

The Resistance Series
A Space Adventure

By: Amanda Zimmermann

(616) 402-2272
amazimmermann@gmail.com

Novel Excerpt

“Are you kidding me? This is just a routine tactical run! I don’t see why I have to join up with some green Nav pilot and-“ Major Renken cut off Wes’ rant before he could get into full swing. Arielle stood by, attentive but silent.

“The point of this practice is to get those ‘green Nav pilots’ some seat time before they are in a real fight. We need pilots that know what they’re doing behind the panel, Lt. Vangelous. You even more so to help the new navigators.” Ari could see Wes’ jaw clench. He wanted to say more, but the Major had just given him the closest thing to a compliment he could expect from the man. Wes was one of the best navigator’s in the fleet and an excellent pilot of his own right. If he hadn’t teamed up with her from the beginning he would have been piloting his own fighter.

“Thank you, sir.” Ari said, bowing. Before Wes could say anything else stupid, she grabbed him by the arm and dragged him from the office. “You just make him dislike you more with outbursts like that.” She said as they turned towards the hanger bay for their briefing. When he didn’t answer she continued to talk through his silence. “What was that all about anyways? It’s just training; he’d never separate us on an actual mission.”

“I’m *your* navigator.” He said, as though that explained everything.

“It’s not like he’s replacing you, Wes.”

“I know.” He sighed, “I woke up with a bad feeling this morning. I don’t want you out there by yourself.”

“Your concern is touching but are you sure that bad feeling doesn’t have anything to do with the questionable [MAKE UP A FOOD] you ate last night?” He glared at her and she didn’t bother to hide her grin.

“No.” He stopped in the middle of the hall, forcing several crewmembers to veer around him. “Ari, just promise me you’ll be careful.”

She turned to look at him, her forehead crinkling in confusion. “What are you on about? Of course I’ll be careful.” This was very unlike his usual cocky attitude. “Are you sure you’re okay?” He regarded her for a moment longer. It looked like he wanted to say more but instead he nodded, one quick jerky motion, and continued walking.

“I’m fine, let’s just get this over with.” He brushed past her and ducked into the briefing room. Ari started after him. Wes usually looked forward to training flights, enjoying the chance to show off around the other pilots. He’d seemed a bit distant and edgy during their morning workout but she’d attributed it to the amount of alcohol he’d consumed the night before. Maybe it was something more? She shook her head. It wasn’t something she could worry about now, she had a briefing to run.

“Artemis, you’re clear for launch.” The cool, feminine voice of Demeter’s A.I. gave Arielle the all clear as she powered up the sublight engines and the control panel blinked to life around her. The launch bay doors opened above her, giving her a glorious first glimpse of space. She always marveled at the sight of the stars, so close and bright. Even though she’d seen it hundreds of times it never failed to take her breath away. Space was where she belonged, out among the stars. The Nubian Strip painted its bright path across the sky, shifting with subtle colors.

“You ready back there, Hestia?” She could hear movement from above and behind her where the navigator seat was. ‘Hestia’ was the call sign for Siobia Pelsor, a pilot fresh from the Academy. Every Armada recruit went through the Academy, picking a branch to specialize in; flight, science, or enforcement. Flight was the destination for pilots, engineers, mechanics, and other ship personnel. Science included researchers, medical, and other more academic pursuits. Enforcement was for those interested in security, public protection, and other less savory endeavors like government agencies and covert operations, though they didn’t advertise that.

Arielle had always known that she wanted to follow in her father’s footsteps and be a fighter pilot. Others could take an aptitude test to see where they best fit but it was rare for someone to need it. Once in the pilot program recruits were sorted into two categories, pilots and navigators. Every recruit was expected to pass the basics of each, in case of emergencies, but were allowed to take specialized, advanced classes in their field.

Every ship was piloted by a pilot-navigator team; most were assigned by the S.O. during the first few weeks of being active but every once in a while a pair would come through that just fit from the beginning. That had been Ari and Wes. Wes was a fast-talking, cocky recruit and Arielle had relished every chance she got to one up him. She never rubbed it in, just quietly scored higher than he did or ran a simulation faster. The competition brought out the best in each of them and they grew to respect each other; becoming partners straight out of the Academy.

“Yes, ma’am, I’m good.” Ari remembered what it was like to be green, but she also knew that Hestia had good marks so she wasn’t too worried about the girl.

“You can drop the ‘ma’am’ out here we don’t hold to manners.” She pushed down on the throttle and their ship rose to join the stars.

“Fly high, Lt.” Demeter gave them the common blessing among the Armada.

“Always do.” Ari murmured as they shot off into space.

“About time you joined us up here, Artemis.” A familiar voice came over the comm. Wes.

“I may be late, Helios, but I’ll still beat your ass at battle maneuvers.” He laughed in response, it would seem that being up in the black had lightened his mood considerably.

“Five Bits on Art!”

“I’ll see your five and raise you ten on Helios.” It wasn’t often that Ari and Wes flew separately but the entire squad knew how much they liked to compete.

“Alpha squad, form up.” The major’s voice cut through the banter. “Artemis, take point.” The other [SHIP NAME] already up gracefully fell into place behind Ari’s ship. This was just a routine practice and they watched as Starship Demeter charged up her batteries, preparing to fire electromagnetic blasts at the smaller ships. The blasts were mostly harmless, if one was slow enough to get hit it would scramble the ship’s controls for several seconds before everything kicked back into place. Alpha squad had been through this hundreds of times, but the addition of the new pilots would make things interesting; and with the Resistance bolstering their attacks it was always good to stay up on maneuvers.

“Ready when you are, sir.” She told Renken. There was a flash as the first EM charge was fired. Ari dove while the rest of the squad broke off.

“Formation is good, Artemis.” Hestia reported positioning and movements on the radar. The goal of the training was to hit a pod suspended above each of the batteries on the Demeter with EM charges. The ships formed up into teams and swarmed the battleship, making it impossible to target any one pilot.

“Helios, Juno, swing left around the hull and come up.” Ari directed while executing a series of twists and rolls to avoid a sudden barrage of blasts. Persephone swooped in and took out a pod, her cry of success at getting the first hit sounded over the comm.

“Don’t get too excited, Percy.” That’s your only hit of the day, the rest are ours!” Hera goaded.

“Not if Heph and I beat you to them.” Apollo shot back. Cheers and derogatory remarks came from the other pilots.

“You’re on, Apollo. Loser buys everyone a round later.”

“Contacts!” Hestia’s voice cut off the chatter.

“Keep your head in the game, boys and girls. Things just got serious.” Ari checked her panels.

“Seven total. Must be the drones?” Hestia said absently as she flipped through her screens. It was common practice for drones to be sent out before training only to sneak up on a squad later. Now instead of just the batteries, they’d have to contend with the drones too. The group scattered, keeping a very loose formation to make sure everyone was covered. “They are closing fast...too fast.”

“Alpha squad, we have unknown contacts in the vicinity. Confirm visual.” Ari strained to see out the front shield but the contacts were still just small blips in the

distance, but as they approached they opened fire. Live plasma blasts scattered the squad formation. Ships sped by, coming around for another pass.

“Alpha, battle formations! Demeter, we’ve got Resistance raiders out here!” As soon as Ari made the call the radar exploded.