we get started officers?” I sat down, my spine crawling as my body fought to settle down.

Beckly nodded, clearing his throat before he opened. “It has come to our attention that Montror has gone silent and has remained silent for nearly a week. We are sending the Crimson Battalion as an investigation unit, I want this investigation to be done quickly.” His eyes beamed on me and Bosque.

“Yes sir. The Crimson Battalion never fails.” He said with a bright smile.

A logistical officer called out. “Do we have any

idea on what happened? That is the fifth highest producer of ammunition for the GSR, are we sure no communications got out. I mean we-”

‘Thousands will die, and I have to help carry that out. I know what it is, same as it always is. The poor trying to desperately save themselves, happened with mom happened with dad. Yet I am still here on a “mission” for them, I really don't want to talk to her again. Please not again.’ My mind swirling as I sat there, my eyes and body trained to make it seem like I was listening.

“Ashtan?” I quickly snapped back, re-adjusting myself as Beckly called to me.

“Sorry, I've been overcoming a sickness. Bit out of it.” I stumbled out of my pathetic excuse.

He rubbed his forehead frustrated before continuing. “Did your ship receive its new cannons? Should at least be easy enough for you to comprehend that.”

Bosque butted in for me. “Yes, already calibrated. It works flawlessly, no ship shall stand in our way sir!”

Becklys annoyance started to seem to fade away. “Alright, good. Well we have already sent the briefing to your officers, I think this meeting is wra-”

A chime rang out to the tune of the national anthem.

Everyone looked around nervously, it had been nearly a decade since it rang out. I was only a Major when that last rang out. The screen popped on displaying the news to the whole room.

“Today Consulate Eugene Kindel passed at one-hundred eleven.” The room gasped as voices whispered through the room until Berkly shushed them.

“His almost sixty years of serving the GSR make him the longest member in consulate history. From reforming Galean trade, Forming the Terrorist containment line around the FPLM, and the smashing of the Freedom or Death rebellion make him one of the best in the history of the Galean Space Republic. To mourn for such a loss schools and business will close for the week. Though the other Consulates mourn, they have already decided on a replacement.”

Eyes widened as everyone looked around in confusion.

“Already? He just died today.” An officer cried as the room grew hectic.

“Quiet! The other Consulates are on.” Beckly slammed his fist.

The four Consulates stood on the stage aged and bitter.

“Though it was hard to choose with Kindels

death just hours ago. However we cannot mourn forever, Now more than ever it's time for action! Terrorism and degeneracy has been allowed to flourish in this great republic for too long, it is our duty cauterize the cancer from our tarnished selves and be reborn! For that we have called a great man one who will help us bring that action to drive out the cancer and will not hold back. His work with the True Human and Eugenics Committee has inspired us, so it is a great honor to make Estado Vargas the fifth Consulate!"

My heart dropped as I just sat in my chair, my mind going hot again as I went blank.

‘Fuck. It's gonna be even worse when she contacts me why today, why today of all days.’

Many in the room clapped and cheered, the rest was quiet, almost somber. Beckly only sighed. “Meeting dismissed.”