

Exeunt Omnes

Heroes Lost, part 6

written by Calle Dybedahl

Featured fandoms: Babylon 5, Blake's 7

Featured pairings: Servalan/Travis

A.S.S Story codes: mf,nc

Story rating: NC17

Ivanova shouted, vocally and mentally. She shouted from her heart, desperately wishing Cally to see the threatening Delenn and get out of the way.

getoutgetoutgetout, she sent, feeling invaluable tenths of seconds crawl by. Adrenaline rushed into her blood. *she wants him not you getoutgetoutgetout*.

Delenn aimed.

Cally lifted her head, saw. Started to push Ger out of the way. *no no no not that get out leave him*, Ivanova sent her. She tried to force her way into her alien lover's mind, tried to work her as a puppet, to move her away from the man she was holding. With an effort that made her vision fade, she almost succeeded. Cally twitched and stumbled against Ger as Delenn squeezed the trigger on her gun. Through Cally's eyes, Ivanova saw the clear rod of the gun point straight at her. It glowed like the sun for a moment before everything turned to pain and darkness.

They turned a corner and saw Delenn, first an outline against the faint light coming from the corridor she was looking into, then fully lit by their lamps. She was aiming her handgun at something, looking shocked.

"Delenn!" Sheridan shouted. He speeded his steps, hurrying towards her while drawing his sidearm. She turned at the sound of his voice, lowering the gun. She said his name, and her lips had just opened as if to say something more when a shot rang out and her chest seemed to explode, spraying blood and fragments of bone over the far wall. She took a step towards Sheridan, grabbed his jacket for support. Her lips moved, trying to shape words, but her lungs were unable to supply the air to form words from. Slowly, her legs buckled and she collapsed to the floor. Jenna and Sheridan watched, paralysed by surprise.

There was a sound of someone moving from the side corridor. Sheridan tore his gaze from the dying Delenn, saw an armed man trying to push a body aside and get up. He raised his own gun, aimed briefly and fired, again and again and again. Jenna hurried forward.

Beware what you wish for, Avon thought, it might just be granted. His chest ached from trying to breathe the thin air they'd been left with after the emergency pressure doors slammed shut. His left eardrum felt as if it had ruptured during the pressure loss, and he bled from a minor cut on his scalp where something sharp had hit him after gravity failed. Blake and Sinclair weren't much better off. The trio were heading towards the nearest escape pod as fast as they could, which was frustratingly slow in the weightless chaos that had recently been a smoothly working space dock. Well, as a diversion it certainly did the job, Avon added to himself. If anyone saw them they would be far too busy trying to find something to breathe to care about escaped rebels.

Barcol saw them halfway across the dock, heading for the escape pods. He gestured to the two troopers behind him to follow, and kicked off against the wall, heading forward and up so that he would be able to accelerate again by kicking against the ceiling. Blake and his followers didn't have helmets or anything else to provide air, so they'd have a hard time breathing. Probably wouldn't be too hard capturing them. He pushed against a large fuel tank floating by, gaining some extra speed. The troopers followed.

Avon heard Sinclair's and Blake's guns fire almost simultaneously, but he ignored it

and kept working with the door to the escape pod. It should've been easy to open, but wasn't. Pressure differential, most likely.

"Hurry up, Avon, they're almost here!" Blake shouted.

Avon didn't answer. He had better uses for what oxygen his aching lungs could squeeze out of the thin atmosphere. Although powering muscles to open doors, as he was doing now, probably wasn't the best, after all. If there was normal pressure on the other side, he'd never get it open. But the Federation's designers weren't stupid, so they must have thought of a situation like this. After all, pressure loss wasn't exactly far from one's mind when one lived on a space station. There must be a better way than force to open the door. He stopped pushing and tried to focus on what he saw. Concentrate, Kerr, he thought. Use that brain you're so proud of. A near miss burned his thigh, but he ignored it. Blake shouted again, and he ignored that as well. There must be something here, something his oxygen-starved brain kept missing... Ah. There. A small sign beside a valve, saying "Emergency Pressure Vent". He turned it, and was rewarded with a whistling sound that lessened and vanished as he kept turning. With an unspoken prayer to all the gods he didn't believe in, he tried the door again.

Almost there. One of his troopers had taken a hit in the head from one of the rebels' strange guns, and was quite dead. Barcol had pulled the body in front of himself and used it as a shield. He fired around it, but since he didn't dare look long enough to aim he did little real damage to the rebels. Occasionally he fired back the way he'd come, using the recoil to control his flight.

The one in the Space Commander's uniform opened the door to the escape pod. Barcol swore, and after a moment of furious thinking he faked a violent twitch and relaxed. The body of his ex-subordinate drifted aside, leaving him revealed. He hoped intensely that they'd fall for his little ruse, that they'd be in too much of a hurry to make sure he really was dead. The remaining trooper pushed against a piece of debris, getting out of a fight he thought lost. Good, Barcol thought. It'll make it more believable. As he drifted closer, he watched the rebels climb into the escape pod. He sent a thankful thought to whoever had decided that standard issue helmets should have darkened visors, preventing the enemy from seeing his eyes.

Once in the capsule, Avon quickly checked the controls and found them quite to his liking. The escape pod was fairly advanced for what it was, a very simple spacecraft rather than just a steel can with an air recycler. He turned to help the other two men enter, and saw the body of a Federation trooper heading straight towards the escape pod's entrance. Not even aiming properly, he put a few bolts from his blaster into it. The corpse started tumbling and drifted off to the side. Shooting it did a lot to calm him down after the chase. Blake looked at him.

"Was that good for anything?" he asked.

"It was drifting right at us. Might have hit something and messed up the launch," Avon rationalised. Blake looked as if he didn't believe that for a second, but he said nothing.

"Let's get away from here before someone else decides to come after us," Sinclair said.

Avon nodded. "We'd better strap in first. Escape pod launches tend to be less than gentle," he said. "And someone might try calling the Liberator again."

The White Star was drifting in space near the damaged Space Command station, waiting for something to happen. The Federation ships had broken off their attack when the station was hit, but would probably be back soon.

"Anything?" Marcus asked, still from behind the weapons console.

"It's only been a few minutes," Lennier replied. "We don't know how far from the lifeboats they were. Although it seems it wasn't very far, since we're now getting signals from Mr Blake's link."

"Great! Let's hear it!"

The speakers came online. For a moment there was only static, but then Blake's voice came through.

"I repeat, Liberator, can you hear me? We're in an escape pod just outside Space Command, and we need pickup *now*. Please respond."

"We still can't make them hear us, can we?" Marcus asked.

"No," Lennier answered. "But we can pick them up."

One near-suicidally depressed soldier from another universe and three dead bodies were not the best drinking buddies Vila had ever had, but he'd known worse. He poured himself another glass of milky blue liquid. He wasn't sure what it was, but it was alcoholic and didn't taste bad at all. Particularly not when you got to the third or fourth glass. Silently he toasted Cally, lying on the floor covered with a white sheet. That's what you get for being heroic, he thought. At least you didn't have to go alone. Although quite what you're going to do with a dead clone of Avon and a dead whatever she was I don't know. Give my regards to Gan, if you see him. He emptied the glass and grimaced as the spirits burned his throat. Drinking himself into oblivion seemed like a very good idea at the moment, so he reached for the bottle and refilled the glass. As he put the bottle back on the table he noticed that Jenna had returned from the sickbay.

"Is she alive?" he asked.

"She's breathing and her heart beats. There's not much more I can say without Zen's help, and Zen isn't talking to us any more." She lowered her voice and nodded towards Sheridan. "How is he?"

"Well, he's breathing and I guess his heart beats. There's not much more I can say without talking to him, and I don't think I want to do that right now. He looks like the sort of man who gets violent when he's upset."

"I'll go and have another try at getting Zen to talk to us again."

After she'd left, Vila filled his glass again. He looked at the blue, opaque liquid, and suddenly he could hear Cally's voice telling him that he drank too much. Suddenly there was a lump in his throat, and tears blurred his vision. Why did the silly alien have to go and die like that? With a curse he blindly threw the glass away and buried his face in his hands.

"There she is," Marcus said. "Dark and silent, just as we left her. Something's wrong, that's for sure."

"I guess that Avon clone of Servalan's has been up to something," Blake said. "Can you think of anything that might just shut Zen down like that, Avon?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact I can," came the reply. "You didn't happen to do anything that would've messed with the clone's brain, did you?"

"Jenna gave him something to make his nervous system heal quicker."

"That might do it, I guess." He brought his wrist up to his mouth and pushed the

call button on his teleport bracelet. "Zen, respond."

"Confirmed," rang the computer's calm voice from the bracelet.

"Zen, is my emergency override activated?"

"Confirmed."

"Deactivate override and resume normal operation."

"The Liberator is now operating normally."

"*Your override?!*" Blake asked, very sharply.

"Just a precaution," Avon answered. "Liberator, this is Avon. Do you read?"

Vila didn't notice that the lights had come back on until he heard Avon's voice. It took him a few moments to work out where it was coming from, but in the end he hit the right button on the panel.

"She's dead, Avon," he said. There was a pause.

"Vila, this is Blake. Who is dead?"

"Cally. Delenn shot her in the face, and she died."

"Bring us over, Vila. Now."

"There's no hurry. The dead stay dead, you know. It's one of those things about being dead, you don't get any better..."

"Vila!"

"Vila, did you do anything to Zen?" Jenna almost ran onto the flight deck. "Who are you talking to?"

"Jenna, is that you? This is Blake, we're on the White Star just beside the Liberator. What's happening over there? Why is Vila saying that Cally is dead?"

"I'm afraid he's right, Blake. The Avon we brought back from Space Command wasn't really Avon. Things got messy for a while, and now Cally, Delenn and the Avon lookalike are dead. Ivanova is wounded somehow, I think. Something's odd about her brain chemistry. There's a severe lack of neurotransmitters, for starters."

"Bring us over, will you?"

"We're bringing her back with us, of course. She should be buried on Minbar, where she was born. And I'd like to leave as soon as it's possible to move Susan over to the White Star." Sheridan had brought himself under some sort of control, and were talking to Blake about their immediate plans. They were all gathered on the flight deck, out of some unconscious desire for comfort in numbers. Jenna and Marcus had brought Ivanova up from the sick bay, and Marcus was doing his best to make sure she was comfortable.

"I'm not going," she whispered.

"What?" Sheridan replied.

"I'm staying. I have to go to Auron."

"Susan, you're not well, you don't know what you're saying."

"Don't argue with me!" She raised her voice, and immediately groaned. "I'm having the grandmother of all headaches, I don't want to argue, and I'm not leaving," she went on more softly.

Sheridan opened his mouth to go on, but Marcus stopped him. "She's made up her mind, Captain. She has a right to choose her own destiny."

For a moment it looked as if Sheridan was about to keep arguing, but he didn't. "Let's just go home."

"Certainly," Marcus agreed.

"Come on, I'll transfer you to your ship," Blake said.

They all watched the screen as the White Star was swallowed by the orange vortex and vanished forever. Blake, Avon, Jenna and Vila were at their flight consoles, Ivanova sat on the couch wrapped in a blanket and looking very pale.

"Er, excuse me," a cultured voice said, causing everyone but Ivanova to turn towards the entrance to the flight deck. "It seems I've missed my flight," Marcus went on, smiling at Ivanova. "I hope you don't mind if I stay here for a while?"

"What if we do mind?" Avon asked.

"Of course we don't mind," Blake said. "Stay as long as you want to."

Ivanova muttered something half-heard about silly englishmen. Blake turned to Zen. "Zen, set course for Auron. Speed standard by four."

"Confirmed."

Travis was not in a good mood. He'd expected at least to be able to get some decent quarters at Space Command. He had *not* expected to find the station partly destroyed. In particular, he had not expected to find it partly destroyed by Blake's people. He looked at the young cadet with his hardest and most disdainful gaze. "Speak up, boy! Where's your commanding officer?"

"I... I don't know, sir." He was obviously not sure about how to address Travis, dressed in a Space Commander's uniform without insignia as he was. "Things have been a total mess here since the attack, sir."

"Well, I can see *that*. Where is the Supreme Commander?"

"In her quarters, as far as I know, sir. It's locked and we haven't dared intrude."

Travis snorted. He should have expected that.

"Carry on, boy, carry on," he said.

Servalan woke up when someone held a glass of water to her lips. She drank eagerly. It had been a while since she last had something to drink. For a time, after the violent shaking of the station had made Avon's little mine fall off before it could explode, she had been certain that she was about to die. Slowly and with growing elation it dawned on her that she might yet live. She opened her eyes to see who her saviour was.

Travis was sitting beside her, momentarily turned away while he put the glass of water on her bedside table. He turned back to her, and smiled as he saw that she was awake. It wasn't a pleasant smile. She felt his finger trace the soft swell of her right breast.

"Hello, Supreme Commander," he said.

Servalan closed her eyes and groaned.