

The Tale of the Armigrad

Posted on March 20th, 2011

Author: Eric Tramel

Episode Three

It wasn't long till the Shivans were successful in cutting the power from the gravity generator on the Armigrad. Navac was about 2 feet off the floor, and typing furiously. His face was illuminated by the screen, which was about the only light in the bay, an eerie blue light, apart from all the red blaring klaxons. Mench floated to Navac from across the bay, ending up in an awkward upside down position.

"I take it the Shivans were successful, Navac?" asked Mench from his perch near the ceiling.

"Yes, sir," said Navac, not looking up, "Yes they did cut the power to the gravity generator, and there was nothing I could have done about it, I'm working on the situation now."

That had answered all of Mench's questions, so he executed a less than graceful about face and pushed off towards the other end of the bay to check on his men.

* * *

Stalker was about to let go of the rung with his foot. He thought about grabbing the rung underneath him with his hands then letting go with his feet and swing downward to the next rung, but it was pretty risky, and it was a long drop to the bottom. A bead of sweat dripped past his eye. His foot slipped from the rung and he fell. One second later the gravity generator kicked off. He felt it in his stomach that it wasn't gravity pulling him downwards now, but inertia. Now this was a problem he could fix.

Stalker reached out his left and pushed hard against the ladder, this altered his trajectory to the opposite side of the shaft. He smacked into the wall. At least now he wasn't going down. He hung in the air for a few moments before issuing a sigh of relief.

"Hey guys!" he yelled. "The gravity's down, it's safe to let go!"

Sharpton thought over the prospect of letting go of the ladder. It didn't feel right to him, even in zero G. He told himself: Sharpton, you're going to have to let go of the ladder if you want to get anything done around here, so just loosen your grip. There's a good boy. Now just push off, not too lightly or you'll get stuck, nice and firm. Sharpton followed his own instructions warily, but he did and ended up on the wall above Stalker, with a slight pain in the middle of his back.

A moment later he heard the thud of Maxim's armor hitting the wall, and the issuing of a grunt of discomfort as scout 3, James Moore, also hit the wall.

"Okay, where to now chaps?" asked Sharpton amicably.

"Only one way," replied Maxim. "Down"

"Oh, right, I suppose so. Jolly good, down we go."

Sharpton heard the slight chuckles from the scouts as he pushed forward and downward along his zig zag journey down the maintenance shaft.

* * *

Hoonan looked at his hands, they seemed to be his own. The Shivans had put him in a small office. The room was furnished with a mahogany table and blue carpeting. On the walls hung historical paintings and renditions of famous GTVA battles. On the desk was a model of the NTF

Iceni. There was a laptop in front of him, turned off, and a potted plant in a corner. He could see out into space through the clear steel windows. The ship was nearing Mars at the moment, or so said the graphical display on the right wall. A colored display showed the current position of the Armigrad and all other ships in the system. There seemed to be a hell of a lot of Shivan ships around the entire system. He thought he saw one or two Juggernaut Sathanass destroyers around Earth itself.

Hoonan knew that the red dots were the deadly and feared ships because it was written quite clearly in Shivan to the side of the ship. That was a surprise, he didn't even know what written Shivan language might look like, but here it was staring him in the face, and he understood it. It seemed like he understood a lot of things he hadn't before. Things like, why is there space? What is my purpose? And even the ultimate question, or actually answer to Life, the Universe, and Everything. He found that when he asked himself this "question" he nonchalantly told himself it was 42, but he did really understand what the question was, so the answer didn't make much sense. The question was one of the things he didn't understand. (A.N.: Thank you Douglas Adams).

Just then the handle of the door turned and Hoonan quickly turned to face the doorway. The door opened and there stood the silhouette of a man.

* * *

Mench had to think things over very carefully. He could either send everyone down the shaft, without scout reports, and maybe find death. His other choice was to stay here, face death if the life support were ever cut if something major happened, and hope that Navac could make something positive happen on that computer of his. The latter, he thought, was probably the best choice of the two. He decided he'd might as well bide his time until he got some kind of a report from the scout team, where upon he would ask himself the same question again and see what his instinct, or his last meal, tells him.

Mench floated over to Navac, he was starting to get the hang of this zero G thing. Mench managed to land basically in the same position as Navac was sitting. Mench looked over his shoulder.

"So, what's up right now?" asked Mench, head raised, trying to see the screen.

"I'm trying to keep us alive at the moment sir." Replied Navac contemptuously. Sometimes he wished the universe was a smarter place, but then again Mench wasn't physics so he couldn't know what was going on. Navac let his anger subside, he didn't want a court martial.

"The ship's systems are trying to shut down the life support system in all the maintenance areas. It thinks there is an emergency somewhere since the gravity is out, so its trying to conserve air and heat, and the things needed for life in the crew sections and control centers." Said Navac, his voice as solemn as he could make it.

"Okay now that is probably the worst thing right?"

"Yes sir, we have about ten minutes now to evacuate the maintenance areas before the ship cuts life support."

"Right, well I've made my decision." Said Mench calmly. "Everybody! We need to blast that door off NOW!"

* * *

The scout team managed to make it down the shaft alive. There heard small explosions coming from the top of the shaft, but that was secondary, they just had to get out of the shaft. Fortunately, lady luck was looking down upon them. When they got to the bottom, they found that a sealing door had tried to close to block off the shaft, but a piece of derbies had fallen under the door,

and kept it from closing. Sharpton praised the Lord aloud for their good fortune. There was just enough room for the four of them to slide under the door and get to the other side.

Maxim carried a smile on his face about this turn events. He was the first under the door. He was smiling as he slid out from under the door. He smiled as he stood up and dusted himself off and he smiled when he ran into the back of a Shivan. When the Shivan turned around, Maxim's smile quickly faded, like how the tide goes out, the tide took the blood from his face too.

The tide also took Sharpton's happiness as he saw this happen from underneath the door.