

The Bond Episode Ten

The Gray Buccaneers gathered on the bridge groaned in unison.

“Impossible!” one of them shouted.

Harbinger came strolling onto the bridge while Sam held up his arms to quiet the rowdy bunch as they continued to protest and yell.

“Double or nothing says he can’t do it again!” one yelled.

The men roared their agreement.

“If you say so,” Sam said with a smile. “Take the harbinger away!”

Harbinger smiled as the Gray Buccaneers swarmed around him and escorted him back off the bridge. His eyes met Sam’s and the two men shared a knowing smile.

“And pat him down extra good this time!” Sam yelled.

They took him down the hallway, until the bridge was out of sight. The men then vigorously checked him for cheating devices, anything to explain what he had just done. Finding nothing but his knife, most of the men returned to the bridge while four remained behind to watch Harbinger.

Sam again had to quiet everyone on the bridge.

“Who wants to do it this time?” he asked.

One of the pirates came forward and Sam offered him the stylus. The man stood for a long moment, thinking hard, before writing on the screen 317,284. The Gray Buccaneers muttered their approval of the number and the pirate smiled as he handed the stylus back to Sam.

“Let’s see him guess that,” the pirate said.

Sam stared at the number, concentrating on it as hard as he could, willing it via the control bracelet directly into Harbinger’s brain.

“Three hundred seventeen thousand, two hundred and,” Harbinger’s voiced boomed out from down the hallway, surprising all the men on the bridge, “eighty four.”

The Gray Buccaneers gathered on the bridge groaned in unison.

“Impossible!” one of them shouted.

Harbinger was beaming as he returned to the bridge amidst yells from the Gray Buccaneers.

“Easy money,” he bragged.

“Triple or nothing!” several men shouted.

The idea was met with a loud cheer. Sam saw one of his buccaneers pushing through the crowd, a serious expression on his face.

“There’s something on the holo-news you need to see, sir,” the buccaneer said.

“Everybody quiet,” Sam bellowed as he moved towards a console.

He punched in the proper commands and the holo-news sprang to life, the newscasters hovering in the air in front of the viewport.

“The scene is being described as one of the most gruesome recorded in the modern era,” the reporter was saying.

The view switched back to the male newscaster in the newsroom. He wore a grave expression on his face.

“There you have it, more reports from Corporate 1, where one hundred of the galaxies top CEOs have been brutally slaughtered. Authorities have no leads on who may’ve committed this atrocious crime and have released very few details. For more in depth speculation over what effects the loss of these CEOs will have, we turn now to Professor of Galactic Economics at Highborne College, Stuart Anderson.”

A plump professor with glasses appeared now.

“There’s no doubt that this could cause major issues within the galactic markets,” Stuart began. “Unless there’s some kind of intervention from the Galactic Council, and let’s be honest, they’ve never been quick to act on any form of crisis, these deaths could result in the complete crash of the markets. It would take a very large, very organized group stepping in with a ready plan to keep that from happening.”

Sam punched a button and turned off the broadcast. The bridge was quiet now.

“Everyone get to your stations,” Sam ordered.

The Gray Buccaneers left the bridge quickly, leaving only the essential crew there. Sam noticed that Harbinger looked disturbed and stepped towards him. Harbinger noticed him coming and their eyes met.

“It’s the Apocalypse,” Harbinger said.

“What?”

“The Apocalypse Plan, the Four Horsemen’s master stroke. This is how it starts.”

Sam paused for a moment before responding.

“How do you know? Did Isaac tell you about it?”

Harbinger shook his head.

“No, I was never included in anything like that, but I know this is it,”

Harbinger answered. “I can feel it in my bones.”

The weight of what this meant hung heavy in the air. Sam was about to respond when an alarm began ringing out from one of the consoles.

“We’ve got a ship, coming in fast!” the pirate at the console yelled.

Sam moved to the captain’s chair.

“Put it on the viewport, full magnification.”

The ship came into view. It was the Justicebringer and it was under heavy fire from several pursuing ships.

“That’s Charles,” Sam said.

“Those are horsemen fighters,” Harbinger added, pointing at the pursuing craft.

Sam punched in a command on his chair to open up a communication to all Gray Buccaneer ships.

“Fighter group alpha, engage and destroy all ships attacking the Justicebringer. Allow no crafts to escape!”

He shut down the communication and then stood.

“Bring the Justicebringer in to dock,” he commanded.

He turned to leave the bridge and motioned for Harbinger to accompany him.

“Let’s meet them at the airlock.”



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EPISODE TEN – “THE APOCALYPSE PLAN”

A holographic representation of Huran 4 rotated slowly above the table. Charles, Sam, Sean, Penelope, Fay, and Harbinger were gathered around it, planning their next move.

“We’ll take all of the Gray Buccaneers to Huran 4,” Charles said. “It’s obviously important to the Four Horsemen, which means it’ll be well guarded.”

“I’d think it’s more than important,” Fay said. “If they can get the corporations to agree to use this world as a checkpoint then they’ll control everything. Nothing will go anywhere in this galaxy without the Four Horsemen knowing.”

“With the CEOs gone the corporations won’t have a choice,” Charles said. “The Galactic Council won’t act fast enough, which opens the door for the Horsemen to swoop in with their plan to keep everything running smoothly and efficiently.”

“Surely the Council will see how corrupt that can become,” Penelope said.

“They won’t care,” Sam said. “As long as they don’t have to deal with the headache and the economy keeps going, they’ll turn a blind eye to the Horsemen and how they utilize Huran 4. It’s a perfect plan.”

Penelope sat back in her chair, a realization hitting her like a punch to the face.

“Isaac’s business, everything he’s ever worked towards,” she said. “This is it. He’s been edging in on galactic shipping lanes forever and now I see why.”

Charles stood up and smiled slightly. They were bordering on getting overcome with the severity of the situation and he tried to project calmness and confidence as he stood before them.

“Isaac and the other horsemen’s plan didn’t account for us,” Charles said. “The Council may not be in a position to do anything about Huran 4 but we are.”

They were all looking up at him now.

“Like I was saying, we move the Buccaneers to Huran 4 and assault the planet. While Sam and the Buccaneers rain down hell from orbit, Harbinger, Fay and myself will land planetside and infiltrate the main complex. With any luck we’ll find Isaac there.”

“Whoa,” Fay said. “Why me?”

“Because it’s a three person job,” Charles answered.

“Why not take Sam?” Fay asked.

“He’ll be commanding the Buccaneers.”

“Why not take me?” Sean asked.

Charles paused and looked at the young man. He offered him an apologetic smile as he answered.

“Because you and Penelope won’t be with us.”

Sean stood up quickly.

“What?”

“You and Penelope will take a small Gray Buccaneer ship and head for one of my hideouts.”

Sean shook his head.

“I don’t think so Professor,” he said. “I started this with you and I intend to see it through to the end.”

“Listen...”

“No, you listen,” Sean interrupted. “You’re not going to send me off to hide somewhere while you go to war with the Four Horsemen, it’s just not going to happen.”

“I’m not sending you to hide, Sean. I’m sending you because if we get wiped out, there’s no one left to stand up against the Four Horsemen.”

Charles paused to let his words sink in.

“If we all go, and we all die, they’ll be free to continue doing whatever it takes to get their claws into this galaxy. There’d be no stopping them,” Charles said.

Sean opened his mouth, then closed it. He looked over at Penelope, then back at Charles.

“So what, we’re supposed to hide out and develop a back-up plan?”

“I know it’s not what you want, but it’s what we need,” Charles said. “It may be what this entire galaxy needs.”

Penelope stood up and moved to Sean. She put her hand on his shoulder gently.

“I’ll go gather our things and meet you at the airlock,” she said.

Penelope said her goodbyes and then departed to get their belongings. Sean also bid farewell to everyone and then accompanied Charles towards the airlock. He was clenching and unclenching his fists as he walked.

“You’re angry,” Charles said.

“Wouldn’t you be?” Sean responded. “I came this far and now I’m leaving right at the end.”

“That’s not the only reason you want to stay,” Charles said.

Sean stopped walking and turned towards him.

“You want to punish Isaac and the Horsemen for what they did to your father. Trust me, I understand the inclination.”

“You’re wrong,” Sean said quickly. “My dad was just another businessman in the room, my relation to him doesn’t matter.”

“It does matter. Family and friends are the only things that do matter.”

The two men stared at one another for a long moment. Charles knew that Sean was trying hard to remain strong but wished he’d allow himself at least a moment of grief.

“I’m sure he was proud of you, Sean.”

Sean laughed.

“He so wasn’t. He hated the idea of me being a Bounty Hunter. I mean he absolutely hated it.”

Sean slowly looked down at the floor, falling silent for a moment.

“I always pictured seeing his expression when he watched me walk across the stage to accept my Bounty Hunting diploma,” he said quietly. “I was really looking forward to rubbing that in his face.”

Again he was quiet for some time before continuing.

“And maybe, once I was out there, Bounty Hunting full time, keeping people safe, bringing down bad guys, maybe he would’ve gotten it. Maybe once he saw how capable and disciplined I was and how hard I worked, you know?”

Charles nodded and smiled warmly. Sean stood for over a minute and then finally looked back up.

“All those good qualities that he would’ve been proud of, I learned them from you, Charles,” Sean said.

“Yes well, it’s my job to bring out the best in my students,” Charles answered with a smile.

“I thought out here I was your partner, not your student.”

“Yeah, but you’ve still got a thing or two to learn.”

The two men laughed. As it subsided Charles held out his hand.

“Be safe,” he said.

Sean shook his hand and nodded.

“You too.”

Charles released his hand and watched as Sean turned and walked away. He then returned to the room where they were having their planning session. Sam was talking to some of the Gray Buccaneer commanders and Fay and Harbinger were sitting at the round table, the hologram of Huran 4 still spinning in place.

Sam noticed his return and called him over. Discreetly, Sam pulled the control bracelet off and handed it back to Charles.

“In case you need it on the planet,” Sam said.

Charles nodded and slipped it on with the two others. He then turned back towards Harbinger and Fay.

“Let’s get our gear together and then transfer over to the ship we’ll be using to make planetfall.”

Fay was staring at the hologram, a sour look on his face.

“I’m not going,” he said.

“Excuse me?” Charles asked.

Fay stood up.

“This is your fight, Charles. I’m not a part of this.”

With frightening speed and intensity, Charles rushed Fay. He stopped just inches from his face.

“You became a part of this when you killed Jerry Rapada,” he hissed.

Fay’s eyes went wide and he recoiled. Jerry’s death hadn’t been mentioned between them since Kleet and it was something that Fay spent most of his time trying not to remember. He kept backing away from Charles until he ran into something big and solid. Fay turned around slowly to see the Harbinger standing there, his massive arms crossed over his massive chest. Gordon looked up at the smiling manbeast, then back to Charles.

“You blame me for a lot of things, Gordon, but you can’t blame me for the fact that you’re here,” Charles said. “You tracked me down, you placed yourself in the middle of this situation. You did those things, not me. Whether or not you were driven by your duty to your version of justice or the truth or whatever, that’s on you, not me.”

He paused for a moment and took a step forward.

“Like it or not, you’re in this. You’re a part of it,” Charles said. “Now let’s get our gear together.”



Huran 4 was barely a speck in the viewport when the Four Horsemen defenses descended upon the Gray Buccaneers. This was the first time they had flown with the full compliment of Buccaneers and their force was over one hundred crafts strong. Still, the technologically advanced Horsemen fighters were on them quickly and the battle was fierce.

Charles watched the Buccaneer fighter ships zip past as he sat in the pilot’s seat of a tiny transport craft. The ship was built for speed and little else and with Charles, Fay and Harbinger in it there was little space left in the tiny cabin.

Sam barked orders to the Buccaneers over the ship to ship communications network, his voice booming from the speakers. Once they fought their way closer to the planet he gave the command for planetfall.

“Here we go,” Charles said.

Escorted by six Buccaneers fighter ships, Charles piloted their small craft towards Huran 4. He had the engines at maximum speed, meaning his piloting decisions were being made with a split second of thought. He jerked around destroyed ships, dipped violently below an incoming missile and barrel rolled to break a weapons lock. The Buccaneers kept the Horsemen off of their back and soon they were entering the Huran 4 atmosphere.

“We’ve studied the surface and identified the main complex,” Sam said over the network. “I’m uploading the location to your navigation computer.”

“Thanks, Sam.”

“Give ‘em hell, Charles. We’ll have the skies clear by the time you get back.”

The small craft started to shudder violently as it passed through the atmosphere.

“Grab onto something!” Charles yelled.

He kept the throttle all the way forward as the ship cut through atmosphere at a breakneck pace. The craft shook and swayed wildly. Alarms blared loudly and Charles had to fight to keep his grip on the steering.

Finally they broke through and the shaking lessened greatly. The sky was cloudless and they could see the surface of the planet. It was covered in spaceports all the way to the horizon, already outfitted to handle being the checkpoint for all galactic trade. Charles pulled up hard, trying to get the ship out of the suicide dive it was currently in.

“Shouldn’t we slow down?” Fay asked nervously.

“Can’t,” Charles said through gritted teeth. “They’ll have state of the art planetary defense systems. The only way to beat them is to outrun them.”

Almost on cue, missiles launched from the surface of the planet. There were thousands of them, rising on columns of white smoke, streaking towards the small ship. Charles still hadn’t gotten the nose of the ship raised, but as he saw the overwhelming number of missiles he stopped trying. Instead he left the craft in a dive.

“I’m gonna be so sick,” Fay said as he watched the ground draw ever closer.

The ship was shaking again as it rocketed towards oblivion. Charles craned his neck to check on the missiles. They were designed to fly upwards and intercept

ships in the atmosphere and were slowed greatly as they now changed course and began tracking the craft downwards towards the surface. An altitude warning was screaming now.

“I’m gonna need a hand, Harbinger,” Charles said.

Harbinger made his way up and gripped the steering while Charles held it on the other side.

“Now!” Charles yelled.

The two of them pulled up as hard as they could. The force of the maneuver pressed Fay down into his seat. Nothing but ground was visible out the viewport now. Charles and Harbinger grunted with the effort as they continued to fight the steering. By the time they leveled the ship they were only eleven feet off the ground.

“Even by my standards that’s cutting it close,” Harbinger said as he gave Charles an admonishing look.

“Here come the missiles,” Charles said.

He hugged the ground as the missiles began striking right behind their ship. An unending line of explosions followed directly behind them as they flew dangerously low. Charles had to account for every object, every gentle rise in topography, all the while fighting not to be knocked off course by the constant explosions. Slowly the missiles hit closer and closer until their impacts were rocking the ship violently.

“We’re not going to make it!” Fay yelled.

“Just a few more,” Charles said.

An explosion pushed the craft to the side, sending it careening off the side of a hill. The next missile hit the hill, showering the ship in dirt and rocks. Charles dipped lower to avoid hitting a tree, skidding the bottom on the ground. The final missile hit just inches behind the ship, enveloping it in fire for an instant. The flames covered the viewport and for a moment they were flying blind. When they cleared there was a building directly in front of them.

Charles ripped upwards on the steering. The craft clipped the top of the building, breaking off chunks of it. As they climbed up they saw that this was the main complex. Charles noted the main entrance and angled the ship towards it.

“Hold on,” he said.

He cut the engines all the way off, causing a sudden and violent reduction in speed. Fay flew forward, face first towards the viewport. Harbinger reached out and snatched him from the air, saving him from breaking his neck upon the viewport glass. Charles shoved the steering down, grinding the ship into a violent, haphazard landing just fifty feet away from the main entrance. The craft skidded across the ground, digging a deep divot into it before finally coming to a stop.

Charles exhaled heavily and wiped the sweat from his forehead.

“I prefer it when Sean flies,” Harbinger said.

“I agree,” Fay said.

The large blast doors on the outside of the complex slid open and soldiers came pouring out. They opened fire on the small craft. Fay stared out at them fearfully, suddenly feeling no reassurance at all from the pistol in his holster.

“Listen to me Gordon, because we don’t have much time,” Charles said.

Fay turned towards him.

“Present yourself as a small target by turning sideways and crouching. Fire from cover, exposing as little of yourself as possible. Keep your arm steady as you shoot and only take sure shots, don’t waste your time firing blindly.”

Gunfire continued to ping off the outside of the ship as more and more soldiers came rushing out. A group of four of them were carrying large components and started assembling a cannon.

Charles pressed a button on the console.

“Sam?”

There was no immediate answer. Charles looked out at the hundreds of gathered soldiers, hoping that Sam was as in control of the space battle as he had assumed he would be. The cannon was almost assembled now and Charles was growing nervous when the ship’s speaker crackled to life.

“Commencing planetary bombardment,” Sam said.

Artillery shells began raining down from space like righteous fire. Sam’s people expertly aimed them, obliterating the gathered soldiers but leaving Charles’ small craft unharmed.

“Let’s move!” Charles said, throwing the back hatch open and rushing out.

The majority of the forces outside were dead but more Horsemen soldiers were replacing them already. Charles led the way, firing again and again with his pistol,

every shot lethal. They made their way behind a shipping container and took cover there.

“Incoming!” Charles yelled.

An ear piercing whistle sounded out and was followed soon by another artillery shell. It impacted nearby in a deafening roar, ripping up the outside of the complex and leaving Charles, Fay and Harbinger momentarily without hearing.

When the smoke cleared they could see that an entire section of wall was gone, a perfect spot to enter the building. Charles pointed towards it and then started laying down covering fire while Harbinger and Fay advanced. The two of them had to stop behind a low wall halfway there as the soldiers at the main door opened up with a machine gun. Charles took a deep breath and then sprinted from cover.

The machine gunner focused on him immediately, the bullets chewing up the ground beneath his feet, whizzing right past his head. He dove head first, sliding in beside Fay. Charles gathered himself and looked over to see Fay shaking, his pistol in his hand.

Charles poked his head up and returned fire, hitting three of the soldiers. When the machine gunner started again he ducked back below the wall.

“What are you doing?” Charles yelled at Fay. “I could use your help!”

“They won’t stop shooting at us!” Fay yelled.

“Then shoot them back!”

Charles popped back up and fired, trying to hit the man with the machine gun. Reluctantly, Fay raised the gun over the wall. He peeked his head up just enough so he could peer over the top of the wall. He fired rapidly, his expensive pistol delivering bullets at a deadly rate. None found their targets, but the added shots helped keep the Horsemen soldiers at bay. Charles ducked down to reload, as did Fay.

“We’re going to get ripped to shreds if we stay out in the open any longer,” Charles barked. “We need to get inside.”

Harbinger pulled his knife and smiled.

“Allow me to lead the way,” he said.

He stood and sprinted for the opening that had been blown into the nearby wall. Even though Charles had witnessed it before, he still marveled at the speed the

giant man was able to achieve. The Horsemen soldiers all focused on Harbinger and Charles stood quickly, grabbing Fay by the arm and pulling him up.

“Let’s move!” Charles shouted.

The Gray Buccaneers were pounding the planet with artillery. Charles saw several distant explosions as he ran for the opening in the wall. Harbinger disappeared through it and soon screams sounded out. Charles and Fay rushed inside and saw three soldiers dead on the floor. Harbinger stood over them and was sniffing the air.

“No sign of Isaac,” he said.

“What’s the range on that thing?” Charles asked, pointing at Harbinger’s nose.

Harbinger shrugged. Two more soldiers came around the corner and Charles fired, killing them both.

“Strategically speaking,” Fay said, “standing here probably isn’t the wisest thing for us to do.”

“Okay, Harbinger, go cause a ruckus,” Charles said. “Fay and I will try to find a control room and see if we can find info on where Isaac is.”

“Can do,” Harbinger said with a smile.

A group of eight soldiers came jogging around the corner and raised their rifles to fire. Harbinger let out a scream as he rushed them, his knife held high. He dove as they opened fire and within an instant he was among them. After that it was all over, the men fell into a panic as he cut them up one by one in a matter of seconds. Some tried to shoot him, hitting their comrades instead, and a moment later the hallway was quiet once more.

Harbinger looked back down the hall at Charles and Fay and gave them a thumbs up, then took off around the corner.

“That guy is seriously disturbed,” Fay said.

He and Charles went the opposite way of Harbinger and found minimal opposition. They could hear gunfire and screams deeper in the complex and it had the desired effect of getting the attention of the Horsemen forces. A few minutes later they were moving freely through open hallways. Fay felt more confident now and had pulled slightly ahead of Charles as they ran.

Charles slowed as they neared a turn in the hallway but Fay didn’t.

“Hold on,” Charles hissed.

His warning was too late, as Fay had already rounded the corner. There were three soldiers there and they opened fire. Fay collapsed to the ground and slid into the far wall. He closed his eyes tight and fired six times, five bullets hitting the floor and one hitting the wall. Just as the soldiers had adjusted their aim and were ready to fire upon the man lying in a heap against the wall, Charles dove around the corner. With their attention on Fay they never stood a chance.

Fay groaned as he pushed himself up. He looked down the hall and saw that all three of the men were dead.

“Did I do that?” he asked.

Charles reached down and pulled him to his feet.

“No Gordon, you did not.”

When they reached the next turn Gordon was the first to slow down. Charles stopped right at the edge and waited, hearing someone approaching. A lone soldier came around the corner. Charles knocked the rifle from his hand, then kicked him hard in the back of the leg, dropping the man to his knees. He followed up with a brutal knee to the face, knocking the man out.

He then peeked around the corner only to be met with heavy machine gun fire. Charles jerked away just as bullets chewed up the corner of the wall where his face had just been.

“They’ve got a turret set up, fully armored,” Charles said.

He chanced another look, trying to see if there were any weak points on the turret that was set up fifty feet down the hallway. The gun erupted again, spitting out bullets at a deadly pace. Charles again pulled back around the corner just in time.

“This isn’t going to be easy,” he muttered.

Charles put his pistol away and pulled his rifle from his back. He began checking the sights to make sure that they were perfectly lined up.

“I need you to lay down some covering fire for me,” Charles said.

When Fay didn’t respond Charles stopped preparing the rifle and looked up.

“Do you know what covering fire is?” he asked.

Fay nodded, a nervous expression on his face.

“I shoot a bunch so that the bad guys focus on me while you do something else,” Fay said.

“Right.”

Charles finished checking the rifle and knelt down.

“In three, two...”

“What?! Now?!” Fay yelled.

“...one!”

Fay stuck his gun around the corner and began squeezing the trigger as fast as he could. Charles rolled out into the open, bracing the rifle against the floor as he came to a stop on his belly. The machine gun came to life, forcing Gordon back around the corner. Charles looked through one eye down the sights, knowing he was only going to get one chance at this. The machine gun turned towards him and when it was lined up perfectly Charles fired.

His bullet traveled on a perfect angle right into the barrel of the machine gun. The gun exploded, sending the two men operating it flying into the wall.

“Let’s move!” Charles yelled as he got to his feet.

The rifle was returned to its holster on his back and Charles again had his pistol in hand. At the end of the hall was a large computer lab. A soldier was standing guard outside and Charles dispatched him with a shot to the head.

There were twenty five stations in the lab, each of them manned by a Horsemen follower. It was clear that these weren’t soldiers and Charles shot once into the air to get their attention.

“If you want to live, stand up and run away now. If you want to die, stick around.”

The room emptied quickly and Charles rushed to one of the stations and began typing in commands. The opening screens were in Aramaic.

“Gordon, it’s in Aramaic.”

Fay stepped forward and punched in some commands. A moment later the language switched to English. Charles took back over, his fingers flying over the keys as he tried to find information on the Conqueror. Fay nervously watched the doors into the computer lab, his eyes darting between the three of them.

“He’s not here,” Charles said.

“Then maybe we should go.”

Charles typed furiously, digging through hundreds of documents.

“No, not until I found out where he’s headed.”

The tapping of his fingers against the keypad was a constant drumming as he went deeper and deeper into the mainframe.

“Babylon.”

“These guys and their bible references,” Fay sighed. “What planet is it on?”

Charles flipped through screens before answering.

“This doesn’t make sense. It’s definitely a city, one that Isaac was put in charge of building. It’s technologically advanced, outfitted with weapons I’ve never even heard of, but it’s talked about in different places.”

Fay looked over his shoulder at the screen.

“Maybe it’s a mistake,” he offered. “Or maybe they’re building parts of it on different worlds and then assembling it somewhere else.”

Charles frowned.

“Maybe.”

He was about to say something else when he heard Fay inhale sharply. He looked up just as Fay pulled his pistol and pointed it dangerously close to Charles’ head. Fay’s hand was shaking as he pulled the trigger. Charles could hear the bullet whiz past his ear, and he turned quickly to see a Horsemen soldier collapse in the doorway.

“He was about to shoot us,” Fay said quietly.

Charles looked up at him. Fay looked like he was in shock.

“You made a good shot. You did what you had to do.”

After a moment Fay nodded weakly.

“Can we please get out of here now?” he asked.

Charles memorized some of the locations of Babylon and then stood up. They exited the computer lab and began moving deeper into the facility.

“Why this way?” Fay asked.

“Because this is where the screaming is coming from.”

Soon they started seeing the bodies, the handiwork of Harbinger. They followed them and the sounds of gunfire and yelling until they came to a large cafeteria. Harbinger was standing on a table, swinging a man around by the leg. He released the man, sending him like a missile into two more soldiers who had just rushed inside.

“Let’s move!” Charles yelled.

Harbinger looked up at them. He was covered in blood.

“You’re ruining all of my fun,” Harbinger said with a smile.

Fay shuddered as a chill ran down his spine.

“He’s a monster,” Fay breathed.

Charles shrugged.

“He grows on you,” he said.

Harbinger put his bloody knife away as he approached.

“Oh Charles, I didn’t realize that you cared,” the manbeast said.

Charles just shook his head as Harbinger moved past him. The giant man let out a loud laugh as he moved into the hallway and led them back out to their ship. When they emerged from the complex they saw that the Gray Buccaneers bombardment was continuing. There was no opposition as they ran back to the ship. Charles got into the pilot’s seat and started powering it up.

“I have to say, I could’ve gone a little while longer without having to fly with you again, Charles,” Harbinger said as he wiped blood from his face.

Fay nodded slowly.

“I agree.”

Charles didn’t respond, but made sure to punch the throttle extra hard on lift off, just to make it a little more bumpy than usual.



Sean’s communicator beeped, indicating he had a message. He pulled it from his belt and pushed play, but the sound was very quiet. He pressed it to his ear and listened.

“Is it Charles?” Penelope asked.

Sean nodded as he listened to the rest of the message. Once it was done he punched in a command to keep their small craft on auto-pilot towards the hideout and then turned towards Penelope.

“Isaac wasn’t on Huran 4 but Charles learned about some Four Horsemen capital city called Babylon. He’s got a few leads on where it might be, he and the Buccaneers are holding at Huran 4 while he digs up some information.”

She could tell by his tone of voice that he was upset. Sean felt her staring at him and met her gaze. She raised her eyebrows, silently questioning him.

“It feels like we’re running away,” Sean said. “I want to be helping.”

“Protecting me isn’t helping?” she asked playfully, pushing him lightly in the shoulder.

“It’s not that, it’s ...”

“I know Sean, I was only kidding,” she interrupted.

After a pause she spoke again.

“It does feel a little like we’re running away.”

Sean was growing angry now that he was dwelling on it.

“All these classes, all these years as his student, all the missions I’ve been on with him, Professor always said to follow my instincts.”

Penelope watched him. She liked seeing him get like this, it made her feel safe.

“What are your instincts telling you now?” she asked.

Sean thought for several long moments before answering.

“They’re telling me that he needs our help. That they all need our help, and I’ve got an idea on how we can do that.”

Penelope spread her arms and smiled.

“Well then?”

Sean looked at her.

“Well then what?”

“Why are we still flying towards the safe house?” Penelope asked with a smile.

Sean stared at her for a moment, then he smiled.

“We’re not.”

He began punching in commands, canceling the auto-pilot and turning their ship around.

END OF Episode 10

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