

Evelyn had several more minutes to breathe. Her emerald hues glanced over the horizon. She was currently wearing her AEF Task Force Beta flight uniform. Her snow-white hair was up in a tight military bun. Evelyn took a deep breath. The saltiness of the air and the musk of the rocks reached her nose. The sun has not yet set. Few more hours. A small corner of her lips curved upwards, depending on her portal overnight, she could watch Dajorra set.

Hopped down from the railing, she started to make her way toward the Dusk Station. It had been eerily quiet on Evelyn's end. She hasn't heard from Jax and Kobign. Well. Not really. They were busy. Or Jax said. More than usual. Or they were most likely over at Kobign's apartment and she had no idea where that was. She felt there was more going on but Jax was a good man and she would know. He taught her everything about loyalty, honor, and vision.

Once she was at the Dusk Station, she greeted her comrades who were there. Some of them were complaining, others just woke up, and a few were chatting away. They all started to put their space suits on. When there was a moment of silence, Evelyn spoke up, "Did everyone eat, sleep and drink well?" Few Sirens grumbled while others affirmed they did. The quiet one would get a motherly glare from Evelyn. They scoffed and reached into the locker and got out a protein bar before sticking their tongue out at Evelyn.

Evelyn watched for a moment before nodding in approval. It'll have to do for now.

Evelyn freed her hair and started to braid it while several squadrons went to the team meeting. The AEF Task Force Alphas went to the left, the Betas went to the right for their debriefing conference meetings.

"Alright," the AEF Beta commander started, taking several sips of their coffee before they hiccuped. Rumor had it that there's always a splash of alcohol in the coffee but it was never proven. They sighed and placed their mug down while bringing up the holoprojector. It was of the Dajorra's System.

"Here are the portals for the next few days. Ash Angel and Selen's Song, take the North East to South East Quadrants. Eldar's Anthem and Will of our Lady, take the North West to South West Quadrants. Siren Squadron and Canticle Squadron, you both take 1800 to 0600. Banshee Squadron and Paeon Squadron, 0600 to 1800. You know the rules. Share the space with the Alphas and for kark's sake, some of you need to stop playing games." There were some snickers. The commander smiled along with some others.

Evelyn followed the smile. Alphas and Betas were thick as thieves so it would make sense there would be some sibling-like rivalry among them. But they all had the same goal. To protect Dajorra System.

The bantering and games had increased lately. Evelyn was definitely guilty of joining in on the banter and games Anything to ease the tension of her team. They all felt something looming over their wings.

Whose wings will be clipped?

The commander sighed before hiccuping, "Safe flying." All of them were excused. Idle chatter echoed in the air of the meeting room. The Siren Squadron made their way to their ships. All of them had the rainbow coating but each of them had a unique marking or logo on their ships. Evelyn's ship had the sky blue wyvern logo on the side to honor Aketa. Her late wife.

"Sirens!" Minnie called out to the squad as Evelyn's emerald hues rested on her. What was she doing on the base? "Yanno what I want!" The bright Nautolan had a camera in her hands. "Before the old man retires, we should get a picture of all of us. Gather around!" Minnie wasn't exactly part of the Siren Squadron but she was accepted as Honorary Siren by them. They all agreed as they huddled up. They had a serious one and a goofy one. Of course, Evelyn was also serious in the goofy one. Ka without missing a beat, did bunny ears by her two comrades with a massive grin.

When the group picture was done, Evelyn gently grabbed Minnie and pulled her into a hug, soft laughter emitted from her chest, "Good to see you, Erin. Always." Evelyn was forever grateful to Minnie and Jax for helping her through hard times. Time was running out so Minnie left the docks.

Now it was time for work.

The Epicanthix hybrid opened the cockpit, grabbed her helmet, and slid in. First, she made sure her hoses were hooked up correctly. Made sure her helmet was secured. Evelyn had a mental checklist. When satisfied, she closed her cockpit and ensured it was locked and sealed.

Brought her starship around, she was now focused. Flicked some switches, her craft hummed to life and took off into the air, and hovered while she waited for the others. Six of the Siren Squadrons circled the Ash Angel and the other seven circled Eldar's Anthem.

Ash Angel and six of the Squadron started to head to Eldar. The remaining was to stay at Selen to portal there before heading to space to cover the South to East Quadrant alongside the Alpha Team.

There was a little chatter on the radio but everyone was mainly focused. Dajorra was setting over the horizon and it brought the ocean as well the islands to life full of vibrant colors. Boral was so close to Selen that you could see the details of its cracks and craters. It was a sight to behold and does not happen often. The sky was clear, soft, and clean. For a moment, the pilots appreciated its beauty.

"By the Galaxy. We ain't seen this beaut in so long, eh?" One of them sighed into the radio as others murmured in agreement.

“Eh. I ‘ave seen mo’ purdy thangs. Dis is so-so,” a heavy accent came through the radio.

“Can ya, just for one kriffin’ patrol, not be a negative nexu, Nisol,” a female voice was exasperated.

“Guys? Should we - you know - patrol Selen and go up in space?” Chimed in Ka. Ka much prefers space. Ka was pretty new too. Only been part of the Sirens for a few months.

“Ka is right. Alright. Eldar’s Anthem bridge, come in.” Evelyn started. When they responded, “Take the equator. Ka and Nisol, take 50 degrees N latitude. Dan’sol and I will take 50 degrees S latitude. Everyone else spread out and keep Eldar’s Anthem covered. We’ll meet up at-”

A chill went down her spine. Underneath the suit, goosebumps formed on her skin. Her mouth started to salivate. Her heart pounded rapidly.

“Wyvern, report. Your heart rate went up,” a voice came in through the radio. It wasn’t any of her team. Or the newbie.

Evelyn blinked. Right. They had her vitals along with everyone else who was piloting back at Dusk Station. It was a good way to keep an eye on everyone, especially since they had to do an emergency rescue when one of the pilots had fallen asleep and forgot to connect the droid to their ship for autopilot.

“Oy, I think Cap’n’s head might’ve been in da clouds again,” One of them commented.

“What clouds?” Chimed in one of the pilots. Being a smartass. There were a few snorts.

Evelyn chuckled. “Yes, sir. I apologize.”

“Clear your head, Wyvern, and get going.”

“Yes, sir.” She exhaled through the mask, “We’ll meet up at 200 KM above when patrols are finished and go from there. Fly out, Sirens.”

But she knew. She knew deep down inside, this was most likely the last beautiful scene some of them will see.

The true calm before the storm.

Whose wings will be clipped indeed?