



## RETRIBUTION for LOST NOVA Primaris Ultramarines

Librarian Doran paced the bridge of the Imperial Strike Cruiser Nova Occator, or just Nova as the crew and Astartes of the Ultramarines chapter both affectionately referred to it. He preferred his quarters or the training decks to the bridge; however, as they neared Agrippa, he could sense an unease enveloping the navigators. His presence seemed to help them, although several younger navigators had fallen ill, or more precisely, collapsed in crippling fear and anxiety, in just the last few moments. Each of them falling to their knees one by one screaming similar variations of the same thing: “Where is the Emperor’s light, where is the Beacon? The Astronomican dims.” The life of a navigator aboard a warp faring vessel was far from easy; however, they were trained to endure the horrors of the Immaterium, keeping sight on the Beacon of Terra where no one else could guide them to their destination.



The older members of the Navis Nobilite persisted with a familiarity of the increasingly disturbed currents of the warp and a grit only age could bring; however, the stress of this voyage could be seen on their faces as well. Doran could sense what they sensed but could not see it as they could. The warp around him felt like a field of static, infinite yet minuscule discriminate points of varying intensity. These jagged peaks and troughs replaced what he imagined the navigators saw as smooth waves. He could envision how these could disorient even a seasoned navigator.



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Captain Lares entered the bridge, if the movements of the vessel in warp space had degraded his constitution at all, Librarian Doran could not tell.

Captain Lares made straight for the Librarian, placing an armored palm on his pauldron. “How are they doing, Doran?” Concern flashed across his brow for only the faintest moment - just enough to show that he grasped the weight of the situation, but not so much as to belie that it would weigh him down.

“The younger ones have been moved to sick bay and sedated. The veterans should get us there soon,” the Librarian somewhat shakily replied. Soon was a relative term, even more so when navigating the warp.

“Have we received anything new from Agrippa?” Lares continued, ignoring any hesitation in the Librarian’s previous response.

“No Captain, it’s all still static. Every channel, every standard broadcast. Even the astropaths are reporting something like static when they try to reach out. In truth, I feel it, too. Everything heading towards Agrippa is like blinding pin-pricks of energy, while everything looking away becomes more and more... fuzzy...the closer we get. Forgive the inadequacy of my description. It is like nothing I have ever felt.” Doran apologized.

As if on cue, the screen next to them erupted into green static. “Nova commiserates.” Doran let out a single huff of air in jest as he pounded the console under the screen, the image of Agrippa springing back into focus.

The ship lurched, and the remaining navigators fell to the floor, some heaved as if about to vomit, while others vigorously rubbed at their third eyes. The most senior of the group staggered to his feet and came to attention, “Captain Lares, the Nova has arrived.” The tone of the last word left the statement hanging, as if it was still riding the warp tides.

“And...” Captain Lares questioned, sensing there was more to follow the statement.

The senior navigator paused, “Although I ... I don’t want to be here any longer than we have to be, and I’m afraid the Astronomicon may be too dim for us to ever leave if we linger for too long.” The old man shrank away, ashamed of what had just come out of his mouth.



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The Space Marine Captain glared at the man, although he took the seasoned navigator's fear under advisement. "We will be here only as long as required," he assured him, taking up station between a viewing port and a row of consoles.

A planet came into view below him as the massive vessel rotated. The codices had described it as an agri-world with a relatively small population and only a few large cities. What he saw below did not match the blue green marble on the screen next to him. This planet was covered in thick grey-brown dust or smoke, green lightning arced from cloud peak to cloud peak while the whole dust screen below was backlit by thousands of glowing green lights. This world was not only unlike what he had expected but was altogether alien. He looked over to the navigator in confusion.

"Are you sure we have arrived at Agrippa?"

The navigator nodded and pointed out to the starboard side of the vessel. There, coming into view, Atalan, just as described, pock-marked and creviced, misshapen from aeons of impacts.

Lares could not deny they had arrived where they had planned, but his stoic demeanor slightly gave way as he pondered what could have caused such a transformation. As he looked back at the planet, he saw more familiar signs, yellow and white flashes in the upper atmosphere, red beams drawing





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straight lines through the dust, high explosives and las weapons. Whatever had happened here was still happening, and he intended to bring the full might of the Emperor and the Adeptus Astartes into the fray.

Alarms blared in excited anticipation throughout the strike cruiser, “Battle stations,” followed by, “Man the assault ships.”

“Station us in orbit above the sector with the most intense fighting,” Captain Lares instructed the bridge, “We will handle it from there.”

As Captain Lares turned to exit the bridge, he caught another glimpse out of the starboard port. A smaller moon was coming out of the shadow of Atalan. It was smooth and round, no larger than an imperial orbital station. It seemed to fit the description of Amar, but the color was off. It was a pale light green. Lares continued to focus on it as the green hue intensified. Suddenly a blinding flash of light let loose from the moon, striking the vessel amidships. The violence of the impact was immense, breaking the Strike Cruiser cleanly into two halves. Lares looked on in horror as the Ultramarines insignia painted on the stern of his own vessel floated into view, green arks of light still racing across the blue and white sigil.

The tone of the alarms changed from one of anticipation of battle to that of fear and loss, throughout every section of the vessel that still had power, “Abandon ship!”