

# H I H

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## Chapter Eleven

*Daniel is travelling tonight on a plane  
I can see the red tail lights heading for Spain  
Oh and I can see Daniel waving goodbye  
God it looks like Daniel, must be the clouds in my eyes*

*They say Spain is pretty though I've never been  
Well Daniel says it's the best place that he's ever seen  
Oh and he should know, he's been there enough  
Lord I miss Daniel, oh I miss him so much*

*Daniel my brother you are older than me  
Do you still feel the pain of the scars that won't heal  
Your eyes have died but you see more than I  
Daniel you're a star in the face of the sky*

*Daniel is travelling tonight on a plane  
I can see the red tail lights heading for Spain  
Oh and I can see Daniel waving goodbye  
God it looks like Daniel, must be the clouds in my eyes  
Oh God it looks like Daniel, must be the clouds in my eyes*

- Daniel, by Elton John

I stepped onto the bridge for the first time during my trip home. Although it was also my first time on the bridge period, because on the trip to Rigel Prime I didn't bother to check it out. But

I had been called to come to the bridge, and so here I was.

I looked around casually, and there were workstations and consoles everywhere with a place for the Colonel and her first officer to sit in the middle facing the large view screen that seemed to show the outside space as we travelled. The colours matched the rest of the ship, and the bridge was pretty upbeat in that manner.

“Commander in Chief on the bridge!” I had no idea who decided to announce my presence, but I walked over to the three command chairs. I looked to Colonel Blood.

“Your highness, we have a message coming in for you from Imperial Intelligence. It’s marked for your eyes only.” Colonel Blood was a serious woman. For around 45 years old, you wouldn’t mistake her for a day over 38. She was fit, lean, and definitely a typical marine if there was such a person. “You can use my office.”

A man beside her stood, and walked me over to the office. I stepped inside, and he waited by the doors on the bridge side. I found a large mahogany desk with a black high-back chair, and I went and took a seat. It was a pretty comfortable chair.

“Computer, display incoming message for the Crown Prince. Authorization Bezner-675-peekaboo.”

The message displayed, and the man from Imperial Intelligence appeared. He was a General, but I honestly couldn’t remember his name. “General, what can I do for you?”

“Your highness we wanted to let you know as soon as possible. We’ve found the RSS Imperial One. We are sending you the coordinates now. The investigation here will take two to three weeks. I thought you’d like to see your Father since we need another ship to take him elsewhere for medical treatment.”

I raised an eyebrow. “What sort of medical treatment, General?”

“We have him stabilized, but he may need some more surgery and other treatment options that we can’t offer him here. He needs the services of a Starbase, perhaps the one in orbit of Earth.”

I knew what the General was really saying. Unless we got my Father, he’d be taken back to Rigel Prime or some random Starbase nearby for treatment. If I happened to be there, then I could have him taken wherever I want. “Thank you General, I will arrange this now.”

The channel closed, and I stood up from my chair. I headed back onto the bridge, taking a seat in an empty chair next to Colonel Blood. “Colonel, you should have received a set of coordinates.”

She nodded, “We did indeed, your highness. At best speed, it should take us 5 days to get there.”

I shook my head. "I know about Project Slipstream." It's the most advanced technology for the Empire since we started to explore the stars. "Take us to quantum slipstream, Colonel."

After I became the Regent, I had these briefings. One from the Imperial Guard, one from Imperial Intelligence, etc. As such I had to be told about all the *secret* little things going on. It was no coincidence that the RSS Agamemnon was assigned to fly me. It was one of five ships that had a quantum slipstream engine installed. If I became the Pharaoh, this ship would become the new RSS Imperial One.

The Colonel just looked at me for a few moments. I don't think most of her crew knew about the project, but the important people did. It didn't matter, I knew about it and I had given her an order.

She looked over to the helmsmen. "Leftenant, set course and prepare for quantum slipstream."

The young man at the helm nodded, "Sir, yes sir. Once we enter slipstream, it should take us about 2 hours to get to the destination."

Two hours. Only two hours to get somewhere that was previously five days away. This new technology would change the very fabric of the Empire. I knew it the moment I was briefed on the project. If I became the next Pharaoh, we'd be installing it on every military and intelligence starship we had.

"Course set and laid in, Colonel. We are ready for quantum slipstream" the young Lieutenant reported.

"Thank you, Leftenant. Take us to slipstream, best speed." The Colonel was an efficient woman, and I had a lot of respect for her.

Her first officer was a man named Daeus Naser. Commander Naser was a nice enough guy with a good service record, but he had horrible people skills. While Colonel Blood was certainly a tough woman, she could also be diplomatic, and if she wanted to sell you a used car, she could do it without even trying.

Commander Naser on the other hand would never be able to sell a used car. He was too rigid in his thinking, and the way he does things. The way I read his record, he'd never make it past Colonel, if he got that far. He'd been passed over for three commands of his own.

Half an hour before we were due to arrive, I made my way out of my quarters, and back to the bridge. This time no one announced my arrival, and I was glad for that. I didn't want to be announced every time I entered the room. My ego might get too big.

As if it hasn't already.

When we came out of slipstream, we saw three ships in the area. All three of them were different classes of vessels. The RSS Imperial One was the same class as the Agamemnon.

Speed counts when you're in a crunch.

“Helm, deactivate the cloak and hail the RSS Erebus.” Colonel Blood commanded.

The Lieutenant nodded and deactivated the ship's cloaking device. I was kind of excited, it felt like *Star Trek*, but this was real, and I was the ranking officer. Yet I was still 17, and I still got in trouble at school.

The viewscreen came alive with the General's image. “General, how is your investigation going?” I asked of him.

“It is going well, your highness. It is good to see you out in this part of space.” The General was doing this for the benefit of the 'public'. As far as the others were all aware, all I had been told earlier is that the ship and my Father had been found. The Colonel was in on the secret, however.

“Oh yes, General. I'd like my Father prepared to be transported to this ship's medical bay as soon as possible. We're headed back to Earth immediately, and will ensure he receives top medical care at the Starbase.” I smiled. I liked the idea of going home. And since it was a week away, we'd be using quantum slipstream again. That's how Dad's personal physician was able to see him so fast.

It's a closely guarded secret.

Until we announce it to the general public, expected sometime next year according to the current plans.

“Of course, your highness. I'll see to it myself. Erebus out.”

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I walked into the medical bay about half an hour after my Father had arrived. I wanted to give him and the staff time to get organized and settled before I went and started harassing people. Hey, if I could manage to annoy Ms. Laframboise, I could do it to the medical staff as well, and I don't need or want them to quit. So keeping some distance is probably a good idea.

My Father was laying on a bed, with his vital signs displayed above it for all to see. I walked over and sat next to it in a hard, plastic bright yellow chair. I grimaced a little, and contemplated asking Colonel Blood if I could use the chair from her office. Probably not a good idea.

My Father's eyes opened a little. “Ale... Alexander?” he whispered. I looked at his normally bright red forehead, that right now was pretty pale.

“Yes Father, I'm here.” I took my Father's hand and held it gently. I closed my eyes, and a tear came down from my eyes. In all this time, I had been too busy to feel sad.

"I love you, Alexander" he whispered, and then went back to sleep.

I looked over to the doctor who was coming this way. I continued to hold my Father's hand, having missed him so much in the time he was missing. The doctor finally reached us.

"How is he?" I needed to know, both for me as his son, and as the Regent. It sucked, big time.

The doctor pulled up a chair, and opened my Father's chart. "He had multiple injuries. This isn't unlike the last time he went missing, about 16 years ago. The Erebus stabilized him, but the Starbase can help him heal up quicker, and can take care of any outstanding issues."

I nodded a little. I didn't have it in me to give the doctor a response. All of a sudden I had started to feel tired. "When... when can he come... home?"

"Your highness, you should get some sleep. You look really tired. He should be able to go home in about a month, assuming the Starbase gets everything looked after, and there are no unknown issues."

I stood up from my chair, leaving my Father's hand on the bed. "Thank you."

As I walked toward the exit, I pulled out my communicator. I had one that I carried in my pocket, but they also came in pin form, again like on *Star Trek*. "Alexander to the bridge."

"Bridge here, your highness" was the reply.

"Set course for Earth, please. You are authorized to use quantum slipstream." I said, heading for my suite.

"Of course, your highness. Bridge out."

When I got into the suite, Peter was reading a book quietly in the living area. I walked over and gave him a long, passionate kiss. He smiled, and stood, wrapping his arms around me.

After the kiss finished, Peter whispered "I've missed you lately. So busy with affairs of state."

I nodded a little. "I'm sorry, it's a lot to learn. But I'm glad you're here. My Father told me he loves me."

Peter kissed my forehead. "I'll always be here for you, Alexander. Your parents will be fine, and soon we'll be planning our wedding. Though I think we'll start with picking out a honeymoon spot." Peter gave me a big grin.

I leaned in and whispered, "As long as it's with you, I'd have a honeymoon in a volcano."

After we finished hugging, and kissing of course, I headed to bed for a long nap.