

# CHAPTER TEN

## —BREACH—

### **Jekotian Naval Fleet, South of the Brenodi Empire, nearing Thule October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2985**

“Bring main cannons to bare, synchronize targeting with HOPERISING’s primary targets,” Ralis shouted at her officers. They were nearing Thule, and taking a lot of fire. Already two ships had been lost, and time was too important for the fleet to rescue the survivors. In the distance, echoing booms could be heard as the coastal cannons fired another barrage.

“Main cannons ready, firing,” one of her officers shouted, followed by the echoing explosions of the warships massive cannons.

“Bring the artillery cannons to bare, synchronize targeting with HOPERISING’s tertiary targets, blow them to hell,” she shouted, before turning to a communications console. She activated it with a few key strokes, and High Commander Patterson’s face appeared on screen.

“Sir, I hope you know what you’re doing, we’ve already lost two ships, and the closer we get the more accurate their cannons are,” said, speaking into a microphone. “At this rate, following you’re targeting, casualties will be in the thousands.”

“Don’t worry Ralis, we know what we’re doing. Just hit those generators and the control center will lose control of the cannons. I’d love to see them stand up to a fifteen shell barrage, would only mean a new alloy for us to salvage and play with,” he replied.

“Yes, sir,” she reluctantly replied before deactivating the communications console.

“Have RS2 and RS3 synchronize firing control for their artillery cannons with ours. Retarget cannons for the shells to impact in a one-hundred metre diameter cluster. I want that generator complex levelled,” she instructed her weapons control and communications officers.

“Yes ma’am,” they replied together. The communications officer sent a message to RS2 and RS3, the other two Raven Spear’s, and received override codes in response. He passed the codes on to the weapons officer, who input them with the new targeting protocol.

“Artillery cannons synchronized and targeted, firing,” her weapons officer shouted. Fifteen massive explosions sounded, mere seconds apart, creating what sounded like rolling thunder. The ships forward momentum was stopped by the sheer force of firing the five cannons together. In the distance, a massive explosion was heard. The cannons ceased.

“Give me a video uplink with HOPERISING, I want to see the damage,” Ralis ordered her communications officer. Moments later, he had linked the satellites primary optics array to the bridge’s secondary viewport. HOPERISING was rapidly zooming in to the generator complex, making millions of micro-calibrations each second. Seconds later, the final optics lens adjusted focus, and the damage was clear. The entire area was consumed by a blazing firestorm, slowly sweeping through the surrounding forest towards the coast. The generation station itself was rubble. Car-sized chunks of stone and metal lay scattered everywhere, and one of the Tesla coils from the generator was arching electricity between the remaining capacitors. Minutes

passed, and as the fire reached the coastal cannons, people fled to the coast. Seconds later, the cannons detonated; either a munitions cook-off caused by the heat, or explosive charges to deny the Jekotians their prize. The bridge erupted in cheers, the first victory in the coming campaign.

“I want rescue craft sent to the wreckage of the ships we lost. They have one hour to recover any survivors. As much as I don’t want to leave anyone behind, we need to advance. The Brenodi will be organizing a naval fleet. We must be ready and swift,” Ralis told her officers.

### **One Hour Later**

“Echo Two-Three to RS3, requesting clearance to land, survivors onboard, over,” the pilot said into his helmet microphone. The rescue operation had been a success, somewhat. Between the two-hundred crew lost when the two ships sank, fifty-eight had been found, four died of hypothermia on the dropships back to RS3’s onboard hospital.

“Affirmative Echo Two-Three, you’re cleared to land as soon as Echo Two-Four clears the landing area,” the ships air-traffic controller replied.

A total of three dropships had been dispatched. Echo Two-Two had recovered twenty-three crew members from the wreckage of the Iosa, Echo Two-Three, Zack’s dropship, had recovered eighteen from the wreckage of the Tyan, and Echo Two-Four had recovered seventeen survivors from the frigid waters.

“RS3 to Echo Two-Three, you are cleared for landing. Emergency personnel will meet you on the deck and take the survivors. You are then to taxi to hanger elevator five, over,” Zack was instructed by the air-traffic controller.

“Affirmative RS3, Echo Two-Three out.”