

Dramatis Personae Aska Kjelu Russ WH40K OC

The Daughter of Leman Russ, Primarch of the Space Wolves

Von Garnet-Nihilia

Kapitel 1: Moonrise

Chapter 1: Moonrise

All records stated that Tavia was once a beautiful moon circling a gas giant. Numerous legends praised its splendor and the unique sky that could be seen from its surface. It was far away from all war and all lived in peace. Those whose fate it was to fight did so only in defense or in traditional meditation rites. Magnificent cities and a wonderful wilderness adorned the former homeworld of the woman that had born Leman Russ a child.

But in the dark millennium of mankind's history the peaceful world of Tavia was ravished by war, like many other worlds. And so this once blooming culture was wiped out and left behind. Records talked about an attack on this world but nothing more was known ten thousand years later. To no one's surprise the Inquisition had something to do with it. They were masters of cover-ups and twisting facts, after all, and probably the only ones who knew exactly what had happened so many eons ago. But apart from them, there were still a few survivors who knew what cruel fate Tavia had suffered, but no one talked about it. The whole situation was very strange but the fact that after such a long time a Tzeentch cult spread across this system didn't leave much room for speculation. Suddenly they had appeared on this destroyed and empty planet and brought with them a strange crystal which was either a relic or a trap for the Vlka Fenryka.

It stood there, in the dusty ruins, and in it she slept....

Russ' daughter was back. After ten thousand years Aska Kjelu Russ had appeared again.

It was a miracle since no one had even counted on it anymore and it brought back the hope that Russ too would soon be with his Wolves again.

Was it irony of fate or maybe providence? Either way, while on the way to the ruins of Tavia many Wolves pondered over this twist of fate. A trap maybe? Definitely foul sorcery! With those damned traitors you had to be ready for anything. Auspex-scans showed the crystal consisting of a substance similar to diamond and containing some form of air chamber inside in which Aska had survived. Her life signature was unmistakable, although she seemed to be in some form of cryostasis.

Strangely there were also only few enemies found in orbit or on the planet. Some few Chaos Space Marines of the Thousand Sons and their retinue, consisting of a few

hundred cultists had made themselves comfortable on the planet.

There was no big portal or battleship in sight.

So initially there was no need for a big attack. Since Aska's safety and her rescue had top priority for the chapter, Ragnar himself was on the way to the planet. However, everyone on board the ship knew something was wrong here.

Chaos never meant something good, and rage made the hair of every Son of Russ stand on end thinking back to the butchering on Prospero.

Even after all these years the wounds were still fresh and the Wolves were hungry for a slaughter. The traitors were present in such a small number they would be easy game, or at least so it seemed. Every Wolf knew the Thousand Sons would never be so foolish and in many battles they had learned the pathetic tricks of their traitor enemies.

But a master tactician like Lord Blackmane would never go into battle unprepared. Still, he was reluctant about the mission as he thought about it in the Thunderhawk. Having pondered their approach and their tactics, they were cautious and ready for anything. No matter if it really was Princess Russ or not, the Wolves would unleash the massed hate of a true warrior on the Sons of Magnus. As always Ragnar's men had no choice but to remain alert and ready for anything, it just seemed too much like a trap. However it would probably prove far more difficult to actually get Aska out of the crystal. They could try to blast her free piece by piece but the risk of hurting the Primarch's daughter in the process would just simply be far too high. They needed a different idea and they had just that.

The plan was to just blast a bit of the crystal away at its foot and involved a long steel chain and three Thunderhawks, which would collectively pull on the crystal via the chain and hopefully topple it.

They had an emergency plan to get the crystal off the planet first and then contemplate on their ship on how to pry Aska out of it.

Top priority however was to get Aska out of the crystal and then see, if it was truly the Primarch's daughter or if the Wolves had been deceived.

If it turned out to really be Russ' daughter she would be the most important living person of the chapter. There would be nothing more important than this young woman and Russ himself wouldn't have expected any less of his sons, only the attempt would already be more than worth it.

And should it turn out to be true there would be a good chance that Russ too would soon return to them...

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Ragnar showed his still young fangs in a grim grin. Dealing with the Thousand Sons was a personal matter and he was already looking forward to slicing their heads off their bodies. Memories of days past emerged and he thought back to when he cast Magnus, the traitor Primarch, back into the hell he came from using the spear of Russ. He listened to the silence and concentrated on that which was yet to come.

Withdrawn into himself....

The calm before the storm....

Ready for anything. He, two of his Wolf Guard and two squads of Blood Claws were already above the vast ruins. In the distance they could see the strange, diamantine crystal which they had heard about. Suddenly the Thunderhawk started groaning as their enemies opened fire, the steel hull shaking with every impact.

"Ullur! Man the turrets!" Hostor, the leader of one Blood Claw packs, shouted. The turrets of the Thunderhawk burst to life and hailed a barrage of returning bolter fire

at their enemies.

"Well then let's land this bird!" They had familiarized themselves with the area and didn't even need the push of a button to have dozens of drop pods raining from the sky, if the situation escalated into a ground battle. Should this turn out to be an ambush or even a joke, they would crush the enemy without mercy. Everyone who knew the Sons of Russ also knew not to mess with them and that their massed fury is not to be underestimated. The Wolves would unleash their unrestrained, concentrated wrath upon anyone who was foolish enough to step in their path. Heretic blood would litter the ground and nothing could stop them.

Only dust would be left behind and the crows would feast on their enemies' bodies. Their fangs were sharper than any blade and their claws ready to shred anything blocking their way. Nothing could stand against their unwavering will as they unleashed their inner beasts! As the ramp lowered they readied themselves for the counterattack. Still in the air they jumped out and while falling killed the first traitors. Booming they landed on the ground and banished the last dust out of the old hollow armors or made the flesh of their heretic retinue explode. The earth shook and the hum of the servos in their armor could be heard with every movement.

The claws of Russ ran rampant with the fierce fury of every Wolf and let their enemies feel their fangs. Cultists stormed in from every direction but they were no match for the Wolves of the Vlka Fenryka. Initially they had been looking forward to a combat but this turned out to be a cakewalk. Their chainswords sliced right through the heretics flesh and their bolters fired bullet after bullet, leaving nothing but ash in their wake.

"Watch out!" Ragnar shouted to Olvec, the leader of his Wolf Guard. He had almost been surprised by one of the Thousand Sons and burned in witchfire but thanks to Ragnar he turned in time and skillfully dodged the attack.

A salvo of dozens of bolter projectiles hailed into the armor of the heretic and caused it to explode into hundreds of small pieces. Neither blood nor flesh had filled these dusty armors for eons because the influence of the Chaos god Tzeentch had turned them into nothing more than dirt trapped in rotting ceramite. Bolter shots blew right through the head of the next chaos follower storming to them and with a tormented scream a ghastly dust cloud escaped the ancient power armor. All that was left of their enemies was empty hulls of ceramite.

"Ha, not on my watch, bub! No chance!" Lars laughed, happy about all the lowlifes staggering blindly into his firing line. Lars and Ullur were one of the most ferocious Blood Claw duos. Both complimented each other to absolute deadliness, which every enemy stupid enough to even think about attacking them got to feel. The stink of treachery was overwhelming as cultist sorcerers suddenly opened warp-portals and the troops of their enemies were reinforced. More Tzeentch sorcerers emerged from these dark rituals and the Sons of Russ had to briefly retreat behind a dusty, crumbled wall. Every second more emerged and like they had expected this turned out to be a trap. The heretics had just waited for the Sons of Russ to blindly set foot on Tavia's surface.

"Should I do it or do you want to?" Ullur asked with a broad grin, already loosening a Frag grenade from its clasp. Lars showed his fangs, returning the grin. "This time, the honor's all yours, brother!" He pulled the pin and threw it into the enemy lines when Lars suddenly shouted "Watch out! Behind you!" and thus saved Ullur from the traitor that had sneaked into their cover.

"You smell that? I love the smell of dead heretics in the morning, nothing better to

start your day!"

"Every day I don't have to see your damned face is a good day, so it seems today I'm out of luck!" Even in this precarious situation, taking cover behind a not very protective crumbling wall, both of them made their usual jokes. Even the Jarl couldn't hide a grin as he heard the witty repartee of his Blood Claws. Not a second later he got a message via the com-net. A large cruiser of the Chaos Space Marines had appeared in space and from everywhere on the planet they got reports of portals to the warp opening, a cowardly strategy of their enemies. The whole time they had hid behind the next planet and only waited for the Wolves to be distracted. But the Wolves were already familiar with this trick and if the heretics thought they could fool them with this they were even more stupid than they had thought. The winds of chaos obscured their minds, made treacherous rats of former loyal warriors, but they had no chance against the massed fury of the Sons of Russ.

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"By Russ's iron balls!" Lars cursed. They all were hardly surprised. They were trained for these situations they already had endured worse.

Reports came from everywhere and it slowly started to get really nasty. Not only was a heated battle going on in orbit over the Tavian moon, but more and more portals were opening and spewing out unholy creatures. They had to stop the rituals for the portals, had to silence the dark chanting and heretic incantations. At the moment the whole planet seemed to be overrun and their mission became increasingly harder.

"This scum is becoming a major pain in the ass!" Lars growled and clenched his fist, peeking out from behind his cover. Figures, this had just been a ploy. It made them furious.

"What? You starting to slack? Wanna get nursed by mama?" Ullur teased him.

"How about you shut your damned mouth and start killing?!"

"And how about you start growing a proper beard?"

"How about you two keep your big mouths shut and start returning fire?!" Hostor barked, putting the two back in their places. Raik and Hargi, two Blood Claws of Hostors' pack, known for their wild and stubborn temper, left the cover and charged forward, howling and striking fear in their enemies. Hostor cursed, providing cover fire for the two daring Blood Claws.

Ragnar grinned, thinking back to his days as Blood Claw where he wasn't much different from the two hotheads. He watched as the two hacked apart cultists and renegades and wanted to order his troops to charge, too, when suddenly Raik was impaled on the jagged blade of a Chaos sorcerer. Hargi screamed in disbelief as he saw his friend coughing blood and the life leaving his eyes. He threw himself at the sorcerer with a wild rage but was outclassed and he, too, fell to the wretched blade.

Ragnar gritted his teeth in anger. He had seen far too many promising whelps die in this conflict already and on Sherrox Prime. He wanted this conflict to end and now! He gave the order for the drop pod attack as a support for their ground assault. It would distract their enemies, give them the opportunity to press on and ultimately crush their wretched foes.

First there was a thunder in the air without the clouds parting. Seconds later the sky was set ablaze with the first pods entering the atmosphere and their screaming descent roared over the sounds of battle. The pounding in his body grew stronger, a fiery heat spread through him and his eyes concentrated on the traitors of the Imperium of Mankind. Short, still quite young fangs were exposed as Ragnar fell into a rage and charged like a berserker with a blood-curdling battle cry into the lines of

Chaos.

For now he had turned the tide to their favor again. From the beginning it had seemed to their enemies as if the Wolves had stepped right into their trap, however that was not exactly the case. They had led the Thousand Sons to believe that their trap had worked and now were striking back hard and accurately with the frosty hate of their Fenrisian warrior blood.

Ragnar had proven himself as master tactician again. But none of the Vlka Fenryka dared to think themselves safe yet, they knew their enemies too well.

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The reinforcements hit like bombs exploding the surface and the claws of Russ turned the ruins of Tavia into rubble. In the meantime Ragnar and his guard together with two packs of Blood Claws - Hostors Spears and Maegars Pack - had managed to advance to the area with the strange crystal, presumably holding the sleeping Primarch's daughter.

"Over there! We're almost there!" Lars shouted while they pressed onwards, getting in the vicinity of the crystal.

With every step and every second their enemies' resistance grew. In the meantime they sometimes got a glance at the person trapped inside of the crystal. But they couldn't let themselves become distracted, even if they had to admit that the sleeping beauty fascinated them more than just a bit.

A young woman with long, white hair and a strange MKII armor inscribed with Fenrisian Runes once crafted by Russ himself for her. They knew her face from dozens of paintings, pictis and records and she looked exactly like Aska Kjelu Russ, daughter of the Wolf King and Princess of Fenris.

A relic.

Now, whether it was really her or not could be found out in short time with a simply genetic test. The hope and tension in their pack grew with every step. Right before the square they took cover behind a crumbling wall which probably at some time was part of a building. They could hear the traitors whispering about having problems getting the crystal open.

One of them said loud and clear in a voice like gravel, "Our master would reward us generously if we brought him the Daughter of Russ. She would endure endless torment and give the master great pleasure; how sweet her screams would be, a symphony of terror." Every Son of Russ would much rather die than let Aska fall into the hands of a God of Chaos.

The very thought of it unleashed a furious hatred in them. They snarled, clenched their fists and roared their defiance at the traitors. More drop pods rained from the sky, striking right next to the crystal and Thunderhawks skimmed over their position. Now they had to keep the area from traitors so they could finish their mission. Roaring cries of battle they charged from their cover and cleared the surroundings of those disgusting creatures. Traitor souls escaped dozens of empty armors which the servants of Tzeentch were made of.

Their chainswords cut through renegade flesh and cultists, splitting them in half and drenching the ground in blood blacker than their spirits. Ragnar's grudge against the Thousand Sons still wasn't forgotten and deep-rooted hatred rose within him. When he had managed to banish the daemon Primarch back then he had also lost an important relic. This personal defeat bothered him and the thought of retribution brought him to anger-driven, frenzied peak performance. Frostfang, the legendary blade of the young Wolflord was elevated to one of the deadliest weapons of the

universe and every young Wolf in his vicinity was inspired to greater and greater efforts in order to impress their Jarl and to execute any traitor who dared to stand in their way in the name of the Allfather. A broad, mocking grin spread in his face as he thought about taking yet more traitors apart with his singing blade.

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"Aye, get the Thunderhawks here! Place the charges!" Lars bellowed as they reached their position, banging his fist against the crystal.

As always the young Blood Claw was frantic and aggressive.

They were tense since this serious situation seemed to be almost an adventure for some of the whelps.

Hostor, their pack leader, reprimanded him with a stern look. Olvec looked over to Hostor with a slight grin, then turned his attention to their young Lord, "My Jarl, I have to voice my concerns. To be honest I'm still not quite convinced we should blow the crystal free. The risk of hurting her is way too high!"

"I don't think so," Ragnar replied. "You see that sphere around her? I bet there's some kind of air cavern, a shell supposed to protect her. At least I think so and the scan has shown the same results. If nothing else at least we can transport the crystal away but first we have to detach it and it seems it's grown together with the earth."

"And what if not? I don't think any of us wants to be responsible for hurting the daughter of Russ..." Ragnar nodded, eyeing the crystal and pondering their situation. Seeing as their situation got worse by the minute a decision had to be made fast and it was his responsibility as Wolf Lord to consider all the avenues and decide what would be the best approach. He opted to use smaller explosives, so the risk of harming Aska would be minimized.

"Understood," Olvec nodded and gave the order to start with the preparations.

"If I'm wrong I'll have to bear the consequences. And we still have Plan B, remember?" he laughed and showed his fangs; he was confident. From everywhere in the ruins they got reports of areas being secured and the casualties it had cost them. For now, the enemy was held at bay and it was important it stayed that way so they had enough time to deal with the crystal. "When we get her free start the analysis at once."

"AYE!" After a short discussion small bombs were placed at strategic places and primed. The small charges detonated and the crystal started to crumble. They had to repeat this process numerous times, reducing the risk of harming the prisoner to a minimum.

Piece by piece, the crystal started to deteriorate. It was impressive how sturdy this thing was. Chaos followers constantly pressed on their position but their line of hastily erected defense fortifications held them at bay. Ragnar with his guard and the accompanying Blood Claw troops dealt with the enemies pressing on their position while Ullur and Rolf from Hostors pack were busy attaching a long steel chain to the crystal and the Thunderhawks.

Via com-net Ragnar gave the order to start the Thunderhawks. Roaring their turbines to life, the ceramite-armored behemoths lifted from the ground. With a grinding sound the chain tensed under the tremendous power of the thundering thrusters.

The heretics panicked as they realized what the Wolves had planned and started unleashing a barrage of fire on one of the Thunderhawks. Projectiles of varying calibers drummed on the armor plates, chipping off huge pieces of ceramite. In turn now the Wolves started firing into the lines of the heretics and the turrets of the Thunderhawks turned to bombard their enemies with heavy bolter projectiles.

Suddenly a ground-to-air missile launched from within the horde, then a second and only a moment later one of the Thunderhawks was churned by two heavy explosions. The first boomed throughout the whole ship and made the heavy fuselage lurch through the air, the second ripped a huge hole in the side and one of the wings off. The right turbine detached from the hull and took off, crashing with a thunder into the heretic lines while the rest of the aircraft went into a spin towards the ground.

"Shit, they're going down!" Lars shouted.

Ragnar raced into their enemies cover, hacking Frostfang through his enemies' heads and bodies. They had no chance against him but there was a huge explosion as the Thunderhawk crashed into the land. The ground trembled beneath their feet and the pressure wave hurled huge amounts of dust and haze skywards, toppling the crystal which exploded into thousands of pieces. The dust cloud obscured their view of the field for a long time.

They could hardly see anything of the square anymore and thus had to wait until the cloud had settled again. Hoping Aska was okay, they intently peered into the cloud. Had they damaged the crystal irreparably and killed Aska? Or was it still intact and only the outer shell broken so they still had to execute their backup plan and transport it into orbit? Ragnar readied himself since it seemed to be much more difficult to get Aska out of this mess. Slowly the dust settled and they finally could see something from the battlefield. The outlines showed the crystal shattered into pieces. Behind the dust they gradually could catch sight of the outline of a young woman... Every passing second they could make out more details. In that moment the eyes of the enemy and the Wolves were just directed at the young figure and the heat of the battle seemed to stand still.

The gaze of the Wolf Lord wandered over Aska. Aska was truly a sight for sore eyes. Tall and slender, truly a splendor beyond what any Saga had described her as. There was a small, tiny moment of complete silence.

Both Wolves and traitors were mesmerized for a short time. The battle came to a halt as if only her will and her presence provoked the worst resentment in the bodies of their enemies. Tall and proud the young daughter of Russ stood, hands folded for a soft and quick prayer to the Allfather.

When she opened her eyes a few seconds later it was as if you looked into the wolf-eyes of the Primarch himself.

Infinite hate for the enemy mixed with hope and joy as she saw her brothers....