

Chapter 5: Closing

It has been 27 years since the Second Great War. Tales are still told of the massive battles between the Terrans and Vasudans. In spite of what most say, the Vasudans were right about one thing. The economy of Earth was never salvageable. Even after the boom given by the war, Earth collapsed under the pressure of wartime debts. Most still blame the Vasudans for what happened. They're wrong, but I usually don't correct them. The fall of Earth is still a very sensitive subject.

Even so, I don't think we shall ever forget those final moments of the war. After all, our fathers never tired of telling us of the Second Shivan Incursion. Walking down the streets of any city on any planet in Sol, you can hear the tales of the magnificent death of Admiral Kohler, the works of Captains Ropert and Leight, the life of Admiral White, and the demise of Samul. You can hear almost anything you want regarding the war. The veterans can be found everywhere you look, some still wearing their squad emblems. Oh, you're probably too young to remember what happened. But I remember. Before the war broke out and even during it for a time, I was a reporter for the GTVA News. I even managed to compile and publish a short history of the war. *Terran Pride*. I doubt if you've heard of it. It was never really completed. About the time the Delta Serpentis battle ended, quality information became very hard to find. But if you have the time, I can tell you all about it and what supposedly happened afterwards.

It had been 27 years since the Second Incursion ... Well, story has it, after the Terran forces pushed through the Beta Aquilae node, they were greeted by the rest of the Vasudan fleet, who had set up the system as a kind of base of operations. The battles in Beta Aquilae were magnificent. During one skirmish, the Relentless is said to have taken down three Besets and a Naunet. Probably an exaggeration, but that's the story. Unfortunately, a few days after that, Admiral Samul ordered that the Relentless be specifically targeted. Somehow, he found out that Admiral Kohler was on board. Very few know exactly what happened, due to all of the action at the time, but the Relentless went down fighting. The story is that the Relentless, losing hull integrity, pitched it in and dove into Admiral Samul's command ship, blowing both ships up in one of the most glorious yet most saddening explosions of the war. Now, Samul's ship did go down that day in battle. No one really knows if it was the Relentless that did it though. But I guess it really isn't important now.

Anyways, with Kohler and Wulf dead, White took over operations in Beta Aquilae and even managed to push his forces back to Vega. His wartime experience probably would have helped push the Terrans back to Deneb if he hadn't been captured. During one of the skirmishes, the Atlantis was left alone in the front lines with a disabled engine. Rather than destroy the ship, Vasudans boarded her and took White capture, holding him for trial.

Anyways, White was tried and convicted of conspiracy to assassinate the Vasudan Chancellor and Admiral Garret. There wasn't enough push to execute him since everyone knew that Kohler was the one who had organized the entire thing and Wulf was the one who provided the Armageddon. So, since they couldn't get the votes to kill him, they banished him to the desert planet of Vasuda III. Word was that a few months after his banishment, he died in a sandstorm, eaten away by Vasudan buzzards, eaten alive by the Vasudan buzzards...

After White's banishment, Captains Ropert and Leight took the reigns of the GTA. They had the ship power. And they had the experience. Don't really know what happened. I guess the loss of Kohler and White took the wind out of the campaign. But the Vasudans still weren't satisfied... Well, you know the rest.

You know, I still don't completely understand it, but I think I'm beginning to catch a glimmer of the light. The Vasudans were wrong about the great protectors. They got the destroyers right. The Shivans were the great destroyers, all right. But they aren't the great protectors as well. No, the Vasudans underestimated themselves. They're the great protectors. When they pushed us all the way back into Sol, when they disabled that Knossos, they did a great service to the universe... They forever protected the galaxy from ever again experiencing the damages of Terran pride.