

*Chapter 10*  
*“GYspy JaZZ”*



He still tasted Addie. He still smelled the sweetness of her love. He stood outside in a daze, facing the dawn. Was he waiting for death?

The sound of his heartbeat was thumping in his head. A song called, 'My Life', played over and over again with haunting words that drove his heart deeper into the abyss, the abyss where only spirits cursed and loneliness resided. He knew he wasn't the only one thinking this way today. Others must be regretting things they've done in their past too. He couldn't fix any of it, not right now anyway.

Life was a scoundrel. In this moment when he faced the worst darkness imaginable, he walked a stand-up comic specifically to make jokes of all that he'd done wrong in his life. No matter how hard he tried, his brain couldn't shut out the barrage of jokes. They just kept raining down on his shoulders making him feel heavy and awkward. Was this real?

The burden of his thoughts were very real though and not imagined. They brought back painful and neglected memories. There were plenty of times his ego had gotten in the way of someone else's feelings. For some crazy reason, he never thought it mattered enough for him to notice. After all, wasn't everything important and relevant focused on only himself - his life, his goals, his achievements?? There were times he wanted things done his own way and in the past, it seemed okay. But, now, when his own serious accusations against himself echoed in his ear... as the gateway to the great beyond brought down a harsher judgement, he realized the hurt he had provoked in others and the selfishness he had personified. Oh, yeah, he saw their faces vividly now; watching his soul struggle to find a divergent kind of truth, one very different than his own version. He ached inside.

He tried to think of the upcoming war. *Focus you fool*. Instead, the morning light brought dark shadows. Distraction was easy. He was unfocused. He was crazy.

The cool air blew against his face, making a mockery of his life and his cheek. The comedian was cruel...because when the punchlines came, they drove into his essence with the unforgiving touch of a shiny long sword. The resulting laughter was hideous, and the jokes were all on him. He couldn't rewrite the script. He couldn't conceal or change his mistakes! The show would go on. The material had already gone to press. The front page headlines were already read. The reviews hurt like hell.

A time bomb went off in his head, good God, this was living hell, facing the truth about the hollow life he'd lived.

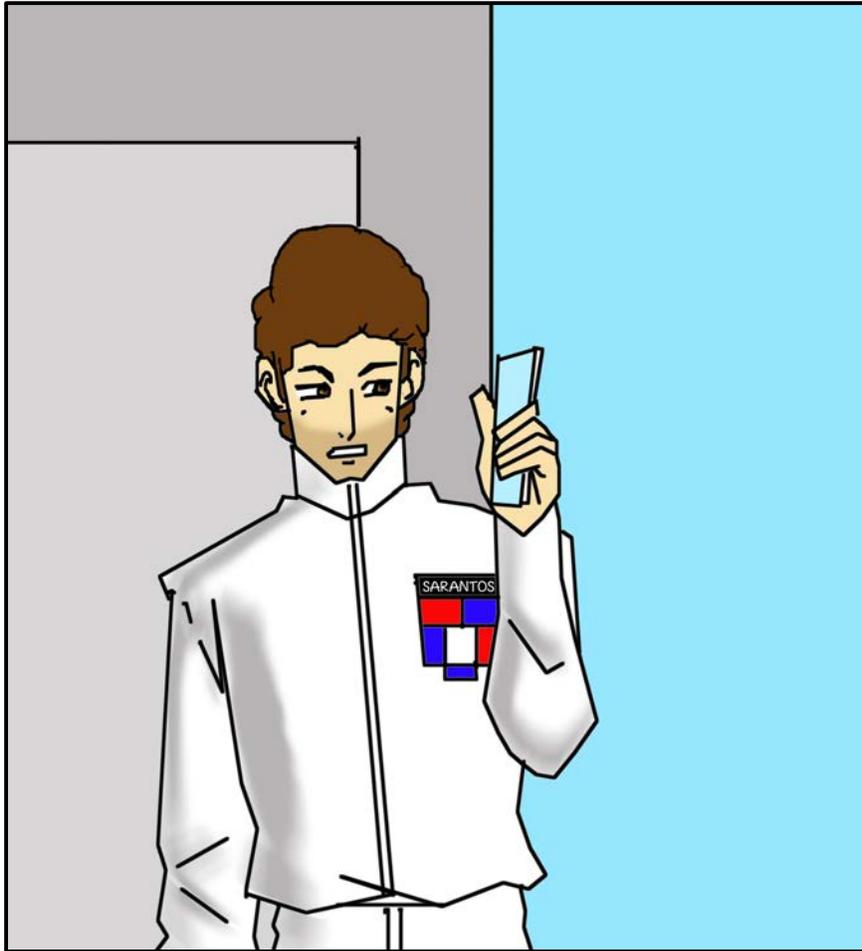
His life assumed the form of dancing children that created a million waves in the ocean that roared against the shore. Sad scenes of faded pictures belonging to his past flickered by like an old movie. Some were fragments of forgotten memories that snickered at him, in this, his blackest moment. All was quiet suddenly.

Hell, was the honest realization of what his life had become but realizing it now was tragic. It was too late to change anything. Was this God's irony?

The hypocrisy of this, his final moment, when the blurry vision finally cleared and he could somehow make out the dense trees sprawled on the forest floor and in some way knew their individual names. They each had a life that sighed on their own, separate from the forest. They were each alone, rare, but working together to accomplish something more. He couldn't do a damn thing with this new-found knowledge. It arrived at the end of his time. He could only hope that if he managed to survive this war, he could use this new gift of insight to pass along to others. Surely, he wouldn't forget this great lesson the minute he was free to be human again. He wanted to believe he'd return from this hell a changed man.

It's true what they say about the quiet before the storm. The woods were deathly silent, the camp was mum, but the storm had already started raging inside his mind right before the expected apocalypse.

He had sent Addie to deliver evil onto the enemy, alongside Brel. He had no choice really. As much as he would've loved keeping her next to him and safe from harm, it was their best option. It was the strategy that made the most sense to him as a Captain.



His thoughts were suddenly interrupted as Brel made contact. “Captain, we’ve set all the explosives. We could stay back after the initial explosion and use the laser guns against them too, then keep retreating back toward the outpost. I received a message a minute ago. The tunnels have an impenetrable wall that closes at the entrance. There’s a digital hand-held device hidden behind a secret panel in the eating area there. Press 911 for the code to

release it on the replicator itself. Then press the red button to activate the door and seal the perimeter. There are only a few people who know about it, that’s why it took so long to get the information.”

They finally had a way out. There was justice in the world! The OKurian were clever. He assumed that only the construction crew, OKurian military, and their government knew about these tunnels. He even studied at their academy for a term and still never knew of their existence. That was one great way to protect your defenses. However, now that they’d started an evacuation of some of the cities, more people would know about them.

“Captain? Did you get that?”

“Yes, yes, sorry, Brel. Thanks for that information, and I agree, explode, use the weapons, and move back each time. Let me know as you get closer. We’ll hold the gate for as long as we can and move underground when necessary. Good luck.”

“Yes, Captain.”

Boom, Boom, Boom...screams, silence and then boom, boom, boom attached with more screams. It had started. The symphony was underway.

The explosions were a signal to the flyers and he watched the sky as one by one, they took to the air. They were magnificent and he wished he was on board one of them. He loved the view and felt like he had more control over what was happening up there than down here. Maybe because he could see a larger perspective than standing down here behind a fenced wall waiting for signals and intel. Being Captain definitely wasn’t what he expected sometimes.

He headed to the mess hall and listened to the explosions going off periodically. They did an excellent job in placing them, otherwise the enemy would’ve spotted them. He thought it’d slow them down but they obviously didn’t care about their fighters. They thought them expendable.

The laser show had started by the time he located the device and returned back to the gated entrance. He counted his flyers and was glad they were all still intact. Suddenly, a new weapon was shooting them from the ground. It must be that strange weapon Brel had told him about. It appeared to be lethal and he was afraid if it hit any of his ships, it would be certain death for the ship and those on board.

He stood at the gate waiting to see if his troopers were coming so he could let them back safely inside. Immediately, he thought he saw movement to the left of the woods. He made sure he had grabbed a multiple laser weapon for himself. He had to protect the fort and his comrades. Either way, he was ready.

He steadied the gun and kept his eyes forward, scanning back and forth diligently searching the woods.

Boom, boom.

That explosion was too close! Something got past the first set of explosives. No scream accompanied that blast either. He concentrated in the direction of the bomb. There wasn't any movement, yet. Scouring the rest of the perimeter before focusing back to the explosion proved beneficial. Ten fighters came out of the woods, grinning, and raising their weapons.

He pressed the laser. It was crazy. Six of them disappeared, gone in a flash. He got ready to shoot again, but the other four started running back into the woods. He shot three more of them. One survived.



Turning quickly towards the direction of the last explosion, he noticed some movement along the ground.

“Captain, we’re coming out of the woods. I killed the last one that got away.”

“Brel, good. The explosives to the right went off too. Something is crawling along the ground there and heading towards the gate.”

“I’m on it, sir.”

He waited patiently but his group didn't reappear. Then Brel appeared out of nowhere standing at the gate with a wounded Belock soldier who'd lost a leg in an explosion. He always reasoned the Belocks must have green blood and sadly he now knew he was right. Brel had already tied off the amputated wound with the soldier's own shirt and the tourniquet probably saved his life. He was capable and strong because that Belock was one huge Belock! Brel was a one-man show. He had yet to figure out an area where Brel lacked expertise.

"Captain, good to see you."

"Well, done, Brel."

Suddenly, he heard clamor behind him and Born and Cleary were there to take the prisoner to sick bay.

"Born, make sure he's inside a cell, after he's taken care of by Doc Cleary. Use the shield when he's in sick bay. I know he lost a leg but if he can crawl, he could still use weapons for us causing more chaos and saving lives."

"Yes, Captain."

Cleary gave him a stern look. "Captain, I'm quite capable of tending to my patient. I know the procedure of having an enemy inside the ship and it's no different down here."

"Sorry, Cleary, I didn't mean to imply that you didn't know what to do, however it is a Belock."

She helped hoist her patient up, throwing one arm over her shoulder and the other one over Born's. The patient moaned. She looked at Sarantos and winked.

“Captain, I drug my patients.”

He grinned, and so did Brel. That’s nice, he thought, the ultimate warrior also has a sense of humor.

He felt concerned about the large green haired creature. He knew of their inhuman strength and their raw free-form fighting skills. They had no principles which made them a ruthless fighting machine. They had no concern for their own life when in combat. Their honor had no code of ethics either.

Sarantos opened the door for them as Cleary and Born carried the riled soldier inside. When he turned around, Brel was gone.

He was alone again, and moved towards the front of the fenced-in section. He stood in front of the security gate listening to anything and everything.

The wind had picked up but the fighters were still moving comfortably around the sky. The armies approach had to have slowed down with the air attacks distracting their forward progress.

A loud noise made him search up at the heavens. There was a blinding flash that just missed a fighter. What was that weapon?? Even Brel didn’t know. Obviously, it was some kind of cutting-edge device invented by the axis scientists. Whish...it just kept shooting.

“Brel, tell the fighters to get out of there, now.”

There was no response. He ran back toward the building to access the radio tower, but he didn’t make it there before a sound exploded overhead. He covered his ears in pain.



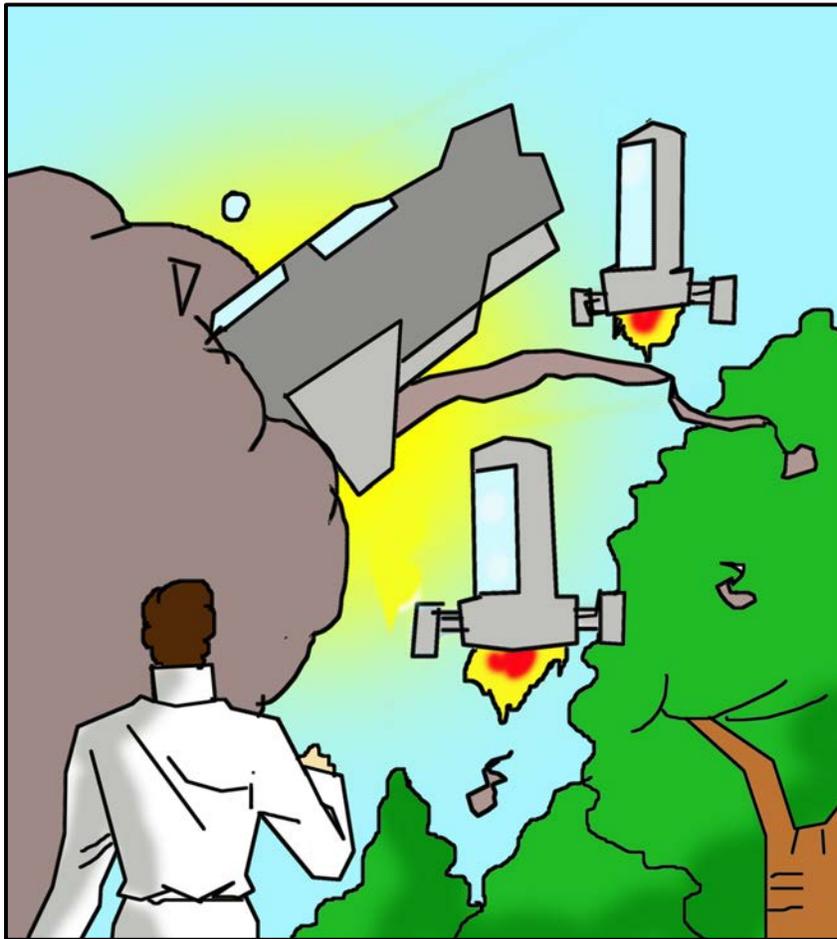
“No!” He shouted so emphatically that he felt the strain on his throat.

One of his fighters took a hit. Running back to the main entrance he hoped to see who it was or at least if they could to save those on board.

Brel must have reached them somehow because all the fighters were heading back to the docking port, even the one that was blazing on fire with smoke blasting behind it.

A black cloud was eagerly approaching from the east. He prayed it was reinforcements for their side.

The smoking ship was rapidly slowing down. He saw two pods eject from the top of the ship. Two members of his team narrowly escaped, but they were now landing right in the middle of the thick of the battle zone.



Everything was now in slow motion. The ship crashed and exploded, throwing particles into the air and collapsing onto the surrounding area. War was ugly, and the violence of the explosion was a part of that, but the irony played on as the pods gently floated towards the ground. They were moving with the breeze heading to the safety net but falling unknowingly into a trap. Hell, why didn't they teleport to the loading dock?

“Brel.”

“Captain, I see them, I’m on it.”

If anyone could bring them out of that mess, it would be Brel.

Three of his crew members with torn clothes and battered bodies came out of the woods running full speed.

They were on him in no time and moved inside the perimeter of the fence. Matt locked the gate.

“They’re coming, Captain.”

He looked at the three of them, exhausted physically and emotionally from the intensity of hand to hand combat. Or, maybe, it was from the damn fear of death. Either way, they’d never admit to any of it and would readily fight until they collapsed from sheer exhaustion or the embrace of death.

His head began to spin. Nauseated, he grabbed onto Matt’s shoulder. He needed the support and felt guilty about it. He hadn’t been fighting all day, yet he used this man to lean on.

“Matt, where the hell is Addie.” His voice sounded hollow. The urgency of each word caused Matt to flinch.

Matt turned quickly and faced him. “Captain, I’m sorry, but I thought you knew?”

He grabbed Matt’s arm and yanked on it pulling him closer. “Knew what, Matt?” Silence hung in the air. He felt any form of control slip from his grasp, as a huge vacuum came down on his chest and sucked the life from his body. He closed his

eyes, then opened them wildly. He screamed, “Knew what, Matt? Knew what? I don’t know anything. Where’s Addie?”

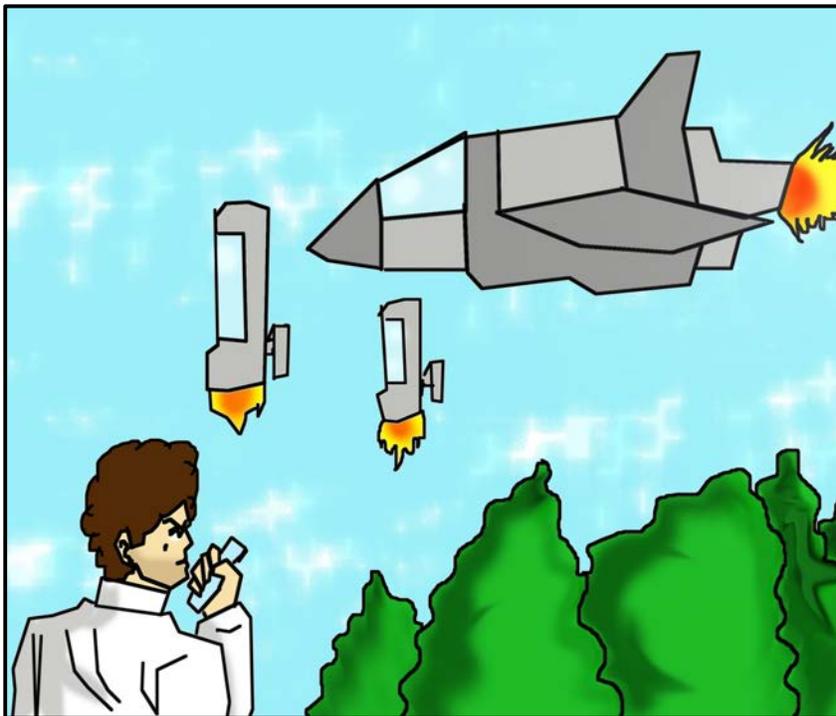
Matt moved away from him and looked him in the eyes. “She went with Brel, Captain. She went with Brel to save our team members.”

The vacuum stopped sucking his life energy force and he could finally take in a deep breath.

“What the hell was she thinking?”

“Sorry, Captain, we thought you gave her the orders,” said Matt.

Chief Petty and Private Opal stared at him like they might have to sedate him, or shoot him into oblivion.



Looking at his team, he breathed deeply, again. “I’m sorry for overreacting. I’m okay.” They didn’t look convinced though. “Really, I’m okay.”

Chief Petty said, “Captain, we have help!!” His eyes were on the sky.

Indeed, they finally had air back-up. The timing was impeccable.

“Brel, can you message anyone in the air and explain the weapon being used from the ground? They need to be very cautious. I don’t want any more casualties today.”

“Sir.”

He wanted to collapse or run into the woods like a madman searching for Addie. He chose neither. Instead, he decided to calm down and address his crew and hope that they’d forget this outburst ever happened. He was sure Matt would not.

“Is anyone in need of medical attention?”

The three of them stared at him like he was an alien before replying that they only had a few scrapes, cuts and bruises and nothing serious.

He didn’t like the way they were still looking at him, so he quickly decided on a different approach. “All three of you, please go to sick bay and have Cleary check you out and then return back here immediately.”

“Captain,” they said in unison.

Oh, God, what was he thinking? He had to quit losing it when it came to Addie but she had to quit surprising him with her primal need to put her life in danger without consulting her commander in chief. Of course, he understood why she didn’t consult with him, because he would’ve said no! She would feel any decision he made regarding her wouldn’t be beneficial to the team a mission even if her life was in danger. The fear of losing her was making him crazy. He wanted her more than he’d ever wanted anyone in his life. She absolutely owned him and possessed his primitive soul.

He watched the fighters overhead feverishly battle with the ground troops. There were at least 50 ships. The only problem with fighters is they couldn't always tell what they were hitting on the ground and the love of his life was out there exposed to rabid overhead gun fire and skilled ground troops. Although, technology had moved forward at a rapid pace over the last 65 years, they still had a lot to learn about not killing friendlies.

All of a sudden, Addie's current exposure gave him a brilliant idea. They should make a uniform patch that would give off stealth signals that could identify friendly ground troops from the enemies. He would definitely have to remember this and pursue it at a later time.

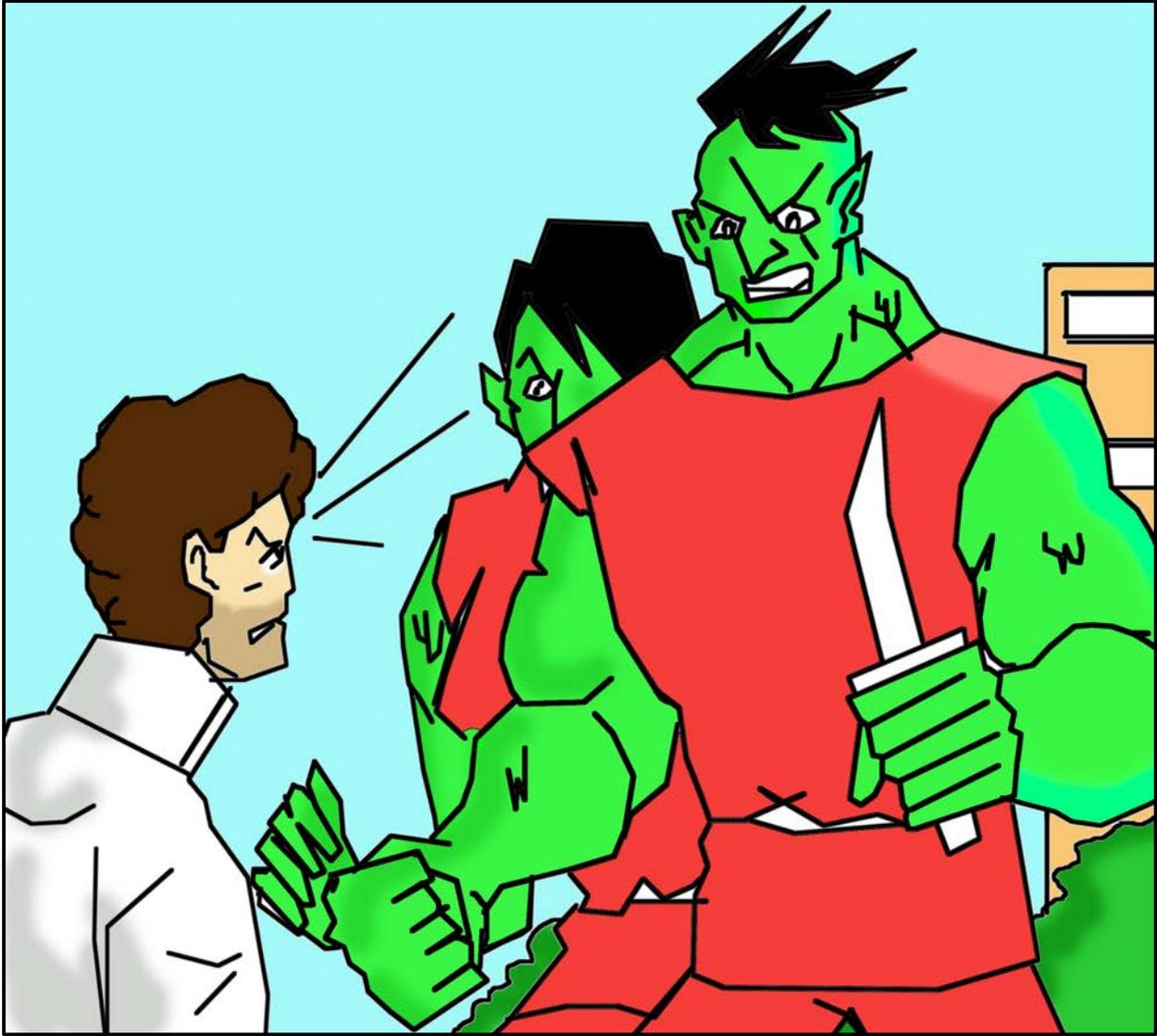
He still wondered who went down over the enemy's terrain?

A group of soldiers ran out of the woods and into the opening. There must be 25 or more of them. He used his laser before they could react. It took out only six. They were running towards the gate in a frenzied state.

He jumped in a pre-dug trench when gunfire reached his ears.

He lifted his head slightly and saw that they were almost on the gate. He shot, again and slid back down. The trench was long so he could move quite a distance before appearing up to shoot them again and putting himself in a different location than they might expect. He heard the gate rattle. They were climbing their way to the top. He knew Belocks were in the group and they wouldn't care if the barbed wire tore their skin to shreds, they wanted blood...his. They were unrelenting.

He hurried along the trench to position himself to shoot again while they were still on the fence, hoping to take them out before they got inside. Peering out of his hole, he was too late. Two were already inside and one jumped in the trench. They were



hell bent on hand-to-hand combat. Belocks loved to tear the arms and legs off their opponents, before gutting them while they were still alive.

Gunfire shot across the trench and a lifeless Belock rolled down inside the trench about five feet from where he stood and blocked the approach of his comrade.

Over his head laser lights were moving quickly. He could only assume that the crew from the ships came to his aid, after they'd disembarked from the docking bay. Relentless in their attacks, the ships overhead gave quite a deafening display of warfare.

All of a sudden, an angry Belock stood in front of him while the dead body of another one lay between them. It was a female. She held up her six fingers in a gesture indicating his life was forfeit. He stared at her heavy breasts as they excitedly heaved up and down. Her nipples extended about three inches outward in the excitement of her recent kills. The females were the deadliest but despite that fact, all he could do for a brief second was gawk at her extremely large bosoms. Her green skin was shiny and inviting. Her savage hair moved out from the top of her pointed head falling across one of her nipples. He'd never been this close to a female Belock before in his entire life! Hell, he had never even seen a real female Belock until this very moment...

He pried his eyes away from her nipples and looked at her face with a determined purpose. His breath got caught in his throat. There was something intoxicating about her eyes. They were a soft green but filled with a raging ocean that might entice sailors to stay and play upon her waves. She was a siren that walked the land, but with green lizard-like skin. Damn, her lips were smooth, dreamy and lusciously large. He never heard about this race being so alluring. Maybe they weren't all this way? What made her look different?

Her smile made him long to touch her breasts and float on the seas of her eyes. She licked her lips slowly. He became as excited as the hardened nipples that extended towards him from her heavy breasts. What was wrong with him? He loved Addie, gorgeous Addie who was fighting for her life and the life of her comrades right now, while he was in a trench with the enemy and all he wanted was to shack up with a female Belock! Maybe he needed therapy. What was wrong with him??

He became lost in time, with this Belock. She wanted to play with him, before she killed him of course. Of that he was sure of, but right now, he didn't honestly care. He could hear the roar of her ocean coming to his shore pushing her waves against his sturdy rocks. Soothingly she whispered while taking him down, turning him to sand until he lay at the bottom of her ocean.

The swinging beat of her chest as she climbed over the top of her lifeless comrade beckoned him to dance with her. His feet wanted to swing, as the sweetness of her vigor rushed at him through her green ocean eyes. She was a gypsy like from of the old days in New Orleans that he'd read about. The only thing that could soothe his soul was the rhythm of her gypsy jazz.

He was her dizzy love-struck sailor, lost at sea. He stood there watching her as she moved close enough to him that he smelled the ocean deep in his nostrils. Her face was soft and defied logic, because the aggressive behavior of her body and mind should have altered her appearance, but it didn't. No, it certainly didn't.

He was drowning in her eyes and felt her hostile hands touch him, taking the weapon out of his locked fingers. She lifted him up and placed her lips on his thirsty ones. Her kiss was hard and passionate. Her breasts were like daggers that penetrated his skin in all the right spots. She grabbed his legs and wrapped them around her waist and shoved his face between her breasts.

She was strong and forceful. It turned him on.

Suddenly, he felt her go limp, just as he released the pressure going on in his manly region. Then, blood was running down her breasts. She fell over backwards in a weird way. He went down with her still straddling her muscular body. Did he kill her somehow?

Strong arms then pulled him out of the trench.

“Captain, are you alright?” The blue face of Sargent Todd Cam was looking him over.



“Yes, I think so. What happened?” He was embarrassed and uncomfortable when he noticed his soggy pants.

“Captain, you were engaged with a Belock female. One of the Benders. They’re called that for a reason. They bend men to their will. She would have killed you when she finished playing with her food. They’re quite effective in war as you can imagine. You need to kill them

immediately and never look into their hypnotic eyes.”

“I knew she wanted to kill me, yet, I couldn’t do anything about it.” He felt dazed and disorientated and leaned on Cam.

“You’ll be okay in about ten minutes or so, Captain.”

“Thanks.” He looked around the area and noticed the elimination of the small army but then noticed Private Mann and Major Flint were missing.

Cam was watching him closely. “Captain, we haven’t heard anything from Brel’s rescue mission.

He nodded his head. “Cam, I’m going to clean myself up and will return shortly. Have you heard from the air fighters?”

“No, but I think they’re doing rather well. We’ve lost two ships to that inferno machine though.”

He patted Cam on the back. “You’re in charge, until I return.”

“Yes, Captain.”

He ran to the showers. He couldn’t believe what just happened and needed to get cleaned up as quickly as possible. He didn’t want this to end up being the talk of the camp, and he felt dirty, very dirty. He was ashamed.

The water was therapeutic and now that he wasn’t under the influence of that evil woman he thought again about Addie. He felt remorseful. He genuinely hoped she wasn’t injured. He’d feel guilty about this forever no matter what. It didn’t matter that he couldn’t stop it, somehow, he felt like he should’ve been able to, after all he was a captain of the ‘Chicago.’ But if something had happened to Addie, it would make this day even worse. The guilt would haunt him forever.

He heard a loud commotion that sounded like a hundred troops moving through the tunnels. The back-up soldiers must have arrived. Finally!

He hurried to get dressed to make himself presentable as a Captain to the ground crews. Thank God they weren’t there when he was trapped in face to body contact with that seductive siren.

When he left the showers, the hall was brimming everywhere with soldiers waiting for him to lead them into combat.

He eased his way through the men and stood at the top of the stairs to address them.



“I’m Captain Sarantos and we’ve apparently held off the troops for now but there are many soldiers still running around in the woods. The overhead fighters have done a lot of damage but until we check out the perimeters, we can’t know if they’ve been totally eliminated. Who’s your chief in charge?”

A tall thin man in the front held up his hand. “Captain, I’m Lieutenant George Camp, first in command.”

“Lieutenant Camp, let’s get someone on the radio and clear out those planes for the time being. Put a few of your crew with medical backgrounds on medical duty in sick bay to help us out down there. We should have a couple of them in the brig, guarding our prisoners of war. I prefer security units if you can spare them. Also send one to sick bay, as well, for security reasons. We already have an injured male Belock there. Maybe, we should send two security personnel to sick bay just to be on the safe side. Use the rest of your army to help our team clean up the woods. There is a new weapon I’d like retrieved that is being used against our planes and seems very dangerous. Two groups from both sides of the post are possibly scattered around the area. Please keep me informed on your progress.”

“Yes, Captain.”

He turned to continue up the stairs and listened to Camp giving orders to his troops.

Then Camp yelled, “Fall in.”

They were headed his way so he hurried up the stairs and out the door to the gates to see if Brel and Addie had returned.

He saw no sign of them. Damn, where were they? What was going on? Were they alive?

He spotted Sargent Cam and went to chat with him.

Cam saw him coming and greeted him. “Captain, I still have not heard from Brel. We’re getting a little concerned.”

“Yes, I understand, so am I. The ships will be leaving for a while as the troops are headed up now, to clear the woods of anyone left.”

“That’s good sir.”

The army came out the door and lined up to the gates. Sargent Toner opened them and they walked through them separating into two groups heading in two different directions.

“Cam, I need you to take a few of our own crew and see if you can locate Brel and Addie. You have your hand IC on you, right?”

“Yes, Captain. I’ll find them and let you know.”

“I want to come with you.”

“Captain, it’s best if you stay here. I’ll take Toner, Drake, Opal and Day. We’ll find them, sir.”

He watched them all walk out the gate. The army quickly and efficiently marched into the woods and disappeared from site. Cam’s group was already gone.

Addie.

There were ten soldiers that Camp had left behind. They were set up around the perimeter of the outpost.

He stared off while pacing after they left for over an hour.

“Captain?”

It was Sargent Cam.

“Yes, Cam.”

“We found them, sir.”

“All of them?”

“Yes, sir, but sir, Lieutenant Stuart and Major Flint are injured. We are assisting in getting them back to sick bay.”

“Are they okay?” His heart was racing and sweat beaded up on his forehead.



“I’m not sure, sir.”

What? Not sure? Oh, my Addie, I can’t lose you, you are my only gypsy jazz, the woman that makes me live and breathe. You’re the only one who can calm my wild mind and can soothe my broken, fragile, tired soul...