

ATATILIA

Lost Letters

To: KSky#NE@SMail.net
Subj: My Exodus from Avalon

Dear Sister,

Do you recall the fi |

Exodus

ATALIA: Lost Letters- Exodus

by Fell Skyhawk

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Dedicated to John Harte

Our mission is to defend those who are defenseless in a lawless land, where lawless men prey on the weak. We stand in the void, a beacon of light against a harsh night. -Tech Knight founder

To: Ksky#NE@Smail.net

From: Fell.P.J.Skyhawk#AV@TKMAIN.IHS

Subj: My Exodus from Avalon

Date: 10-21-576

Dear Sister,

Do you recall the first time you entered that one place you waited your entire life to see? That is assuming you've been there; but if you have been there, you know you'll never forget it.

For most of my life, I dreamt of visiting the great Citadel of Avalon. You probably remember that place, and would, therefore, remind me I was born there. However, I have no memory of it. I don't know if you remember how I would study the pictures and holographs (The way you left would denote you're probably trying to forget the family right now). I knew every corridor, every bolt, every dimension; but it held no equal to approaching that grand entrance in person.

Oh those pillars of encased light dotting the pools leading up to those massive wooden doors! It's amazing! I stopped at each engraved crystal displaying the fallen knights of old who died protecting the innocent. The doors beckoned me to enter in, but the surroundings begged me to stay in their beauty.

When I finally went inside, I was greeted by such greater beauty that the former was swept from my mind. No one in this life had more joy entering that place than me, and now I can never return.

It all started the day after my fifteenth birthday. Father brought me there because I had been accepted to be apprenticed as a knight. You do remember our father? Felipe Jared Skyhawk, Tech Knight liaison to the Omega Task Force of the ATP. You know, Father was really hurt when you left us to join the very person our family has been hunting for generations.

I'm sorry, Kattie, being bitter won't do me or you any good. I'll try to restrain myself. I just... I miss you, big sis.

I regret the fact that when Father requested if I wanted him to come with me, I had told him, "no". In my mind, I was finally heading out on my own. I was going to be independent. His eyes conveyed a massive sense of sorrow, but he allowed me my freedom and respected my wishes.

Thus I entered alone, save for God.

A few meters in I was greeted inside by my mentor, Bruce Benjamin Bennett. I hate the official term master. "Mentor" sounds like a much better title.

"You must be Fell Skyhawk," the dark-skinned, short man began.

I, of course, wanted to pull the old "legacy joke". "No, you're thinking of my father, Fell Skyhawk, I'm Fell Skyhawk. Unless you mean my grandfather, Fell Skyhawk." However, I was good and replied instead, "Yes, I am."

He shook my hand, "My name is Bruce, and I will be your master. Is this all you have?" He was referring to my single backpack.

"What more do I need?" That backpack ended up being all I have now that I left the Tech Knights.

I'm not sure I can fully explain why I left, I'm not even entirely sure myself. Everyone thinks that I have some master plan, that I know where I'm going. I don't. One could say that my reasons were a long, drawn-out string of events that led to the inevitable conclusion, but there's even more than that. I believe it's ultimately God's leading, but who am I to know where God leads?

I can, however, give an account to my bias: the events of my life so far. My issue with the council started almost a year later. I was at fault for what occurred, but that occurrence drew something out of the core of the Knights, out of the council itself.

I was on a patrol mission with a fellow apprentice, Hezekiah Knight, just outside of the star system Norway. We, of course, being boys, ended up in the middle of the mission talking about what most boys talk about at our age, girls.

"Which one is that girl again? Is that the red head?" I inquired of him, trying to pin down the girl he had a thing for.

"No, Fell, not the red head; she's a missionary," his reply sent a shiver down my spine.

"And what's wrong with that?"

"Don't get me wrong, it's a noble field, but I want a woman of a higher caliber, like a knight."

"Wait, what..?" my shock was cut short by a rhythmic beep.

"That's the ECR, Fell, that's..."

"I know," the Emergency Comm Receiver had picked up a transmission. I swung to the panel and called up the information on what we were receiving. "It's just on the edge of our scanners, about two parsecs away. Distress call from a freighter, under attack by raiders."

"Fell, that's within the Lakota system, jurisdiction of local police."

"So, we're just a civilian yacht helping out a freighter in need. They won't last until the locals are able to help." I, being impulsive, began entering in the course.

"Let me just comm..." he stopped talking as we entered a SSF, the trip took less than two seconds.

"Fell..."

"Hold up." I turned the ship toward the distress call which was now behind us, we were one klick away from target. I engaged the warp field drive to cover the distance, dropped cloak, and disabled the raider with one shot from our phase cannons. This left me pretty impressed with my own skill.

"I guess we won't be reporting before going in guns blazing."

"Better to ask forgiveness than permission."

You, sis, were the one who taught me that one, which has gotten me into more trouble than anything else. I should have known better than to follow your advice.

We contacted Avalon and were ordered to return to base. The ride back was relatively quiet, both Hezekiah and I contemplating what we would face for my actions. Well, I contemplated my defense believing my actions just, Hezekiah worried about the punishment.

"Hey," I began after we had set down, "Don't worry. It was my call and my actions, I'll make sure if they do not listen to reason that any consequences fall on me. I was responsible, so you should be in the clear."

"Thank you."

We were brought from the space dock straight to the council. It was there we found out that the vessel we disabled had been a privateer, a government certified pirate basically. They were pirating a suspected smuggling ship. This resulted in the ATP getting involved. However the council didn't even attempt to aid in my defence as they are suppose to. They were worried more about their image than standing with one of their own. After hours of pleading my case, they did not punish us. The ATP issued a beacon to licensed privateers to identify themselves with with a notice to keep it active while privateering. If they failed to comply they were told not to be surprised or offended if and when someone comes to help the ship in distress.

I did though realize the importance of following procedures. Had we reported and they gave us clearance then the one giving the clearance would be held in primary responsibility. But this does not negate the fact that the privateers were still attacking a vessel without warning, simply because a vessel was suspected of possible smuggling. Shouldn't we still protect them? Apparently within controlled space this is the job of the police or local navy, which are all ill-equipped to handle the job. They aren't in "control", especially on the outskirts of systems like this was.

Which runs into the next event, which I will not bore you with details. Simply put, a similar situation occurred while my mentor and I were outside the Rhodes System. He decided that we stay back and simply watch. The navy of one planet responded, but so did the navy of the next planet in that system. The result was a massacre, where the two ill-coordinated navys killed more of their counterparts than they did of their common enemy.

However despite all this I do understand why the Tech Knights (I'm already starting to refer to them as separate from me) will not cross that boundary. It is the responsibility of the local authority within their borders, we were set up to guard those who are outside any borders. This is the conundrum which I struggled with.

Earlier this year I laid out the dilemma to our cousin Robert, who told me more stories of events occurring even within New Sol space. The very heart of the interstellar government couldn't get their act together. But it isn't the responsibility of the Tech Knights to correct this issue.

Robert ended our conversation with telling me that if God had put this issue on my heart, then I should pray about what He wants me to do with it. It was Robert who proposed the idea that my place may not be with the Tech Knights, that I might have a different calling. After much prayer I came to the conclusion that he was right, that my place was working within the Galactic Federation of Allied Worlds' Navy to effectively make any change.

The council, and many other Tech Knights, did not see it this way. Two of the intercessors somewhat understood, if not believed me, but the missionaries and knights did not.

"What purpose could you have in leaving our noble field? You talk as if you believe yourself above us, perhaps you are not called to be a tech knight after all. You lack humility." The Councilor who spoke is known to be quite prideful.

At this point I realized there was another reason for my leaving, as a wakeup call for the council.

"Believe what you want, it doesn't make it true. But I must follow where our Creator leads me." I looked to the two who were somewhat sympathetic to my cause.

The female sympathetic councilor turned to her male counterpart, then looked to the remaining council. "In that case, go with God," she said.

The prideful councilor spoke next. "But don't expect to be welcomed back should you find you are wrong."

I suppressed a laugh, it was difficult though. "Understood."

I turned and left, to go where God was and is now leading me.

It was hard leaving, the citadel was home. But God called me to leave, so I left, knowing my home ultimately rests with Him. I may never see the citadel again, no I know I will never see it again, but I'll be doing good work here.

Until we meet again, with love,

your lil brother, *Fell Peter John Skyhawk*