

Unity

By Mantrid Brizon

Episode Nineteen: A Dreadful Reunion

“Unity Flight Control to Mike-Alpha-November, you are cleared for launch.” A man says over the comms.

“Affirmative, Unity Flight Control. Good luck out there!” The captain replies.

Leaving the hangar bay, the ship waits between the airlock doors, allowing the inner doors to close before the outer doors open and allow the freighter to leave. It's the last freighter to deliver supplies to the vessel. Two days after the spy, Katala, was killed, Unity's fifth engine has passed the technician's tests with flying colors. With all engines now online, Unity prepares for launch, allowing the Sol Marine ships and the freighters time to move away. Standing aboard the bridge, the crew wait for the signal to begin their flight. All are ready to test the upgraded engines which are estimated to be twice as fast and use half as much energy.

It's one of many firsts that Unity can claim, if the engines function as intended. Captain Marcus 'Madrid' Basile stands at attention, his arms bent gently behind his back. With relatively long brown hair brushed back but otherwise untamed and a fairly long goatee beard, his appearance is not what most would expect from someone with his standing, especially for a man with a military background. With an average height and build for a human, the Earth born man is all of thirty-years-old, yet his decade long combat record

helped earn him a place aboard Unity, and he was voted in as captain by the Council.

“Captain Basile, we have an incoming transmission.” A woman at a communications terminal speaks.

“Well, don’t keep me in suspense!”

Patching in the call, a familiar face appears on a large screen in the bridge.

“Madrid!” Captain Kraiss chirps.

“How’s it going?” Captain Basile casually replies.

“Terrible! I’ve been wondering how a brat like you ever landed such a cushy position.” Kraiss says with a smile.

“Being a manipulative bastard, and also handsome.” Basile smirks.

“Hah. Then why did they pick you?!” Kraiss laughs.

“Jealous of my youth, old man?”

“Hey, if I had a teacher like me when I was a young pilot, I’d have absorbed his knowledge and stepped out of his shadow too.” Kraiss jokes.

“I don’t remember there being much of a shadow.” Basile teases.

“Well, we’re all out of the way. It’s time to show us what that big phallic ship can do... Are you happy riding in the tip of that?” Kraiss quips.

“You wish your ship was as big as mine. The star ports don’t like you as much as they like me.”

“Hahaha! ... I’m going to miss you, Madrid. We had quite a few good years together. I’ll buy the drinks when you finally get back.”

“... Yeah.” Captain Basile says under his breath. “Well enough of this! We both know that real men don’t have feelings. See you later!” He says with a single wave.

“Safe travels, my friend.” Kraiss adds.

“You too.”

With their course set and the engines charged, Basile gives the order. Their first jump is to one of the Exclusionary Zones that would’ve housed Unity. This particular zone was rejected due to being less than a seven days flight from the nearest populated planet. The five pods hum loudly, the staff inside wearing hearing protection as a result. The hum echoes throughout the central stalk, audible to people who are walking about the residential sphere. Designed with a mixture of Irakus engine technology and Dezonian hyper drive technology, with influences by the Solakus, the wholly unique engines whirl and a blue light glows from the rear thruster ports.

Moving slowly forward, Unity’s red and black accented hull dwarfs the Sol Marine ships that protect her. Suddenly, and without warning, Unity appears to stretch wildly before vanishing altogether into a singularity. From inside the bridge, a blue aura with teal swirls covers the hull, blocking their view of space. It’s vastly different from the pink and cyan swirled warp bubble of a convention drive. After a flight of only a few minutes, Unity emerges from the warp bubble and within the targeted area. All are briefly stunned. A trip that distance would take any of the other ships as much as a day.

Snapping out of his shock, captain Basile remembers his orders, quickly ordering his crew to contact the Sol Marines and the Directors. Unity’s hybrid engines appear to be a complete success.

“Captain! There’s a ship here!” One of the crew exclaims.

“What?! Is it a Sol Marine ship?” Basile asks.

“Negative. Running a scan now... It’s an MBX-2160 ‘Endurance’ but she’s heavily modified.” The crewmember replies.

“Is it a derelict?”

The crewmember turns in her chair, her eyes wide with shock.

“It was registered decades ago... It’s the Lomboko, sir.”

Everyone aboard knows that name. The Lomboko is the most feared and fabled vessel in space, even among aliens. The only ship with more fame and as many stories is the Azilian.

“Well now... Perhaps we should test some of Unity’s other features...” Captain Basile says as he strokes his long beard.

At his order, they immediately contact the Sol Marines. Captain Kraiss and several dozen other ships in the fleet immediately make their way there. Though initially ordered to take Unity away from the Lomboko, which has destroyed two cruisers with ease, Madrid Basile ignores that order. The five engines glow a deep blue, cobalt streams flowing behind the thrusters as the massive ship approaches. Once the largest vessel ever created by the Solakus, the Lomboko is miniscule when compared to Unity. Diagonal ports on her static engines allow the ship to slow her speed and turn. The Unity soon points away from the Lomboko.

Backing slowly toward the craft, the hangar sphere comes within ten meters of the Slaver vessel before Unity stops entirely. A sliding panel in the outer airlock door opens and a large umbilicus emerges. Extending the distance, little jets of air steer the umbilicus as it reaches the Lomboko’s portside airlock. Powerful electromagnets hold the open end of the umbilicus and allow for air to

be pumped into it. Now tethered to the Slaver mothership, captain Basile issues another order.

“Understood. I have an agent who I believe would be more than willing to undertake such a task.” Miss Ayanda says to her captain.

Ending that call, she quickly begins another. Ring, ring, ring. She waits for August to answer. Ring, ring, ring. Seconds turn into a minute. He never accepts the call and it eventually drops.

“What the hell? Why won’t you answer?!” She growls at her V.I. bracelet.

Flopping down atop his mattress, August gasps for breath.

“Damn!” He exclaims, thoroughly relieved.

With his fur matted with sweat, he looks over at Annette, who lay naked on her belly beside him. The nurse from the hospital he met only two days earlier gazes at him, her mouth agape as she pants, her fur equally damp and matted. Her blue eyes lock onto his jade green orbs, her little bunny tail quickly swaying happily as she lay there, exhausted.

“Wow... That was...” She says through labored breaths.

“Oh no. The critique.” He teases.

“Shut up.” She giggles.

“Well, don’t keep me in suspense.”

“It was amazing. I didn’t know secret agents had so much stamina.” She coos.

“Gotta catch those bad guys.” He smirks.

“Or were so big, or have that much cum. How do you run with that?!” She asks, her eyes turning down toward his genitals.

“Very difficultly.” He replies.

Leaning in, he kisses her snout and the pair trade saliva for a moment. Having ignored the call so they could finish, his V.I. bracelet quickly begins chirping again.

“Damnit.” He sighs.

“Other girlfriends?” She teasingly asks.

“I’m not that kind of secret agent. I like to be mutually exclusive.” He says as he grabs his bracelet.

“So, I can see you again?!” She turns over, her expression gleeful.

“Sure.” He says with a smile.

Seeing that Miss Ayanda is calling, he’s quick to answer. He doesn’t even look to see what kind of call he’s accepting. Miss Ayanda’s hologram appears as she glares angrily at him. Her expression immediately changes as she looks at the nude August and the equally unclothed woman lying on her side just behind him. Annette quickly pulls up the sheets to cover her body as Ayanda shakes her head.

“Is that why you didn’t answer?” She chuckles.

“I was busy.” August shrugs.

“I can see that... I need you for an operation. We found a ship and you’re taking a team to board it.” She begins.

“A ship? What ship?” August asks as he collects his underwear.

“The Lomboko...”

The couple stop in their tracks. August looks back at Annette, and then at Ayanda in disbelief.

“Captain Basile hailed her, but we didn’t receive a reply. They’re backing up to her now and locking in an umbilicus. I want you to board her. I figured with your history, August Woods, that you’d be interested.” She continues.

“Yeah... I’ll go.” He nods.

Ending the video call, August turns to Annette. She looks flabbergasted. Perhaps she thought that Woods was just another last name? Or maybe she didn’t realize that he really was the kind of man he’d said, assuming he was just another soldier? Scooting closer to her, the naked bunny girl sits atop his bed. Leaning in, he kisses her cheek rather tenderly.

“I’m sorry, but I have to go. Family reunion... If you want to stay, you can stay. If you want to go, you can go.” He says softly.

“Okay.” She nods.

“If you do go, do you want me to call you when I get back?” He asks calmly, trying not to pressure her.

“Sure!” She chirps.

Rising from his bed, he quietly dresses without so much as a shower or body spray, quickly collecting a shoulder holster and his blaster. Leaving the apartment, he races for the hangar, calling Miss Ayanda again to confirm his orders, which are as follows: Meet his team in the hangar, board the Lomboko, scout the ship, and if possible, capture or kill James Woods and any of his lieutenants. Completing the first objecting in short order, August stands with his men, many of whom notice his appearance and the faint and familiar smell. None, however, care to comment in the moment.

Opening the inner airlock door, the outer remains closed. They approach a large sliding door, ten feet tall by eight feet wide, and built into the primary airlock door, which is large enough for the small destroyer to comfortably fit through. This door provides access to their end of the umbilicus. Checking a small control panel, they first verify that the electromagnets are holding and that the umbilicus is air tight. With a light turning green, they activate the door and it slides open. Looking through the darkened tunnel, a feeling of dread comes over many of the men and even August himself.

Swallowing the fear, they move through the tunnel, floating through the umbilicus as they're no longer bound by Unity's artificial gravity. Reaching the Lomboko's airlock, one of August's team takes out a device and begins hacking the door panel, locking out controls and overriding the system. Now controlling it from the outside, they breach the door and move deeper into the sinister ship. Hacking the inner airlock door, it too slides open. The interior is archaic and drab, built in a time before any of the other alien races were known to the human and Voeldahn, or when ships could leave the Solar system.

The Lomboko is eerily quiet. Not a sound is heard, even from the ship itself. Leaving most of his team behind, August takes a small group and moves quietly through the ship. They use a known holographic map of the typical MBX-2160 interior, using it as a reference and to guide them through the ship. Reaching a junction that heads either straight or left, they move left, toward the bowels of the ship. Hearing a commotion, they pause for a moment. Voices echo and a scream of pain is heard. Kicking into high gear, they race toward the sound, quickly rounding a corner and entering a hall where a battle is raging.

Undressed humans and Voeldahn hold blasters and shoot at men at the far end of the hallway, who are clad in purple and black outfits reminiscent to special forces uniforms and armor. Seeing the strangely dressed newcomers, an orange furred, feline Voeldahn man

spins and points a blaster at August's face. His eyes scan August and his men, noting their radically different clothing and confused looks.

"Slaver?!" The naked man asks, his hand trembling.

"No! Sol Marines!" August growls, smacking the blaster away.

"Oh, thank God! Look everyone! Rescue!"

"What's going on here?!" August asks.

"Help us and I'll tell you!" The man poses.

Trading places with the naked people, August and his men fire back at the Slavers. At least as competent as the Slavers, the nefarious soldiers fall back, retreating around a corner. Rather than pursue them, August stays with those they've rescued, quickly turning to the man he'd spoken with. The grateful nudists praise the confused officers, who were not expecting such a turn of events.

"Thank you so much!" The man says over and over to August.

"Yeah, alright. Who are you and what's going on here?"

"I'm Steve." The orange cat replies. "We're prisoners. The Slavers took us to sell."

"How the hell did you get out?!" One of August's men asks.

"While in stasis, one human, the guy lying dead at your feet, awoke in his pod when it malfunctioned. He managed to force open the weakened door of his pod and get out." Steve says, kneeling beside a human's naked corpse. "After killing a Slaver with his bare hands and stealing his weapon and card key, this one guy began releasing the rest of us. Pretty soon, we were all free."

"How many of you are there?" August asks.

"A lot... Are you here to rescue us?"

Seeing the hope in the man's eyes, August can't bear to tell him otherwise. Answering with a single nod of his head, the overjoyed slave leads August and his team away from the battle, taking them deep into the cargo area of the Lomboko. Entering a large cargo bay, they're left dumbfounded. The room is packed with unclothed people. Humans of every color, Voeldahn of every breed, and even a few Irakus and Kanorakus stand among them. At a glance, August and his team would estimate that there are over three thousand prisoners standing there. Of them, at least seven out of ten are younger females, probably between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five.

"Holy shit..." A soldier murmurs.

"Get these people aboard the Unity, right now." August orders.

Leading them back down the hall, August and his team make contact. More than happy to help the escapees, captain Basile grants them asylum aboard Unity. Bringing more of his men aboard as the thousands of slaves rush out and toward the safety of Unity's hangar, August secures the cargo hold and the hallway leading back to his ship. However, he still has a mission to fulfill. Taking only a handful of his men and leaving the rest behind to protect the escaped slaves, August continues on, first returning to the battle-scarred hallway before moving even deeper into the Slaver vessel.

Following the path of the retreating Slavers, August and his men move slowly and carefully. Once again, the ship is eerily quiet. Walking through the silent halls, they stop when they hear boots thudding in the distance. August holds out a hand to his men and progresses slowly on his own, leaving his men behind for the moment. He takes a step closer and then another, trying to make as little noise as possible. Nearing a corner, he brings his blaster up and prepares to clear the corner, only for a door beside him to suddenly swoosh open.

"The fuck?!" A uniformed Slaver growls.

Firing a ball of blue energy from a strange handheld blaster, it strikes August's body and stuns him. Peeking out from the doorway, a few Slavers exchange fire with August's men, who hesitate to shoot in the direction of their leader's seemingly unconscious body. One is struck by a ball of blue light and stunned as well. Fearing capture by the Slavers, August's men collect their fallen ally and retreat down the hall, leaving August behind. Though stunned, August is actually still conscious as the Slavers crowd around him. One grabs his shoulders and lifts his torso.

"Come on. Help me pick him up." One Slaver orders.

"Heh. That's a familiar smell." Another laughs as he takes hold of one of August's legs.

"Man, I was going to the cargo bay for a piece too, when this shit broke out. I haven't had pussy in almost a week!" Another says, carrying August's other leg.

"Shut up and move your feet! The boss will want to talk to this one!"

Now fully succumbing to the device, August loses consciousness. He briefly opens his eyes once when he feels his back slam against a metal object, though he can't be sure if he's standing or lying down. Opening his eyes yet again, he's now standing beside a pillar, with his wrists cuffed to a point above his head. Well dressed, human men and women stand around their captive, with a teenage girl examining him rather lustfully. An older man with a white shirt, red and black leather vest and black dress pants and shoes examines his V.I. bracelet in the background.

The teenage girl moves closer, sniffing his neck while a teenage boy who is visibly related appears to become jealous. He crosses his arms before his chest and glares angrily at August, who is still too weak to speak. He can barely move his eyes. Seeing his gaze shifting, the teenage girl moves closer, her lips curling into a rather wicked

smile. She rests her cheek against his chest, looking up at him with sinister intentions.

"Mmm... I like this one." Sasha says softly.

"I don't see what's so great." Maximus grumbles.

"Such a pretty kitty." Sasha coos, stroking the fur of August's arm with her long fingernails.

"Down, girl." Erica giggles.

"Well I'll be double fucked!" James laughs. "Do you know who this is?!"

"Who?" Erica turns to him.

James passes her August's V.I. bracelet.

"Oh, my!" She exclaims.

"Kids, meet your long-lost cousin!"

"Really?!" Sasha exclaims. "Even better..." She whispers, her fingers stroking August's chest.

"You brother fucked a Voeldahn?" Vivian snickers.

"George had very particular taste." James smirks.

"Interesting." Draiman murmurs, visibly uninterested.

"Well, this is a red-letter day, and not because of all the blood!" James laughs.

"Something's wrong... Corova's in trouble, dad!"

"Oh?" James turns to him.

"I can hear her. She's trapped with some crew by the engine room!"

"Well, that's not good." James calmly remarks, casually taking a drink of scotch. "Did you need any help?"

"I have to go!" Draiman takes a rifle from a table and dashes through a door, ignoring his father.

"Bye then... Gotta do what you gotta do, I guess. Good luck!" James calls out to his son, who's probably long gone.

Approaching August, James grabs Sasha's arm and pulls her away from him.

"Aww!" She whimpers

"This one is family, and I want him alive and *unmolested*." James instructs.

"But he's pretty! I wanna play with him!" Sasha whines.

"I don't want to..." Maximus grumbles.

"You can watch me, then." Sasha winks at her twin brother.

"Stop being a sick fuck." James casually remarks.

"I can't help it." Sasha pouts, crossing her arms beneath her breasts.

"God help the universe if you take over." James smirks, shaking his head.

Resting his ring adorned hand on August's chin, James lifts the Voeldahn's head. August's eyes turn to him, blinking slowly.

"Damn... You have his eyes." James silently chuckles. "Do you know who I am, mister invader?"

"... Hello, Uncle." August speaks softly.