

## Never

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I remember a time when I looked up at the stars with wonder and amazement. The infinitely vast and seemingly endless void that was never truly empty. I remember looking up at those sparkling lights and seeing giants walk across them like majestic gods in heaven. I remember looking at them and wondering; when can I walk like that? When can I explore the infinite possibilities hidden away between those distance lights? When can I inspire hope into the next generations? I indulge in my wild and loose fantasies. I look up once again. Slowly the giant creeps by; the war machine that it is should never be this silent. Beside it, its faithful escorts accompanying it to the battlefield the numerous little ones flocking to it like flies to an open flame. Yet, where that giant wonders, glory and songs of honour follow it and in its belly, lays my dreams of walking across the starts.

I stare out into the dark abyss. Through the window I feel like I can see all. But most importantly, I can see my home. One can never truly know paradise until they lose it. Yet, I must leave paradise. I am not looking for glory, fame, or even paradise. No. I am looking for the end. The beginning and all that it creates. For ten years I have worked hard to get where I am. I took any job I could that would help me get closer to the stars. Anything; but I have not arrived at my goal yet. I have a long way to go. I stare outside again. The darkness calms my soul and the empty space is mine to fill. Be it the images of war or what I may find. I fill the space with all that I desire and they are all mine. They are within my grasp but I can never reach out to them. I lack that ability and I lack the discipline for it.

We are not alone. I have known that more the longest time in my life. I watch as our leaders beg for mercy. They degrade themselves by going on their knees and asking for forgiveness when we have committed no wrong. But I cannot raise my voice. I look out at the void. Only there is no void. Terrifying war machines drift around us. Their guns pointed at this very ship. If we fought, no doubt we would lose. They were quick. They claimed us as their slaves. They fought wars, we aided them. Battles that are lost are our punishment. Battles won are their glory. We remained silent. I understood why. We did not want to work for them but we did. We did it so we may survive, so we may build ourselves, so we may earn our freedom. I understood this ever since I can comprehend the vastness.

We finally stood up for ourselves. Even if it meant dying, we finally defied our masters. To protect a single life, we were about to throw our entire species on the line. They ordered us to give up our weapons. We did not. They ordered us to give them our resources. We did not. They ordered us to die. We refused. The great empire that rules us fought other empires. We were small. We could never hope to be big like them. We could never hope to be powerful. But we wanted our freedom. We wanted our future to look up at the stars once more and feel empowered. We wanted to know the truth. Yet, battle after battle, we suffered. Though we claimed victories, our losses kept us from celebrating them. We held and retreated. That cycle would surely continue until we can only hold our home. Then we would have no where else to go. A small push. We managed to push them back. We gathered our forces and pushed harder. They fell back. We pushed and we pushed, until; they decided to finish us.

Another empire agreed to fight us. They wanted us. So the two sides made a wager. The winner will claim us; either as slaves or resources. We saw many slaughters. They had no remorse for life. They killed us for game. They tortured us for entertainment. They used us as pastimes. We fell back. Our leaders search for a way to end it all. But they do not listen. They did not listen when we asked. They did not listen when we begged. They did not listen when we surrendered. To make an example, they wanted to slaughter us all. They killed the colonies. They killed any ship that crossed their path. They pushed us far back. We could not hold the entrance into our home. At the very end,

we stood in front of it. All available ships; anything that could fly was mounted with guns. Anything that could fight was called. Anything that could move in space was there. To ensure our survival, we prepared several ships. The Miller, Saviour, Hope, Order and Ark Seven held the last pieces of our kind. We turned our whole planet into a weapon. They came and we fought. We fought hard. We threw ourselves at them, for every one that we take down, that is one less the sleeper ships have to face. At the height of the battle, we were broken. We gathered all our ships and left the planet. We smashed through the blockades. We rammed their ships and we shielded what was left of our kind with our own bodies. They chased us. We split up. I was in a fighter. The tense moments I felt as we fled our defenceless home. The tense moments as they appeared and fired on us.

A solitary entrance; our escape route. Most of the guards were killed. We did not travel together. While the war ships held the enemy back, all ships were to run at full speed. I guarded Ark Seven. A Corvette protected them. The speed of the ship allowed it to follow the freighters. I desperately guarded the people with every bit of strength in my body. They came in swarms. But we held them off. As the first freighters and cargo departed, Ark Seven would follow it. The situation turned hopeless. A final transmission came: Ark Seven is the last sleeper ship. The message was weak and hard to make out. But without a doubt, the others were gone. Floating in the empty void having failed their missions; everything turned grim as five massive ships came in. Our largest was their equal, but she was weakened and she would not survive the battle. They closed in. The Saberick was about to enter the node. I could see the eyes of the Admiral. He waved good bye and my ship was drawn into a large hole. The ship stopped mid-way into the hole.

"Good Luck." Those were the final words I heard from my Admiral; a fine leader who never hesitated to protect lives. I watched as the ship exploded and the spiralling walls around me shake. My ship tumbled into through the hole on the other side. We landed on the edge of another galaxy. No empire was here, no enemies were here, no friends were here. I cried in my seat. I low hum of the engine behind me mixed and twirled with my sobs. Everyone I knew was killed. I was physically broken. I was mentally broken. I was spiritually broken. I was rescued. We did not wander far. Many other races were around so our only option was to hide on the nearest habitable planet. We found one; just enough to keep us alive. It was terrible. It was a dried up rock with no redeeming qualities. We landed our ships here. The war machine we hid underground and the freighters became materials for our homes and lives. We managed to create life; we brought seeds from our planet and began life here. Quiet and simple yet forever fearful.

Several years pasted. Our lives were miserable. Living in fear and suffering and despair, we could only watch the stars from afar and live in fear that one may be here to finish us off. Our numbers were tiny. Our species went from billions to a few thousands. We got sick easily, and we weakened over time. Our numbers did not grow, we considered ourselves dead. But I did not. As luck would have it, a new friend I made created a map of the stars we could see in our sky. He found our star. A small and insignificant star tucked away in a sea wishing to wash it away. Just as distant stars inspired me to walk upon them; ours inspired me to win it back. I told stories to the young ones. A majestic and pure world; a planet where they could look up at the stars with no fear, cities reach out to the sun and seas so vast you can never see the end. A beauty which we took for granted, but we wanted to win it back. When we left, we abandoned it. Not anymore, we will take it back and we will crush those that got in our way.

I repaired my fighter. Many of the people agreed with me and decided to repair engine parts of the old ships that brought us here. We dug up the dead war machine and studied it. We learned the ways of war from it. How kill, how to slaughter and how to win. The dry planet served one purpose and one purpose only: our counter attack. We mined the planet empty and built vast fleets. We tested our weapons time and time again. We changed them to become more powerful, more deadly and more monstrous. We even changed our own appearance. We took on forms that allowed us to move in

space without gravity. We grew multiple limbs and spliced weapons into our bodies. We built our ships black and painted them red; the darkness that wanders in our hearts and the blood of our friends. We took the whole system and we began to take near by systems. We established ourselves and built massive fleets. As our ships grew bigger, our fleets grew in numbers. We mastered subspace and repaired the seal that protected us for so many years. For the first time in many years, we traversed back into the blood stained road we once walked on.

The area was littered with debris and shadows. I could see bits and pieces of the Saberick. I ordered our ships to move on. We walked over the dead in a march. The once contested area was now all but abandoned. I remember them to be filled with empire ships guarding the path. But now it was all gone. Empty is the appropriate word to describe this. We soon reached our star. Even more dust and echoes were here. We carefully made our way to our planet. We were so excited we did not simply jump to it but we walked all the way there. There was no greeting for us. No celebration. No welcoming. We reached our home. But our home was not what we envisioned. The blue planet was now a dust ball floating unforforgingly around a tired sun. Garbage and filth thrown into the planet and nothing could be living on it now. Its proud cities, its beautiful skies and deep seas were no more. It was raped beyond recognition and it was now an ugly mass too shameful to show itself. I snapped. I ordered all ships to fire upon the planet. We blasted the surface with all our might. We did it until all traces of garbage was now glass.

We did not do it because we hated it. No, we did it because we loved it. We loved our planet and seeing it in such a disgraceful manner would just ruin the dreams of the future. So we blasted it until it looked war torn. Not disgraced, but defeated in noble glory. But no matter how hard we fired, the image of the defiled planet burned itself into our minds. We decided not to forget it. No, we burned the images into our soul. We pasted it to every member of our species. The final push. We all changed. We threw away our former selves and became hideous monsters bent on destruction. We entered the empire's space. As expected they attacked. We let several ships get destroyed. We boasted their egos and then we launched our attack. In a matter a month we broke the back of the empire. We overwhelmed them we made them understand that we do not fear death; that we WERE death. The more they killed us, the more of us came. The systems we built our ships in expanded, we adopted new techniques to create them. We did not build ships anymore, we grew them. As more and more rolled off, we invaded and crushed the empire. We left our ships around their planets and blasted them until the outer layer was nothing more than glass. They sent us numerous transmissions. They ranged from apologies to threats. We ignored them all. They begged, they surrendered, we kill and we slaughtered. They tried to take our ships, they board us, but we killed them. Our monstrous ships were only matched by our monstrous appearance. Our warriors equalled ten of theirs and we inspired fear and despair into their eyes as we killed them. We broke them. Their fleets followed wherever we directed them. We lined them up and just as we prepared to leave the system; our ships returned and destroyed them all. We abducted the emperor; the very one that ordered the attack on our home. We showed him our world and what we did to it. He understood the moment we showed him. He held his breath; we opened his eyes to show him the scene before him. We slew his citizens; we flung garbage at his planet and defiled everything just as he did with our home.

We watched as he broke. We slowly killed him. We made them understand the pain and suffering they imposed on their slaves. We left our ships there to watch as the survivors suffocated in their own world. They tried to resist but we finally showed them true despair as we eliminated their star before their very eyes. The last thing they saw was their life giver taking all that it had given them, back. We continued our fight. We broke the other empires and killed their home planet through bombardment with our beam weapons. We liberated the slaves. We did not accept thanks or any of that sort. We returned home. We fired on the planet once more. But this time, our weapons broken down the layers and we cleaned up the surface. We cleaned the ground and every where we could work in. After many efforts, we returned the planet to its former glory. But we dare not step on it

anymore. We lost that right many years ago. We planted the seeds of life on it and watched. We stared at our estranged home for long periods of time.

We soon learned that the freed races fought and many of the superior ones took control. Much like how the empire held their areas, the new empires did the same. We were finally provoked to attack. We followed our system of killing and before long, other races thanked us. They followed the same path. They tried not to make the same mistakes as their predecessors. They tried to eliminate us. We killed everything that knew of our existence. We were in despair. For the longest time, we were greeted with guns and fire. Not once did one try to reason with us initially. We turned off our normal means of communication and adopted a new one. Only if they truly and desperately want to communicate with us that we will respond. Before that day arrives we will take more lives. Before that day arrives we will despair and continue our ruthless campaign of righteous slaughter. Until the day one earns the right to kill us. Until one appears that shows potential to communicate, we will kill. We are after all monsters. We left our planet one last time. We lost our right to walk upon its pureness. We, the personifications of death could not touch it anymore. We were hideous monsters that killed. Our old selves are gone; and so we embrace our new roles with regret and agony. To kill all those that has the potential to rule, so that others ignorant of the conflicts may have their time. Until the day comes when the one with the power to communicate with us comes, may this blue planet, third from the sun, forever remain beautiful.

The End