

The Order was about working together to reach common goals, to be organised for the outcome of everyone. Unfortunately, the downside to that was that no one had any freedom to do what made them happy. If you deviated from the plan you were shunned, outcast or in extreme cases removed from the equation. Everything was methodical and slow.

Thankfully for Millie, she had seen a lot of 1990s/early 2000s science fiction and knew that both extremes really sucked. It was all about the balance between order and chaos that kept the universe running. None of this extremism to both philosophies. Unfortunately, no matter how much he tried and how many good one liners from shows like Babylon 5 that talked about this very matter, did she manage to get them changing their mind. All they wanted was a piece of her.

“What do you think your doing, Millie?” came a familiar voice over her Comm system.

Millie had found her way to a dead star system, Lacaille 8760. She was flying directly into the red giant sun.

“Your letting the galaxy fall into the hands of Chaos,” the voice continued.

“I’m tired Chi’iar. I’m so very tired of this chase,” Millie replied.

“You’re a ball of energy, Silly Millie, you don’t get tired,” there was a terrifying innocence to that voice.

“This war started because of me, without me it will end.”

She accelerated towards the sun. The red dwarf, despite its name, loomed in front of her.

“Oh, this war has been going on way longer than your arrival Silly Milly. It’s been going on since the dawn of time. And it will be going on well until you and I are no longer.”

“Then why fight a war that never ends?! A war that destroys the universe around it.”

“To give up is to lose! The Order will never allow the universe to succumb to Chaos. Everything would burn out like a matchstick. They’d be nothing less. You know that, Silly Millie.”

“Stop calling me Silly Millie!”

“Well, stop being silly and I will,” the voice giggled.

She couldn't believe that for many cycles, too many than she would have liked, considered her to be a friend. Chi'iar had been there when the order ship had picked her up. She was only a youngling at the time. She helped Millie get acclimatised with the ship, showed her all the fun things that you could do. In return she helped her with her homework and helped her parents and the crew with whatever mission they were on. The place had a real community spirit that she hadn't got on Earth for a very long time. But that changed when they found out what Millie truly was.

Another blue portal opened next to the Order cruiser that was chasing her. It was a squadron of Chaos fighters.

“This is red leader to red five, we have target on sight,” called Red Leader, obviously.

Chaos had thought to win over Millie's favour by learning all the Earth pop culture references from Earth. She hazards to think what they were doing on Earth while they were collecting that information.

“Hey there. What in the force do you think you doing Millie,” Red Leader called out. “You're getting awfully close to that sun. We don't want you burning up in that great ring of fire, now do we?”

“You were the one who drove her to this,” Chi'iar's voice turned from the sweetness of a playful seven-year-old to a cranky seven-year-old who had been told by her parents that she was tired, but insisted she wasn't.

“Now, now. Looks like someone forgot to take their nap this morning. You're sounding positively Chaotic!” he laughed.

The agents of Chaos were masters of getting under the skin of the Order. It was surprising how easily flustered they became when things didn't go their way. There was a long silence between the two groups as they chased Millie to the star. She was only a few minutes away now. She knew that they would keep fighting between themselves. As Chi'iar said they had been fighting since the dawn of time. At least though, without her out of the picture they would soon run out of what powered their ships. At the very least, the war would end in this part of the universe.

The Order, however, were never unprepared for most eventualities. Chaotic fighters were quick, manoeuvrable and hard to target with laser guns and torpedoes, but were extremely vulnerable to AOE attacks. You think they would learn after all this time. They fired their EMP. The fighters lost all thrust and began floating through the void of space.

“They say they learn from their experiences, yet they fall for that every single ...”

Out in the middle of the fighters came another blue portal. Emerging from the centre was the Chaos mothership. It was a mishmash of ships they had destroyed. They stuck all the best things from every species they encountered. As it emerged, it fired a sphere of light. As it reached each fighter, it restored their systems.

“Go get Millie, Red Leader. We’ll cover you.”

It seemed to Millie that Chaos had indeed learned from their experiences. As the mothership fully emerged from the portal, so did their entire fleet. It was a collection of every known and some unknown ship styles from across the galaxy including...

“Is that an Earth shuttle?” Millie had no time to waste. The Chaos ships were closing in on her and she had to destroy herself before they destroyed the galaxy.

“Oh that’s cute. You brought your whole family. That’s okay, so did we.”

Small portals surrounded the Chaos fleet.

Millie hated the death and destruction these two caused. It seemed to amplify whenever they were around. She hated to think this, but with this opportunity she could ensure this ended here and now. She just needed to draw them closer. Time to Superman this. She diverted into an arc around the sun. Thankfully, time travel was an impossibility, that she knew of.

The Chaos fighters followed her around. They were soon joined a squadron of Order fighters in perfect formation.

“Silly Millie, what are you playing at now? This is no time for tiggly,” Chi’iar giggled.

“I don’t know,” Red Leader replied. “This could be fun!”

“Trust you to find this fun, Red Leader,” she replied.

In the background, the battle waged on. Besides from the fighters, they seemed focused on eliminating each other. She was fine with that but sooner or later, one was going to be victorious. From the looks of it, the Order had the advantage with their encirclement strategy, pressing down on the Chaos fleet. She needed to level the playing field. It was time to change from Superman to Captain Marvel. She went directly towards the head of the Order Squadron.

“Hey Silly Millie, I thought we was chasing you,” Chi’iar had decided to lead the Squadron.

“Oh, nothing to worry about. I’ve just changed my mind.”

“Oh, I would like to believe that Silly Millie, but I don’t think you intend to be friendly.

“Don’t worry, Millie,” Red Leader chimed in. “Whatever you’re up to, we got your back.”

The Order squadron broke off into two groups. The first group would keep the Chaos ships busy, while the others dealt with Millie. Her aim was to disable the ships, if she could, leave them in a vulnerable position, so that some of their friends came of the front line.

It worked. For a time.

“Now how about you help us with the rest of these icicles and we can be on our way,” Red Leader commented.

“No such luck I’m afraid.”

She headed back towards the sun. Some of the Order ships left their formation to aid their comrades in the pursuit. That allowed the Chaos fleet to punch a whole big enough for them to fight through. The Mothership however, had taken some serious damage, as it was under sustained attack.

She needed to get them over there. The closer she could get them near the sun, the better, however, she couldn’t let them know what she was doing. It was important that she attract everyone’s attention. Believe or not, she need to make herself a more valuable target, a bigger target. It was time to eat.

## Chapter 27

The Corvette orbited the Homeworld of the Empire, the first planet where the Humans first overcame their Masters; Rise. Milton's little trick had taken them over a hundred light years away, into the heart of the Empire. No one from the ITU or the PC had ever seen the place and come back alive. Diplomatic envoys weren't even allowed here.

The Empire Civil hadn't reached this part, they were fiercely loyal to the Emperor and the old ways. So much so that the automatic defence systems almost took out the Corvette immediately. If it wasn't for the quick thinking of the crew of the Revenant, it would have been.

Milton, Lillianna and Billiam were escorted through the Revenant corridors towards one of the secured conference rooms near the main hall. While the Grand Palace had better security and anti-surveillance equipment, the Empress thought it better to not bring PC citizens down to the home world. They may look human, but the locals would be able to spot PC humans a mile away. Besides if she knew the Empress was working with PCF personnel, well that would go against her original rallying cry when she took the mantle.

The three walked into the conference room and were amazed to see the amount of detail that went into it. It looked less like a conference room and more like what the Legion of Doom would use when they were torturing their victims. Black and red screens lined around the oval room, with the biggest display at the front. The darkwood table stretched the length of the room like an elongated egg. There was a rectangular shape cut out at the front with a very grandiose golden throne.

"Well, this is a little over the top," Lilianna commented to herself.

"Agreed," Billiam replied. "I could do without the skeleton hanging from the top there looking at us. What is that a shark whale or something?"

"It's a Risian Whalelord," replied the Empress.

The trio hadn't noticed the Empress and a small entourage of military officers walk into the conference room. Most of them had their eyes on Billiam.

"Why don't you take a seat?" The Empress gestured.

Billiam and Lilliana were going to sit at the far end of the table, however, Milton walked up the left side of the table and took a seat closer to the rest of the group. The pair begrudgingly followed suit.

“Before we get started, I believe there are some introductions to be made. This is my Military council.”

The Empress went through the leaders of each of the five military wings of the Empire; the Empress’s Guard, Marines, Ship Fleet, Covert Ops and Miscellaneous.”

“What the hell is Miscellaneous?” Billiam whispered to Lillianna.

“They do whatever needs doing that the other branches can’t,” the Empress answered. “They are used for...” she paused mid-sentence. “Crowd Control.”

“Sorry, I asked,” Billiam replied.

“As you may know, this is former and disgraced Captain Billiam Dirk. He of course is part of the reason we are in this predicament in the first place.”

Billiam was going to protest but Lillianna stood on his foot to prevent it. She had to do some sweet talking to not have his head cut off the moment he stepped on board.

“This is Commander Lillianna Belle of the PCFS McGuffin. While she was a prisoner, she has proven to be a capable officer, despite her reckless behaviour.”

Lillianna had to bite her tongue. She had almost saved the day. Unfortunately, ‘almost’ was the key word there.

“And this is Milton Ways. The source of our problem,” she announced.

The trio sighed in unison. This was as hospitable as the Empire got with outsiders. They all thought it was better than being shot though.

“However, he is not responsible for his actions. For that we have to go back thousands of years,” she added.

At least it wasn't all bad.

On the main screen, she put up passages of what looked like ancient texts of many ancient civilisations, none of them from Earth. These particular pages were translated across the screen down the side.

“These texts are the religious texts of all the conquered worlds of the Empire. Most of them were burned, however, copies were kept by many of the Empire's academic institutions for study. You never know what might be useful. Most of them are stories about supernatural beings sharing their enlightenment to the people, all false idols.”

Lilliana wondered for the first time what the people of the Empire believed. They came from so many backgrounds, and while it appeared that the anglo-saxons had risen to dominance as it did on Earth centuries before, she wondered if they kept the same beliefs their ancestors had. It would be a question for another time.

“Do you see the similarities of these passages?” the Empress pointed out to the group.

“Yes, these outline the battles each world witness between Chaos and Order. I know all this already,” Milton pointed out.

“I'm also aware of that,” she coldly retaliated. “You may also be aware that this isn't the first time the Empire has been in the middle of this ancient struggle.”

“You were referenced in some of the agents of Order and Chaos files, but you guys were just getting started when I came along. I don't remember any of the conflicts I was involved in anywhere near your territories,” Milton explained.

“Well you may remember this ship from Lacaille 8760?”

She clicked on her throne chair and showed the shuttle craft that had been converted into a Chaos fighter.

“I thought that was stolen from Earth.”

“It was; by the Bagerats, when they took the crew from Earth. Then it was stolen again by the agents of Chaos. For reasons I have no idea. But that’s not the whole of it.”

She clicked a button on the throne chair and the images across the room had changed. These were computer files of transcripts. Billiam and Lillianna were struggling to keep up with everything, however, it would appear this meeting wasn’t really for them as it was for Milton. They would just have to follow along as best as they could. By the time the pair had finished reading the first page, Milton had read all the displays.

“The Empire was built by the Order!”

“What?!” Lillianna was confused. “Don’t get me wrong, but I thought the order were the good guys here.”

“You’re wrong,” Milton replied just as coldly as the Empress. “The man you met, obviously an Agent of Order that went into hiding, may have appeared friendly and may have had the best intentions for you, but they are just as guilty. They have destroyed as much as they have created. They’re just better at justifying it than Chaos. They never stood for me and I’m very much alone.”

“All righty then, I’ll shut my mouth then,” she replied giving Billiam an eye roll. His facial reply could have been described as ‘Welcome to the club’.

“Milton is right. These documents are interaction between the Order, the actual species called the Order, and many of the species that started abducting humans from Earth over a millennium ago. These species revered the Order as they were the most ancient and most advance of all known species across the galaxies. They mention the Earth several times as a source of great power. They took this as meaning the people and so they started taking humans from their homes.”

Milton was processing this information, calculating timelines, putting two and two together.

“Wait!” Milton called out. “How accurate are these translations? Do you have the originals I can look at?”

“Do you doubt our abilities stranger?!” the Fleet Captain called out.

“Please, I need to see the originals if I could. I need to confirm something. This is important.”

The Empress ordered for the original documents to be displayed on the screen. When they came on Milton began meticulously reading them.

“What’s going on Milton?” Lilianna was clearly concerned. “What are you looking for?”

Milton checked everything twice. He needed to be absolutely sure. “It was me,” he finally answered. “I was the great power they were looking for!”

“Don’t be ridiculous! You can’t be a thousand years old,” Billiam interrupted. Both Lilianna and the Empress glared at him.

“What are you saying Mr Ways?” The Empress asked not sure if she wanted to know the answer.

“The first memory I ever had was out near a country road near the township of Wilton in 1301, approximately. I was a fully-grown man, very different from how I look now. I was discovered by a Shepard. I don’t remember anything before that. For the longest time I didn’t know who I was or where I came from.”

“I don’t mean to cast doubt your eminence,” the Fleet Admiral pointed out, “I’m finding it hard to believe this story.”

She put up a finger to silence him. He disgruntlingly obliged. “Are you saying that the reason we exist, the reason our ancestors were taken from their homes, their families was because they were looking for you?”

“Maybe not me specifically, but the Order said a great power. My natural state fuels all their systems. But the species that took you, as you said may have thought humans were the great power they were referring to.”

“Look I don’t mean to ruin this galaxy shattering moment,” Lilianna butted in, “but how does this help us track Chaos. It’s come back. And it’s got a piece of Milton. We don’t know what it intends to do with it.”

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