

Warring Factions: The Novus Initium Saga
Episode IV: The Star of the Wolf



PART 3

*Conference Room, Covert-Ops Stealth Warship Templar, Republic Stealth Warship #1
Dellino III Orbit, Dellino System, Republic/State/Empire Occupied Space, Eastern Region
12:54pm, September 5, 5433 A.D.*

“IT’S TRUE! IT’S ALL SO TRUE!!”

Trent expected a response to the presentation about the Lykan faith and how it should have been interpreted by their race a long time ago, but Forneido’s eccentric response was not what he had expected at all! Forneido sat there crying after the presentation had concluded, but he started crying more than halfway through. Did the presentation actually accomplish what it was supposed to do?

Trent had also listened through a headpiece to the recording involving the orbital bombardment of Vangirdi that Forneido had requested for Trent and the ambassadors to hear, though the ambassadors had not come back in yet to hear it. Trent was appalled by the recording and could tell that it was not a fake based on the background chatter that he could hear. The King’s actions and orders were crimes against his people, but the fact that the people of the Kingdom haven’t reacted to this news of the bombardment based on the transmissions that were

still being intercepted, the people are not fully aware of what was happening. This needed to be addressed but lately Trent has been noticing some increasing hostility from State Ambassador Drino when the idea was presented on reforming the Lykans. If the State really is focused on the goal of eliminating the Lykans, this would strain the Republic's relationship with the State.

However, that matter could wait for a moment. Trent needed to know how well the presentation really worked, not from Forneido's clearly visual emotional response but his mental response as well.

"Forneido," Trent said, "I want to know what your thoughts are after seeing this presentation. How do you view the current state of the Lykan Kingdom after seeing how those outside your culture and faith have interpreted your works with an open mind and analysis?"

Forneido straightened up and tried to look presentable while attempting to stop crying as much as he could do so. He took a deep breath to calm himself.

"I see where we have sinned after watching that video," he said. "I also see that we are continuing to sin against the nature of our faith. Your video is correct on all points. Whether the Prophet Ka'Thro had a divine message, if it was his own words, or the possibility of both, he attempted to make our warrior ancestors stop fighting and killing each other. There needed to be peace between all Lykans after centuries of warfare and his divine message gave us inspiration to do that. Once we were united, our development in the arts, science, and culture had suddenly boomed when we started working together. A King was appointed based on who had the largest influence on us all. The Kings up to that point ruled with justice and faith in their hearts. We were finally at peace to the point that my people decided to start exploring space. Eventually we found a way to reach other star systems."

Up to that point, Forneido spoke of his history with a renewed sense of pride in his heart. It was understandable and a testament to the Lykan spirit that a whole race united when divine inspiration gave them a purpose. However, Forneido started to lose that sense of pride after mentioning how they reached star systems. Trent could tell that the next part of their history was the part that was reflected the most in the presentation. That part was when slavery became involved and Trent knew that was coming.

"After colonizing several nearby star systems, we eventually reached Vitam and came across the first intelligent alien race in our history," Forneido continued. "It was during the reign of Kseriki the Third. When the race was first discovered, our kind sent recon units from afar to see the level of technology they were at. When it was found that they had only went so far as their planet's lunar orbit, Kseriki's heart must have suddenly turned cold as he interpreted Ka'Thro's words about seizing the unbelievers being the same as enslaving them. Either that or he saw a chance at acquiring a cheap labor force for select mundane jobs. All I know is that because the King served as leader of both the nation and our faith, we all believed him when our forces suddenly went to their planet and began enslaving their people. Soon after, we came across the other four major races that now make up the current State and enslaved them as well. Every Lykan believed what the King had said and still believes that we are to enslave other races as a means for them to work off their sins."

Forneido reclined in the chair.

"If we had followed the true interpretation of Ka'Thro's words and took an approach towards those races that was peaceful and meant to help mentor them into enlightenment, the situation within the Kingdom towards them and our neighbors would be far different than it is right now."

"Does that include the position on Humans?" Trent asked out of curiosity.

“Especially towards Humans,” Forneido said. “We would not have declared war like we did, especially in light of the fact that your kind did not come here intentionally. You all are not vermin but rather victims of circumstance. My kind needs to remedy this. I have to ask, but why is it that you wanted to present this to me without the other two ambassadors being in the room?”

“While there is not an issue we know of when it comes to Orbinai and the Empire, Drino has made it clear that the State’s position involving the Lykans is their complete extermination. However, the words that Drino said in a meeting we had yesterday was to ‘get rid of the Kingdom’ from the star cluster. We are, hopefully, going to play on those words from a political if not cultural standpoint.”

“You want to present this presentation to the Kingdom to not only change them from a religious standpoint but from a political one as well?”

“That is correct. If the Kingdom goes through a political reform upon realizing their own actions to the point that the Kingdom becomes something else, then the Kingdom is effectively gone from the cluster. In other words, we fulfilled Drino’s exact words.”

“It is a clever move. I will say this: I doubt I would be the only one affected by this presentation. Your presentation speaks a lot of truths and we as a people need to repair the damage our kings of the past have caused. Can I get a copy of this presentation to show to my crew so that they can get a better understanding of what you have shown me, please?”

“I will give you a copy of that presentation, but now we need to figure out what to do about your King.”

“I know. If we as a people need to become something other than a kingdom, we also need to come up with a new form of government as well.”

Forneido looked at Trent with a thought on his mind.

“Let me ask this,” Forneido said, “your Republic has been around for almost three thousand years, correct?”

“Yes, that is correct,” Trent said

“Has the government gone through any drastic change?”

“No, not at all. There have been new laws to cover changes that have occurred in the Republic such as going into space, but the structure has been the same since the beginning.”

“I know this is an odd request, but is there a way I can get a copy of the political structure and laws that govern your Republic?”

“Do you wish to turn the Kingdom into a republic?” Trent asked while a bit shocked.

“In your government, no one is in a position of supreme power over the government and people, correct?”

“Aside from the Supreme Chancellor acting as the ‘de facto’ leader of the Republic, you are correct. I take it that you want to make sure that no one would single-handedly alter the government to suit their personal needs again, correct?”

“Yes. We don’t need another person with absolute power over everything to corrupt us once we reform our way of thinking including our culture and religion. We have a lot of repairs to make to our nation, culture, and faith. We don’t want anyone to undo what we would fix.”

“I will get you a copy of that as well. However, there is still the matter of how to deal with the King and the Royal Guard.”

Forneido thought about it for a moment.

“I may have an idea as to how to deal with both of them but that is why I need your help. My plan will require that the Royal Guard be kept occupied while I work on removing the King and the Royal Court from power.”

“So what you are asking for is a decoy. The only problem is the fact that there are thirty-eight battleships in Heronia, and none of our nations are going to dedicate enough ships to combat them.”

“I know it sounds like a tall order but right now, the Royal Guard is what stands between continued oppression and reformation.”

Trent thought about the scenario he was presented with. Even the First Fleet at full strength doesn't have enough firepower to combat that many battleships. Trent tried to figure out what to do.

Then it hit him. There WAS a way to distract them, though it was still risky.

“I have an idea,” Trent said. “What if we give the Royal Guard something else to think about?”

“What do you mean?” Forneido asked.

“The presentation you just saw. We were planning on playing it throughout the Kingdom. What if the Royal Guard suddenly had to deal with the population and even the Royal Navy rising up against their King due to the actions of the crown over the centuries?”

“Then they would be too busy with a rebellion to deal with an enemy fleet! Hopefully the population will understand your message like I did and realize the folly that has been committed against our kind.”

“I plan to bring the ambassadors back in to go over your request but don't mention the presentation. Drino and Orbinai do not know about it.”

“I understand but there is one last thing I need to ask.”

“What would that be?”

“How much would this cost me and the Lykan people for your assistance?”

Trent never thought about a “cost” to this whole endeavor. He had to think what the Republic as well as the State and the Empire would want for their assistance.

“I don't have an answer for that yet,” Trent said. “I would have to present this to my government first and see what they want to do.”

“I understand,” Forneido said. “Go ahead and bring the other ambassadors in. Let's see what they say first.”

“Very well.”

Trent pressed a button on the table.

“Ambassador Drino and Orbinai, please come back inside,” Trent said.

Two seconds later, the doors behind Trent opened and the ambassadors walked inside. Drino still looked rather upset as he took his seat.

“So, what have you two been plotting in here?” Drino asked.

“Forneido wants our assistance in overthrowing his government,” Trent said.

“So he wants to be King instead? Forget it.”

“He does not want to seize power for himself. He wants to reform the Kingdom.”

“He wants to reform it into something worse than it is now? It doesn't matter what nation it is or who runs it, the only good Lykan is a dead one.”

“Are these your words or the words of your government?”

“Both are true, Trent. I don't know what you two were talking about or what you promised him so far, but the State will have no part in ‘helping’ any Lykan.”

Drino got up and started heading for the same door he entered. He stopped halfway through.

“Trent and Orbinai,” Drino said without turning to face them, “I would consider your choices very carefully. Trying to help or befriend the Lykans will only make relationships with the State go very badly. Our kind will never forgive the Lykans for what they have done to us and no amount of reform is going to change that. I will be in the shuttle.”

Drino walked out of the doors. As soon as they closed, Trent let out a sigh.

“Talk about being ‘bullheaded,’” Trent said. “He didn’t even hear the proposal you had, Forneido.”

“I understand his hatred,” Forneido said. “We have done a lot of terrible things to his people and those races that make up the State. If there was any method to make it up to them short of our extinction, we would do it. Our sins are great and we must atone from them.”

Orbinai suddenly had an awkward look on her face.

“Something is different about you, Forneido,” Orbinai said. “You seem more remorseful than you were when I left the room. What exactly happened in here while Drino and I were waiting outside?”

“Let’s just say that Trent helped me with a revelation involving my kind’s actions and our faith that led to them. I can’t go into too many details, but if the Lykans can make up for their mistakes once the King and the Royal Court are gone, we will do what we can to atone for our sins.”

Orbinai was in shock by Forneido’s words, and then looked over at Trent.

“While I can say that you must have really done something to show Forneido the error of his ways, I must decline to help as well,” she said.

“Why is that?” Trent asked. “I understand Drino’s reasons but what are yours?”

“Do not get me wrong. This decision was not based on any sort of hatred. However, we have already started working with the State involving the arms exchange as you already know and the last thing we need to do is strain that relationship with them.”

“So this decision was based more on business and trade reasons than political.”

“That is correct. I have seen Drino’s attitude towards the Lykans for a while and I don’t think that will change anytime soon, but the Empire does not foster the same level of hostility. If this reform with the Lykans meets our goals, then our objectives involving the Lykans will be met and we will end our hostilities. What we will do with the territory we are currently occupying will be a discussion between the Empire and the reformed Lykans at that point.”

“I look forward to that day as well,” Forneido said, “but I understand your position and I respect that you stand by it. I wish you safe travels back to the Republic capital.”

“You don’t want to wish the same thing for Drino?” Orbinai asked.

“I would but I don’t think he would appreciate any wishes from me.”

Orbinai laughed slightly.

“No, I guess he wouldn’t,” Orbinai said. “Trent, I assume you will be speaking with Supreme Chancellor Drew about this matter?”

“I will be speaking with him and the Joint Chiefs,” Trent said. “If the State won’t help and if the Empire doesn’t want to commit according to the reasons you have provided, we may have to come up with another plan to remove the King from power. I listened to the transmission Forneido had mentioned, and there is no way it would have been faked. If the King can order the Royal Guard to bombard a city full of civilians who were only doing a peaceful protest just to make a statement, then he needs to be removed from power and answer for his crimes.”

“On that I will agree with. I will leave this matter to you two and get back to Luminaire. I wish you both luck.”

“Thank you,” Trent said.

“Safe journeys,” Forneido said.

Orbinai bowed before turning and leaving the room. Once the doors closed behind her, Trent pressed a button on the table.

“Communications,” Trent said, “I need a line to Supreme Chancellor Drew and the Joint Chiefs immediately.”

“Yes, sir,” Sheryl said.

“Drone Control, the ambassadors are going to be leaving to head back to Lumen. Make sure their path is clear for departure.”

“Yes, sir,” Haley said.

Trent let go of the button.

“Hopefully the Supreme Chancellor is not very busy and we can get a line to him quickly,” Trent said.

“Is it my understanding that he has the final word on actions such as these?” Forneido asked.

“The Supreme Chancellor acts as the commander-in-chief of our armed forces but he cannot declare war in the name of the Republic without a majority approval of the Senate.”

“I see. What do you call such a method of restraint?”

“There are a series of what we call checks-and-balances involving those two branches as well as the Supreme Court. These checks-and-balances insure that one branch of the government does not have more power than any other branch.”

Forneido genuinely appeared impressed by this notion.

“That seems like a good system,” he said. “No wonder your Republic has been around for so long.”

“I take it the thought of becoming a democratic republic is now more enticing than before?”

“It is better than what we have now, that much is certain.”

“Sir,” Sheryl said through the intercom, “*I have the Supreme Chancellor on the line.*”

“Understood,” Trent said. “Put him on the monitor in this room.”

“*Understood.*”

The monitor that the presentation was on suddenly displayed the office of the Supreme Chancellor with Drew behind the desk. His arms were on the desk, his hands together with his fingers crossing each other. He looked serious, though thankfully not upset. The view that was used also showed the Joint Chiefs in front of Drew’s desk with two on each side. Grand Admiral Mikey was on Drew’s right near the center.

“Supreme Chancellor Drew,” Trent said. “Joint Chiefs, I would like to introduce you Forneido, former Head Advisor of the Royal Lykan Kingdom.”

Forneido got up from his seat and bowed.

“It is an honor to meet you all,” Forneido said.

“Trent,” Drew said, “*I trust there is a reason for this call? What happened to Drino and Orbinai?*”

“That was part of the reason I called you, sir,” Trent said. “Forneido, please have a seat.”

“Thank you,” Forneido said as he sat back down.

“Sir, I know we had our orders and I had informed you what our plan was but a situation that requires action has come up. It would appear that the Kingdom is having its own share of problems, a lot of which seem to be based on orders from their King.”

“What do you mean?”

“Let me give you the story thus far...”

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Throne Room, Lykan Royal Palace, City of High Charity (translated)
Lykana Orbit, Heronia System, Capital of Royal Lykan Kingdom
1:15pm, September 5, 5433 A.D.

“What do you mean you found no trace of the station?!”

King Ronimier the Fourth had a rather troubling past few days. Ever since Forneido had broadcasted live the news of the withdrawal of forces from the frontlines and abandoning their citizens, the entire Kingdom has been protesting against his rule and the Royal Court’s. In order to curb the so-called “peaceful” protests, he ordered the Royal Guard to bombard the city of Vangirdi in the Ciscio System. They were successful despite local resistance from the Royal Fleet who were already ordered to not interfere with the Royal Guard’s actions. Thankfully he ordered the news stations to play the whole event out as a protest gone violent and harming the other citizens. In other words, he made them out to be like terrorists. However, in many systems, the protests only intensified. It would appear that not many citizens believed the news story that was put out there. It would also appear that the Royal Navy is also aware of the destruction of the fleet that tried to stop the Royal Guard. So far the Navy has not tried to go against the Royal Guard but they are no longer following the orders of the King. Even the Fleet Admiral is not accepting the King’s orders. His last transmission to the King was that the use of force of that level against unarmed civilians was not warranted no matter what the reasons were.

Then there is the matter with the Lykan responsible in the first place for this dilemma. Despite the order to put Forneido in prison for his actions, he never showed up leading the King to believe that the guards he assigned to bring Forneido to the Throne Room and out had betrayed the King as well. Forneido has since been hiding somewhere from the Royal Guard, and considering his database is locked with an encryption key that no one has been able to crack yet, he most likely had secret places that no one in the Royal Court knows about.

This fact was made abundantly clear when a wormhole was suddenly detected near Heronia VII. The Royal Guard managed to warp to the location after pinpointing the wormhole’s location thinking that somehow an enemy fleet managed to jump into the system. However, the Royal Guard only got there in time to see the wormhole close with no other ships around. That means something jumped OUT of the system rather than IN. The Royal Guard was able to determine that it was the size and strength for a battleship to go through but that was it. There were readings that something massive had warped away from the scene but those readings indicated that it did not come through the gate due to its size. The only explanation in that regards is that it was an installation that was mobile.

However, the Royal Guard just reported that there was no means to track where such an installation went to before they arrived. This did not please King at all. This meant that Forneido had fled the system and the King’s reach, not to mention his conspirators were hiding in the system along with the station’s beacon.

“*My apologies, Your Highness,*” the Royal Guard officer said on the massive holographic screen for all of the Royal Court to see. “*Heronia VII is located on the other side of the system from the jump gate that leads to Ciscio and the battleships are not fast at warp. There would not have been a chance for us to get there before whatever ship it was jumped from the system.*”

“Wait a moment,” the King said. “What do you mean by ‘whatever ship’? I thought you said that the wormhole was the strength and size large enough for a battleship? Wouldn’t that mean it was a Thrasher battleship?”

“We thought the same thing, but the plasma trail that was left behind shows a different thruster configuration than that of a Thrasher. Also, the amount of plasma that remained indicated that the vessel was heavier than that of a Thrasher, too. Whatever the ship was that jumped, it was not a Thrasher based on these facts.”

“That blasted Forneido! He must have created some prototype battleship without my authorization! Keep searching for that station that was there! That ship had to be developed and built there, and I want it found!”

“Yes, sir!”

“One last question, though: do you know WHERE the ship was jumping to?”

“Based on the trajectory of the wormhole, the only system it could have jumped to was the Dellino System.”

“To Dellino?! That system is still occupied by the Republic based on our last reports. Why in the world would Forneido travel there?”

“I don’t have an answer for that, sir, but we will search for the station that the ship was launched from.”

“Do it, and don’t fail me. I’m not in a forgiving mood right now.”

The Royal Guard officer bowed his head before the screen disappeared. King Ronimier was furious about these events but now he has to wonder what Forneido was planning by going to the Dellino System. Was he trying to enlist the aid of the Republic? Also, HOW was he able to make such a jump from that distance? Whatever the ship was that he took and jumped with, it clearly had at least one advance ability. Who knows what else it was capable of?

If Forneido did go to Dellino to establish some sort of alliance with the Republic and its allies, then he needed to fortify key positions in both the Ciscio System and this system.

“Get me in contact with the rest of the Royal Guard here and in Ciscio,” the King said.

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*Conference Room, Covert-Ops Stealth Warship Templar, Republic Stealth Warship #1
Dellino III Orbit, Dellino System, Republic/State/Empire Occupied Space, Eastern Region
1:22pm, September 5, 5433 A.D.*

“That is the situation as we know it right now.”

Trent had just completed his report on the Kingdom’s situation to Drew and the Joint Chiefs. Surprisingly, they quietly listened to Trent without interruption. Most likely they wanted to make sure they heard everything without suddenly getting off-topic. Once Trent was done, the Joint Chiefs looked at each other before looking at Drew.

“I must say,” Drew said, “I am a bit surprised about the presentation you mentioned about in your report. I’m guessing I was not told about this due to Ambassadors Drino and Orbinai being around?”

“That is correct, sir,” Trent said. “We know Drino’s position and feelings for the Lykans. If we had told him about what we were planning, he would have his objections for us proceeding with said plan. Considering how he acted while he was here and we didn’t even mention the presentation to him, I doubt we would have been able to convince Drino or the State to help in any way, even if it was to reform the Lykans.”

“And the Empire doesn’t want to assist due to their recent trade agreements with the State,” Drew said. “The Empire was practically stuck in the middle of this situation so I am not surprised they took the less conflicting path. I don’t fault the Empire for that. However, the State’s attitude, if not Drino’s, is something I have a problem with. I was aware that their goal for this war was getting rid of the Kingdom, not their extermination of the Lykans. No wonder Drino wasn’t even accepting the idea of a reformation of their government and culture. This is going to cause the Republic a lot of problems in future dealings between the State and the Lykans when this war is over.”

“If I may ask,” Forneido said, “when would you consider the war being over?”

“When the Lykans cease hostile actions against our forces, both in a military and civilian manner. My guess is the Empire will stop at the same time also.”

“Do you think the State will stop at that point, too?”

Drew and the Joint Chiefs looked at each other.

“If what Drino said is the objective of the State,” Drew said, “there is a good chance they will continue their war, regardless of the situation involving your kind.”

“Then when the King is gone, we need to make every effort to change and show them we are not the same as we were before. I can think of a few ways that can be established but I will need your approval. I guess you can consider what I am about to offer as conditions of our terms to surrender after the King is gone.”

“Whatever you offer, I will take to the Senate for consideration and ratification if the King is removed from power.”

“Considering the mistake we made involving the slave labor, I am willing to offer the slaves that are currently within Kingdom territory to be surrendered to you. From there, you can provide them safe passage back to the State if they wish. I’m afraid the State will still be too hostile to us to effectively give it back to them.”

“Understandable and acceptable.”

“The second is that any territory that has been seized by the Republic, the Empire, and the State are yours to hold if you wish. We will not ask for them back. After we release our slaves, the population of the Lykans will be very thin in outlining systems. Therefore, we will have no need to expand towards any systems for a long time as we cope with establishing a new working class that will help stabilize our economy as well as our defensive positions.”

“That is going to be tricky for the Republic.”

“Why is that?”

“The advancement we made into your territory has always been meant a temporary occupation, not a permanent one. The only exception to that rule was our Defensive Perimeter Zone. We may start to call that area something else after the war but if the Lykans want that territory back, we can remove ourselves from that space.”

“Won’t that cause some form of public backlash? You had your kind die in those systems. I would rather not think that they died in vain.”

“They died upholding the defense and protection of the Republic from a tyrannical King. I think that alone more than qualifies for their heroism in the line of duty.”

“Heroism is a word I haven’t heard in a while. It is a word that has recently been lost to us in the advent of the mostly automated destroyers and cruisers we developed. Hopefully, our reform will change that as well and for us to have pride again as Lykans.”

“You mentioned a few ways but that is only two. Did you have another condition to include?”

“There is one last one. Trent has told me about the political structure of your Republic and I am wanting to model the next government after the King and the Royal Court are gone. I would like for people from your nation to serve as advisors to help in the creation of such a government. We will even allow them into the Heronia System to assist.”

“I find the request reasonable but at the same time I’m concerned some would see this as becoming a potential hostage situation. If it is alright with you, since we have a presence already in the Dellino System, we can work on creating that new government there.”

“That brings up a rather good question. What will happen to those Lykans who are still in this system? Because of the jammers, they have no idea or concept as to what is going on.”

“You make a valid point. They need to be informed of the situation but they need someone to talk to them so as to curb the shock of the current events.”

“Will you allow me to do so? I also want to present them with the presentation that I was shown here as well. If I can convince them of the transgressions we as a people have done because of the actions of our past and present kings, they will be more than willing to accept the change.”

“If they do and the new government you form is able to stabilize, we will see about establishing a base near the Lumen gate, though we will be moving this end of the gate elsewhere instead of here. We don’t know where yet as this has yet to be decided by the Senate.”

“I understand.”

“I will order our forces to deactivate the jammers but only after you go down to both Dellino III and IV and explain what is happening in the Kingdom as well as show the presentation. We will even make it where, if it is simpler, both planets can be informed using laser communications.”

“I would prefer being on the ground at one of the planets, namely at the governor’s office on Dellino IV, but I might need an escort. The Head Director of Project Beta sought refuge at the governor’s estate and I want them to know that I am not there to get revenge. The estate has the communications equipment to transmit across the planet and we can set up a link to the people on Dellino III to watch.”

“That sounds like a plan. Now all we need is to figure out how to proceed with removing the King and the Royal Court from power.”

“With your assistance, there may be a way to accomplish that feat.”

“Go on.”

“Once I am able to show the people here what has been happening and make them realize the errors we have done due to the misinterpretation of our faith, I will get in contact with the Fleet Admiral of the Royal Navy. The last I heard, he and the King do not get along at all after the bombardment that was ordered. If we can muster our forces on an assault on the Royal Guard in the Ciscio System, we can push our way into the Heronia System to defeat the Royal Guard there before proceeding to the orbital city of High Charity.”

“The only problem is that even if I commit one or two fleets to this engagement, there is still lot of battleships to punch through.”

“That’s only if they are able to target you.”

“What do you mean?”

“Doesn’t this stealth ship possess the means to jam the targeting systems of multiple ships? I heard it used that method to prevent an entire fleet from gunning it down.”

“He provides a valid point, sir,” Trent said. “However, our jamming abilities were stretched rather thin and we couldn’t jam every ship.”

“Then it sounds like we need to modify and equip a few other ships for that purpose. Trent, while such an engagement is taking place, I want your ship and Forneido’s to get to the Heronia System. The Royal Guard in that system will likely lock the gate and we need someone to unlock it for us. However, we need someone to distract the Royal Guard since we will have to go through the gate one to eight ships at a time due to the size of the gate.”

“That won’t be a problem,” Forneido said. “If this ship can provide an ample amount of jamming towards the Royal Guard ships in Heronia, my ship can survive the onslaught of the remaining battleships. It does have the offensive and defensive capabilities to survive the battle and the Royal Guard won’t have any data on it to exploit any weaknesses. Also, I doubt they will have a lot of ships at the gate in that system right now.”

“How do you know?”

“My aides had to move the station my ship was built at to a different location to avoid capture by the Royal Guard. If the communications is jammed as well, those ships won’t come to the aide of the others. There will also be ships at High Charity as well. The King no doubt knows I have jumped to this system if the Royal Guard vessels arrived just as the wormhole I created closed. If they saw the trajectory, they will know that I am here.”

“And the King would strengthen his defenses of his capital, is that right?”

“That is exactly correct. Most likely he anticipates us jumping back into the system so we need a way to avoid detection.”

“I would leave that to my ship,” Trent said. “If we can find the sensor network in Heronia, we can attempt to access them and shut them down when the moment comes. However, we will need to travel to Heronia under our own power which could take a couple of days.”

“If we time it just right, we could engage their forces on both sides of the Heronia gate and they would not be able to contact each other once the jamming begins.”

“I have to ask this question, though,” Grand Admiral Mikey said. “Is it absolutely necessary to destroy all of the Royal Guard ships?”

“It is,” Forneido said. “The Royal Guard serves the King and the Royal Court and them alone. Their loyalty will never waiver and they will fight to the last Lykan to defend them. If even one ship remains when the time comes to remove the King and the Royal Court, they will be a threat to any government that is established in their place.”

“Then it sounds like their destruction is required in the end,” Drew said. “Very well, here is the plan. Trent, I want your ship to get underway as soon as Forneido leaves. The Seventeenth Fleet will escort Forneido’s ship to Dellino IV and SAGATs will escort him to the governor’s office. From there he will talk to the people of Dellino and show them the presentation. If the presentation works, we will deactivate the jammers and Forneido will contact the Royal Navy Fleet Admiral to gather as many of their ships to Ciscio as possible. We will send the Second Fleet after we modify a few destroyers with jammers and ECM equipment to make the battle more favorable to us. Make sure the Fleet Admiral knows of these ships and what they will do. It will help make his decision easier. Once Trent’s ship has disabled the sensor network in Heronia, Forneido’s ship will jump to Heronia and warp to the Ciscio gate along with Trent’s ship to engage the Royal Guard fleet there. At the same time, our fleet will jump into Ciscio through the star gate and warp to the Heronia gate at the same time as the Royal Navy. Jammers and ECMs will be used to prevent either enemy fleet from contacting the other for reinforcements. We will be broadcasting this as well. If we show a unified assault on the enemy of the Kingdom, moral support will increase among the Lykan people that want change.”

“Is this supposed to help bring about favoritism for changing the government?” Forneido asked.

“That is correct. You will need all of the support you can get to establish a new government, and seeing the destruction of those willing to kill their own citizens will give you that support from the people.”

“I understand.”

“Thankfully,” Trent said, “the Empire is guarding the Ciscio gate in this system. They would be more willing to let our forces through compared to the State.”

“That reminds me,” Drew said, *“the ambassadors will be back here soon. I will leave this in the hands of Grand Admiral Mikey to coordinate our forces. However, the State forces in the system will quickly know something is up when the jamming is turned off so we will have to make sure the State doesn’t interfere with the operation. I will make sure the Empire’s forces know to let our forces through the Ciscio gate when the time comes. I will handle the political matters.”*

“Understood, sir,” Trent said.

“It would seem I would need to get back to my ship and prepare to meet with the governor,” Forneido said. “I have a lot to discuss with him and my former head director.”

Forneido got up as well as Trent. Forneido bowed to Drew and the Joint Chiefs.

“I want to thank you for making all of this possible,” Forneido said. “I am most humble for your assistance and I am truly sorry for the way we as Lykans have acted towards your kind as well as those of the State and the Empire. I was hoping to give the ambassadors this same apology but they left before I could say it.”

“You can thank us after the King and the Royal Court is no longer in power,” Drew said. *“For now, we all have our roles to play out. Historians will no doubt look upon this day and write that these are the final days of the notorious Royal Lykan Kingdom and the birth of something much better.”*

“Well said, Supreme Chancellor,” Forneido said. “I will head back to my ship now. Trent, I wish you safe journey to Heronia and I will see you there in two days.”

“Until then, Forneido,” Trent said with a smile, “but before you go, you will need this.”

Trent walked over to the monitor and pulled the portable storage device from the monitor. He handed it over to Forneido.

“If you wish to show this to the governor and the people of Dellino, you’ll need a copy of the presentation,” Trent said.

“Thank you,” Forneido said, “but it would be best to transmit it to my ship as I don’t have anything to plug that into.”

“Of course. I will have our communications send it to you once you are back on your ship.”

“Thank you all, again. I will take my leave now.”

Of course, Trent never thought he would be this social to the Lykan responsible for what has happened to him much less smile, but Forneido has changed, now motivated by a renewed and restored sense of faith. He was a Lykan determined to make his kind aware of the mistakes made now that his “crisis of faith” has ended. As Forneido walked out of the room, his demeanor had indeed changed, and Trent really was hoping that this would not only be the start of the end of the war, but a means at peace again.

“Vice Admiral Trent,” Drew said.

“Yes, sir,” Trent said looking at the screen.

“I want to thank you and your crew for coming up with a solution to the Lykan situation that actually worked with that presentation. I could see the difference in Forneido’s position and mental state of affairs compared to how things were a few months ago. If the rest of the Lykans can be reformed based on the true nature of their faith, it will indeed go a long way to restoring peace in our part of the star cluster. I am still concerned with the State, though, and their position of wanting to exterminate the Lykans regardless of reform.”

“How about the fact that Drino made it clear that our assistance in helping the Lykans reform would put a strain on our relationship with the State that may include us no longer being allies?”

“I am concerned with this as well and the impact of those from the Republic already in the State trying to promote our culture within their society. The best I can do is to make it clear that our intention is for the Lykans to end hostilities with the Republic and if that means assisting them in reforming their religion and their government then so be it. From what you have told us, this would also achieve the Empire’s goals as well. The State would be the only one not satisfied even if the slaves were returned to the State.”

“The slaves have gone through a lot of conditioning as well as emotional and physical scars by the Lykans. It will take a lot of time and effort for the State to undo all of that if it is even possible. The loss of their home planets also did not help in that situation.”

“Getting a whole slew of their kind into the State that cannot contribute to their population growth due to their loss of their reproductive organs also didn’t help. I don’t know if their science is capable of undoing the damage and making it possible for them to bear children like ours is capable of.”

“Let me ask this: should we hold the King and the Royal Court responsible for the travesties that have been committed against the State?”

“That is a difficult question but if their removal will allow the Lykans to corrected the travesties that have been committed, then I am all for their removal by any means. We need to end this conflict and now we have a chance.”

“Very well, sir. I will get the *Templar* underway so that we can initiate the plan. I have to say that I wasn’t expecting this mission to go so differently.”

“Neither would I, Trent. Now, I need to go as the ambassadors are due to arrive any minute. I have to come up with some sort of cover story for this whole mission. I wish you safe journeys to you and your crew.”

Trent saluted just before the monitor went dark. He put his arm down but looked at the small data drive still in his other hand. It may be only a copy of the presentation but he held what would be the means to help end the war and now it is becoming a reality.

He turned and headed for the door the ambassadors went through. He needed to get up to the bridge and begin his mission. As the doors opened and he passed through them, the energy barriers that were up in the corridors were off now that the ambassadors had left. He proceeded down the hall a ways before reaching the elevator. He called for it and a few seconds later, the elevator arrived and the doors opened.

“Bridge,” he said as he got in.

The doors quickly closed and the elevator soon got moving, though it did so horizontally. After about seven seconds or so, the elevator slowed down and came to a halt. The doors soon opened to the *Templar’s* bridge. Trent walked out of the elevator onto the bridge. Tora, Haley, and Natalie turned and saw him walk onto the bridge.

“How did it go?” Tora asked.

“The presentation worked,” Trent said. “However, per the Supreme Chancellor, we have a new mission. Before we proceed, Tora, I will need you to forward a copy of the presentation to the Lykan Battleship. Forneido is going to use the presentation while addressing the people of Dellino since they have no idea what is happening in the Kingdom due to the jammers.”

“Is he going to use this to rally the Lykans here? What about the rest of the Lykans in the Kingdom?”

“We will get to that point eventually but our task is to access the main sensor network in Heronia. We need to disable it so that Forneido’s ship can jump back into Heronia without being detected. Forneido is also going to rally the Royal Navy and they along with the Republic Second Fleet will launch an assault on the Royal Guard fleet in Ciscio near the Heronia gate on their side. We along with Forneido will focus on the Royal Guard at the Heronia gate. We will be using our jamming and ECMs to prevent the Royal Guard from getting the advantage. Also, Forneido believes that the Royal Guard fleet will be split three ways: at the gate, at High Charity, and looking for his accomplices. This means they will be fewer in number at the gate.”

“This may also give us a chance to make sure they cannot flee,” Natalie said.

“What do you mean?” Trent asked.

“The *Templar* has been modified with some new equipment. I will go over the full details of the equipment once we are heading for our destination.”

“Very well. The goal of the operation is to remove the King and the Royal Court by any means necessary. Right now, only the Royal Guard is enforcing their will. Once they are taken out, the King and the Court will be vulnerable unless High Charity has defenses. The SAGATs on board will also infiltrate the gate in Heronia to take control. If the combined fleets destroy the Royal Guard in Ciscio before we do, we will open the gate to Heronia and let them through so that they can help finish the job.”

“How are we going to remove the King and the Royal Court from power?” Tora asked. “Do we arrest them or do we destroy them?”

“That will depend on how they respond to our demand for surrender. For now, we will focus on the task at hand. Tora, transmit the presentation to Forneido’s ship. Rei, set a course for Heronia and prepare to activate the warp drive.”

“Yes, sir,” Tora and Rei said in unison.

* * * * *

*Bridge, R.K.S. Harbinger, Lykan Advance Prototype Battleship
Dellino III Orbit, Dellino System, Republic/State/Empire Occupied Space, Eastern Region
1:43pm, September 5, 5433 A.D.*

“I take it the meeting went well?”

Antario noticed Forneido had walked onto the bridge not too long after his shuttle had landed back on the *Harbinger*. Antario also noticed that the expression on Forneido’s face was drastically different as was his posture. He could not resist asking such a question to Forneido considering that fact.

“It was more informative than you know,” Forneido said. “Is the Republic stealth vessel transmitting a large file to us?”

“They are requesting to transmit a large file,” the communications officer said. “Do we accept?”

“Yes, and store it in the database. I want you all to see this file when it is complete.”

“What is this file they are sending to us?” Antario asked.

“You may not believe this but there are Humans who have taken an interest in our religion to get a better understanding of us. Surprisingly, they noticed a few details and interpretations that we have misunderstood or were modified by past Kings over the years. I want the whole crew to see this once it has been stored.”

“I don’t suppose you can give us a summary by chance?”

“That would ruin the experience, but when we are done, we will head to Dellino IV. I want to speak with the Governor there and let them know what is going on in the Kingdom. I will be provided with a Republic escort as well.”

“Based on that fact, I take it the Republic will help us remove the King and the Royal Court from power?”

“More than you know but obviously the State and the Empire won’t help.”

“I’m not surprised by that fact.”

“Sir,” the communications officer said, “the file’s transfer is complete.”

“The stealth ship’s warp drive is powering up,” Antario said looking at his readings. “Their heading would put them towards the Heronia System.”

“Then they are beginning their part of the mission,” Forneido said. “We will be following them into Heronia in a couple of days but we have our own objectives. First thing’s first.”

Forneido sat in the command seat in activated the ship-wide intercom.

“Attention, all hands. There is a presentation that we have received from the Republic that I want everyone on board to watch regardless of what you are doing. This is important to watch before we move on to our next objective. Stand by.”

Forneido turned off the intercom.

“Communications, let the Republic fleet know we will be getting underway shortly but that we were presented a presentation to watch. Once that is sent, play the presentation throughout the ship including here. I want you all to see this.”

“Yes, sir,” the communications officer said.

“This presentation must be really informative and convincing for you to want us all to see it so badly,” Antario said.

“I had a crisis of faith, Antario,” Forneido said. “For a while now, I questioned the existence of our god. After seeing the presentation, it has been renewed after seeing where we went wrong.”

“Transmission sent, sir,” the communications officer said.

“Good. Now, please play the presentation. This will explain everything.”

“Playing the presentation throughout the ship now, sir.”

The forward viewscreen changed from what was in front of the ship to a black screen with the words in the Lykan language saying: “The Misinterpretation of the Lykan Faith: What it was supposed to be and how royalty twisted it.”

Antario raised his right eyebrow.

“This is going to be interesting,” he said.

The presentation’s audio soon played along with the presentation in the Lykan language. Tora’s voice started to speak.

“To any and all Lykans who are watching this, I thank you for taking the time to view this presentation. I won’t say my name for specific reasons but I am a Human who has taken the time these past couple of months to look over your race’s holy texts to get a better understanding of the Lykan culture and the religion that influences that culture through the eyes of an outsider. In

other words, I would be someone who has taken a step back to look at the religion with an open mind.”

The image changed to that of a book with several written passages from the Lykan texts.

“In my quest to better understand your religion, I have also taken the time to study your history in conjunction with these texts to see where one may have influenced the other. I started with the time period of the Prophet Ka’Thro from where your religion began. It is a well-known fact that the Lykan race was separated into separate feudal nations based on several ideologies and beliefs. The Lykans were at war for centuries up to the point that Ka’Thro made his decree. Whether this was done by divine intervention or the pleas of a Lykan who had seen enough war is still a topic that is up for debate. However, his words had a profound effect on the Lykans who were on that battlefield and they stopped fighting. Those words were this:

“‘Hear me, for every Lykan has a purpose in the eyes of the Creator, a divine destiny that you all have long since forgotten. Our Creator gave us the breath of life to proclaim and worship him and his creations. He now proclaims this: to end all wars and to end all battles with your fellow Lykans. Borders are meaningless to him, only devotion to him and his creations. Go forth and proclaim his good faith. Seize those who do not believe in our Creator, have them confess their sins and transgressions, and turn them towards the faith of our Creator so that all will worship at his alter. Do this and you will be blessed and find peace.’

“This passage alone holds a lot of meaning as this would begin what would be known as the first time Lykans have come together. As Ka’Thro’s words spread throughout the planet, borders disappeared until they became one nation: The Royal Lykan Kingdom. A new age of culture, art, and science soon began as the Kings of the Lykans pursued an era of peace. Eventually, Lykans had gone into space and eventually managed to jump to different star systems.

The background image soon changed to that of the planet Vita in the Virani System.

“However, when the Lykans came across the planet Vita and the indigenous race known as the Vitams, this is where the message of the Prophet Ka’Thro became twisted in their meaning. It was during the reign of Kseriki the Third. When word came back about a race that was technologically inferior to them, Kseriki made a decree that would sow the seeds of the Kingdom’s eventual fall from grace. It is unclear what Kseriki had in either his mind, his heart, or both but he decided to take Ka’Thro’s words of ‘Seize those who do not believe’ and make them into meaning the Lykans were to conquer the Vitams. He then decreed to enslave them to work off their sins and transgressions with the promise of freedom through converting them. However, they were worked to death doing mundane tasks to dangerous ones.

“In other words, instead of befriending the Vitams and teaching them peacefully of the Lykan ways and faith, they were put into bondage and forced to convert through military conquest. This continued on across several planets throughout the Eastern Region as Humans call the area. It is not known if any Lykans saw the misinterpretation during that time or not but if there were any, they were not mentioned in history and possibly silenced if they said anything against the King.

“This single act went against everything that Ka’Thro began in turning the Lykans into a peaceful and devoted race. Ka’Thro would never have agreed to the enslavement of others and to force them to convert based on his words and sincerity. This act would eventually see the Lykans fall from grace in the years that followed. Where the Lykans were once humble and pious in their lives, King Kseriki had changed them into slavers and thirsty conquerors. This sudden greed for slaves would eventually have the Lykans confront the Camino Star Empire and lose against them,

no longer under the graces of their god for not following the true words of Ka'Thro. This soon led to the Slave Revolts, the formation of the United Vitam State, and the introduction of the Republic to the war.

"The war with the Republic also came from an alteration in the words of Ka'Thro that King Kseriki also modified. In the previous passage, it was stated that god only wanted devotion to him from all of his creations. Kseriki had interpreted this as the 'creations' were only those that came from the star cluster as he had concerns about others from other galaxies encroaching on the cluster as 'invaders,' and considering Humans came to the star cluster by accident this interpretation led the Kingdom to declare war on the Human 'invaders.' That would make three enemies the Kingdom had made which it did not need to make in the first place.

"After analyzing the facts and the religion, it is believed that had the Kingdom followed the words of Ka'Thro in a peaceful manner as intended, the Kingdom would not be at war with any race and may quite possibly be at peace with all of them helping those who were underdeveloped along. There are many possibilities of what would have happened but now we must face what has occurred.

"Therefore, I ask every Lykan this question: Are you happy with what is currently happening to their Kingdom due to the choice of what King Kseriki the Third had made as well as the Kings that followed that is about to lead the Kingdom to ruin? Or, would you like to follow what Ka'Thro had intended for you all and work to resolve and reform the Kingdom into something better and peaceful with its neighbors? The latter choice will be harder and difficult to accomplish considering what all has transpired but one could also say that it is the hard road to redemption and the true path that Ka'Thro wanted for all Lykans.

"I for one want to see the Lykans as they should be, not who they are now. Royalty has corrupted the faith you all hold dear and it is time to take it back and set things right. Please, I hope you all have found truth in my words but this truth is already in your holy texts and history books. I thank you for listening."

As the video concluded, Forneido felt proud rather than how he felt when he first watched the video. He was reassured of the words spoken in the presentation that he was making the right decision. What surprised him was that no one on the bridge had the same initial reaction like he did. He looked around and everyone had their eyes closed and their right hand over their hearts.

"Are you all okay?" Forneido asked.

"We are," Antario said. "I have read the holy texts of Ka'Thro many times as a youngling and was told to interpret them like how the Kings did so. I even accepted it up to this day. However, for someone to finally put the facts together and read it again with a different, or rather the original, perspective of what the texts means shows how wrong we all are. We have strayed far from the path that Ka'Thro wanted us to go and this losing war we are in with the State, the Empire, and the Republic only shows us how wrong we were to follow our King and his predecessors down this dark path. I see why you wanted to show us this presentation and I am glad you did. I feel like I have a renewed purpose in life!"

"You feel like you are choosing the right path?" Forneido asked.

"Yes. I believe all of us here are with you, sir. We need to correct this most heinous mistake that was made and begin following the path we are supposed to take."

"That is good to hear but before we go, I want to make sure about the rest of the crew. There may be some that feel different about the presentation."

Forneido pressed the intercom button.

“Attention. This is Forneido. By now everyone on board has seen this presentation and what it signifies. However, there may be some of you who have issues with the video. If you have questions or concerns, tell them to your department head and they will relay them to me. I want to hear your voice if you have a problem. Department heads, if no one reports any problems in the next two minutes, please let the communications officer know.”

Forneido turned off the intercom and decided to sit there and wait. He was hoping no one had any issues at all with the presentation. After all, this presentation is the means to “wake up” the Lykans as a whole to the problems plaguing the Kingdom and something needed to be done.

Two minutes soon elapsed and the communications officer was suddenly getting messages from the department heads.

“Everyone on board is in agreeance with the presentation, sir,” the communications officer said. “They are all with you in revising the Kingdom into something better.”

Forneido breathed a sigh of relief.

“Thank you,” Forneido said. “Now that I know we are all in agreement, send a message to the Republic Fleet. We will be heading to Dellino IV to discuss the situation with the governor.”

“Yes, sir,” the communications officer said.

“Do you think he will listen to us?” Antario asked.

“For the good of all Lykans, I hope so,” Forneido said.

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*Main Foyer, Governor’s Estate, City of Esteem Hope (Translated), System Capital of Dellino Dellino IV, Dellino System, Republic/State/Empire Occupied Space, Eastern Region
2:09pm, September 5, 5433 A.D.*

“You are allowing him to come here?!”

Jyinuro, the former head of Project Beta, had sought sanctuary at the governor’s estate after he fled his battleship a few days ago when the project was going bad. He had managed to use the governor’s power to explain the situation at the time to the King directly rather than report it to Forneido who had threatened his life for his failure. Jyinuro had thought that Forneido would have been imprisoned by now, but somehow he was still free and worst yet he was in this star system that should still be occupied by enemy forces! Things were not making any sense but for whatever reason the Dellino governor was allowing him to come down to the planet.

The rather husky politician stood in the main foyer with his security detail lined up from each side of the door up to where he stood. Jyinuro stood nearby him after hearing the word that Forneido was on his way to the estate.

What confused Jyinuro even further was word that a Republic SAGAT security detail was escorting Forneido. What was going on these past couple of days?

“You seem to forget a few things, Jyinuro,” the governor said. “Right now, we are cut off from all communications from outside the system, our enemies are currently occupying this star system, and a lot of this is the fault of both you and Forneido for not expecting that this all would happen. I agreed to let you communicate directly with the King to send your report of the situation but now we have no clue how the war is going. How Forneido is here without getting killed by enemy forces or why he is coming here along with an enemy security detail is beyond me. All I know is that I requested for all citizens to stay indoors and to not interfere with them along their route here. I don’t need anyone starting something that would give our enemies a

reason to come down to the planet in large numbers. So far, they have left us alone with the exception of jamming communications. Whatever it is that brought Forneido here, it must be important.”

“My concern is for my life,” Jyinuuro said. “I remembered the threat that Forneido made if I had failed. I’m concerned he came here to accomplish just that.”

“Somehow, I doubt he would come all this way with an enemy escort just for that purpose. He is up to something and we will find out soon enough what it is.”

They could soon hear the sound of a couple of vehicles approaching the estate. Their brakes were soon heard just outside. The governor nodded to the two closest guards to open the doors. They did so and both the governor and Jyinuuro could see directly outside towards the main gate. The walkway between the gate and the front door was forty meters in distance but both Lykans could not miss the two armored vehicles parked out front. SAGATs in what looked like some form of riot gear popped out of the back of both vehicles. The main gate was unlocked since the governor knew ahead of time of their arrival and did not want them to bust it down for any reason.

Forneido soon appeared from the back of the second vehicle and Jyinuuro was suddenly scared stiff. He wanted to leave and run away but he knew that right now it was not an option. Forneido and the SAGATs soon entered the main gate with the SAGATs walking in two columns of fifteen, one column on each side of Forneido. As they got to the steps leading to the main door, the SAGATs stopped just at the steps and turned to face each other while Forneido proceeded up the stairs. He walked through the open front door and looked to see a Lykan security detail column on each side of him. In the center and further in the foyer, Forneido saw the local governor and a scared Jyinuuro to the governor’s right.

Forneido quickly remembered why Jyinuuro was scared since it was Forneido that threatened his life if Project Beta failed. That would no longer be the case or the issue.

“Greetings, governor,” Forneido said. “I see you have been taking care of my former head director Jyinuuro for the past few days.”

“Greetings to you, Forneido,” the governor said. “Considering your attire, you don’t seem to be representing your position right now.”

Jyinuuro didn’t notice before but the governor was right! Forneido was not wearing the traditional garb of the Head Advisor position! Something did happen to Forneido, but what brought him here?

“I was stripped of my position due to my compounding failures it would seem,” Forneido said. “However, that act allowed me to be able put a series of events in motion that will allow for change in the Kingdom. Before I begin, though, I want to apologize to Jyinuuro.”

“You want to apologize?” Jyinuuro asked, shocked to hear those words.

“Yes. I threatened your life for mistakes that I had made and your life did not need to be threatened because of my actions and choices. For that I am truly sorry.”

Jyinuuro was both relieved and puzzled at the same time. Something else had changed in Forneido. This was not the same Lykan he had to report to a few days ago.

“I accept your apology,” Jyinuuro said, “but something has happened in the past few days. You are not normally like this.”

“You are correct. I’ll give you a summary of what has happened. The King after hearing what had occurred in this star system sentenced me to prison while at the same time ordering our forces to pull back from the frontlines without evacuating our people. I put out a live broadcast of our conversation and the people were furious of the King’s decision to pull those forces back.

I managed to evade prison thanks to two escorts who would be affected by the King's decision. I managed to flee to an advance military research facility to launch the advance prototype battleship called the *Harbinger*. I'll tell you more about her in a moment but I managed to jump to this system from Heronia using that ship."

"But why jump here?"

"There are a couple of reasons but one of those is that I need help. Because the people and even the military are protesting the King's decision, and those protests are peaceful just so you know, the King ordered the Royal Guard to bombard the city of Vangirdi. The city is nothing more than a series of craters."

"The King ordered an orbital bombardment?!" the governor asked.

"What did the Royal Navy do?" Jyinuro asked.

"A small fleet defied orders to remain on standby and engaged the Royal Guard to stop their bombardment but they were no match for the Royal Guard and were wiped out. The King made the news reports sound like it was an armed and violent protest instead, but so far the general public isn't buying the story. I came here looking for allies to remove the King and the Royal Court from power, but I ended up finding a lot more than that."

"What do you mean?" the governor asked.

"A member of a Republic covert stealth operations team has been reading over our holy texts and history. She found out some things that explain why we have been losing this war and it has been happening over several centuries. I brought a copy of this presentation with me and I wish to share it with everyone in the Dellino System. The Republic is even willing to drop the jammers so that it can be transmitted."

"What is it about this presentation that you want to show it to the people?" the governor asked.

"If I was still in the same mindset as I was a few days ago, I would have killed Jyinuro on the spot for what has happened. However, I didn't do that but instead apologized to him for the wrongs I had forced on him. Do you want to know what made me change?"

"You're saying that presentation changed you?" Jyinuro asked. "Is it that powerful?"

"I brought a mobile holographic projector. I want you all to see this presentation for yourself and afterwards, I will let you determine whether you still think things should stay the way they are or if it is really time to change our people to how we are supposed to be."

"Very well," the governor said. "You can show it to all of us here and we will determine if it is acceptable to transmit it or not."

"Believe me, governor, when you see this, you will want this transmitted to the entire Kingdom if it were possible."

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