

The Tale of the Armigrad

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Prologue

This story takes place 15 years after the second war with the Shivans. When the Sathanass' jumped after the supernova, their advanced technology allowed them to jump to the Sol system, where they conquered the peoples of Earth and claimed the system for themselves. One lone survivor managed to make it out of the system and tell the GTVA about what had happened. He died shortly after from injuries.

The GTVA started to build the Armigrad after the destruction of the Colossus. The need of it arose after the GTVA lost a huge number of ships trying to make an invasion of the Sol system. They were able to complete the Arimigrad in a relatively short period of time because of stepped up construction efforts and the fact that they already had all the technology needed to build it. The Armigrad weighed in at 20 kilometers. New computer technology allowed a much reduced crew size on the ship, only numbering in the hundreds.

After the Shivans mercilessly slaughtered millions of captives, the GTVA launched the Armigrad right out of dry dock, for a retaliatory attack against the Shivans. Since of such short notice the Armigrad didn't have a full fighter bay, only about 20 fighters and bombers were in the bay when it was launched, none of which had pilots. A small escort group of Sobeks and the aging GTD Aquataine were sent with it. Apparently the shivans were ready, and already had a full compliment waiting for the convoy. The bombers and fighters took out the Sobeks quickly, before the weapons systems of the Armigrad could come online. The Aquataine stayed and held off the Shivans with its large compliment of fighters, including the legendary 70th Blue Lions. They kept the Shivans off and allowed the Armigrad to escape. The Armigrad jumped and ended close to the moon Europa. Several new Shivan transport ships attached to the Armigrad and took control of the ship.

Episode One

"Where the hell are we going?"

"You'll know when you get there" replied Sergeant Sok

They had been traveling on the transports for about two hours. There were four other troop/personnel transports in the convoy, along with heavy fighter cover. The convoy was getting close to their destination. Apprehension hung in the air like incense at a Buddhist temple. The men shifted around in their seats, making small talk with their comrades in arms.

"I heard it was pretty bad" stated first private Mench to his friend beside him. "40% casualties so far I heard."

"Bother" said Mench's friend Sharpton. "Its all rumors."

"Well, how do you explain its disappearance, eh?"

Sergeant Sok stood at the front of the cargo bay, where the troops were seated. He raised his voice so he could be heard. "Our mission is a follows...." He started.

Mench turned and looked out the view port above his seat. There was a glint from behind the moon, the moon Europa in the Sol system.

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“Captain!” yelled the young sensors operator as he ran across the bridge to meet Captain Hoonan, who was standing by his chair. Hoonan turned to face the operator.

“Sir,” he saluted. “There are breaches in decks B, C, and G and..”

The operator was cut short by a large explosion that blew off the door to the bridge, catching an officer by the head, his body fell to the floor. The sensors operator was thrown to the floor and the Captain flung into his seat, hurting his back and right arm.

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“The GTVC Armigrad, who was clearing a path to Earth for future operations, was sabotaged. We do not know what faction did it, none are claiming it as their doing. There is a battle going on inside the hull, and we are going to put a stop to it, so get ready.”

Sharpton pulled down his visor and activated his helmet’s HUD display. It flashed blue and then came on clear. Mench leaned towards him.

“Just rumors, huh?” he said aggravatingly, to get on Sharptons nerves.

Sharpton studied his gun and looked up into Mench’s eyes.

“Personally, I had rather hoped it was.”

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“Shivans!” yelled Captain Hoonan. He brought his pistol to bear, up from its holster on his leg. Hoonan stood and fired a couple of rounds, wounding one Shivan. They were faster then they appeared, one cleared the distance between the Captain and the entrance of the bridge in less than a second. The Shivan grabbed Hoonan by the neck and dragged him off the bridge, his boots leaving two black streaks across the floor of the bridge, his pistol fell from his right hand and clattered to the ground.

The sensors operator sat up, having passed out momentarily. The last thing he saw was a Shivans limb come down across his face.

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The convoy was less than three clicks away from the Armigrad and closing. The fighters had gone ahead and disabled the weapons, engines, and a few extra sub systems. It was quiet inside transport one, everyone sat in a numb, nervous, silence and waited, preparing mentally for what was to come. Mench closed his eyes and clenched his gun tighter, mouthing the words of an ancient prayer.

“As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...”

One soldier across the aisle was dry washing his hands. Sharpton was reminded of Lady McBeth. He had gone to see a recent reproduction of the famous Shakespearean play three weeks earlier with his wife, Hannah.

“He’ll be the first to die” thought Sharpton. He then let the thought slip his mind and he stared intently at the wall opposite him.

“These look rather flimsy.”

Flimsy was putting it lightly. Of course that’s only compared to the Armigrad’s massive beam cannons. A green beam lanced across space and smacked into the side of Transport 3. The beam cut through its light armor and erupted out of the other side. The transport exploded in a fireball due to its leaking reactor.

“Holy Sh*t!” yelled Mench, and he braced himself in his seat as Transport 1 made a hard

bank to the right, a beam barely grazing the side of the transport. Sparks came flying from the cockpit. The transport was leaking coolant to its reactor, and pretty soon it would heat up enough and explode. Sergeant Sok was on the radio.

“Alpha 1, you said you took out its weapons!”

“We did but...”

Static. Mench saw an Enries class assault fighter fly across the view port, exploding. Sok quickly hailed command.

“Command, we require immediate assistance, it’s a slaughter!”

“Transport 1, battle group 125, we at this time cannot send reinforcements, maybe in another hour or more, the closest fleet is in Alpha Centuri, but is far from the node.

“Command, we don’t have time.”

The main power cut off. Only life support and other necessities were still working.

“Quick! To the pods, troops. Double time!” shouted Sok at the top of his lungs. There were two pods on the transport, each accommodating 10 men. In the confusion Mench was separated from Sharpton as he rushed to pod one. Mench dived into the pod, and being the last one in, closed the hatch. Sok, still inside the transport, closed the secondary hatch. He then moved and did likewise for pod two. There was a small window in the hatches. Sharpton looked up through it. Sok saluted.

“Oh my God, he’s not going to...” he said. “Sergeant, no!”

But it was too late. Sok had pressed the ejection button and the two pods were flung away from the transport at high velocity. Sok looked out the window, a tear falling from his cheek, and stared at Europa. The transport deco pressurized.

The explosion was magnificent. It was a sight Mench would never forget. His commander, dead. He was looking out the view port at the wreckage in amazement. This was one of the bravest men the GTVA had ever recruited, thought Mench. One of the soldiers placed a hand on Mench’s shoulder. Mench sat numbly while all of them placed their hands over their hearts and looked out the window.

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Captain Hoonan managed to open his eyes. He looked up and stared in horror and disgust into the face of a Shivan. He tried to back up and get away, but he found that he was up against a wall. The Shivan had a small metal device in its hand, which Hoonan couldn’t figure out what it was because of the dim light. The Shivan reached over and thrust the object into Hoonan’s ear. His eyes bulged and his muscles tightened, mostly from the pain from this procedure. Then he relaxed, his arms falling limp. The Shivan made an odd noise.

“Karr Hissthh Zecussthss” is what his ears heard.

“Welcome from your slumber Terran” is what his mind interpreted from the strange noise.

“Shsshskhtss” a rough laugh from the Shivan.

“You are just like the others whom we have conquered in our lifetime”

“W-w-why?” stuttered Hoonan. For once in his life, he couldn’t keep his composure. The Shivan cocked its head and stuck its face centimeters from Hoonan’s. Its third eye turned a bright red, piercing through Hoonan’s brain like a spear.

“You will find out soon enough, child of Terra” it said in what must have been a sinister

voice, for a Shivan.

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After the short mourning time for their former leader, everyone took their proper places inside the pod. Mench pushed the after burn of the event from his mind, at least. He cleared his throat .

“Men, I am afraid that...” there was an explosion. Another transport down. “We can’t stay here. Soon the life support systems will fail, so our only way out of this is to get aboard that ship, it’s the only way.”

“Sir,” one of the younger men said. “Hell, I’m not going on that ship with only twenty of us.”

“Do you want to die out here?” replied Mench coldly. There was a green glow inside the pod as a beam lanced from the ship, causing a fighter to explode. The combination of the two made the Ensign shut up and sit down.

“Let’s see if anyone else survived.” Mench got on the radio. Sharpton’s face appeared on the vid screen.

“Hey Mench”

“Do you see any others?” asked Mench.

“Uhhh, I believe there are two more pods...” answered Sharpton.

“So that’s forty, hmmm...” Mench thought briefly. “Do you have the blueprints?”

“Sure do, transmitting them to you now.”

Mench looked over the blue prints on the screen. Five minutes later, he recontacted Sharpton.

“Meet us at the forward top engine. There doesn’t seem to be much beam over there, and tell the others.”

“Right-O”

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Hoonan and the Shivan left the room. He saw that they were actually in the brig, but who cared? Hoonan followed the Shivan numbly, blindly, and unfeeling. There were prisoners in the cells, some looked already dead. In some, bodies were piled up into huge heaps. As he continued walking, he saw horrible experiments in the med labs and there were piles of weapons and metal objects. Most likely to be melted down or use in the Shivan war effort.

Why wasn’t he making a run for it? There was a searing pain in his head. Why? Because he didn’t care, who cared anyway? No one, that’s who. No, no, this wasn’t right at all, he thought. Pain again, and again, and again, after each time he thought a wrong thought. He gripped his forehead, his knees felt wobbly. He put his hand against the wall of the corridor for support. No, not a mindless automaton. Zap. Who? What? Whatever. He slid down the wall. The Shivan stopped and turned around.

“Finding our new technology ingenious, yet painful, I presume?”

Hoonan couldn’t form words, though his jaw moved. The Shivan picked him up and in midair stopped, seeing the captain’s face.

“Do not worry now, we are one in the same.”

The Shivan out Hoonan on its back. Hoonan groaned. Then looked up, and groaned again, passing out.

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The group of four pods skimmed silently across the surface of the Armigrad. The turrets they passed were huge. It looked like a totally alien landscape, with a metal ground and cube trees. There was silence in pod one as everyone stared out the view port with apprehension. As they across the rise in the hull, Engine 3 came into view. There's our objective, thought Mench. The engine was situated above the the hull on a huge support structure. It got even larger as they got closer. But hey, Mench thought, what'd we expect for a twenty kilometer ship. Mench got on the radio with Sharpton.

"Sharpton, the engine is right ahead of us. We need to move a little bit faster, so that none of those turrets can track us as we got up the support structure." He stated.

"Yes sah!"

"There is a maintenance craft entrance midway up the structure, we might be able to enter the ship there."

"Yes, we've spotted it, we will gather there shortly."

The entrance got closer and closer. As they neared, the bay seemed to be closed. Sharpton hailed pod one.

"Mench, this bay is closed, there's no way to get in, and we don't have any guns to blow off the door."

"Wait a second.."replied Mench. "Is that a manual open panel I see there?"

"It looks that way sir, but what are you suggesting?"

Mench turned around from the vid screen and looked at his crew.

"Is there a tech engineer, here?" he asked.

Someone near the back raised his hand. He stood up and walked to Mench.

"Sir, I am Ensign Navac, I am a technical engineer." He stated.

Mench turned back to the screen.

"Sharpton, we got a man here for the job, an Ensign?Navav."

"I'll assume you will take care of this problem, we are on standby."

Mench looked over his shoulder at Navac and raised his eyebrow.

"Are you ready for an EVA?"

Fifteen minutes later, Navac was on a tether to pod one, floating towards the maintenance bay door and left thinking, what the hell did I get myself into? He landed against the wall of the support structure and crawled over to the manual open panel. He pressed the button. Nothing happened.

"Um, sir," Navac said. "It appears to be locked or broken."

"Well do something about it." was Mench's reply.

Navac took a tool from his belt, where they were floating helplessly. Hmmm, laser torch should do the job. He took the torch and managed to take off the panel. There were a large number of wires leading from the panel to the inside of the hull. Navac reached his hand into the hole and grabbed hold of the main circuit board for the panel.

“Hurry up, Navac.”

“Yes sir, I’m hurrying.” was his reply.

The converter on the board had blown, showing that it wasn’t purposely locked. He took out his wire cutters. He cut the power source to the converter and removed it. “This is pod three, were being tracked by a turret. Hurry with the door, now!”

Navac was trying to splice two wires together when that transmission came. He got nervous and fumbled, the wire cutters floated away, he was unable to reach them. He went back, trying to twist a wire to another one with his bulky gloves. He then rerouted the power.

“Holy Sh*t, the turret has acquired lock! Dammit open the door!” said the leader of pod three. The door finally opened as the beam charged up. Pods one and two rushed in quickly, Navac still on the tether was jerked away from the panel and into the bay. The beam fired and hit pod three, which smacked into pod four, which in turn flew up and ran into the engine wash, exploding. A chain reaction ensued, blowing up a huge chunk of engine three and disabling it. They numbered only twenty now.

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The door slammed shut behind them. The chamber pressurized and reached normal atmosphere. Navac sat up. He looked around. The lights inside the bay were very bright, a strong contrast to the blackness of space. The two remaining pods settled onto the floor and powered down. Navac stood up and took off his helmet as the rest of the marines disembarked from the pods. Navac took the tether off his belt and began to take off the EVA suit. None of the others looked at him. Navac just stood there and watched the others line up facing the wall in front of him. Sharpton came up behind him.

“Kid, you did your best, there was nothing you could have done, they’ll understand that soon enough.”

“But, sir..” Navac replied.

“No, hush, go take your spot, speak no more of this event, don’t open any new wounds.”

“Yes sir.”

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There was a shaking across the ship that jolted Hoonan on the back of the Shivan. He nearly fell off but he regained his balance and sat up. They were walking to the bridge. A myriad of Shivans were walking in and out of halls, talking to others, and some were rushing to maintenance shafts as silent red lights flashed.

He held his forehead, where there was an insistent throbbing. The Shivan was gaining speed, jolting and bumping uncomfortably. All the lights, movements, and noise were making Hoonan quite nauseated. He moved his right hand from his forehead and wiped sweat off his brow. Hoonan noticed that the ship was beginning to change in appearance as they moved down one of the long halls. It looked less like a spotless, polished, metal terran ship, but more like something organic, something living.

The organic features were increasing in number, variety, shape, size, and color...not to mention smell. The stench was getting almost unbearable for Hoonan, and it didn’t help his already queasy stomach. He noticed that they were moving towards the former security headquarters of the Armigrad. They stopped at the camera room, and the Shivan let Hoonan off of its back.

There were a few Shivans monitoring the Vid Screens. There were a few showing more Shivan transports docking with the Armigrad and a few fighters and bombers being transported to

the ship's massive fighter bay, which could house up to 1,000 fighter and bomber wings, along with multiple transports and other GTVA vessels, such as an Aeolus cruiser. Each of the hundreds of screens on the walls and on the control panels were cycling through multiple camera view. Hoonan was looking at one on the control panel just to his right. Wait, was that what he thought he saw? The pictures cycled through again, this time he was sure. He had seen soldiers onboard the ship. He was confused...but how the, all the transports were destroyed, he thought to himself. Suddenly a powerful and final sense of nausea came over his already weary body. His stomach released its contents upwards and onto the vid screen Hoonan was watching. The liquid caused the panel to short circuit, a very small plume of smoke rising from the panel. Shivan immediately adjacent, for the first one had left, turned abruptly and hit him across his face, knocking Hoonan unconscious.