



By

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Prologue

Before I begin with the story, I will tell you something from my personal life and the reason and my drive for creating this. I have been diagnosed with a heavy dyslexion from an early age, this of course is nothing special as 5 to 10 % of the population, has a form of this.

Before any help, I had trouble, even making the simpeles sentences or reading any words in a book. Like word blindness, not seeing the words that have been written in front of you. For an example, like the word “not” if not used in the sentence, turns it suddenly positive.

As also for my father, that has dyslexia as well. With his insight and the help of my mother and even my brother. To help me overcome these hurdles and improve my skill greatly. Most of the time, this was with my mother going after school activities, to the speech therapist. (logopedist) or anyone to help. Even one of my class mates, that saw how much trouble I got with language classes. Invited me to go to their parents, that where specialized with foreign languages, that were willing to help with school and my dyslexia. I am grateful for everyone that helped me in my past. I would never be able to repay their kindness. But maybe with this book, to see how much, these little or greater things they have done.

But the real reason for beginning to write, is of course work. When working for a logistic transport company. At first, I was doing simple things, like answering the telephone or writing simple formulated mails. But working in the night shift, I had a lot of free time on my hand and wanted to improve my English languages skill. This was lacking, in some parts due my vocabulary. Most of the things, that we were doing, is just data entry, filling in forms and what have you. For a long time, I had a story in my mind and start putting the words on paper and making slow, but on-going progress. For I knew it, I see my skill and my vocabulary increase. Changing function, the English languages and writing skills where more demanding. Doing the communication for some big companies. Some more demanding than others. With this story written, that has helped me and my skill to go beyond my normal understanding, even past most of my colleagues, for my surprise as well.

Now it seems that I am being arrogant. But I don't want to brag or anything, I just want to show you. If you find yourself with limitations, find something you are good in and help to transfer this. To help increase your experiences and overcome your weaknesses. Like with hobbies or extra activities.

Of course, this will help if you have somebody assisting you. You will see that many people are willing to take the extra step to help you, if you just ask. To overcome your trouble and helping them in exchange.

Like my manager did, he has provided me with the means and opportunities to improve and increase the production of the company and myself. Sometimes just to put me in with the lions in the cage, as a figure of speech. If something goes wrong, you will learn from it and understanding what you did wrong. Still to this day, I see and improve my skill to some extent.

Before I keep on rambling. This story was a pet project close to my heart, it has started from some dreams and inspiration from movies and manga.

With every alteration to the story, I improved myself and the story, this is not perfect, far from it, but it has set my goals further and further.

I hope you like it, if not it will be ashamed, but a learning curve, this has improved myself and I hope you can do the same. Of course this isn't a love story or explanation of the dyslexia, but instead something I love to write, a sci-fi book, with some compassion.

Just some words of wisdom, just do what you like to do, put in goals for yourself. Just look further, even some of the impossible tasks, if you fail you fail. But learn from it and take responsibility. It isn't always their fault, but begin to know yourself and overcome your weaknesses first. I know this isn't easy, but just do it and you will see afterwards, it wasn't that bad. Understand nobody is perfect. Please enjoy the story and have fun.

Chapter 01 Frank and Nick

In a bunker far below the ground, a broken fluorescent tube is flickering, lighting up a cold dark room. The room is filled with broken computers, monitors and keyboards. They have all been scattered around the floor.

On the wall there is a big picture of the international space station, that is partially ripped. The floor is paved with a gray rubber vinyl composite and has seen some better days, some parts are ripped apart, seeing the bare concrete floor underneath. On the others side of the room, there are two men, dressed in hazmat suits, sitting in front of a flickering screen typing in code. One of the scientists says, as he angry hits his fist against the keyboard.

“Why isn’t it working? Frank! We have been connected, but no video!”

“Have patience Nick. Wait... something is happening” Suddenly on the screen, a window begins to popup with a static view of outer space.

“Yes! Yes! Finally! Frank, we did it”

“Nice work. Nick, enhance the screen”

“Yes...Okay, let’s have a look around. Nice! The space drone seems to be functioning” The scientist Frank, that is looking over the other scientist’s shoulder, notice something.

“Nick! turn back! Isn’t that the ISS” The screen begins to turn to the direction the scientist has been pointing towards.

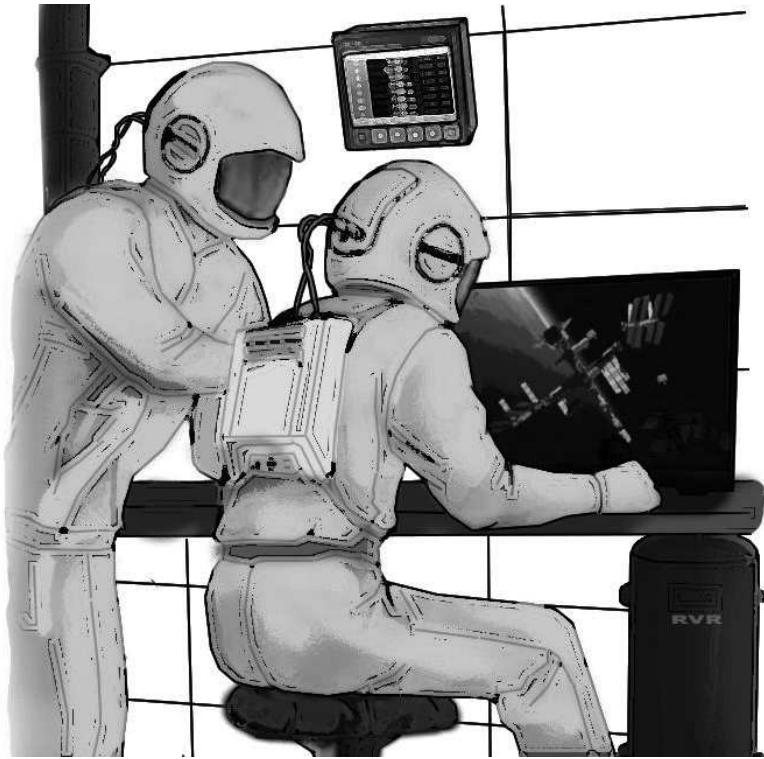
“You are correct Frank, it is the ISS. But it seems in a bad shape, let’s have a closer look”

“Yes, I didn’t expect the drone to be this close”

The drone begins to move closer to the ISS, the station has been ripped apart and parts are flying everywhere. The solar panels have been cracked and aren’t directed towards the sun anymore. Suddenly the scientist Frank shouts “Watch out!” as parts of the station flies just past the drone.

Nick lets out a deep breath and says “That was a close one, look at that, the main hull still seems to be intact! let’s enter the main hatch, there!”

With his finger he moves along the screen, leaving an imprint behind.



As instructed, Nick moves the drone to the hatch and with an extended robot arm connects with the handle. With ease, he turns the handle around and opens it. The door swings open with little or no resistance.

“No pressure inside” he says.

“Let’s hope, there are still some people alive in there” as the drone enters, into the pressurization room.

A blinking light, flashes above the door and has grabbed the attention of the scientists Frank and says “There is still power, maybe we are in luck” The scientist starts the pressurization process and the timer begins to count down.

“I still wonder, what exactly happened here? To rip the station apart like that”

“Who knows, a lot has already happened, nothing surprises me now at this point”

“True that, we are even lucky, that this experimental drone, was still operational”

A red light begins to flash and the door slowly opens to the main room of the station. “Let’s have a look inside, at least it is not completely destroyed”

The drone begins to move through the space station, as junk is flying all around. The belongings of the personnel that hasn’t been tightened, start to fly freely. Books, photos and all other sort of things. A flashing white light and smoke is blocking their view momentarily, as passing a broken lamp.

“Damn it, it is hard to control, with all this stuff flying around” he says.

“Watch out! Nick” the scientist shouts, as a laptop crashes against the drone, almost hitting the wall in the process. Suddenly the scientist notices something.

“Look! Look over there, it seems to be, someone is standing there.”

A man in overalls is floating in the back of the room.

“He seems to be dead” as Frank is getting closer to the body, his face has turned blue

“Damn it, he seems to have died of suffocation”

“So, there is no air...” a silent moment passes and thinking what could have happened, inside the station.

“Maybe he died in peace”

“What Nick?! I don’t think that is a great way to die, but at least we can get some information from the ship’s computer, right?” Directing the drone to one of the terminals, that has still some flashing LEDES.

Frank has grabbed the arm of Nick and shouts, with a tone of panic in his voice.

“Wait! Wait! I saw something in the window, there! There!”

“Hold your horses, I am going” Nick moves the drone closer to the window, as he looks through it. Confused, almost with his face against the screen and says “It almost looks like, a space pod?!” Frank begins to shout.

“Move it away!”

“I can’t, the drone is stuck” Nick replies in desperation.

The incoming object crashes with high speed through the space station, blasting the drone and the station, into a million pieces.

Screen goes out. “Fuck!”

Chapter 02 The private

It's a sunny day in June, in a place called Ijmuiden. The morning has just struck, as a lonely soldier sits on the side of the dike. Looking out over the North Sea.

The sun is just hovering behind him and coloring the sky bright yellow. He is enjoying the warmth of the sun, hitting his body, with a content feeling. He takes a deep breath, to smell the nature around him and feels the grass between his fingers. It makes him feel calm and at peace. In the distance, he can see and hear the sound of the waves hitting the beach. Fast in thought, with no concern about the troubles of this world.

The soldier has a freshly new uniform on, from the looks of it, he just arrived. On the side of his arm, an emblem has been stitched to his uniform, it's a little Dutch flag and a marking of his rank. Just next to him, lies a dirty looking gun, a semi-automatic Heckler & Koch HK416. that has seen some battles before.

A man bows over the Private, the private looks in shock, almost afraid.

“Private Van der Wall! Break time is over! I have found a squat! especially for you. Get your lazy ass off and join the squat Chin”.

In the confused state, he tries to get his gun, from the ground, but it slips out of his fingers. The blood and gore that has been stuck to his gun, has made it slippery and disgusting. He regrets to have picked it up.

It was the only gun left, from a fallen soldier, lucky it is still working and that is the only good thing about it. There are a lot of holes and parts are missing, the side is all cracked and the trigger is all bend, but it still works.

He stumbles up to the dike and looks at the commander “Yes sir” with some pride in his voice and places his hand against his head, for a salute.

At that moment he looks around at the city in front of him. He sees the city all set in ruins, bodies everywhere. Just in front of him, a wounded soldier is being patched up, by some medics. Their efforts seem to be futile, as blood is spilling all over the streets.

People are running around like crazy, they keep bringing in more wounded soldiers, as he looks on. Suddenly in the distance, he sees a church tower fall to the ground. People are shouting and running away from the area. It is just starting to sink in. *This is war and we are losing.*

He picks up his helmet, from his side and walks to the direction commander Zwartwater is pointing to.

In the distance, he can still hear commander Zwartwater, shouting his name “Hein, you will fit right in... with this scum” *He never like that man, he seems always a little too strict for his taste or he was just patronizing him.*

But this doesn't persuade him and he starts to run, right in to the city. Jumping over bricks and debris and he sees dead bodies along the street, so many that he couldn't count them all. While running, he sees an old piano, that is hanging out of a building, he tries to avoid it and runs with a wide swing, around it. His heart is pumping in overtime, he feels good, when the adrenaline is starting to kick in. He always like to run for some reason, almost like it is imprinted in his DNA.

A little lost, he sees a soldier, sitting on a broken-down car and asks him.

“Where is squat Chin” as he exhales from running.

The man turns to him, with a confusing look on his face, he starts to speak French.

“Je ne comprends pas un mot que tu dis” The Private looks at him confused, with his head tilted. Then suddenly the French man says and the private feels like, this was not in a good nature.

“Chin? ommment ces connards” and points to the right, where a tank is stationed. A bunch of guys is hanging around the tank. He thanks the French man and starts running towards the group.

It is a Dutch army Leopard 2A6, with a green camo paint. He hasn't seen a lot of them around anymore and this one seems to be in a good state as well.

“Finally! He is here” says the big guy on the tank.



At first glance, it looks like they have been to hell and back again. All their faces seem to be covered with dirt and gore, the one the tank has even a bandage beneath his helmet and it has turned to dark red, almost to black.

“So, this skinny guy, is taking his place?” says a guy next to him, as he looks at the radio in his hand. The private feels out of place, with these guys.

A ranking officer walks out of a broken-down store. He walks directly towards the private, the private immediately start to salute, the moment he looks at him. The ranking sergeant stands in front of him and salute and says “What is your name and rank?”

“Private, Van der Wall, Sir!” A deep sign can be heard, just behind the sergeant and interrupts the conversation.

“Not another Dutch guy” he says.

“Shut it” As the Sergeant shouts back at him and turn back to the private.

“Please to meet you, my name is Sergeant major Costner. We were waiting for your arrival and to replace our fallen squat member. But first, because we have some time on our hands, before we will depart. Let me introduce you, to the rest of the crew. First, we have my brother Remi, he sitting right behind me, on the sidewalk now” He points behind him, where he just left the store.

“He is our medic, but watch out for his tongue, he got a foul mouth on him. But he is reliable and an expert medic, so learn to live with him and you can ignore him, if you must”

“Funny!” The guy says, as he is looking through, his medical bag.

“On the tank with the Caliber 7.62 mm, the M60, we have Muller, our friendly giant” The guy replies, with a broken American accent, you can still hear his German origin. “You talkin’ to me? You talkin’ to me? Then who the hell else are you talkin’ to?”

“Hmm...okay?” Sergeant says and continues.

“The two guys next to the tank, are Private Smit, he is holding onto the radio and we have Vermeulen, the tank is his responsibility” He only nods.

“Then we have the two lovers, inside the store” He points again to the building, he just walked out from.

“Corporal Brit and Private Boon, Boon is our engineer...” The medic Remi, interrupts their conversation again.

“Engineer? Well, he is engineering Brit right now” he begins to fake laugh “Hahaha” Suddenly the Sergeant picks up, a little stone and throws it right at him and shouts.

“Shut it! Then we have Brit, our grenadier, tech support and second in command” And then out of the blue, the big guy Muller says “We have to do it. It’s part of our lifestyle. It’s like, uh... shaving.”

“Right thanks Muller, almost forgot Kramer, in the top window with the sniper rifle. He is our scout spotter, the silent type” The sergeant looks to his direction and starts to shout at him

“Can you see anything?” He casually shouts back “Nothing at the moment, the way is clear” as he blows smoke from his joint. Sergeant Costner lays his hand, on the private shoulder.

“Welcome to the team, first rule, watch your back. These guys are rough and don’t take kindly towards cowards or not pulling your weight, if someone shoots, you follow. That’s all”

He looks back at the store and he shouts “We are moving out! Gather here!”

When everyone has gathered around at the sergeant, Costner starts his speech.

“I know it hasn’t been easy, no time for rest. In a constant battle after battle. We have lost a lot of good people, on the way here”

“Amen!” Remi shouts.

“But we have to keep pushing on. I just received our orders from the top, this will be a solo mission. We are going to scout on a head, to the next city. We have received intel that indicates, a chance to strike back. Unfortunately for this mission, we have no support”

Vermeulen interrupts “Seargent, well that is nothing new right, so what town are we taking on, this time?”

Sergeant reply’s “You guys won’t like this, but we have been ordered to go to Amsterdam” Silent’s flow over the team. The only guy that remains uneased is Remi and shouts.

“Amsterdam! Are they crazy, they send us on a suicide mission, how can we agree to this?” The little guy Smit, joins in the rend.

“Why are we going alone? We will never make it”

The sergeant says proud and with confidence.

“Orders are orders, we have already done the impossible. This hasn’t gone unnoticed. They have faith in us and these are desperate times, with desperate options. This is the best time to attack, they have indications, that there is almost no activity, coming from Amsterdam”

The only woman on the team, Brit, says “But Sir, the ship is still out there, of course there won’t be any activities, everyone is dead!”

“I understand the situation Brit, but we have to push back, this is the best time if any. You and I know what we are dealing with. But if only for the slim chance, why not take the risk and win this battle”

Vermeulen jumps on top of the tank, “Let’s go, you’re not going to convince him” he opens the top hatch and gets in behind the wheel.

The guy Smit put the radio on his back and jumps on the side of the tank and says “He’s got the right minds set”

Brit and Boon follow right behind Vermeulen and enter the hatch as well, as he closes it behind them. The others are not that willingly, but joins Smit on the side of the tank, the private sits next to the sergeant, to feel more secure, around a leader figure. Costner hits the side of the tank and shouts “Move out!”

The tank begins to move, crushing his tracks along the ground. In some places imprinting the road with it. They make their way towards the highway, what is still remains intact, for the most part. A direct road, to the capital city of the Netherlands.

On their way there, Remi begins to talk to the private van der wall.

“Hey you! What is the deal”

In a confusing state, almost shy, the private replies “What me?”

“Yes! You! With your freshly new uniform, did you just come from the womb or something”

“Ehh?!? No, I just finished training” Remi face palmed, his face.

“Training at this time and day, we are in full war and if you didn’t notice. We are losing big time and they are still train people...just sent them into battle, best way to train”

He hits his fist, against his palm of his hand and grunts with a fight lust.

“Well sorry sir, it wasn’t a normal training, I think, it seems they notice some kind of potential, for some improved training and it took longer than expected”

“Improved training? You only need experience” as he is flexing his arm.

“That will be enough brother, Van der wall, just stay close, you will have the most chance, to survive and let them lead and you follow”

“Yes sir” He looks back at the city, which has almost turned into rubble. He begins to wonder, how this all started. Wondering off in his thought and past.

Chapter 03 In the mind of private

It all started almost a year ago, I was still living with my parents, in a place called sexbierum (and yes, it is a real city). The house we lived in, was an old farm house. Detached from close by neighbours. Most of my time I spend was in the attic, had the whole place for myself. Just lying in my bed and watching some television. But in one hot summer day, that is a rarity in the Netherlands. I was switching through the channels and then suddenly! I notice something on the news. Something has happened in the USA. Something out of a dream. People on the news saying all sort of crazy stuff, that a space ship has spotted, in the state of New York. But nothing was clear. Other people saying in an interview, they saw a UFO. Landing somewhere around Washington DC. All very confusing. Even the USA government, weren't saying anything. It was all kind of fishy and confusing at the same time.

A week past, only thing they showed us, was an image of a space ship. Hovering in Washington DC, near the white house. It looked a lot like a huge flying donut. Nothing like that, I had ever seen in movies before. It was flying in midair, with no signs of propulsion. The outside of the ship was covered, what looked like, an almost black non reflective material, like the vanta-black paint. But nobody could get near it, even the drones were shut down, when they came close enough. The army protected it, like it was fort Knox and no information was released from it. On our own local news station, the Dutch TV. People where already making jokes, just like.

“No wonder they invaded the Americans, they gladly join for some free donuts. But the aliens have to watch out or they will get fat as they are”

“Why like the movies, they always going for the USA. Is the rest of the world not good for them?” and many more.

My normal routine, was still on going and I went to school as usual, I studied computer engineering, nothing special. Everyone was talking about the aliens, I even had some classes, where we watch some footage of the arrival of the ships. At some point some class mates, even went to America to have a look. Just like my best friend Frits, but I never heard anything from him again, after that.

After some time, you didn't even see anything on the news, like they were bored of it. But I was still interested and intrigued, tried to learn anything about these aliens. Maybe some speculations, a hoax or even conspiracies, I even went to the second page of google. I was digging a lot on the internet, trying to learn anything. They had some ideas, maybe it was an invasion of some kind, a technique. That they were trying to take over the earth, at some point.

At first like any conspiracies, I didn't believe them or wouldn't believe them. Why didn't they attack us yet? What was their reason? To even approach us like this, even that, not saying anything. Was this really, the best way to attack? But when I kept reading, it became clear to me and I started to change my opinion on the matter. I have to prepare myself, when the time comes, I will fight. I followed my daily routine, even tried my best at school. Just to improve my knowledge and my skills. After school, I kept training, running for miles to an end. To a point where my body couldn't take it anymore.

Five weeks have passed, since the first news of the aliens. When I was training in the gym, suddenly the president of the USA was on the news.

We all gathered around it, the manager of the gym raised the volume up and we looked in anticipation.

President Steve Goodhart, a newly elected president, started his speech, from the oval office. From the outside USA, he seems to be a reasonable guy, but with this speech, he was holding back information, not acting like his true self.

He said that we didn't have to worry and apologies for taking so long. That their communication was difficult, but came to some understanding. The aliens were friendly and they are here to help us. Exchanging information and providing us with cleaner energy, to return earth back to her former glory. Only at last part of his speech, was kind of strange, still troubles me at this time. That they aren't going to show any footage of the aliens itself. That was their only objection and they called them self the Nautilus. Somebody at the gym started to talk.

"I bet they are really ugly, when they show it on national television, everyone is going to puke" and begins to laugh. The president ended his speech and this was troublesome as well. Not what he said, but how he brought it.

That there will be some blackouts and fallouts, change of energy and communication. Cleaning the space rubble and other junk in space. Implanting new technology to improve our communication and future. He ended with the sentence “Our worries will be over and we will enter a new era”

Another week has passed, since the day of his speech, just as he has told us. All the TVs were blacking out, even the internet was gone. What I thought was impossible at the time, because of the hard lines everywhere through the ocean floors. Our only source of information, was from the radio. Even they, got no information, as everyone was relying, on the modern-day technologies. Eventually after some weeks, they fixed the hard lines in Europa, but still no information from the USA, this was still lacking. Nothing was coming in or out. There where speculation, that USA was taking over by the aliens and also that a war was upon us. So, people started getting ready, for war. Just as a precaution.

Gathering supplies and improving their house for protection. Stores became almost empty. for some reason the toilet paper, was the first to go. Some people, where even digging bomb shelters, what is almost impossible in the Netherlands, as of the high-water level.

Only thing, I could think off, was to join the army and hope this wasn't the end. I had almost no friends and the ones that I had, were gone to the USA. The only family I got, was my father and mother, but these where unwittingly and didn't believe in anything that was happening and truly believe it was the fault of the government. Well, I also had an older sister living in Japan, but she has broken all ties, to the family. I only got a message, once a year on my birthday. Always with the simplest message. “Stay strong brother, I hope to see you again, maybe next year” So, I had nothing to lose and I joined the army that morning. Hoping to fight and defend our country, against these invading aliens.

Weeks past, as I was training in the army, like many others that joined to make a differents like me. Then I heard on the radio, one day, in one of the barracks. That indeed war had broken out. All main cities all around Europe, where being attacked, with the same black ships hovering above it. It wasn't even the aliens, but what looked like the Americans, that attacked us. All wearing some sci-fi gear, totally black with American flag tagged on side of their helmets. Then all hell broke loose. When it happened, I thought to myself, this must be a dream.

Chapter 04 Amsterdam

Remi puts his hands on the private's shoulder and start shaking him.

“Wake up soldier! We have a city to retake” He shouts and brings back Hein, from his thoughts. Looking around and seeing the tank has just arrived, on the last straight away to Amsterdam, with a sign indicating 8 km left.

He looks up at the sky and see in the far distance, still hazy to see clearly. But there it is, the space ship, as it was shown on the TV. Black and oval shaped, straight from a dream. And they are going straight for it.

Costner knocks, on the side of the tank, as it grounds to a halt. Boon opens the lid and looks at Costner. With a look off, why stop here. To take away the confusion Costner says “Just wait here for a second, these open roads can't mean anything good. I will take Kramer and the new kid and scout on a head” He looks at the private and asks “Private Van der wall, do you have a first name?”

“Sorry sir, yes, you can call me Hein” He replies. The sergeant jumps off the tank and lands on his feet and says “Perfect, so me, Hein and Kramer are going to scout on ahead, wait for a sign to move forward. Going to test this new radar thing, seems to be able to detect movement from within the city.”

They jump of the tank and started to walk toward a lonely building, on the side of the road, just before Amsterdam. Costner whispered.

“We are charging in that building, Hein you take the lead and let us see, what your capable off” Hein checks his gun and turns the safety switch off and begins to sneak towards the building in front of him. He is being followed by Kramer and Costner. Hein moves toward the front door and takes a peek through the little window next to it. *Nothing*.

He feels the doorknob and twist it, but it is locked. Little out of though, he looks back at them both *What now?* Kramer nods and without saying anything the Sergeant commander, starts counting down from three, with his fingers. Raising his last finger, Kramer charges forward and kicks in the door in. As it swings open, the private started to charge in. Moving from room to room, floor by floor, clearing the building. Until Kramer reached the top floor and gives the green light and says “Nobody is home.”

The private felt relieved, that the building was empty. Still shaking a bit as he looks at his hands, it's still trembling. The sergeant notices as well, his inexperience and orders him to stay.

“Hein you stay downstairs and guard the door, let us know, if you see anything suspicious” Costner has now turned, his attention towards Kramer and walks up the stairs.

“Kramer, find a good sniper spot and look if you see anything, in the city limits. I will go onto the roof and place this new radar thing, that I have just received for this mission. Maybe we can get a clear view of the city, before we are going to charge in”

Costner notice, Hein is still next to him, clinging on to him, with every move he makes. His patience starts to run low and shouts at private Hein.

“What are you still doing here? Take your responsibility and get moving! downstairs!”

“Ow eh sorry, Sir, Yes, Sir! I am going” He makes his way downstairs, still little shocked, as he almost stumbles down the stairs. At the last step of the staircase, he takes a deep breath and he start to think out loud.

“Keep calm Hein, let's find a good camping spot and wait this out” He moves toward the living room. It's an old interior style design, with a lot of dark wooden furniture. Displaying expensive looking stuff, cabinets full of porcelain and little sculptures. A big window, covers almost the whole side of the living room. A crack in the window, makes a perfect place, to look out over the streets. He takes a real comfortable chair, with leather cushions and with some engravings wooden panels and pushes the chair against the window. He takes a seat and places his gun, against the armrests of the chair and waits as he looks out through, the cracked window.

A half hour passes, with nothing happening, only seeing some birds, still flying across the devastated land. His arm is getting tired and feels a tingling sensation. The feeling when blood has been cut off and begins to flow back into his arm. He starts to shake it off. Then suddenly he notices some sounds from outside. A tank is approaching, hearing the tracks on the pavement. At that time, the sergeant just makes his way downstairs. Hein, overcome with some sense of recognition and says proud.

“Sir, a tank is approaching from the left, just around the corner” Costner lets out a deep breath and says disappointed.

“Private Hein, that is our tank” Kramer looks at him with a disgraceful face and shaking his head. Costner fearless opens the door and moves outside.

“We are ready, move out!” They make their way back to the tank. Hein still feels awkward, to make some rookie mistake, A feeling of disappointment.

The lid of the tank is already opened and Boon is hanging over its side, to hear what Costner has to say “Unfortunately, we have no intel so far, this device is broken or their predictions where correct, that the city has been cleared out” He is holding up an old PDA device in the air, to receive some connection of some kind, but nothing.

“We will move forward, but still be on your guard. We all know how ruthless they can be, they can come at us at any moment’s notice, so don’t be fooled. Especially for you Hein, as this will be your first encounter, if I am correct”

Hein only nods. “Just follow the one rule, if you see anything, shoot! I mean anything. if they notice you, you are dead in an instance. All of these guys here know this. So, don’t wonder off and get yourself shot” Remi stand next to Hein and whispers in his ear. “This is going to be your worst nightmare” and begins to smile, with a creepy look on his face. Hein not able to react as Costner shouts

“Move out!”

They all jumped back onto the tank and head towards the city centre. The closer they get to the city, the eerier it gets. The sound is almost completely gone, almost silent. The chirping of birds has stopped as well. The only sound is coming from the tank and its tracks grinding against the tarmac. The silence is shortened, when Muller begins to speak.

“No life, this city is dead” Smits looks around and notice the same

“Yeah, it doesn’t look the same anymore, does it? almost desolated. Hey! Muller do you know that place over there. We had some drinks last year and had some fun as well” Muller nodded

“Yes, was fun! Nothing left now, only a pile of rubble”

Remi hits the private hard on his back, making him almost fall off the tank.

“Hey Hein, what did you do, before the war?” he asked,

Surprised he says “uuh nothing really, I was a student”

“Ahaa! I bet you fucked some bitches there. And I think you’re the kind of guy, that licks them clean” He places his middle and index finger, in front of his face and start to lick it and raises his eyebrows. Smit says defending Hein.

“Don’t pay attention to this guy, there are some screws loose” Remi spit at him, landing some centimeters in front of him. Remi laughs.

“HAHAHA...Well maybe I do” with a smirk on his face “Well, this idiot, has some advice for the new kid. When you see one of those lights, their guns! Please start firing or run, don’t even try to hide, behind a car or tree. These guns rip through everything! Look over there” as he points towards a ripped building, molted rubble everywhere, almost looks like cooled down lava. With still a smirk on his face, Remi says “I even saw some guy, got killed by one of those guns, he was even hiding behind a tank. Shot right threw it! Only a molted looking corpse remained”

“That’s enough Remi, stop scaring him and now focus, we are getting close” The sergeant looks at his PDA and finally begins to flash, with some information

“We are getting close, get off and move on foot from here and keep your eyes open”

The tank stops, just for a moment as they get off. As the tank starts to move again and following the road into the city. Destruction can be seen everywhere, heavy battles have taken place, bodies everywhere. Casualties on both sides, but strangely, no transport vehicles on the Nautilus side. The vehicles are only from the Dutch army, but the tanks and cars that remain, are mostly molted down to the pavement. These are now mere rubble. Smit looks around and says impressed.

“There were some heavy battles here, These Nautilus are everywhere, not seen so many death soldiers around, not even in Haarlem, I have to say I am proud to serve, we were able to kill this many”

Muller says to not surpass expectations “You think this is much, We Germans, had killed more than that, in Düsseldorf my home town. Even that wasn’t enough”

“Yeah, I know friend. But still, I am lucky, that they are not here, to greet us” Still with the tank on their side, the sense of danger is high. Hein sees one of the soldiers close by and takes a moment to look.

They wearing black suits, with a clip able protection amor patches, the materials are difficult to distinguish. Looks like a hard material for their armor and their undersuit seems to be some sort of fabric. These are marked with light bars. But seen some with green and yellow as well. Their helmets have a vertical visor and are tightly bolted to their suit. Their visors are almost impossible to look through, barely able to see their human faces. The gun looks futuristic as well, like a blaster from a sci fi movie. Some with wires attached to their suit.

Hein feels intrigued, this is his first time, he sees one up-close. He steps towards one and wants to take a better look. But just as soon as he steps closer to the body, he gets grabbed from behind. It's Muller and he says "Don't be a fool, keep behind the tank, this will get you killed" Smit points towards the gun, in front of the body.

"You can't even use these guns, their battery packs, will explode if you remove it or use it"

Remi makes a sissing sound, imitating an exploding creature from a building game. "I always wondered, what that gun could do. But then again, the last guy, that picked it up. Exploded right into my face" He makes a balled fist, right in front of Hein and expanding it. Imitating an explosion.



Chapter 05 The trap of the city

The leopard and the group have reached the city sign, indicating Amsterdam. They enter the city, but just as they do. Vermeulen start to slow down the tank and Brit begin to open the lid. To make as little sound as possible, she carefully opens it and whispers.

“Two tangos” she points forward with two fingers, to a faraway building. Brit quickly ducks back inside and closes the lid behind her. Just as she did it, the tank stops immediately, Costner begins to instruct Kramer and Smit.

“Get to your positions and for god’s sake, don’t let them notice us”

Kramer removes his rifle from his back, as does Smit. They both take positions on either side of the tank. supporting their guns, on the side of the Leopard. Hein is confused and whispers “Why didn’t they hear us yet?” Muller replies to Heins lack of knowledge “Yeah somehow, they are less aware of sounds, mostly rely on their vision” Muller pushes Hein closer to the ground, to his knees to make him less visible. “Get ready, maybe a trap” as he repositioned his M60 in his hand.

Both Kramer and Smit ready to fire, as Smit says “Kramer, I see them, I will take the right one, you the left?” Kramer replies “Sure”

Costner standing behind them, looking through his binoculars and informs them. “440 meters, little side wind from the south, no corrections required”

“Noted sir, Okay on 3....2...1...” Both of them fire their rifles, simultaneously.

Costner, that has kept looking through his binoculars, sees them both fall down to the ground and says “Confirm kills, good job boys” Smit begins to laugh as he packs his stuff “Damn his head! Blown right up” Kramer only smiles and grabs his gun up and puts it back, on his back. Remi looks at the private and says “Damn, the new kid is scared? you are sweating like hell” Hein is still trembling and only smiles back, still lying on the ground.

Muller stands over him and grabs him from the ground up. Back on his two feet and he gets his arm around him and says to him with his fake American accent.

“Why so Serious, if we die here! It’s our time. But if we don’t! We are ready to fight the next fight” It is a strange thing, but it seems to calm him down for some reason.

“Just stay strong, little one, you will be fine” Hein looks at Muller and seems, he can rely on this man and says “Thank you”

The big guy begins to laugh “HAHAHA, don’t thank me for something like that, but I think, this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship” The big guy smiles and walks back to the tank.

Proceeding to move forward along the road for some time, without any indication of obstacles, until they reached the ring road of the city. The next obstacle in their path, is the road forward and has been blocked. The viaduct that connects to the other side, underneath the freeway A10 the ring road, has collapsed. Obstructing the four-lane road to the city. Remi start to shout.

“Why this road!? Why do they have to blow it up! That sucks! Now we have to back track to reach to the other side, that is surely two km away”

Kramer points toward a path, that is still free of debris.

“There! the bike lane” Remi is sceptic and says not convinced.

“Really?! Do we fit through there, it’s a bike lane?”

Costner takes a look and says “Yes, I think that will work, we will fit right through. But please check up a head Kramer and take Muller and Smit with you. Just to be sure, as this will take some precision movements and we will take it slow” Brit opens the hatch again, she overheard their conversation and says “So, Sir, we are taking the bike lane, that will be a tight fit. Even if the viaduct will hold, this will be tricky”

“Yes Brit, but take it real slow, I don’t want our surprise attack, to be wasted by some collapsed viaduct” She starts to give orders, to the crew below.

“Otto! get on the bike lane. They are checking the road up ahead”

“Sure thing, able lady” as Vermeulen turns his tank, towards the open path. Costner is already at the beginning of the archway and sees Muller and Kramer on the other side, raising their hand.



“Brit the way is clear, we will give support from the back. I think Smit already advanced forward, to check ahead” She looks down and shouts

“Old feeble man, the way is clear” Only grumpy sounds, can be heard from below, barely able to make out any words.

“Nice, f@\$#...real nice” The Leopard makes its way through the archway. The pillars begin to shake a little, from the rumbling sound of the tracks, on the uneven ground.

“That doesn’t sound good” Brit implies, as Remi takes a closer look at one of the pillars, to inspect the sturdiness of the concrete.

“It’s holding, at least”

“Well, it still creeps me out, so bye, bye guys” she tries to get back into the tank. Angry she shouts down below.

“Boon move a side. I don’t want to be here, if the bridge falls”

With a little wave, Brit gets back inside and closes the lit behind her.

“That bitch! If we make it, I am not going to patch her up again” Remi says as he waits for the tank, to completely move under the archway.

“Brother you know just as I do, if we lose the tank now, we are done for. Just stay cool for a moment” Costner looks back at Hein and says to him.

“That means for you as well, Hein! Just to keep clear of any rubble” Hein didn’t pay attention and is only focused, on looking behind them, shaking his gun, as adrenaline still cursing to his veins. But then he realizes, they were talking to him and turns around and says confused.

“Sorry sir, what did you say?”

“Just stay close, we are getting through”

The Leopard begins to advance forward, rumbling of the motor and its tracks grinding against the stone pavement. Cracks begin to appear on the side of the columns. But no concern of the group yet.

“Sergeant, are we going to make it?” Hein says concerned, as he is almost hugging the tank right now.

“Just keep your calm private! We are through before you know it” The tank just fits inside the tunnel, gracing against one of the pillars. The roof begins to crack and parts of the concrete archway, begins to fall down. Making a raining sound of clattering small stones, against the metal roof of the tank.

“Watch out! we are here as well” Remi shouts, as he puts his hands above his head, forgetting that he has a helmet on. The Leopard tank has a hard time to be controlled, grinding against the side walk and the uneven grounds. Turning the tank, a little sideways. Grinding his track “*GRRRSSSS*” and barely touching one of the pillars. Remi grabs Hein and pushes him down “Watch out!” They just missed a column, that has been split in half. Crashing against the side of the tank, to the direction of Hein and just missing him by a couple of centimeters.

“Thanks Remi” he replies. Remi doesn’t want to acknowledge his compliment and replies back “Don’t get the wrong idea, I didn’t want to! But else, I had to patch your sorry ass up”

The end of the arch way can be seen, a couple of meters remain. Still debris falls down onto the tank, now and then, they get hit by a small piece of stone.

The tensions are running high, sweat drips down along Heins cheeks. Swiping it away with his sleeve and keeping a close eye in the back. He sees a downed tree, what almost looks like a man. That keeps grabbing his attention, but knows that this is nothing. He looks next to him to revert his eyes away and can see parts of the collapsed road. On the freeway he sees a car with people inside. Of course they have not made it. But their death stare scares him, almost like they are looking at him. Suddenly he hears the tank has hit something, bumping up and down. One of the first pillars, has almost completely disintegrated and the Leopard is bumping against it, to shove it aside. But this action, seems to crack more pillars around them. One of them next to Hein, that he was just looking at. And seeing the cracks appear right in front of him. Suddenly he sees the light emitted from behind the tank, they have reached the end of the archway.

“Finally, we made it!” Remi shouts. The Leopard has been cleared and gets back on to the road ahead. Even the sergeant, seems somewhat distressed and swipes away some of the sweat droplets, from his forehead. He asks Kramer that is waiting for them.

“Kramer, any update?”

“Seems to be clear sir, Smit has scouted on ahead. But he hasn’t had any indications of movement, yet Sir. But can I speak freely?”

“You always, Kramer”

“It doesn’t seem right, that they only place two scouts, at a clear view point at the outside city limits and then nothing. Clear roads! And I still feel an eerie sense, that we are being looked at. Something fishy at work here” Smit runs back at them, exhaling heavy.

“There is nothing, how? The city is completely abandoned? Maybe the intel was correct, that they all have dispersed”

“I understand both of your concerns, but keep your focus. Smit anything on the radio yet?”

“No silence sir, we must be out of range or some sort of signal jamming?”

Remi begins to laugh

“You have watch too many animes with Muller, jamming signal is that even real, with your sci-fi stuff” Smith a little aggravated by his dull question.

“Well actually that is real, the Germans even used this in the second world war, for the BBC radio, to stop them from getting any information from the English”

“Ha-ha, you got that from Muller right, Germans HA” Remi laughs even more “Hey, both of you, Keep your minds clear, no time for jokes”

“Yes sir” Both of them say. As Costner continues

“And watch out, for any ambush or traps and Kramer, please change positions with Hein, you take the back and Hein joins with Muller and Smit at the front, expecting some close combat movement, we will keep the tank between us for now”

They started to move again, slowly Hein makes his way to the front. Little witholden, moving away of the comfort of the tank and its sergeant. His restraint is quickly broken, because of a greeting from Muller, that he is giving him. He grabs him tightly, with his big arms around him, his sweaty musk fills his longs. But somehow, he feels comfortable, a warm sensation resonating from him and fills his heart. “You have joined the greatest duo, Muller and Smit” he says with his German accent. Uncomfortable Hein says “Ehh thanks”

“HAHA Don’t torture yourself, Hein. That’s my job, just look at us, as brothers” Smit is too focused to give any feedback and hasn’t even looked at Hein yet. Looking at every window, to spot any indication of the Nautilus presents. Hein scratches just below his helmet, to ask a question.

“Hmm well, I have a question, if you don’t mind” he says

“Fire away little Freund, but keep your eyes open” with his big hands, he pets him on his back.

“Is this some kind of gang of friends, it seems all too friendly for me”

“You have good eye, but the answer is nein, we are all comrades, as you are now!” Smit’s cough and says under his breath “Well Muller! that isn’t quite true” Still not looking at the private, he says “Hein, I know Muller from before the war and some other friends as well, rest their souls, we were the only survivors from the battle of Haarlem”

“Yah, Only the dead have seen the end of War, they were good friends” Muller quoted.

Smit continues his story as he keeps looking around.

“These guys are the only ones left, that had taken part of the operation to retake Haarlem. We almost had them as well, we reached the station and then all hell broke lose. Almost every Nautilus soldier in the vicinity, where coming to their aid. Thousands of soldiers, we could only escape, with the skin of our teeth”

Hein intrigued says “Yeah, I heard something about that, so that was you guys. But also heard that you were cowards, running away from battle”

“Yeah, they can all say, whatever they want. But it doesn’t matter in the end. We survived to fight, the next fight. So only us two and B & B and brothers Staes. Remi and Costner, survived”

“Who is B & B?” Hein asks

“Brit and Boon the couple, still wondering how they came together, this was before we met them, fighting by each other side”

Hein remembers them entering the tank

“Oww them, what about the other guy in the tank?”

“You mean Vermeulen, Otto, I think his first name was, yeah, he survived the E-Day. Together with Kramer, these are the real heroes on the front line”

“E-day?” Hein says confused.

“E-Day You know? Eradication day? First battle of the Americans, invading into Europe, as a surprise attack. Well, he was transferred to replace our driver Brad, lost at the last battle” Hein recollecting his memories.

“Okay yeah, I have missed a lot, I was still station at...”

“Sorry Hein, we have to hold your conversation for now. We are getting close to our objective. We need to pass through this intersection, to get to that bridge over there. I expect Nautilus any moment now” Smit turns around and raises his hand, toward the tank. The tank begins to slow down, as Smit instructs Hein, to partake in their advancement forward.

“Hein, we will check if it’s clear. You take the left side of the road, keep near the water line, shoot if you see something. Don’t bother with stealth. Muller, you take the middle as usual, let’s hope you don’t get shot”

“Hope is a dangerous thing” Muller quoted.

“Muller, just be serious, I will stay at the right side. We will cross when it’s clear and move toward the bridge”

Muller nods and starts walking in front, with his M60 vastly gripped. Both Hein and Smit are now walking on the side of the road, following Mullers movement forward. Getting closer with every step they make. Right towards the middle of the crossing.

Muller stands now under the traffic lights and stops. To turn to every direction, but no enemies in sight. The situation is getting heated and expecting something to happen, at any moment's notice. But still nothing. Hein feels uncomfortable, he doesn't know what to expect. But keeps his cool, as he also reaches the crossing on the left side and tries to reflect the movements of Smit, on the other side. Smit nods, indicating it is clear.

It's a big crossing, with some more than four lanes to every direction. At the opposing side, where they came from, there is an old bridge in a bad condition. An old bascule bridge, the bridge has seen some better days, but it is still holding strong. Also in the distance, past the fallen down statue of Domela Nieuwenhuis. They can see the heighten train tracks crossing the channel.

Smit has moved to the other side of the road and stands now against the traffic lights, looking back. He feels the coast is clear and safe, to proceed and waves toward the tank, to come. Muller and Hein now make their way as well. Standing near the bridge and await until the tank gets closer to the crossing. Costner makes his way towards Smit, to conclude how to proceed.

“Smit any update” he says

“Nothing so far sir, we can cross the channel here, but not sure if it's safe, on the other side yet”

“Noted, Let's move anyway, but be careful” Costner says as they move towards the bridge. A passenger bus has blocked one side of the road. The front of the bus is completely gone, molted steel had dripped down on the ground and has hardened overtime. Muller and Smit have taken the lead in front again and the first to start crossing the bridge. Kramer following them shortly after. He jumps onto the bus, that is still filled with dead bodies inside. No clear indications how they died, but it is a horror scene inside. Dried blood has been spilled everywhere.

Their hand prints can be seen all over the glass windows and the floor is riddled with body parts.

Almost no identification of any human remains, a complete mesh of blood red flesh. But this doesn't seem to bother Kramer and climbs on top of the bus. He takes a better look, at the other side. Costner feels unease, a faint uncomfortable tone, can be heard in his voice.

“Kramer can you spot anything, my PDA is completely empty, it's out of range I suppose”

“Nothing so far sir, but there is a square up ahead, like everything has stopped there, a last stand of some kind”

Hein closely follows behind Muller, as they move now over the bridge. Smit moves his hand up, to indicate clear streets. The tank follows them, shortly after. Just moving past the bus, on the left side. They can see the carnage, that is getting more and more intense. Heavy battles that have taken place, on this square. It is more than they ever seen before. Still smoke rises from some of the burned cars. They keep on going, checking every corner, every window. Nothing after nothing. Each of the soldiers, that have crossed the bridge, have taken a side on the street. They look around, if expecting some Nautilus soldier, to rise their head from the carnage. Also, the Leopard is now over the bridge as well, in the middle of the road, running on a snail pace, as the canon is moving so slightly from window to window. The tank moves towards the middle of the square, as an attention point. Suddenly! The tanks stops! The canon begins to move upwards! Muller is the first to detect the intention of Boon and shouts back.

“It's a trap!”

Then without warning, the tank shoots, at the building in front of them. Blasting most of the building's facade away. The gunner on the tank begins to shoot as well. Lights begin to appear all around them, like some sort of light show. Without any second notice, everyone begins to fire away, to all directions. The sound is deafening. Muller has also joined in and begins to shout.

“Say hello to my little friend!” and start to unload his M60 up onto the buildings ahead. Smoke and debris are everywhere, parts of the building start to crumble away, deforming them. Costner begins to shout.

“Move out of the line of sight” He is being interrupted by the canon fire. Blasting a hole into the buildings and setting it ablaze.

Through the fire a laser blast shoots and hits the side of the tank. Ricocheting against the pavement and burning the ground away. Costner close to the blast, has moved back to the bridge to find some cover next to Remi.

Still the others past the bridge, are fighting back and taking a stand. They keep on firing, to the direction where the lights are coming from. No direct fire, but spraying their bullets to the buildings. As they predicted, Hein sees their cover being shot away. Cars and concrete walls begin to melt. If a light beam hits it, it is gone in seconds, only a remaining pile of molted steel. Kramer still on the bus, lies on his stomach with a sniper rifle in front of him, shooting his AWM, Bullet after bullet, hitting every target and making every bullet count.

Hein has frozen solid, watching on, with his Heckler & Koch firmly in his hands, but unable to move. One of the Nautilus soldiers, is focused on him alone, the light shines right at him. In the distance, a voice can be heard.

“Wall! Wall! Wall!” Remi is shouting at Hein, as he follows with a reply

“Shoot your gun for fuck’s sake” The light that was focused on him, has fired towards him, but then out of nowhere. The big guy jumps in and pushed Hein away, evading the blast.

The destruction beside him is enormous. The concrete has been completely obliterated. Smoking tarmac fills his lungs, as the heat covers his face. Hein has now ducked behind a destroyed car and looks quickly towards Muller. He seems to be fine, started to fire his Light machine gun again, like if nothing had happened. Being snapped out, he follows after him. Hein that has taken up his assault rifle and fires. Randomly, he shoots at any indication of movement. Smoke starts to fill the air, emitting from their guns. Hein still hears the tank firing, another shot. Blasting another building down. But this doesn’t seem to lessen the rays of bright white lights, that still coming from every direction. Lighting up the smoke around them and is now almost impossible to see through. For one second, the lights begin to dim and the shooting begins to reduce. The destruction begins to show everywhere. He sees a gap in the smoke, a straight view of the tank. A piece of the tank has been shot off, by one of the laser beams. Smoldering metal drips from it. Vermeulen tries to drive backwards, to evade any other blasts. But the tank has become uncontrollable and crashing against the Bus on the bridge. Kramer losing his balance and almost falls off.

Hein begins to reload his HK416 and begins to shoot his gun again. Straight at a window in front of him. He gets the hang of his gun and hit something behind a window and somebody falls through it. He smashes his head, on the way down on a light pole. Cracking his helmet open and then falling to the ground. Covering the light pole with his dark red blood. He feels empowered, that he killed someone and shouts.

“I can do this!” and start to shoot, until is gun is empty again. He reloads his third round and he notices somebody shouting in pain, its Smit! He lost one of his legs. But he is still shooting his M16. As Remi is trying to patch him up, covering his wound. His blown off leg lies beside him. He doesn't even flinch, he just keeps on firing. The rays of lights are still coming down. Big explosions everywhere. Another ray hits the tank, fire starts to come out it. A voice can be heard from inside.

“This is a losing battle, there are still so many” Hein keeps on shooting, unable to move back. Like being in a trance and then suddenly, a ray of light, hits the car beside him. It is a big explosion, hitting the air out of his lungs. He feels dizzy and almost falls down. But in the process, he drops his assault rifle onto the ground. He looks and feels around on the ground, to find his gun.

Nothing, where is it? It has to be here.

At the same time, his left hand feels numb, not able to feel the ground and a strange tingling sensation. He looks at his arm, but it wasn't there anymore. It has completely blown off, he looks around and sees his arm still holding the gun, just meters away from him. He feels confused and dizzy *What how?* He looks away and his sight start to shrink, like an inverted microscope and falls to the ground. Just to see Muller face and begins to pass out.

Chapter 06 Alien arrival

Deep in the darkness of space, a small mysterious object flies through the galaxy, the milky way. It's a black spacecraft, shaped as a round orb, making its way toward the solar system. Inside the ship a man in a dark room, sits in a black stationary chair, like being carved from a piece of stone. The man wears a black futuristic looking armored suit. The suit almost molted into the chair itself. Wire and cables are coming from the floorpannels, connecting with his suit and chair. Providing him with power.

The man is staring into the emptiness of space, as stars are passing him by. Focused the man looks further on, being fixated on the task at hand. The room is silent, only his heavy breathing can be heard. As suddenly a little girl's voice, starts to speak to him "What you looking at? There is nothing there! But whatever, we are almost near the third planet of this star anyway"

The man starts to talk, with an old raspy metal voice "Why do you always have to break the silent, at least keep me at peace"

The girl says a little disappointed, but still with a faint joyful tone "Your no fun, sitting in your chair, looking at imaginary things, but really can you see something there? I only see smudges on the window, I think we need to clean it. But, so, you're going to risk your life, for these people?"

The man grabs his armrest with his oval looking arms. Almost crushing it, with his hands. Angry the man says "Don't talk to me about this. You know what happened and what was promised!"

"Grumpy like always, you will never change, but that is what I like about you, is it not?" Still with anger in his voice he replies "These guys need to pay! For what they did!"

"Once San, don't be like that! We are almost there!" the girl says, as she makes random cheering sounds "Yeaa!! Just couple minutes left and we can start our honeymoon" The guy in the chair, makes rumbling sound of disapproval. Still with her high energy she shouts. "Look! Look! we can see the blue marble right now. Earth!"



Then suddenly the ship crashes against something. A loud sound of debris hitting against the ship's hull, as it begins to shake around.

"ZsamI, are you paying attention! What did we hit?" the man asked.

"Hmmm let me see sweetie, well it looks like we hit some sort of spaaacce.... station" The man shocked and almost stands up from his seat.

"A type of Legand station?"

"Don't worry yourself! Nothing like that, it seems an earthly creation. A space research laboratory. But funny, I didn't expect them to have something like this. They are more advanced than we thought, maybe there is still hope for them, yet" she begins to laugh "hihihi"

"Have your fun, but are we still on course?"

"Nothing to worry about, we have deviated a little, but we are still on course to our second objective, Amsterdam if you like. But a lot of Nautilus have gathered around it, waiting for something, it seems strange, even for them"

"Nautilus! Take us down there" The man says with some excitement. Cheerfully the girl replies "Sure, thing Zunaka!"

Chapter 07 Recovery

Hein that had passed out, start to awake. With a feeling of nausea and dizziness. Like being thrown around and start to feel motion sickness, as he looks up. He noticed that he is sitting in a boat, driving along a wide-open river. It is an older looking boat, rusted and cracked. The side panels are broken off and he feels the ripped fabrics of the cushions he sits on. He has seen a boat like this before. But this one, is in a bad state. It's an old Dutch sloop.

He notices as well, that they are going down the river the IJ. On his right side, he sees the Amsterdam station, passing them by. Grabbing his attention, he looks at the back of the boat. It seems they are still being chased after, rays of lights being shot right at them. Some just passing the boat, others going through the water line, hitting the river floor. Lighting up the ground around them and seeing the shadows of the fishes below.

Muller is at the back, with his M60 blasting away, to keep them at bay. The Nautilus are at a far distance, but still manage to get some close by shots. Just next to him at the wheel, focused on getting the boat straight through the water, it is the Sergeant Costner. With a straight face, looking past everyone.

It seems a lot has happened, still confused what is going on. He hears Brit crying in front of him. It seems something bad has happened, when he was passed out. She keeps on sulking.

“We must go back..., Please turn the boat around... Please!” Lucky for her, Vermeulen is sitting right next to her, comforting and holding her tight, to stop her from doing something stupid. With no care in the world, Kramer sitting next to them, with his eyes closed. Sleeping through this racket and doesn't seem to be bothered by the situation.

Then Hein suddenly feels a stinging pain in his left arm and want to scratch it. But remembers, that his arm was shot off. It is almost like a dream, but he knows it is true, as he looks down at his arm and nothing is left of it! The wound is covered with bandages, still fresh as blood drips through it. He tries to move his arm around. It felt strange, almost like his arm and hand were still attached. *so, this the phantom pain, I heard about* but it still feels, like something is there.