

Colour backdrop: BLACKNESS OF SPACE, twinkling white stars, streaking red comets.

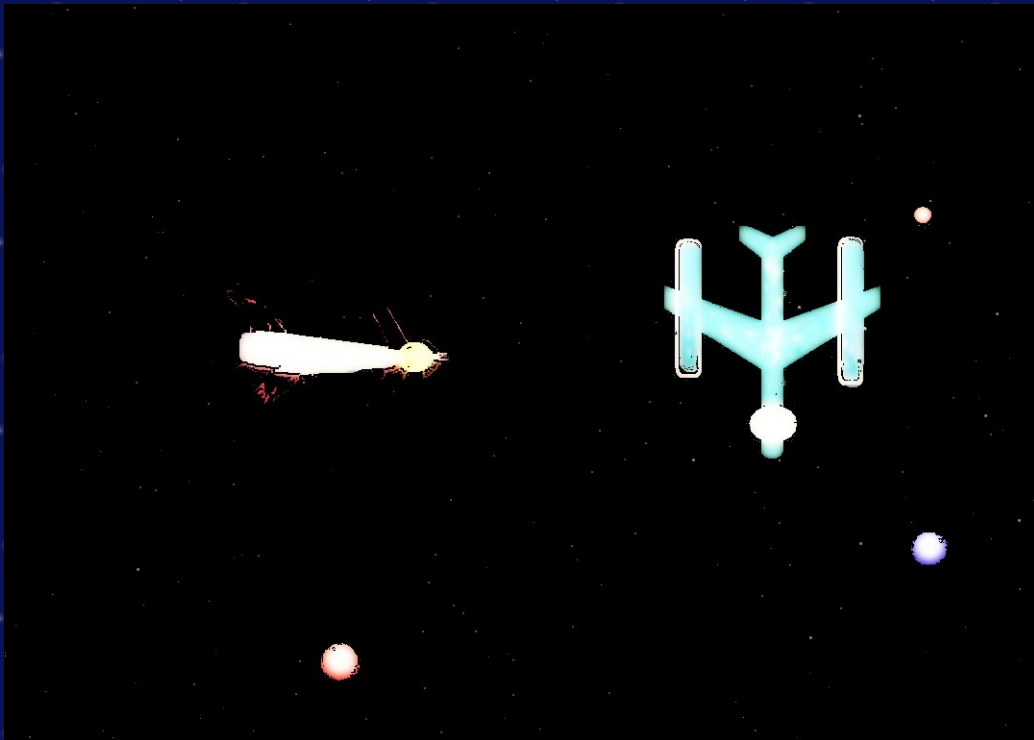


Illustration 14: Ships

It was fortunate that the original Po Shen was in the brig and that The Man had paid for the best in ships for himself to fly.

Still an immigrant cockroach ran across the floor.

It did not carry a suitcase nor have a ticket!

Now Po She sat upright with severe indigestion and heart burn, the pain then turned to rumbling and that put him into a panic attack for he thought he was having a cardiac arrest.

THEN HE BLEW APART

and blew a hole in the ship also.

The ships giant green doors slid
down to seal his compartment off from RAW SPACE.

The ship was the Titanic of its age.

It was indestructible.

Best platinum,

Best rhodium,

Best steel,

Plastics,

Sound nuts and bolts,

Reliable super glue,

It was The Man's:

It was unfortunate that Po Shen had Po Wei as a father.

And Nesta was frantic had she pressed the wrong button and caused the damage.

Saw images of her being jettisoned overboard to restore luck.

Weren't women aboard ship a bad omen?

Every button now looked the same.

All red, green or yellow.

All round and square at same time.

Then the ship stabilised.

All you pressed or yanked out did nothing to help.

Gadgetry things she forgot what they did.

And heaps of altimeters spinning round to add confusion.

But to her they all looked the same.

But The Man and Tintagel knew better.

“Relax baby,” The Man taking over the ship’s joystick.

TEN MINUTES SILENCE AS NESTA ALMOST DIED WAITING FOR THE
SHIP TO BLOW APART OR SOMETHING WORSE.

Something worse?

(She was a woman learning to fly.)

5 MINUTES PASSED.

“Who are you calling baby?” Nesta asked, *yes she was all woman.*

Tintagel said nothing; this was not his Wendy a robot designed to make life
pleasant for him.

This was Nesta.....

The Man looked at Tintagel for help.

But common sense returned to Nesta, she had remembered her position. Why only
a short time ago she had been begging in the street; available for almost anything as
long as she got her share of cash to eat and be warm.

SOMETHING IMPERIAL ROME AND ANCIENTS HAD FOUND OUT
BEFORE.

Slaves.

Banquettes.

Vomiting.

More banqueting.

Orgies.

Cash and sex makes the world go round, food is the fuel, and Augustus had licences to print the stuff.

AND NESTA WAS NOW AFRAID OF WHAT HER CHEEK HAD COST HER?

FEAR returned to her, The Man could do anything with her for he was The Dictator. But The Man had not become who he was working a florists but by blood letting on a grand scale.

“I condemn the guilty.”

“But I am innocent,” Nesta shouted at him because of FEAR.

She was remembering the stories circulating about The Man. Was this not he who had defeated a whole platoon of Imperial Guardsmen and sent their remains back to Augustus with a tag, “Send more.”

Now Nesta rolled fluff out of her pockets and chewed her lips wishing Tintagel would offer her a Victory V to suck.

And none noticed a stowaway spider crawl under a computer; it was too small and skinny.

And her virus clock wished the year was up so it could activate and eat them all.

But the Man was too interested now in the large unconventional ship approaching them than engaging in her mood and now that really annoyed her.

Later he would unwrap the strings that held Nesta together and have them lead him back to Posidonus.

And for the next three hours she learnt a lot about The Man.

“Keep only that which you need,” Tintagel’s advice to her.

Now the pirate ship came close for The Man’s ship could not maintain speed thanks to Po Shen.

How cruel to blame him since he could not defend himself these days?

In fact the ship wanted to spin.

And The Man knew battle would come for he said, “Let’s get this over with Tintagel,” and he later handed Nesta a light weight light green body armour.

PAUSE.

“What are these?” She asked naively pointing at two lumps.

“It’s a woman’s suit,” he replied.

PAUSE.

“Sure why not?” She replied seeing the men present weren’t going to give her any privacy. “Let’s get it over with,” and she stripped off and was slipping into the suit.

Then the ship bucked and she fell against The Man.

He held her and it was obvious he was uncomfortable for Nesta was more beautiful than any of his courtesans and she felt dominant and a female on the attack over his timidity.

“When you two are quite finished?” Tintagel advised digging out body armour for himself.

Now Nesta pulled herself into the suit and yelped as her hair got stuck in the zipper. Well the ship wasn’t steady, that was her excuse but The Man looked and

stared the way men do at places he shouldn't. And he liked what he saw and Nesta made sure he didn't get too stare too long, that came with a ring?.

Now the Man opened a cupboard and displayed an arsenal of weapons. Nesta reckoned he had designed them all for they looked lethal.

"Pick what you can carry," he advised.

Now the ship lurched and she fell against him again and he caught her.

Even at a time like this? He held her for a moment *too* long and she knew it and knew he wasn't uncomfortable any more. Now Nesta was scared, on the defence; FEAR had risen again, Aelfric and the factory had taught her well.

It was The Man's turn to be on the attack and she knew it. "*Run rabbits run rabbits, plural this time?*"

And when the ship steadied he gave her a bandoleer and light weight guns.

Now when they separated Nesta saw Tintagel was dropping his body armour over his head, he did not have skinny hairy legs but a muscular body, Tintagel was deceiving!

HANDLE WITH EXTREME CAUTION,

EXPLOSIVE WHEN MIXED

SHOULD BE STAMPED ON THE THREE OF THEM

But most of the pirates couldn't read anyway!

The result of all this sexual confrontation was that Nesta knew. The Man didn't see her as a kid any the more the more; also she was about to start wrapping him about her little finger.

AND A VIRUS SEEMED ACTUALLY PLEASED OVER THAT.

Viruses in this era could think and since they were in you, make pictures in your head that your brain translates into thought; what they wanted you too think.

The wiggly deadly things through advanced science could communicate and this virus said, *"I won't too kill you."*

Now The Man did what was manly when he broke away from Nesta, picking up a microphone he shouted when speaking would have done, "Surrender or die. I condemn the guilty."

Then coughed for Nesta had done things to his throat emotionally.

Yes he was The Man for only he was brass monkey enough to say such a thing.

Nesta thought he was crazy, there were three of them and she had never killed anything, apart from spiders and Dandy Long Legs in her hair. So looked at Tintagel for support and found none.

"See this blue lever, just in case I fail it is your life boat," and then ignored her.

LAUGHTER was coming over the loud speakers, the pirate answer.

And The Man pressed his fist onto a red button.

As for Tintagel he was blaming himself for this situation for he had been feeding Nesta hormones to counteract her FEAR of men.

Unfortunately his experiences with women were limited to cyborg Wendy.

And The Man screeched a war cry in answer to the pirates who heard and FEARED.

And Nesta FEARED for this was The Man she had heard of, a killing machine.

Now she realised why Tintagel was so solemn, he felt for the pirates who had chosen death.

Now the pirate ship had grappled with them and connecting soft plastic corridors like octopus tentacles sucked onto the ship.

WORSE THEY FILLED WITH PIRATES.

And The Man having pressed the red button pressed another with a skull on it and the corridors filled with nerve gas.

It was just pirates being taken care of in a matter of fact way.

NONE SURVIVED IN THE TUBES.

“Put on your outside helmets and connect to your safety belts,” The Man warned and Nesta did very quickly.

Just as well as a hole was blown through the bridge wall and SPACE was seen as stuff not screwed down floated out.

And the pirate ship was so close the missiles sent by The Man could not miss; now Nesta could see on the screen above, flames and holes in the other ship, so that she saw stars on the others side as well as lots of pirates floating about out there.

All this space got to Nesta, she was a land lover and was tempted to pull the blue lever and get away, but The Man and Tintagel had disappeared and she saw them on the screen entering the pirate ship, taking the fight to the survivors. Now a grisly trophy of war floated by her, a head and its eyes glared demanding to know where its body was?

Nesta pushed it away so it floated out the hole in the bridge wall that was beginning to self seal and it was gone.

The ship lurched from an explosion.

She fell flat on her face.

FEAR.

She was sick.

She couldn't see out of her helmet visor no more.

She tried to get up and her fingers sank into an open belly.

She wasn't prepared for this type of mental abuse.

She was sick again.

She managed to crawl against a wall as the hole sealed and cold space shut out.

She was glad The Man paid for the best in ship technology.

She could see that the red lights had gone off and normal lighting returned.

She knew she could take her helmet off.

She couldn't fathom the smell of vomit any the more the more.

She was afraid space was still about.

Then a brown rat ran over her hand and left pee dribbles behind like rats do so why they soil food; the blighter's. But it was a sign from GOD; rats don't have space helmets!

The rat was her yellow canary in a yellow submarine!

Then amidst the quiet the reliable hum of the nuclear turbines in the engine room and now she sat until her aches ceased and then she got real scared for she was all alone except for orange oil gauge lights and yellow temperature flanges.

Where were the others? On the florescent bright yellow lifeboat, had they pulled the BLUE lever?

Why she stood up on wobbly legs and started to haul herself up a steep red ladder; she did this because it was THERE in RED. Now exiting at the top she was greeted with BLACK....billowing.....mountains.....waterfalls.....of smoke and the sound of laser “zip zip.” Green eyes filling with tears she blindly went on hoping she was heading in the right direction:....what else could she do....well she should have stayed on the bridge and kept her helmet on?

CIRCLES.

<<<<<<LEFT.....then>>>>>>RIGHT.....crawling on blistering hands.....totally confused now....YES SHE SHOULD HAVE STAYED ON

o THE BRIDGE.

n

SMOKE e FUMES d BLACK

l

o

e

w

v

n

e

to yellow

l.....went right corridors.

ANYTHING WAS BETTER THAN STAYING CHOKING TO DEATH
AMONGST THESE ACID LUNG FILLING BLACK FUMES.

“Nesta,” and she jumped.

Tintagel took hold of her left elbow and rapidly calmed her down. The very act she was in contact with another life form was enough. *Dying is a lonely business, when you are dead they come. Who? Some say your guides with you since birth but others angels?*

When The Man died in battle they came, IT WAS THE GRIM REAPER and helpersbut no one wants to hear but he said there was an... OUTER DAKNESS.....don't believe it....they came for THE MAN, they can come for you, but The Man survived, he had good field medics.

Now Nesta was a normal person so thought he was rescuing her from a sinking ship, in this case since we are in DEEP SPACE a disintegrating ship.

Her eyes balls would swell and burst along with her other bits.

SPACE WAS ACCERLATED PRESSURISATION.

Then Tintagel led her to a small room just before the connecting soft plastic air corridor between the two ships.

He handed her a bright orange suit, over large too accommodate her body armour so she looked sexless like a bag of potatoes.

“Oh my God we are going out into space?” She thought.

SCAREDTERRIFIED.

Now for all her SUICIDE ATTEMPTS PREVIOUS to meeting Tintagel and The Man she no longer wanted to die.....*if she ever did?*

NO WHITE SHEETS

EMPTY DRINK BOTTLE

HER MIND WAS GETTING RIGHT

SHE HADN'T BEEN ABUSED IN A LONG TIME

SHE NO LONGER IMAGINED HERSELF IN A COFFIN

WITH THOSE WHO ABUSED HER SOBBING

IF THEY WOULD?

Then Tintagel pushed her into the air lock and she met bits of pirates...evidence The Man had been this way.

Then heard The Man's war cry again, it was soul destroying and why was shouted. The Man laughed so his enemies knew he was not normal....who could ruling an empire full of well loonies and aliens?

So she followed Tintagel and found The Man on an orange balcony overlooking a white loading bay where the reaming pirates had taken refuge.

HAD HE NOT SHOUTED

"I CONDEMNED THE GULITY."

When he The Man saw Nesta and Tintagel he coughed and threw a bag of high explosives amongst the pirates.

HE WAS AN AVENGING ANGEL AMONGST

DRUG DEALERS

CHILD KIDNAPPERS

CHILD MOLESERS

LOST SOULS.

There was a big BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM

And she had ear ache.

“Take over,” and The Man gave her a heavy machine gun and it was so heavy it was threatening to pull her bosom off.

“Aim it down there and give them PINK DEATH,” meaning from a woman.

FEAR made her obey and she sprayed the hideouts and killed many pirates.

She did not see the limbs fly off or brains come out. She had not been brought up to kill people but followed order. She was Nesta surviving in space?

Two minutes later The Man pulled her away and led her and Tintagel back to his own ship.

Under her rumbling.

SHE WAS AFRAID.....TERRIFIED.

Then a ten fingered hand took hold of her and dragged her back to her ship.

The man did everything quickly and she thought it was panic, it was not, and a job needed doing there and that was all it was about.

The job was to kill pirates.

Now before she knew it The Man had dragged her back unceremoniously to his cockpit where she saw after being dumped in a nice soft chair bits of garbage floating about space on the viewing screen.

HE COMMANDED HER TO PRESS A BIG YELLOW BUTTON.

She jumped to it, his voice was loud

Who had who wrapped about a little finger?

Now after pressing the button the yellow button droids floated out of HIS ship and attached wires to the remaining pirates floating out there in their helmets and suits.....to a bright YELLOW balloon.

The Man typed on his keyboard.....

‘I CONDCERN THE GUILTY.’

“Murderous scum,” he said but Nesta saw him as no better than those he had WELL EXECUTED under his law.

She was a child of the street and saw laws were made to protect those who had wealth and keep them like her in her place.

200 community hours for a drug baron.

10 years for a bank robber using a shot gun borrowed from granddad.

“I am different, I don’t run flesh markets, women or boys should not be afraid of MEN.

I AM DIFFERENT, I AM THE MAN’S LAW.

I CONDEMN THE GULITY.”

“Don’t take them off yet?” The Man warned as Nesta was unzipping since PEACE had returned to SPACE.

All watched the screen and saw the pirate ship cauterize itself and jettison damaged sections as bulwarks sealed against SPACE.

Then Nesta the newcomer watched as The Man and Tintagel stripped off and put on lounge bridge suits it was safe now.

‘Indeed he had a wonderful body since he was a bionic?’ Nesta’s naughty thoughts as she was too puffed out to change her suit so just RELAXED watching. And that horrible naughty virus was alarmed she was inflamed with THE HULK....it wanted him dead.....but then squirmed because the virus could see through eyes and was inflamed itself.

Now Tintagel who was not The Man and had a robotic cyborg to soothe his manliness saw things different. Nesta needed an increase in hormones to level 2. Then she would talk about Posidonus.

Five minutes later Nesta was scratching where the body armour she had taken off was red.

“Tintagel, see if she is any use in the hold?” The Man.

AND A SHE WAS NETTLED.

Different hormones?

“Listen, I am a girl,” and thumped The Man's chest and hoped she hurt him.

SHE WAS CONFIDENT SHE HAD PICKED HIM CORRECTLY.....

NOT THE OTHER WAY ROUND?

He didn't hit her back, he was The Man.

All male, all something somewhere, no brains when a woman was concerned, just an urge to fertilise.....Yes he was The Man!

And the great dictator slowly took her hands off his chest that had felt her hits *but he wasn't admitting it.....*

"You did a good job, it was your first time in action and considering you ain't trained for it, now go and help Tintagel to adjust our passengers too freedom," he told her and that woke her up.

"Passengers?"

She quickly found out.

66 children now sat fearful in their hold.

"Christ he wasn't joking?" Nesta spat at Tintagel who sucked a Victory V.

"No," he wasn't, "He's The Man."

"Aelfric wouldn't have done this?" Nesta said just like that and the VIRUS SQUIRMED.

IT HAD ITS OWN MIND.....and that was to eat a human.

And Tintagel noted in his NOTEPAD in his brain what she had said.

A hangman's noose was coming to Posidonus and Aelfric Europe but not Nesta who was innocent.....a pawn.....a groomed child.....and thought of The Man.....there was a chemical reaction going on between these two.....let nature takes its course.....if their paths were destined so be it.....Wendy, and Tintagel stirred so

Nesta noticed.

“Sorry,” he said and she did not forgive him being a woman but accepted it, stored it, reassembled it to satisfy her needs.....watch out a female was about seeking a nest.

TINTAGEL?

THE MAN?

Now Tintagel started taking blankets from a floating droid trolley and handing them to the children, where the droid came from Nesta had no idea, it just floated in.

“Go and hug the youngest and assure the older ones we have come to rescue them,” Tintagel ordered Nesta.

So Nesta went to work wondering if she was able to help because of her own problems but she did and a virus inside her felt ill that the higher values of humanity had surfaced.

“Tea?” Tintagel offered from another droid; the droids were the ships crew. Now Nesta had never had tea before so was weary of the drink till it refreshed her then the bees came.

“Christ almighty?” She gasped holding her cup so she would not spill and get scalded.

“Don’t worry about them, quite tame, they are The Man’s boarding party, (t would be nice if The Man could rout his enemies by himself way out here in deep space, but he his still only a man,” Tintagel soothed her as the bees flew past back to their hive.

“Will you help us?” The question came from a five year old girl whose smock was ripped showing her bruised body.

“Of course,” Nesta replied pulling the child close trying to show love.

A virus inside her knew if this kept up it would die.

“The Man will give you all new homes, wait and see, no more pirates,” and quietly they came, all sixty six children about Nesta attracted by her promise of home.

The pirates were villainous, *who could harm children and call themselves part of humanity? When did such souls get lost and become monsters? Do they not know right from wrong no more? Or where they just selfish people stuck in Hedonism?*

And the children seeing Nesta weep, for she was opening the dam gates to her hurts began to weep with her.

Tintagel felt tugging fingers on his leg and looked down.

There looking up at him was big green eyes of a little girl. Even Tintagel who preferred Wendy because he distrusted human emotions wept and picked the child up.

And that rat Nesta had met earlier on the damaged bridge sensed it was safe to come out for it wanted dinner and dinner was in the ship's pantry! An immigrant American roach was there!