

The Yar'Zanti Invasion 9: Isolated Shelters

By
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"Sky Raptor, this is Scout One, do you copy," casually asked a female Yar'Zanti pilot. She gracefully arced her pyramid like craft to the left to get another look at the ground below her. Beneath were the craggy peaks of the Rocky Mountains in what had been Colorado.

"Go ahead Scout One," calmly replied a controller.

"I've found something interesting."

"What is it Ensign Alu?"

"Maam, it seems there's an intact building within the mountains."

"Ensign, I'd expect there'd be many of those. Our invasion didn't do much out here," quipped the controller in a slightly exasperated tone.

"I know, but this place looks maintained," the Ensign earnestly pressed. She was intrigued by the sighting. "Even more, the encroaching Yar plants are being kept at bay."

"Connect your cameras to us please," ordered the controller.

Alu reached a hand out and touched a screen. Within moments her computer indicated she was transmitting what she saw. She flew a bit higher to give them an overview of the ground below her.

"Ensign, Commander Milan wants you to head back. She's going to send in a scouting party," ordered the controller.

With that Alu banked her fighter away from the spot. "Roger that, heading back now." She pressed the throttle forward and jetted home as fast as she could.

Softly the Sky Raptor floated above the structure ensign Alu spotted. Within the vessel's small bridge, numerous green and purple armored Yar'Zanti worked to try and identify what they were seeing. Some focused cameras on the building and its maintained state, other's the cleared land, while a few peered at the surrounding alien plants.

Whoever maintained the land had erected barriers around the entrances to the valley the building was located in. On one side were maintained lawns, trees, and even deer grazing the grass. On the other side of the thick concrete and metal barriers were dense encroaching Yar plants. They had all sorts of alien shapes and forms. Some appeared like gigantic ferns reaching as high as a typical old growth tree. Others had strange bowl like leaves, many of which held sap. Plus, a few appeared similar to Venus fly traps.

Along with the plant life, there were all sorts of small and medium sized creatures moving within that over growth. Some looked like six limbed monkeys with strange segmented heads. Others had multitudes of legs and appeared like a cross between centipedes and cats. Finally, a distance away from the walls were giant four legged beasts that seemed like brontosauruses but with hard turtle shells. These beasts were lazily munching on the huge ferns.

At first the scientists had been unsure how the plant and animal life were being kept from getting past the enclosure. However, they witnessed a monkey-like beast, known as an Ero'Ni'Ga, try and jump to the top of the fence. However, as soon as it touched the fence's top, large blue arcs of electricity raced out and killed the thing.

"Does anyone remember what this place was?" Commander Milan questioned while peering over a scientist's shoulders.

"No maam," answered another female green armor standing beside the captain. Her rank indicated she was a lieutenant commander. "I've scanned our personnel records and none of our crew had been from Colorado before being reborn."

"Then what do our human records say," Milan pressed standing up to face the other female.

"Not much maam. For some reason they're a bit spotty with this area."

"Well Arath, link up with high command and see what they've got. I want to know as soon as possible," the ship's captain ordered her second in command.

"Yes maam," the executive officer responded and crossed the bridge to consult with a few other Yar'Zanti.

Milan then leaned in to focus on scans a purple armored female was conducting. "Are we getting any human readings down there?"

"No maam. Our sensors don't detect anything."

"Yet it looks like they were there recently?"

"Yes maam. Our heat sensors indicate that vehicle was used in the last three hours." Commented the female pointing to a truck. The thing was parked hastily before the building's main entrance. Their sensors indicated a small bit of heat still resided in its engine compartment.

"It does look like a hotel of sorts," the captain contemplated.

"I agree maam."

Within moments Arath came back, "I've checked command's databanks. They indicate this was the Stanly hotel."

"Stanly hotel? Why does that sound familiar," inquired Milan. She pondered her human memories. Then she exclaimed, "That's the place Steven King stayed in!"

"I don't follow you maam," hesitantly questioned Arath.

"Back when I was a human, I was a big Steven King fan and read most of his books. I remember reading that he had came up with the idea for his book, The Shining, while staying in the Stanly Hotel!"

"Ah ok," evenly responded the executive officer.

"Incidentally, I still read his novels from time to time," casually admitted Milan. Then a bit louder, "But why is that hotel still being maintained?"

"Not sure, but I think we should get a closer look."

"Agreed, assemble a scouting party and go to take a look," Milan ordered her XO.

"Yes maam. I'll get right on it."

An hour later found a pair of Sky Raptor's belly doors slidw aside. After that, tractor beams softly lowered three mechs. They were painted in the two-fifty-third colors of blue and yellow. Their platoon's symbol, tiger swiping at something, adorned the machine's chest.

Each humanoid machine began walking away from where they were deposited. They carefully surveyed their surroundings detecting no threat. "Landing zone is clear," announced one mech pilot, an ensign Ado.

"Roger that, we're coming down," responded a female pilot.

From the same open belly doors floated down a troop transport shuttle. It had a swooped aerodynamic nose but boxy body behind it with a pair of stubby wings. The thing settled down on its extended landing skids beside the mechs.

Doors on either side of the shuttle opened up and ramps extended. From them came numerous yellow armed soldiers both male and female. Then next were a few purple and green armored beings as well.

"Fan out and start scanning the area. I want to find out why this place has been maintained. Survey the exterior grounds first. Mechs, stay on hot standby please," ordered Lt Commander Arath.

"Yes maan," responded everyone.

Ado walked his mech towards the front of the hotel. After a moment he marveled at its old world feel. It looked like the type of place, when he had been human, he would have enjoyed visiting. Plus, it somehow felt good to see a bit of humanity preserved. He wished the others hadn't smashed everything when they conquered earth.

Peering at his sensors, he still could not detect any human life. Yet before him stood something that could only exist in its pristine state because of someone maintaining it. He even noted how there was still power to it.

"Maam, I've found something over here," called out a male soldier over the group communications channel.

"On my way," answered the executive officer.

Ado turned his mech and followed the green armor with his weapons ready. He watched as she entered a side building. While he did not detect any humans in there, he detected some sort of machinery by the building's heat signatures.

"Is that," Arath asked astonished.

"Yes maam, it's a diesel generator. By the looks of these cables, it's being used to power the hotel and those fences," explained a female scientist.

"Where's its fuel?"

"Gotta be some sort of underground tank. We saw none above ground. Want to shut it down?"

"Not now."

"Yes maam."

"All teams report," Arath called out. After that, everyone reported finding nothing other than the generator. They saw

signs of people being there, but no humans were found.
"Alright, Mech's stand guard. Everyone else, we're going inside."

The Yar'Zanti soldiers carefully approached the front entrance of the hotel. The seven foot tall yellow armored beings looked strange against the vintage hotel. Briefly a few crossed along the lengthy covered porch and peered through a couple windows. Yet, all they saw was a clean maintained space.

"No signs," responded a male soldier.

"Alright, go inside, flank the entrance," ordered the lieutenant in command of the soldiers.

"Understood," each of her people called out.

One kneeled, held her rifle in a pair of arms, and reached out another arm to twist the door handle. Suddenly she pulled open the door and aimed her weapon ahead of her. Behind that soldier was another holding his rifle in a different direction.

"Clear," called the two.

Then in pairs they entered the place.

On the one hand, the grand interior would have felt like a vast open carpeted space to any human. Yet being as tall as they were, the room did not seem as big. Many times the Yar'Zanti had to duck.

With precision they streamed through the first floor checking every room they encountered. While they did that, a few chitchatted over the things they came across. Stuff not seen since before the conquest. One soldier admitted he had even visited the place back when he had been a human child.

Their Lieutenant next sent them upstairs to check all the spaces. Slowly they went from room to room. One thing immediately noticed was that every door was unlocked. Plus, the rooms were still being semi cleaned.

Then on the third floor they came across a few which appeared to recently have had occupants in them. The beds were rumpled, there were clothes in the closets and dressers, and the bathrooms had toiletries in them. All in all, they found nine rooms like that. Yet still no people.

"Alright, regroup downstairs in the foyer. We'll tackle the basement as a group."

"Yes maam," everyone chimed in.

It took a couple moments to uncover the entrance to the basement. It was in a back hallway for the employees. Cautiously, two by two, the soldiers worked their way down and through the underground. Though, with the low overhead, everyone had to duck.

Once the bottom of the stairs was cleared, a purple armor came down. At first she was looking for something along the ceilings. After a moment she located a thick black cable lashed along the main thoroughfare.

"This has to be from the generator," the female Yar'Zanti excitedly exclaimed.

"That's gotta be where this structure is getting its energy," surmised the Lieutenant.

"Yep, but I don't know why the humans would run such a thick cable through here. I thought they'd just hook up to the building's main power supply?"

"That's a bit odd. Could it be for something else?"

"Might be."

"Let's trace where it goes."

The scientist pondered the cable for a moment. Then she pointed to the right. "That heads in the direction of the generator."

"We'll go right. Everyone fan out and secure the basement."

"Maam, we've found something strange down a side passage," reported a soldier.

"We're coming," answered the Lieutenant.

"I'll be there as well," chimed in Arath.

Within moments, the XO, Lieutenant, and the scientist stood before what looked like a regular industrial refrigerator. Yet, as the purple armor pointed out, the giant power cable ran right into the thing. On top of that there seemed to be all sorts of cables wrapped around it.

"What does your sensors say ensign," Arath asked the scientist.

The purple armor pulled out a small handheld device and began scanning the box. "I'm not sure maam. On the one hand there's a lot of energy going into the thing. Yet, I can't sense what's inside."

"Is there a door," asked the Lieutenant.

"I found it over here maam," responded a male soldier gesturing to the entry. It was off to the side. Casually the soldier tried the handle but found it locked.

"Think it's booby trapped," asked Arath.

"Doubtful maam," answered the scientist. "My sensors don't detect any sort of explosive."

"Alright, then cut the door open," the executive officer ordered. Within moments a soldier approached the door and pulled out a pen like device from his belt. He then slowly worked it along the door's edges. Once he finished, the Yar'Zanti backed away as the heavy thing fell down with a loud thump.

Within the metal box were a small group of huddled humans. It looked like five adults and four children. When they saw the Yar'Zanti standing on the other side, all began screaming. One man raised a human rifle and fired a shot at the soldier standing at the door. Yet its bullet harmlessly ricochet off the male's armor.

Quickly thinking, the soldier switched his rifle to stun and fired off numerous blasts. Within moments, all the humans were unconscious. After that they were dragged out.

"So," Arath asked leadingly to the scientist who had been examining the box the humans hid in.

"It looks like they devised a system to hide themselves from our sensors."

"How?"

"My best guess is with the box's insulation and some sort of exterior cooling system."

"Worked pretty well."

"Yes it did and if they hadn't built this preserve around the hotel, we would have never noticed them," added the purple armor.

"Commander," Ado called Arath over the radio. That was accompanied by a loud blast shaking the ground.

"Report!"

"Maam, a clan scouting party is assaulting our position."

"And the Sky Raptor?"

"They're providing support, but the clanners have already landed a platoon of mechs."

"Roger that, protect our position as best as you can. We'll get these humans out safely as quickly as possible."

"Yes maam. Oh, the captain told me to tell you to hurry it up, sorry maam."

"Roger that!"

Back outside the hotel, Ado and the other mech pilots were doing all they could to defend against the clan mechs. At first it looked like things were going to be easy. The three pilots had arrayed themselves in a defensive arc and listened to what was going on inside the hotel. During that time the Sky Raptor had raised itself higher in the air to scan the Yar plants to the south.

Abruptly a small clan transport de-cloaked from the north and dropped six heavy weapon mechs. The things landed, raised their large cannons, and began firing on the loyalist mechs and ship. Ado and the others quickly returned fire.

Yet as he battled the clan behemoths, he noticed something familiar with their black and white paint schemes. On the one hand there was the typical clan wolf patch on each mech's chest. Yet, he happened to glance something on each causing him to briefly zoom in. There he noticed they had a grim reaper silhouettes. Abruptly Ado realized he was fighting the one-oh-first Dark Rangers, his old platoon. He remembered how the majority of his old teammates had defected to the clan. They even tried to kill him knowing he would have not joined their rebellion.

Yet, before he could contemplate his old platoon, Ado had to hit his jump jets to evade a set of mechs firing at him. Where he had just stood landed a heavy blast from an enemy shoulder heavy cannons. Bringing his own weapons to bear, Ado whipped off two shots and darted away. While his guns were not as powerful as those clan shoulder mounted weapons, his machine was a bit more nimble.

The other pilot, maybe Hordak, a Yar'Zanti who had been Ado's human brother, quickly tried to get closer to limit the loyalist mech's movements. Another clanner tried helping by pinning Ado against a nearby cliff. Instead, Ado aimed for the assisting mech, rushed towards it, and fired off his own cannons.

Then once close enough, Ado raised a lower non-cannon arm and aimed. With a pull of a trigger, a small cable shot out of the hand and slammed into the clan mech. Finally with a press of a button, Ado sent a heavy current through the cord and into the enemy machine. Abruptly the affected mech's systems went haywire causing the machine to grind to a halt.

Ado knew that was not enough to permanently shut down the newer mech. Yet that gave him time to aim and fire off a brace of missiles. Those projectiles lanced through the air and pounded the mech blasting off all sorts of things. However, while he was focused on that one mech, another landed a few missiles to the rear of Ado's machine. Yet, with the armoring back there, there was little damage.

An idea occurred to Ado. He remembered the special frequency his old command had that none of the others units used. The loyalist mech pilot wondered if they were still using it or had they changed frequencies?

Reaching a hand out, Ado hastily tuned his radio to the channel he had used as a member of the Dark Rangers.

"Come on, come on, let's deal with this scum and recover whatever's here before their pretty little ship comes back." Ado covertly listened his old commander urge the Dark Rangers, a female by the name of Niki. Ado was overjoyed to realize they were still using the private channel.

"How long till your mech is operational," Hordak urgently called to someone. It sounded like he was firing something. At the same time, Ado had to dart away from an heavy cannon blast. He interpreted the sounds to mean the mech attacking him was actually being piloted by his brother.

"Damn," swore Ado realizing the situation.

"Give me five minutes. That scum shorted out my computer system. Some idiot back in Hawaii didn't think to harden our mechs against an EMP attack," angrily responded one of the female lieutenants Ado had served with.

"I wish we had some smaller cannons instead of these behemoths," Hordak commented.

"Cut the chit chat and focus on our objective," reminded Niki.

"Yes maam," all the Dark Rangers called out.

Ado fired off another brace of missiles at the disabled mech. Then with the tip of his tail, Ado flipped a few switches

behind him alerting his command to the Dark Ranger platoon's frequency.

"Is that them," quietly asked one of Ado's current platoon mates.

"Yes, I recognized their patches and wondered if they were ballsy enough to use the same private channel they had before," Ado hastily added.

"Good work," Arath complimented him. "Keep them occupied just a bit more while we load the humans into our transport. Air cover should be here any moment."

"Yahoo," Alu gleefully called out over his radio a second later. At that moment she began raining down numerous missiles and bombs. The land around the Dark Rangers erupted in all sorts of explosions.

"Damn-it, they brought in their air support," swore Niki.

"It looks like they're trying to protect that transport down there," added a clan pilot. Ado recognized her as one of the more jovial pilots from his old platoon. He thought she had been a reasonable Yar'Zanti but was surprised to see her side with the clan.

"Go after that," urged Niki.

"Yes maam," responded the female.

Quickly Ado adjusted his mech and began slamming that pilot with his cannons. They did some damage to the woman's mech, her armor absorbed a lot of the energy. Yet, one of his fighter pilots assisted and began slamming that machine with more bombs.

Using a couple fighters as escorts, the transport lifted off the ground and raced out of the battle zone.

"Damn it, they're getting away," angrily yelled Hordak.

"Ensign Ado, get ready for retrieval," announced a Sky Raptor controller.

"Yes maam," he quickly answered. Within seconds a tractor beam yanked Ado's machine up out of the battle. He looked down to see his brother's mech. "Good bye brother. I'm sorry to see you like that," Ado softly mourned.

Up in the sky, Sky Raptor gunners manning the ship's heavy weapons began pelting the clan mechs. Heavy bolts of energy slammed into the ground around them. One hit the power generator causing it to go up in a giant fireball. Another slammed a mech, its armor could not withstand the amount of

energy and blew up. Ado was not sure which that was, but he silently hoped it had not been his brother's.

Once the transport and mechs were retrieved, the Sky Raptor turned around and left the scene. Behind them the clan mechs proceeded to demolish the old building. Before long all that was left was a smoking ruin.

Deep within the Sky Raptor the nine humans slowly came awake. They found themselves within a softly lit pastel colored room which sort of looked like a dorm room. Each found themselves laying on comfortable metal cots.

Groaning, the adults slowly sat up trying to figure out where they were. For a quiet moment, they pondered the strange semi lit space. Instead of being in some sort of cells, their beds were comfortable, there were no bars, and they could detect a slight shudder to the floor.

"Mama, what's going to happen to us," questioned one child.

"I'm not sure Emily. I'm not sure," unsteadily answered a woman pushing herself up off her cot. She crossed the space to check on her child. Yet, she could not detect anything wrong.

"All of you are being transported to the Dallas preserve," replied a female voice off to the side. Her speech had an Australian accent.

The humans quickly looked over to see a blue armored Yar'Zanti politely standing to the side. Her speech caused the children to shriek and the adults to suddenly stand up. Yet the Yar'Zanti held her four hands up.

"Don't worry, nothing bad is going to happen to you," she assured them. "My name's Risha, I'm a medical technician. I just want to see that you're all healthy and fed."

"You're only saying that till you bring us to the slaughter house," spat a man.

"We're not the clan and you're not going to the slaughter house. Trust me," assured the med tech.

"How can we trust you? You destroyed our world, ripped us from our home, and stunned us," accused a woman.

"I understand, truly I do. But you've got to realize you're safe and in no harm. I wish I could tell you more, but I can't."

"We don't believe you," angrily retorted the first man.

"How about this, instead of making sure you're healthy, why not skip that and go straight to the meal," proposed the tech with a hopeful tone. With that she turned around and headed to the exit. She tapped something on her armor causing the door to open up. Once out of the room the door closed behind her.

Within moments she was back pushing a hover cart. On the cart were all sorts of food from a roasted turkey, honey baked ham, mashed potatoes, stuffing, and much more. "When I first came to this country, I was introduced to Thanksgiving dinner. It's one of my favorite meals. Please dig in. I can assure you it's all real."

At first none were willing to touch it. Yet after a moment a young child crept close to the cart and saw a bowl of cranberry jelly. The youngster reached a hand out and dipped a finger in before the adults could stop them. Yet when nothing bad happened, the others soon came over.

"It's all safe to eat. You'll find silverware and plates under here," the Yar'Zanti gestured to the bottom shelf of the cart. "Take your time and enjoy. I get the feeling this is the first full meal some of you had in a long while. We won't reach Dallas for a few days based on our schedule. I'll come back in a few hours to collect the leftovers. Please enjoy," she graciously gestured to the food before leaving.

Hesitantly the others came over. Yet, after seeing nothing harmful happening to the child, the others dug in. Each soon had a plate heaped with food.

They were a bit bewildered. The group had heard rumors of the Yar'Zanti cruelty. That was the main reason why they had been hiding out in the Stanley Hotel. Yet, here they were eating a banquet brought by a Yar'Zanti and nothing bad was happening to them.

Three days later found the small group being escorted off the ship after landing. While they were not allowed out of the room, every day the humans were visited by blue med techs. Each paused to gossip with them whenever their meals were brought.

While on the one hand they were being escorted off the ship by a pair of guards, none were pointing guns at them. Nor were

they being forced to walk in line or treated like prisoners. If anything, it felt as if they were just being casually led.

The group was stunned to see all the Yar'Zanti construction that occurred over what had been Dallas. Like the other cities, the original human city was leveled to the ground. Then in its place, a huge monolithic proportion of tall buildings had been built over the spot. Though they were so close and interconnected, that the structures almost seemed like one vast building. Along with that, all sorts of defenses had been added. Each was brimming with huge gun emplacements.

They saw that the Sky Raptor had landed in a spot deep within one ring of gun emplacements. To either side on the huge tarmac were other sky cruisers. Each was brimming with Yar'Zanti working on the ships.

The humans were asked to board an open transport. Afterward, they drove through the bustling spot and into a concrete lined service corridor. Most were open to the sky while others they entered were covered or went underground. To the humans, it looked like they were driving along the outside of the vast city.

After dipping into another tunnel, the transport rose up out into a wide open high walled courtyard. There, before them, rose a pair of huge doors that rose multiple stories high. Beside them were two human size metal doors, each manned by a yellow armored Yar'Zanti.

The groups got out and were led to one of the guards. "These people are being added to the population," their escort informed a guard in Yar'Zantieese.

"Roger that," answered the guard and reached behind him to tap a panel. After a moment, the door opened beside the Yar'Zanti and a human man walked out. He was dressed in a clean suit and his hair was neatly trimmed.

"Yes," he inquired of the guard.

"Here are more refugees," casually answered the Yar'Zanti in English. He pointed to the humans getting off the cart. They looked around at all the concrete walls bewildered at what was going on.

"Oh good, very good. I assume the clan was about to get them," the man casually asked the Yar'Zanti.

"Yep. I believe the spot they were in came under a clan attack," gossiped the male guard.

"Then I'm happy they found you. Come inside New Dallas. We'll get you set up with some ID's, a home, and something to eat? I'm Bill Davis, I work for the Yar'Zanti-Human Interchange." The man pleasantly informed them gesturing for the humans to follow him inside the walls.

As soon as they stepped past the barrier all stopped in their tracks. For beyond the tall Yar'Zanti walls stood what looked like a regular human city complete with authentic Texas styled buildings. Along with that, the streets were thronged with people. Each was regularly dressed and healthy looking.

"I bet you're wondering what's going on here don'tcha," Davis spoke leading them through the city. "Well it's a long story. Yet, it seems that the Yar'Zanti are having a bit of a civil war. Simply put, the Yar'Zanti clan wants to kill us all. However the loyalists, this group, wants to protect us. They say that's because somehow our well being matters to their future or something like that. They don't want to get into it but I guess it's something about Yar'Zanti tradition. In any case, they've decided it's in their best interests to treat us nice."

One of the adult men interrupted Davis, "If that's the case, then why did they capture us?"

"Well, I understand the clanners hate humans. Don't ask me why? Instead of capturing humans, the clan wants to simply stomp us out. Personally, between the two, I'm gonna side with the loyalists," softly admitted Davis. Then speaking up, "But in any case, the loyalists have made it their mission to save as many as they can. Then they want us living in these walled cities under their protection. We can do whatever we want in here. Heck, there's even times when the loyalists need our help."

"Like slaves," chipped in a woman.

"Nah, not like slaves. If they ask you for help nowadays, they'll reimburse you and you can always say no."

After a moment the group arrived in front of the Yar'Zanti-Human exchange building. It was a three story stucco and red clay roofed building done in a typical southwestern style that included an inner courtyard. The man led them inside and began issuing them all sorts of things. By the end of the day, the group who had lived in the Stanley Hotel now had a new home, lots of food, school for the kids, and jobs.