

## ***Recalled To Life***

*Grinding of motors and the thudding of bolts vibrate throughout the docking bay. Men in overalls, stained head to toe, are breaking a sweat running the operation. Officials with clipboards and stogies bark and point. Despite the loud roar of the ventilation, the air reeks of smoke and grime.*

*A man with a tie and megaphone spits out instructions for the ship-hands to follow. The tone of the commands reveals urgency and curiosity. The bay hasn't had such an exciting emergency beacon salvage in what could constitute forever... ergo perhaps less than a few days.*

*Workers rush to crowd around the stationed salvage vessel. The control panel is manipulated to unload and decouple the oblong rescue 'dinghy'. All sorts of personnel haul themselves down to the bay after hearing the announcement over communications. A technician wrestles with the air-tight seal. A triage nurse grinds her teeth in anticipation. Security controls the crowd, questioning whether who, or what, on board could be, friend or foe?*

*The servos of the emergency hypersleep pod click and whirr...*

**White light.**

**Their screams could not be forgotten. Something that a man would have to remember forever. A soldier understands his purpose. Even if afraid, he is resolute.**

**Those screams betrayed their nature. Primordial, like an infant. As if their tower to Heaven had crumbled down. Man was no longer in control.**

**There was only one other time in his life where screams like that affected him.**

The red of their blood. The red of the sirens screaming red alert. The red in their eyes. Alien yet familiar. May they be demons? Personified wickedness of the blackness in a red heart. They were made of man.

That long day was red like that too.

If there is no Heaven waiting in the clouds, and that much they said they did know, then it certainly could not be in space, given the circumstances.

But, it was as if he was going to it now. White, and more white.

The warmth enveloped his body after being cold for so long. He felt the warmth in the air, but in his body now too. Finally, it was time for a reunion.

*The bag of saline dangled from the post. The drum of the patient monitoring system was constant, the patient showed signs of returning consciousness after some time.*

*The staff, aiding the man's recall to life, were relieved that the situation was not worse. His condition was fair, juxtaposed to the looks of the shattered capsule that had delivered him to their ward.*

And then I knew I had to be up right, though how little the rest of me agreed. Disoriented, the white screamed into my eyes. How deceptive it was, like one would think of a siren. Soon, shortly, the waking mind discarded my memory of those fantasies. There were more important things to consider. What has been done. And soon I understood.

*The patient was discharged after a standard medical hold and evaluation given to all salvaged lifeboat personnel. After being cleared, his presence was alerted to military liaisons and company representatives.*

*The man had been assigned a temporary dormitory aboard the station for him to stay in.*

*Hints of grime caked in hard to reach places, though the superficial gloss of chemical cleaner was all but apparent. A kettle sat silent and dull on the stove-top. The artificial lights flickered and shook. Ventilation huffed and spewed recycled air in and out of the board, despite this, a haze of cigarette smoke lingered. The incessant dripping of the faucet and the groaning of the hull robbed the atmosphere of any true quiet.*

*The man continued to nurse a beer and a cigarette by his bed-side. A closed Bible laid beside him on his nightstand.*

**The board given did suffice. A man must not forget his humility, especially in the cold frontier.**

**By the opinions of a professional, I was of sound body and mind, presently. Once the operators gave the green light, I was told I was to report to the Colonial attachment on deck in several hours or so. Recalled to life and already I had a meeting, or was it a lecture, or was it a crucifixion on the docket. I could never know when I knew so many demanding eyes would be involved. There was a lot to explain. Some things never change.**

**My salvaging had been giving me a creeping sensation of déjà vu. It was not the first time I had been rescued from such a wreckage, though I was merely a boy the last time it had occurred. Even if it was God's will that I was quickly discovered and un-frozen, it was in the hands of men to over-see the rest of the job.**

**And I was not a fool to that fact. If they had wanted me gone, they would not have even picked up the signal. I would still be adrift right now.**

That alone gave me a shred of confidence. A shred of confidence for my career, that is. And I never was one to think foolish thoughts.

After a few bottles, I figured by now I had the nerves eased enough to shut my eyes, though inklets of worry still buzzed through my body.

Breathing exercises always helped, though I could never quite exhale for every single one of those long seconds...

*He peered out of his opened bed-room window to gaze upon the rising sun. The beautiful red rays cast themselves upon the land, providing necessary warmth after a nippy night. It will be getting colder soon.*

*The cacophony the animals made as they were being herded was always oddly comforting in his eyes. He remembered the day he milked his first cow.*

*Deciduous trees ran the borders of the acreage, transitioning into a teeming and lively forest. The property included a share of shoreline on one of the many lakes that dotted the landscape. It was hard to believe places like this still existed on Earth, especially out east.*

*He smelt and heard the sizzle of fresh eggs. His mother would be calling him soon.*

*Now he had to get up.*

*His mother wailed for him. That same sort of scream he remembered. He had not heard his father any more those last few minutes. Kind of her to think of him in her last moments, maybe. Rubble was blown across the street indiscriminately. Cars, buildings, people, were crushed and destroyed. What was once a shopping district was reduced to*

*nothing. Shrapnel from the nature of the detonations had killed many others.*

*The gun shots had finally stopped now. Masked men lay bleeding and slain on the very street they chose to terrorize. Vigilant righteousness stayed in their eyes until their very end. But the screams reminded him as he was carried away...*

**Thrown awake again. I must be upright.**

**Memories of the dream escaped me again. Like the one I had tried to fleetingly muse over before my revival. It makes me question if any of it was real at all. How could I say besides I know it to be true?**

**But I know it was true. Because it is why I fought.**

**The same bastards who had revealed their darkened souls to the world that day gave me the light to lead my path today. Their darkness had a lot in common with the evil that had ransacked my ship, in fact. That I do remember. Yes, that resentment I held had turned into a hardened passion that had to go somewhere. That somewhere was the Corps. I know my choice was right.**

**No matter. The terrors of the night cannot shatter the stoicism of the day. And there is still much that awaits me.**

**For now, nothing another brew of joe cannot resolve.**

*The man was called from his dormitory into the conference room, his presence long expected by those eager to know.*

*It was only during the most critical situations that such a tribunal of important faces would coalesce together, company and Corps. The man was either unlucky or lucky enough to be under the receiving end of their lenses of examination.*

*They wanted to know what had happened. They wanted to know what caused it. They wanted to know his loyalties. They wanted to know what kind of man he really was.*

*The man had answered frankly and honestly about the events aboard the cruiser. And a lot to answer for he did, being the acting commander during the events that resulted in its apparent state.*

*After a long tenure in the Corps, he was keenly aware of the dynamic he sat in.*

*Rigorous cross-examination lasted for hours, with evidence provided by system data, stored in the archives that were persistently transmitted via the ship-side intelligence.*

*The man's testimony gave the suits eyes full of engrossment. He knew at least his fate would be merciful. His knowledge and experience against this foe would prove key for their interests.*

*There were no questions of his loyalty. His history and upbringing provided the perfect concoction for the person they were looking for.*

*After some time had passed following the conclusion of the official analysis, the man was delivered a final report and notice.*

**I think I am still in shock from it.**

**The fact that they would consider giving me the helm of my own vessel after the events aboard the previous one... it was not the outcome I had expected. Though I supposed - through baptism by fire - it was a sign that I had proved myself to them.**

That, and my predecessor's demise leaves a warm seat to be filled...

I light up a smoke - and my eyes go to say their goodbyes to the station that had recalled me to life. As it seems, there is still much I must do in the line of duty, as I board the military shuttle back to Chinook.