

**THE  
LAST  
PRIESTESS**



**SASHA ZARYA NEXUS**

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# The Last Priestess

By [Sasha Zarya Nexus](#)

A fan fiction sequel to Jonathan Betuel's

*The Last Starfighter*

And Universal Studio's 1984 Movie

Jeff Rogan was a boy whose life seemed to be going nowhere fast. He loved escaping from life into acting roles both for the stage and in games. His hopes were upon an application to a boarding thespian high school to escape to the promise of the life as an actor that he dreamed about. But the gift of a new VR game from his mother changed his life in ways that he could have never imagined becoming "The Last Priestess".

Greetings Priestess,

"You have been recruited by the Star League to defend Rylos and the Goddess Xanthia's temple against Xur, his Xurian cult, and his Zandozans."

That's how the new VR game Priestess that Jeff Rogan, received from his mother Eve, starts out. Eve is a struggling single mother who is juggling a catering business, that only employs women, as enshrined on her business plan. Jeff is a skilled actor, sure footed in high heels, and has thrived in playing female parts. Eve often has to employ Jeff, in the guise of her daughter Linda, to fill in as server so often that Jeff is beginning to wonder who is real, Linda or Jeff. Anyway, Jeff or Linda is really getting into Priestess, the VR game, which is made for female players only, complete with female costume, which must be worn in order to get the full immersion in play.

The following story is not intended as a copyright infringement to Jonathan Bethel and Universal Studio's "The Last Starfighter" but is only presented as a free tribute to the skills of all who brought that movie magic to the silver screen. I'm only borrowing their characters and situations in order to tell this fan fiction sequel which I envisioned. The new characters and situations that I have invented herein are my own and I retain all rights to their not-for-profit presentation.

## Chapter 1 - The New Game

Earth - Denver, CO - The Present

Jeff was thrilled when he found the new game initially on his new PC as a demonstration of the new VR games which were made possible by operating his PC and Xbox in tandem. The VR glasses had been refined so that they were very much like a very expensive pair of sunglasses and the VR gloves felt just like very expensive gloves. The main difference over previous incarnations is that the frames of the VR glasses had sensors which could pick up his brainwaves and even feedback to them to make the whole VR experience seem so much more real.

“So Jeff, tell me about this setup, this VR arena?”

“Tony, it’s just that you have to have the motion sensors and sound system for the Xbox set up according to the specifications so that you get the full VR experience,”

“So, you interact with the game with the gloves and your emotions and see the world thru the glasses and hear it thru the speakers. Doesn’t that kind of limit you?”

“Well, you just walk or run in place obviously since our space here is limited. The deluxe version has a treadmill which elevates or declines to give more realism. I imagine I’ll only get to play it if I master the standard version to get into a ‘Priestess’ tournament.”

"I guess it will be worth it to play a female character just to get a chance at playing in an actual simulator tournament with all the fame and big prize money. I wonder if it will be on Twitch?"

"Only if they work out the bugs with broadcasting in VR with the Xbox in tandem."

"Yeah, It is kinda strange to see your screen dark with all the visual input going to the glasses."

"That's part of the gimmick of the game is that to even observe it you have to be in the VR environment as well. Hey, what's that you are putting around your neck? It looks like the neckband from the priestess costume on the box?"

"It's a voice changer which is used to emulate the magical effects for everyone and for guys also gets them sounding like girls in the game."

"Well, they did a good job of designing the gear so that it looks like the costume the priestess is wearing on the box illustration. You have to wear those ballet slippers too?"

"They are the analog to the gloves, and they have sensory feedback too so you can feel the ground you are walking on. I hear that they have even more sensors in the deluxe version built into the costume that you have to wear to play it."

"So do you have another set of gear so I can at least observe too?"

"Yeah, they were running a special, so you got 2 sets of gear if you were a PC beta tester."

“Which you were. So, if you are the priestess, who do I get to play?”

“You get to play my escort, while you are magic null, you have all kinds of martial arts abilities which play out as though you were a graceful ballerina.”

“You mean I have to play a girl too? Aren’t there any boys in this game?”

“Sure, but they are the NPC villains. They promise a PVP version later so that you could play a villain, but this version only has female characters since they all live in a women’s only temple.”

“Okay, suit me up, Jarvis. Just kidding, I see the other set now that you have moved your jacket.”

“While you are getting ready, I’ll run the game acclimation routine for me and when you are ready, then I’ll do the same for you. And don’t get freaked if I submerge myself into the part. With this game, it’s easy to imagine that you’re really a girl.”

Tony watched in amazement while still remembering to put on his gear. Jeff’s posture and demeanor and the way that he moved looked just like a girl. The incongruity was the outward appearance was still Jeff. The freaky thing is that with the voice changer whatever he spoke came out in a girl’s voice. Ted could tell when the routine was over since Jeff started reacting to the real world again even though he was in sync with the game. He was a bit weirded out that Jeff still sounded and acted like a girl.

“Am I going to act like that too? Like a girl?”



"It depends on how much you are able to get into the game. The plus side is that the more you can get into the game, the better that you will be able to perform in the game. I'm not forcing myself to act in a certain way, it just seems natural to act like this in interacting with the game. Are you ready to get synced with the game.?"

"Just a sec. Let me power everything up."

Tony pressed spots on the devices, and they all began to work including the voice changer around his neck changing his voice to that of a girl's.

"Wow it is freaky to hear me sound like a girl. Guess everything is working. Put me in, Coach! I'm ready to play!"

"Here goes nothing!"

Tony looked over and saw Jeff in the priestess costume and instead of the room around, they were standing in the splash screen of a video game. There were words displayed in front of Tony directing him to do certain things while the game was trying to latch the inputs so that there would be a seamless interaction between Tony and the VR simulation. Finally, the words in front of Tony stated, "Player 2 Synced" The game moved into its startup configuration with words between them to guide them into the actual gameplay.

"Player 1 select name"

Jeff with his hand pulled letters from a queue to spell Linda

"Player 2 select name"

Tony tried to input, "Anthony" but the game rejected it. Tony understood what to do in order to do the input but had not realized that he would need to pick a girl's name too.

"I'm going to be Linda in the game. Who are you going to be? No one I know has been able to input a boy's name and a lot have tried."

"What kind of game maker has gone to so much trouble to make sure you use a girl's name? The AI in this must really be impressive."

"Centari. It's a game maker which specialized in the original stand-alone arcade games. When the arcades lost their massive appeal, they kind of disappeared so this game is their first in a while."

"I've heard of them. Aren't they the company that came up with that rad game 'Starfighter'?"

"Yes, Now quit stalling and pick a girl's name already or I'll kick you out and go without you."

"Okay, Okay! I'll be Toni, just so I can remember to answer to it, but I'll input Antonia."

Tony input the name and Antonia and the game accepted it. The game started the intro in speech as well as spelling it out in the space before them.

"Greetings Priestess Linda. Greetings Protector Toni. You have been recruited by the Star League to defend Rylos and the Goddess Xanthia's temple against Xur, his Xurian cult, and his Zandozans."

“Prepare for teleport.”

The splash screen faded from view and was replaced by a vista so realistic to both of them, yet they knew it could not be real since instead of on earth they were on an alien planet. Unfolded before them was a shine to the Goddess Xanthia in a small town a good way away from the capital of Rylos where Xanthia’s temple stood.

“Grab, your sword and prepare for combat, Toni. I’ll start summoning fireballs.”

Toni did just that and assumed a very sleek and feminine ready stance. Linda incanted to start the fireball summoning and one appeared controlled by the palm of each hand.

“Prepare for target light practice.”

Linda was quite accomplished in obliterating the target lights surrounding her. Toni experimented with her own ability to use her athletics, martial arts and her sword to obliterate the target lights around her. As Toni and Linda acted with more skill, the difficulty accelerated. Fortunately, even though Toni was a novice player, they both survived the target light wave.

“Linda! I’m sorry honey, but I need you to help with the Lawson catering job.”

“Okay, Maw! I’ll be right there after I say goodbye to Toni”

Linda summoned the game menu with a particular flick of her hand. Gone was Rylos and the shrine to be replaced by the game room in the real world. The gear came off each boy as they both adjusted from the athletic adrenaline rush that the game combat had given both of them as well as both need to catch their breath after all the activity.

“Sorry about that Tony. Duty calls. Thanks for helping me try out the new game. You were getting good.”

“Once I quit freaking about being a girl in the game, I relaxed and a lot of it came very naturally to me. Thanks for inviting me. You have to go with your mother?”

“Yeah, being a child of an unwed teen mother, we’ve had to have each other’s backs. The game upgrade is way worth it, don’t you think?”

“It is really rad. See you later, Jeff. Bye Ms. Rogan!”

The door closed behind Tony and then Jeff looked at his mother suspiciously when she held out the voice changer to him.

“Oh No! You didn’t know we were in the game when you called me Linda. You need me to be Linda again for the catering gig!”

“It’s just for tonight sweetheart. One of my waitresses called in sick at the last minute. It’s not that bad and you’ll see Joyce all evening too since I called her in to help as well.”

“And now with the voice changer, I won’t have to pretend to have laryngitis. Okay, Mom, I’ll do it. The mother-daughter act rides again. ”

“Thanks, Linda. You know the routine. Go get ready and meet me down here in an hour.”

Jeff took the voice changer and put it back on before Linda answered.

“Only an hour! Mother! I’ll do the best I can. ”

“That’s all I can ask, Linda. Thank you!”

This was not the first time that Jeff had to become Linda to help with a catering gig. Part of what made them unique was that they always entertained with food and service from an earlier time with the glamor of the first stewardesses, so all of her wait staff were in uniform as cocktail waitresses. Jeff’s puberty had not manifested yet so that Linda made a very attractive waitress. At times he wondered what his mother would do if he began to get manly and hairy like all the other boys in his class including Tony. That would not happen since Jeff took hormone blockers every day and went to a gender counselor to put puberty on hold till he could decide if Linda was going to be a permanent part of his life.

Linda surprised herself by getting ready with fifteen minutes to spare so she was able to help her mother who had also changed into her waitress uniform to load the last of the perishables into the catering van.

“I am so lucky to have such a beautiful and caring part-time daughter. Thank you again for doing this, especially on such short notice. I’ll make it up to you, I promise. ”

“I want to help, Mother. I just never imagined it would be like this.”

"You know Linda, you are getting so much better at this. I haven't had to correct you once this time."

"I guess I'm just getting into the role just like I do in the game. It's just another part that I play."

"Have you heard about admission to that boarding Thespian High School that you applied to?"

"Not yet. Are you sure that we will be able to afford the tuition when I get in?"

"Of course. That is why we are working so hard, besides keeping the business together for all the other people we employ. I'm going to miss you but I agree that it's the best fit for your education so you can have the life that you have dreamed about."

"Thanks! Oh, here's Joyce now with the other girls. Guess we have to unload and get prepped for the gig."

"Hi Girls. Thanks for you all working to make this a success for our guests. First we'll unload the van then I'll brief you all on tonight's festivities."

One of the catering carts came off the truck's ramp as Joyce and Linda pushed it into the kitchen of the banquet hall where the event was occurring.

"I see that we were a girl short again tonight, Linda. How do you feel about that?"

"I take it as just another acting role, I have a fertile imagination and I just get into the part."

"You are a great actress, Linda for certain. I'm glad that we don't have to use the laryngitis ploy again since you sound so yummy."

"Well, it's only partially the device since I have to choose the right words to say and inflection to use when saying them. I really can do as well now speaking without the voice changer, but it is just one more aspect of the costume to get into the part of being Linda."

"Well, you are such a dear to help your mother out in a pinch. Tell me about this new game that has taken up so much of your time lately."

"Sorry about that. Perhaps it's something that we could do together. You see it's not a usual first-person shooter game. I feel like you might even like it."

"We tried that before with us playing a couple of muscle-bound guys and I really could not identify too much with it."

"This one is different since we would be playing a couple of girls."

"Now you have my interest. I know that you had invited Tony over to play as you do weekly. What did he think about playing a girl?"

"He wasn't too thrilled about it. He did alright in the game once he surrendered to the inevitable and he was curious about the system. I think maybe he'll wait for the next game that comes out which is directed more to the traditional male gamer audience. I have a good feeling about me doing well enough to be invited to the prize tournament they announced. Would you like to try it and help me get there?"

“Sure Linda. Since this is a VR game, I might have an idea or two about how you might do better in the game once you max out your skill playing the way that you normally do.”

“Anything to get an edge in the game. Thanks, Joyce.”

The entire evening was a blast since the entertainment besides our part with the food and serving was top notch. We always pooled our tips and split them but there was always a little bit of competition between us. The other girls had complimented me on the exceptional way that I had served this evening, but I was a little unprepared for what came next after the event was over and everything was cleaned up and loaded back onto the catering truck.

“Now it’s time to announce who won the tips competition and the right to wear the tiara till out next job. The winner is Linda! All of you are winners since everyone had lots of tips and you each take home an equal share. Linda, come up and get your Tiara and your check!”

To a lot of cheers, I joined Mother in the front of the room where she placed the tiara on my head and handed me my check for the night. I smiled and showed the others the amount on the check which they would also get the same amount as well. The rest of the girls got their checks and finally, it was just me, Joyce, and Mother.

“Congrats Linda on a wonderful performance tonight. The charity fundraiser set a record which our contribution helped as well. A success for all.”



"I agree, Eve, and I and the rest of the girls appreciate the nice checks that you gave us as well. So, Linda, when am I going to get to try out this new game of yours?"

"Tomorrow if you like, except not too early. I feel like after a night like tonight, I've earned the right to sleep in."

"Of course, your grace, and will you be having breakfast in bed as well."

"Cut it out. Okay, I won't sleep in. Have you got a day planned already?"

"You won't believe what I've got planned and I know you'll have a blast, Linda"

"That's what I'm afraid of. Well, see you tomorrow, Joyce."

"Bye, Eve! Bye, Linda! Tomorrow is only a day away! G'night"

## Chapter 2 - Starfighter Legion

Rylos - The Present

“We are gathered together here as we did thirty years ago to celebrate the singular accomplishment of Centari, Starfighter Rogan and Star navigator Grigg as they repelled the invasion of Xur and the Kodan Armada thru the break they caused in the frontier. Thirty years ago, at that celebration Rogan, Grigg and Centari pledged to take on the task of rebuilding the Star Fighter Legion. They have made good on that pledge and even more during that time. Not only has Earth matured and became a formal member of the Star League but following the dissolution of the Kodan Empire a rescue mission that Legion Commander Rogan led to the Kodan home world which also became a formal member of the Star League. He also deployed the rebuilt frontier around the new boundaries of the Star League. And now please welcome Star League Star Fighter Legion Commander Alex Rogan.”

A tremendous applause erupted as not only Alex joined the speaker on the platform with his wife Star Navigator Margaret "Maggie" Rogan, also Star Fighter Lewis Rogan with Star Navigator Feli Grigg, also Star Fighter Trevor Rogan (Alex and Maggie's Son) with Star Navigator Grigg, and of course Centari, and his daughter Sega Centari.

"I count it a special privilege to come before you all this day as part of the crew of Gun Star One with my wife Maggie with my wingmen Star Fighter Lewis and Star Navigator Feli, plus my wife's and my son Star Fighter Trevor and Star Navigator Grigg. Of course, none of this would be possible without the efforts of Centari even though even I have not seen much of him recently working on some kind of project. The Star Fighter Legion has been replenished and the Star League revitalized with vital additions. We have turned old enemies into dear friends. Yet Xur has evaded us having changed his tactics to something we have yet to discover. The Star Fighter Legion stays ever vigilant so that Xur, his Xurian cult, and his Zandozans, be put a stop to once and for all."

All of them took a bow as applause thundered all thru the capital of Rylos. Finally, the pomp and circumstance was over and the friends who had come together for the occasion finally had time to relax and talk.

"Ambassador, I wish that I would have had something more definite to say about Xur but as you know, he has evaded every attempt for us to get a lead on his location."

"He has changed tactics away from the military action, so we have no way of knowing if he's just cowardly hiding or if he has a master plan in development."

"We won't give up looking for him. I won't feel like the matter is concluded until Xur has been captured or we have confirmation of his death, Ambassador."

"That's encouraging Rogans, Griggs, and Centari's. Once again, I leave it in your hands."

With the departure of the Ambassador, and by Alex's signal the rest of the group who were at attention relaxed.

"I'm just glad that is over. Grigg, how is young Trevor doing?"

"He's a born Starfighter just like his Dad and Uncle."

"Thank you for taking on the assignment and keeping him out of trouble just like you taught me and taught Lewis. Lewis, how is it working out between you and Grigg's son Feli?"

"He's a Grigg alright and I feel really fortunate to have him with me in my Gunstar. So what about the rumors that the Xurian cult is planning something? Do we have a target?"

"The Xurian cult has laid low ever since they lost so many of their number in response to Xur's request that they provide an escort to the Kodan Armada to Rylos. I eliminated that threat while I was indeed the Last Star Fighter."

"So we don't have any clue why the Goddess Xanthia has not accepted any more into her service as Priestesses? There are many girls on Rylos who have the gift, yet she has not replaced those in her service who have died. The reasons for their deaths are still for unknown reasons but appear to be from natural causes."

"That's still a mystery that we are no closer to solving. And have you heard of the prophecy?"

"Alex, Ryla mentioned it to me since it was officially revealed on her class trip to the temple. It was prophesized that Xanthia is looking away from Rylan girls. It seems that she is destined to choose someone from the Star League but not from Rylos. The most cryptic part is that it would be 'The last person anyone would expect'. The Priestesses are having a tough time trying to make sense of that last phrase since the verb tenses and gender agreement are all twisted up in the Ancient Rylan phrase that none of them really are comfortable translating in the first place."

"Xanthia has become more and more cryptic ever since I've been on Rylos full time. Let's hope that she accepts this person she has her eyes on before long and continues taking priestess and protectors into her service. The number of priestesses left steadily decreasing has me worried. Has our daughter, Ryla, said anything about what role she wants to take in Rylan society when she comes of age? Her testing has revealed that she has an abundance of gifts so she must decide which one she will embrace and develop to reach her full potential.

"Ryla hasn't decided yet. She may wait until she reaches majority before committing to her path. She tells me that she feels that she will be called to her future life and that she'll know later what that life will be."

"Speaking of cryptic, what have you been doing with yourself, Centari. I hear that Starfighter 10 has been well received. It certainly has been very helpful in keeping up the numbers of the Starfighter Legion to whatever number that Alex feels is needed at any time."

"Actually I have been developing a new game, which was Sega's idea and she is the project manager. You know me, I am always proactive particularly when there is money to be made in a new market. But I still am paying attention to my commitment to help recruit those who have the gift from all over the Star League."

"That's right Daddy! This one even has Xanthia's blessing, so it has to be a money maker. It's called 'Priestess'"

"Well, I for one am glad that this celebration at least gave us a chance for a reunion one more time. However, it's now time for us each to go our separate ways to do their duty for the Star League."

With that the group broke up and went their separate ways in pairs except for the mysterious Centari who had seemed to have already left before Alex dismissed the group.

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Earth - Denver, CO - The Present

"So, Joyce, what is the big surprise that you wanted to get together so early today to reveal to me?"

"Just this Jeff. I know what you said about pinning your hopes on winning the Priestess Tournament. So I have a gift for you in this garment bag."

"Thank you Joyce. Let me remove it from the bag and see what you've gotten for me."

I opened it up to reveal a priestess costume. But it wasn't a replica. It was an official costume with all of the sensory net that interfaces with the game to provide an even better simulation in VR. It cost a small fortune and one of the perks of getting an invite to the tournament was to gain one of these to use in the tournament. While I was blown away by this, I noticed that there was a new companion to the headset included which was labeled xenon mist glance down lenses.

"I can't believe this. Thank you so much Joyce. However, did you manage it?"

"My daddy works for the company which makes them for Centari. I told him that you wanted to practice for the tournament with me and he provided a priestess uniform for you and a protector uniform for me. I won't be able to participate in the tournament with you since I'm a family member of a subsidiary worker, but practicing is permitted. "

"Well the tournament doesn't team anyway so as long as I survive, I'll be matched with a top protector who also survived. What is with these contact lenses? Xenon mist?"

"It has a special link to you when you have a female mindset. It provides all the RPG stats that you don't want to clutter your heads-up display.

"That's wild! You mean that if I relax my fears and let Linda out, even if I am not dressed as a female, that they will work?"

"Correct! You know you gotta try this Linda!"

I smiled at Joyce and nodded yes to her while removing the lenses from their case and inserting them in my eyes. I noticed that Joyce did the same with her set of lenses too. I glanced down and the RPG read-out was visible. Then I looked up to Joyce and the Info went away.

"Joyce, Where did it go?"

"It's still there suspended in the xenon mist, but it is only visible while you are glancing down. The same way your new HUD disappears while you are not looking straight ahead. Can you see your character stats?"

"I'm glancing down now and the stats are back but they are for me as Linda outside the game. "

"It's interesting that it distinguishes between your priestess character and your real self"

"It recognizes me as Linda without all the exterior aspects. That's totally wicked!"

'i had a vibe you were female when I first met you. When you let out Linda, you are your truest self."



"I just need to at least put on the priestess tiara in order to get my in-game stats. You should put on your belt with the same oval space as the center of my tiara. Oh wow! No wonder there is a separate screen for them. It's a grid with three columns and three rows with three stats in each cell. Above this are the words Key, Priestess, Protector, Target, Inventory, Skills, and Edit with Priestess highlighted now. It has the same status line displayed as is at the Bottom of the HUD. I'll look at the key and highlight it too and see what happens. Oh, it expands the abbreviations but some of the cells are empty with the full cells left justified. I'll call out my stats while you get ready in Protector mode."

Name: Linda    Class: Cleric    Bond: None  
Sex: Female    Race: Human    Primary: Priestess  
Age: 18        Planet: Earth    Secondary: None

Strength: 5        Intelligence: 6    Dexterity: 4  
Constitution: 5    Wisdom: 6        Stealth: 4  
Accuracy: 5        Charisma: 6       Hypnosis: 4

Majick: 5

Spellcraft: 1

Loyalty: 6

Maximum Mana: 5

Current Mana: 5

Restore Mana: 1

Maximum Health: 6    Healing: 1  
Current Health: 6    Number Heals:1  
Restore Health: 1    HealingCraft: 1

"That is totally cool, Linda! If you highlight Protector and Key you can see my stats just like I can see yours"

I did as she asked, and my stats disappear and hers came up. I read them to myself silently.

Name: Joyce    Class: Cleric    Bond: None  
Sex: Female    Race: Human    Primary: Protector  
Age: 18    Planet: Earth    Secondary: None

Strength: 6    Intelligence: 5    Dexterity: 4  
Constitution: 6    Wisdom: 5    Stealth: 4  
Accuracy:6    Charisma: 5    Hypnosis: 4

Psionics: 5

Psicraft:1

Protect: 6

Maximum PsiEnergy: 5

Current PsiEnergy: 5

Restore PsiEnergy:1

Maximum Health: 6

Current Health: 6

Restore Health: 1

Your stats are totally great too for a fighter. I love that you have PSI abilities like a Jedi Knight. What else do you have in mind?"

"If you really want to win, you ought to be Linda from now till you find out if you qualified for the tournament. And after we've practiced for a while to give you some incentive, I'll take you shopping so you can get enough clothes for you to be Linda for the rest of the summer if you agree with me."

"That sounds like a plan. I guess I should get changed and you should get changed too."

"For you to get a good fit you should use the foundation garments and prosthesis that your mother got for you when you are Linda for her at work."

"I agree. This should be fun. Meet you back here as soon as I can get ready."

I got ready just like I would have to be Linda for Mom and then instead of the waitress costume, I put on the Priestess costume that Joyce had provided for me. I couldn't wait to power everything up now that I had the entire personal equipment so that I could get used to the additional input plus everything feeling congruent with the image that I had in the VR environment. I also could not wait to see how Joyce would look in her protector costume. I made my way back to the game room where Joyce was waiting for me, looking beautiful and content.

"You look wonderful, Joyce. What do you think of me?"

"It's clear that Linda is back and I'm glad that I get to spend the day with you."

"I was right about putting on the tiara changing the stats to Priestess. What triggered you getting your Protector stats?"

"I got them when I put on my protector belt of strength. Shall we start?"

"I guess we can both sync together since I don't have to worry about you freaking on playing a girl in the game. Just input your name when it asks and then we'll start."

We powered up all the things we were wearing, and the game synced up us as players with the game. We each entered our names in the VR environment and then the game started. We got past the target lights stage of the game and were able to move into the shrine. We discovered that a battle was in progress. Disguised Xurian cultists in priestess and protector uniforms were taking out the real priestesses and protectors.

"How are we supposed to know who to fight, Linda? They appear to know friend from foe but they all look the same to me."

"They look the same to me also, Joyce. We look the part but we are not in Xanthia's service as initiates yet. We need to get the initiate's mark at the altar. Hopefully, we'll be able to tell friend from foe afterward."

We fought our way to the altar and kneeled before it. There wasn't a priestess attending it but we were greeted by a voice anyway.

"Blessed be those who come from Rylos and all the worlds beyond it to enter into the service of Xanthia as initiates. Receive the mark of Xanthia and her blessing."

I felt empowered as I took on the initiate's mark and I saw Joyce react the same as I did as her initiate's mark appeared as well. Fortunately, we both found we were able to distinguish the imposters after taking the initiate's mark of the Goddess at her alter in the shrine.

"You each have only started on your journey and as you master your gifts return to Xanthia's alter for a renewed blessing. Your talents and service will grow as it pleases Xanthia to teach you what you have need of in order to fulfill your full potential. Go serve Xanthia as her will is revealed to you."

Before either of us could speak, we were in the middle of a firefight as we defended the alter from the onslaught of the Xurian Cult. We cleared the room of all the Xurian cultists. Then I was able to transfer the Goddess Blessing to the room door portals so that no more of the Cultist could enter. We collected ourselves quickly and sought guidance for the next step.

"Linda, I feel so much more powerful now that we've received the Goddess blessing than when we were practicing the target lights. Can you picture the shrine layout in your mind too? I can sense where the Xurian cultists are making their assault."

"Joyce, I see the map in my mind as well. Let's go help our sisters. For Xanthia!"

It was hard work clearing the shine room by room of the Xurian Cultists. We joined the other teams who also were in the Goddess service. While the other teams were involved in the same task on repelling the Xurians, there was no communication and therefore no real cooperation. If we worked together the whole would be greater than the individuals.

"Joyce, are you up to opening us up to the MMORPG environment. We've been playing in standalone mode but each of those teams could be guided by actual people that we could talk and plan with if you are game?"

"But no PVP? none of the enemies would be guided by a person?"

"No PVP. The enemies are still NPC's in the MMORPG version."

"Sure. Go for it!"

I went into the game menu and turned on the MMORPG and enabled the player-to-player communication. For those of us in the service to Xanthia, it meant that we could communicate telepathically for combat and the Xurian Cultists could not overhear us planning. Immediately I sent out a welcome to reach out to the nearest pair.

"I'm priestess initiate Linda paired with protector initiate Joyce in service to Xanthia."

"Greetings sisters. Please fight beside us and we will clear this room of the Xurian scum."

We learned by doing and by cooperating we soon cleared the room and set the seal upon it so no more Xurians could retake it. As we entered the next room, we gained another team and finished that one so much more quickly. Finally, all the rooms of the Shrine and the grounds around it were cleared of Xurians. Many of their dead bodies were disposed of by Xanthia, while other Xurians fled into the surrounding countryside. Victory was Xanthia's!"

"My daughters attend me at my alter!"

"So when we took the mark, it was Xanthia herself who spoke to us. Amazing! We best not keep her waiting"

All of the priestess and protectors gathered in the alter chamber of the shrine. When the last of us had entered Xanthia spoke to us.

"Well done, my daughters. You must keep this shrine open for those who I shall call to join us. However, my last two daughters, Linda and Joyce, I have need of you to go to the shrine at Avron to aid the sisterhood there. Go now Linda and Joyce, in my great esteem."

All of them gathered saluted us in the secret way of the daughters of Xanthia as we took our leave of them and the shrine and started on the road to Avron. Once we were out of sight of the shrine, Joyce stopped and turned to me.

"Are you getting these status messages:

Xanthia grants you +1 to all level's stats for entering her service

Xanthia grants you +1 to Level 2 stats for our victory"

"Yes! Let me pull up our stats."

Name: Linda    Class: Cleric    Bond: Xanthia  
Sex: Female    Race: Human    Primary: Priestess  
Age: 18        Planet: Earth    Secondary: None

Strength: 7        Intelligence: 8    Dexterity: 6  
Constitution: 7    Wisdom: 8        Stealth: 6  
Accuracy: 7        Charisma: 8       Hypnosis: 6

Majick: 6

Spellcraft: 2

Loyalty: 7

Maximum Mana: 6

Current Mana: 6

Restore Mana: 2

Maximum Health: 7    Healing: 2

Current Health: 7    Number Heals: 2

Restore Health: 2    HealingCraft: 2

I pulled up her stats and I read them also.

Name: Joyce    Class: Cleric    Bond: Xanthia  
Sex: Female    Race: Human    Primary: Protector  
Age: 18        Planet: Earth    Secondary: None



Strength: 8      Intelligence: 7      Dexterity: 6

Constitution: 8      Wisdom: 7      Stealth: 6

Accuracy: 8      Charisma: 7      Hypnosis: 6

Psionics: 6

Psicraft: 2

Protect: 8

Maximum PsiEnergy: 6

Current PsiEnergy: 6

Restore PsiEnergy: 2

Maximum Health: 7

Current Health: 7

Restore Health: 2

"Do you feel like this is a good place to save the game?"

"Sure. What do you have in mind? Oh, wait. I'll get us out of this so we can converse out of the VR environment.

I brought up the game menu and saved the game and brought both of our characters out of the VR environment.

"Linda, I have one word for you, Shopping!"

## Chapter 3 - Starfighter Command

Rylos – Starfighter Command - The Present

"Ryla Rogan to Starfighter Command, Ryla Rogan to Starfighter Command. Please approve approach of Starcar 115"

"Starcar 115 you are approved for standard approach to Docking Bay 17. Please report to the Starfighter Commander's office upon disembarking."

"Understood Clearly, Starfighter Command" After taking care to switch off her transmitter, Ryla remarked to no one in particular, "Yeah, I'm in trouble now. Hopefully, I won't get in trouble for requisitioning the Starcar in Daddy's name once he's heard my news."

Ryla guided the Starcar with all the skill and finesse of a Star Navigator First Class just like her mother. She might get in trouble for other things but not for her skill in operating the Starcar. Soon the Starcar was transitioning from flight mode to land in the entry portal. Once down on the ground and rolling it was simple to drive the Starcar to its designated parking space at Docking Bay 17. Upon exiting the Starcar, Ryla was greeted by a very familiar face.

"Uncle Grigg!" She flung her arms around him and collected a hug. "What brings you to escort me to the principal's office?"

"Your mother suggested it. She also suggested that we take a detour so that your father will have a chance to cool down and actually listen to you."

"Thanks Uncle Grigg! I do have a good excuse for taking the Starcar, but what do you have to show me?"

"I'm working on a new prototype Gunstar. While Death Blossom had its uses when it's only one ship against many enemies, it's not too useful when there are other Gunstars which could be hit by friendly fire. This prototype has an advance which could actually be retrofitted to our existing Gunstar fleet."

"Wow, Uncle Grigg, that's wonderful. Thank you for trusting me with such an important update."

"You know that if you were to enlist as a Star Navigator, you could be on the engineering team with me on the prototype's development."

"I've dreamed about a chance like that, but the decision concerning my future has been made. I owe it to Daddy and Momma to let them know first. I hope that you will concur with the decision about my future when you hear the news, Uncle Grigg."

"Of course you must tell your parents first. I'm sure that they will see that what has been chosen is best for both you and for Rylos. Nevertheless, I know that you will appreciate what this prototype will mean to us, especially when we do not know where the threat of Xur will come from this time."

"I'm glad that we'll have a little fun together before I face the music with Daddy."

Uncle Grigg took me to the development bay apart from the rest of the Gunstars ready in the common hanger. It was here that Daddy's prototype Gunstar from when he was the Last Starfighter was kept safe when all the other Gunstars and their crews perished in Xur's attack. Grigg had me stand outside the Gunstar when he powered up its systems including the prototype device. Just like the Xenon mist that reflects the battle instruments for a pilot's HUD but vanishes when not looking head on. The Gunstar vanished. Not only could I not see it but I couldn't hear, feel, or smell it either.

Just as suddenly the Gunstar reappeared and I could sense it with my other senses as well.

"You can come aboard now and sit in the gunnery chair and experience what it is like first hand."

I went aboard and sat in the same place as my Daddy always sat, instead of the Engineer/Navigator seat, that I was used to in the simulator. Grigg powered up the Gunstar and initiated the cloaking device. Our instruments told us that externally no one was detecting us but we on the other hand were able to detect everything going on around us with both long and short-range sensors. Grigg quickly shut the device and everything returned to normal. Soon the Gunstar had shut down and was ready for the pair to disembark.

"Uncle Grigg, this is amazing. It's as if space was folded in a one-way pocket dimension around us. "

"All I'll say is that you are an excellent engineer, Ryla. The rest I leave as an exercise to the student even if your life is about to take another path."

"You are right as always, Uncle Grigg. One can never tell what bit of knowledge will serve Rylos in the future."

"Well, I'm afraid that we can't put off getting to your Father's office any longer. I'll escort you there."

I followed Grigg to the Starfighter Commander's office. As I hoped, Mother was also there.

"Grigg, thank you for seeing that Ryla didn't get lost on the way to my office. Please wait for us to conclude with Ryla so that you can see she gets safely to her next destination."

"Thank you, Uncle Grigg."

Grigg left after saluting after which Daddy got straight to the matter at hand even before letting Mother get in a word at all.

"Ryla, what do you have to say for yourself?"

"I was visited by Xanthia in our home and I am sure it was the Goddess herself since she gave me her mark without me traveling to her alter at either a shine or the great temple. She told me that she needed me to enter her service as a protector. I am to be the one paired with the priestess whom she has foreseen will enter her service and save Rylos from Xur and the Xurian cult. She told me that the Xurian cult has infiltrated the ranks of priestess and protectors. It is so that the Xurian cult's numbers do not grow any larger hidden in her service that she has stopped taking Rylans into her service. I must go immediately to where she has instructed me."

I showed my parents where I had received the mark of the Goddess Xanthia. They knew that my story was true. The tension concerning my taking the Starcar was dissipated. You could see the pride that they both had that I had been found worthy of such an important service to Rylos in my career. With my revelations, they also feared for my safety.

"Of course, you acted properly. Thank you for revealing the will of Xanthia to us. It makes sense that after choosing one way and allies to overcome Rylos and the Star League and failing that Xur has chosen another means of setting himself up as Emperor. At least we know how Xur will bring about his vengeance. This is not something that will be decided with technology and Gunstars but with avatars and supernatural means. The most we can do is aid at the beginning and at the end."

"My daughter, I always knew you would do great things when I gave birth to you. You did good, Ryla. Your father and I will see that you get safely to where the Goddess has directed. This world has brought many things to our family that we could never have guessed existed when we left Earth. I feared the unknown world outside the Star Light Star Bright Trailer Park where I grew up. We have adapted and thrived in meeting every challenge we have been presented. Ryla, you will meet the challenge for which Xanthia has selected you and you will thrive! "

"I agree with your mother that it is for the greatest good that we send you to meet your destiny. Remember that you are a Rogan and we Rogans have what it takes to meet life's challenges. Some challenges are just bigger than others. This is your chance. Like what Otis back home always said, '... when it's your time, grab it tight and hold on with both hands.' "

"Thank you, Mother. Thank you, Father. I value both your trust in me and also your help in getting to where Xanthia wishes me to be."

"Alex to Grigg. Please step into my office. I have a mission for you."

Grigg quickly entered and saluted Alex once the office door closed behind him.

"What is it, Alex?"

"Grigg, take the prototype and run cloaked to the destination that she'll give you. Ryla was called directly by Xanthia to be the protector for the priestess that the prophecy has foretold. Xanthia revealed to her that Xur and the Xurian cult has infiltrated Xanthia's priesthood and protector ship which is why she isn't admitting any more Rylans to her service."

"That's extraordinary! We'll leave immediately. Come, Ryla!"

And we left immediately onboard the cloaked prototype. Grigg told me that we were using the new Xur protocol that Daddy had started once he was placed in charge of Starfighter Command. With not knowing if Xur had been able to sneak in another spy, any important missions were kept secret to only the commander and the person or persons carrying them out. Just before boarding the Gunstar, I shook hands with a beta unit who would be taking my place in school while I was in Xanthia's service.

"Ryla, how are you finding things in the Gunnery chair? I see you have already activated your heads-up display."

"One of my options before Xanthia decide for me was to be a Starfighter. The gift does tend to run in my family. My father has it, my brother has it, and now I have it. I get why we needed to run cloaked and the cloak masking the fact when we took off. Won't they miss the prototype?"

"I activated a holographic image of the prototype before we left. That coupled with another of my griggings, Johan, subbing for me secretly with your brother on a mission should work to our advantage, theoretically."

"So theoretically they should not miss either of us or the prototype Gunstar. I like it. So, what is the designation for this Gunstar. I remember that with all the other Gunstars destroyed the prototype that you flew in with my father was Gunstar One which is still his ship's designation."

"This one is Gunstar X. I need our destination so I can lock our course into navigation. Ryla?"

"I'm inputting the coordinates now. It's for a point-to-point hop back on the far side of Rylos to Xanthia's Kerlogia shrine".

"Kerlogia Shrine course locked into navigation. Target lights, Ryla?"

"Target lights?"

"I thought you might like to squeeze off a few rounds to get the bugs out of the system, It is, after all, her maiden voyage."



"I thought the idea was not to give away our position."

"We won't. I'm increasing the range of the cloaking field around the ship so that neither the target lights nor our weapons fire won't be detected."

"You are nothing short of amazing Uncle Grigg. Target lights it is!"

It took me a moment to get used to the chair's actual rotation which was a little different from the simulator but after that I was taking out each target on the first shot. With our cloak engaged there was little danger we would have to go into actual combat on the way to my destination. I believe Uncle Grigg was just giving me a chance to have fun before I began facing whatever it was that Xanthia had in store for me.

It was a real treat for me to do something that my father had done. I was briefly experiencing what it would have been like had I chosen to follow in the family business. However, I was destined for another path, which Xanthia promised would be for the good of all Rylans.

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Earth – Present Day

"Linda, I need you to stay home until Rebecca's mother brings your sister, Julia, home from camp this morning. I must go out on a catering gig, otherwise I would take care of waiting for her to arrive back home and looking out after her afterwards. If you could include her on your shopping trip after she gets home, it would really help out."

"I'll do it, Ma. It will be good to see the squirt, I mean Julie, again. She gets along with me as Linda, very well so we three should have a great time out. I hope that everything goes well with the catering gig."

"Thanks, Linda. You're a life saver. "

Mom's request was not unexpected since I usually got stuck at home watching my sister when Mom had to work jobs that she was too young to go on. With me becoming Linda 24/7, it would make my life a whole lot simpler to include her now. She has been well disposed with me being Linda in the past. Hopefully Julie will be okay with having a full-time sister for a while. All that there was left for me was to inform Joyce of the change in plans, so I phoned her.

"Hi, Joyce. My little sister Julie is due back from camp today. Mom is out on a gig and she asked me to wait for her to arrive home. I thought that she might come along with us shopping. It might be a while before I'll be free to leave."

"Sure it will be fine for us to wait on Julie and for her to come along. I'll go ahead and come at the time we planned to meet anyway. We can do some online shopping and have some of our pre-selections waiting at the store for you to try on. By doing that we shouldn't lose any time and we can explore some options for you that we might have missed shopping the normal way.

Cool. There is a website I've been dying to try since I heard about it from Australia where you can be the designer of your very own designer shoes. They make up what you want and send it to you and if you don't like the actual results, they take them back no questions asked.

"Look who's caught the shopping bug. This may be more fun than even I thought. See you soon!"

"Well, since I need to be a girl for a while, I might as well be a stylish girl. Later Joyce!"

I pulled out my laptop and found the website my mother had told me about. I started looking at all the options of design elements and colors and my creative juices began flowing. By the time that Joyce arrived I had something to show her.

"What do you think of this pair of pumps that I designed, Joyce?"

"Are you sure you will actually get some use out of them, Linda?"

Of course. I'm a pro in heels. We all are who waitress for Mom since it is part of the uniform. I have just the dress in mind that I have pre ordered to pick up at the store to go with the shoes or vice versa."

"Girl you are hooked on style. This shopping trip is my treat since Daddy gave me carte blanc on my card. Those heels are pricey but well worth it to get exactly the right shoe to go with the dress you want.

"Thanks Joyce. Shall I show you how to use the design function for a pair for you?"

"I'll take a rain check on that, Linda. Today is all about you. We have so much shopping and so little time to do it in.

"Thanks Joyce. I'll hold you to that. Wait till Julie gets here. She has a great eye for fashion too so having her along will really help us make the most of our time."

We spent the next hour going thru websites for the stores we planned to visit. We would have a number of things waiting for us when we arrived. The doorbell rang and the video showed it was Julie.

"Joyce, why don't you let Julie in and we can surprise her with our plans go go shopping?"

"Sure, Linda. I'll play along for a little sisterly fun."

I could see the entry hall inside as well as the threshold outside the front door with the security video. I stayed out of sight to surprise just Julie once she was safe inside the house.

"Hi, Julia. Welcome back from camp. Your brother is here and will be out shortly."

"Hi, Joyce. Brothers! It's just like the brat to keep me waiting after I haven't been home for a week"

Joyce moved Julie inside and closed the door after thanking the lady who had given her a ride home. I entered the room and gave Julie a big hug. Julie let out a squeal of delight on seeing me before words came to her.

"Linda! I'm so glad to see you, Sis! Do we have to join Mom on a gig?"

"Mom is on a gig but she won't need any of us on this one. She wanted me to make your home coming special, so we have the whole day together.

Linda, what is going on? You know that I'm always happy to spend time with my sister but you usually not Linda unless it's before or after a job."

"Would it be okay with you if your bratty brother Jeff took a leave of absence for a while?"

"Jeff's not really bratty. It's just a brother sister thing. I love Jeff but it would be okay with me if he were away for a while if I get to spend time with my sister, Linda. I know now what is going on but not why. Why is Linda going to be around for a while?"

"Jeff is glad to hear you love him too. Wow that is weird talking about myself in the third person. Anyway, there is this new game, The Last Priestess where you must play a female character. There is going to be a tournament with a huge cash prize. I thought that if I could win it, then there would be enough money for that Boarding Thespian High School that I have been dreaming of attending. You play in Virtual Reality so the more comfortable you are with being a girl in the game, the better at the game you play. Joyce suggested that if I were serious about winning that I be a girl 24/7 till the conclusion of the competition."

"You are really serious about this, Linda. It is nice to have the voice matching the rest of you with that voice changer. Is that part of the game?"

It's one of the deluxe add ins. Some of the heroine's costume comes standard as a part of the VR interface and some is deluxe. The people who get asked to play in the tournament are issued one as part of their prize for qualifying and the competition is conducted using the deluxe costume. Joyce's dad makes the costume as a contractor for the game make. She has a deluxe costume and got one for me to practice in too. I wore the prosthetics with it that Mom got me to be Linda for her and it made game play so much better. We came up with the idea that if I were a girl 24/7 then I'd be the most comfortable playing the game in the tournament and be able to do my best.

"Julia, we were wondering if you would like to go shopping with Linda and I for her new wardrobe?"

"I'd love to help my sister, Joyce. Thank you for inviting me. And please call me Julie like Linda does since we are not at work and around Mom."

"I'm glad that you are coming along, Julie. So, let's get this show on the road. That is Joyce's car and driver waiting parked outside the house. I'll put on the alarm and we can be on our way."

It was a short trip to the local Mall, however instead of heading for the first store on our list, Joyce steered me into a beauty salon. It looked like our first stop was going to be a total makeover for me.

"Hello, I believe you have a standby appointment for Linda Rogan. She's here and she would like the works."

"Hi Joyce. Yes, we can work Linda in. Welcome back Linda. Joyce told me that you are going to be a full-time girl for a while so you can immerse yourself in being as female as you would really like to be without worrying about undoing any of it. You'll really enjoy the results that we can achieve without any restrictions."

"Thank you, Jordan. That is exactly what I would like. Thank you, Joyce. You are very sweet to give this as a gift to me."

"You are welcome, Linda. Julie would you like to come with me and get some shopping done while your sister is being made beautiful?"

"Would I! Thanks Joyce. See you later, Linda!"

Joyce and Julie disappeared out into the mall while I was sent to get into a dressing gown in preparation for my makeover. This day was turning out to be much better than I had expected in my wildest dreams.

## Chapter 4 - Kerlogia Shrine

Rylos – Kerlogia Shrine - The Present

“Ryla Rogan to Grigg, I’m clear of the blast area and I’m just about to enter Kerlogia Shrine. You are clear to take off. May the Goddess Xanthia protect you on your flight home.”

“Grigg to Ryla Rogan, Initiating departure sequence. May you have success in your mission and fulfillment in the life path which has selected you. Goodbye, Ryla!”

The Gunstar cloaked and I assume it departed since after it cloaked, I could sense nothing further from it. I turned back towards the entrance of Kerlogia Shrine. When I approached the entry portal, it opened for me. After I passed through it, the portal closed. The whole of the shrine looked as though it was first created, pristine and spotless. I paused walking forward as I heard all around me the audible voice of the Goddess Xanthia.

“Welcome Ryla Rogan. Thank you for responding to my summons. I have called you to be the protector of my next high priestess. I have called you here to Kerlogia Shrine in order for you to receive your training. All are gone from this place, save one whom I protect, in order that you might receive that training without interruption. Please advance forward inside the care chamber ahead, there you will meet your instructor and the one whom I protect here.”



"I walked forward and as before the portal opened to admit me to the chamber ahead of me and closed after I passed through. Lying in one of the beds was Centari and beside the bed was a human woman who also exuded all the attributes of Xanthia as though she were the Goddess incarnated in human form.

"Please call me, Thia. Since you bear Xanthia's mark, you know that I am the Goddess in human form. Your training is so important that I wanted to train you myself. In order to do that I have expressed myself in human form so that interaction on a human level is made possible. You also know Centari, who is in my service and under my protection."

"Centari, Is this where you have been keeping yourself? No wonder no one knew where you were keeping yourself."

"Partially, since it has been so close to time for my body to regenerate. After so many miles on the body, it just becomes time for a retread. Xanthia has been keeping me going while I finished work on both Starfighter 10 which is seeking recruits who have the gift to be Starfighters. Xanthia called me into her service so I have also unveiled a new program, Priestess. It was sent throughout the galaxy in search of those gifted to be called by Xanthia as priestess and protectors. It extends her reach into the galaxy to find who Xanthia could not find here on Rylos due to the actions of the Xurian cult."

"Somehow they were able to deceive even me, concealing their true allegiance to Xur. I use the game to extend myself into the galaxy seeking those who are destined to serve me."

"The last time that I regenerated it was due to being mortally wounded by gunfire protecting your father, Alex. This time it is just old age catching up with me. As was then, I will become dormant while my body repairs itself and gives me a new body for the next part of my life journey which I have pledged in service to Xanthia. Goodbye, Ryla, until we meet again."

Centari appeared to have died. Thia closed his eyes. It was just like the stories that Daddy told me about that time when he first got to Rylos. Thia covered Centari with a sheet but before she had finished, I noticed that Centari had the mark of Xanthia. I backed away as the bed generated a sealing cover over itself and appeared to have become a stasis chamber.

"We can do no more for Centari now. I promise that when Centari awakes to new life, that you will participate. Let me take you to the chamber where your training will begin."

I followed Thia as we journeyed through the labyrinth which was the shrine. We came to another chamber filled with beds. Thia got into one bed and beckoned for me to get into the one beside hers. I did as instructed but was puzzled on how this training was to work since I was not about to go to sleep.

It was not long after I fell asleep that I began dreaming. However, this dream was different from any other dream which I had previously in that it was so real. The scene was a chamber with everything one would need to practice combat. It was like what I really expected to train in the real world. Before me, was Thia. I became convinced that what I was experiencing was some sort of virtual reality.

"You are correct that this resembles virtual reality. Actually, you and I are caught up into a plane of existence that comes from Xanthia. In this plane of existence, you will practice and learn the skills which you will need to be a protector."

"Why have you chosen this way for me to learn?"

"By learning in this way, you will be able to act at the subconscious level, which will greatly decrease your reaction time and give you a competitive advantage. After you have learned the skills then you will practice them in the ordinary world where you will be applying what you have learned."

"How will we proceed?"

"First you must learn balance not only physically but emotionally, mentally, socially and spiritually."

"That sounds like a huge undertaking all by itself. I can guess the importance of the physical since it is with my body that I interact with the physical world."

"It is but all are needed. You must know your body and keep it in balance to be ready to defend or attack as needed."

"The emotions are powerful and unpredictable."

"You must be able to center your emotions so that your emotions aid you as you act and do not hinder you. "

"Mind is very powerful but if you think too much about something then you may delay your response."

"You must be able to center yourself mentally so that you are open to receive all the messages that your senses give you and to interpolate that information based on the knowledge you have obtained and the wisdom you are given to interpret it. By learning at a subconscious level, many calculations can be completed in a blink of an eye when in combat. While out of combat when looking for the next threat or action, careful consideration is needed lest an important factor not be considered."

"I guess I need to be aware socially so that I can know my friends and my foes.

"You must center yourself socially so that you know friend from foe and all the flavors in-between. You need to know when to act solely and when to be part of a team to achieve your goals. You must develop your interpersonal skills to the point that when acting with another you act as one and when acting against a foe to know them so well that you know where an attack or defense will originate with them so that you can properly counter. "

"I guess I must know the spiritual in order to know how Xanthia fits in my life."

"You must be able to center yourself spiritually. Your greatest asset is your connection with Xanthia in everything. You must learn to nurture that connection so that in times of need you can instantly call upon what you need from her instead of wasting time trying to open a connection which should never close."

And that is exactly what we began to do. By doing this in the spiritual plane, not only could we accomplish things quickly but also without actual physical trauma. In that way, once I had learned something, it was easy to drill that knowledge until it became a subconscious act. We could cover a lot of ground in a single session.

As the days went by, I would spend a session on the spiritual plane. In the real day that followed, Thia and I would repeat in the real world the skills that I had learned. Thia acted as both my sparring partner as needed and as my coach. I found that accomplishing the skills in the real world was easy since I had been drilled with the muscle memory and reactions which permitted the skills being enacted flawlessly.

As I had mastered the first level of skills for each division of my training, we went on to learn and practice the next one and so on. I progressed in all areas as novice, intermediary and master. I finally was ready for the final test.

I'm sure that the account of my training is less than satisfying for those who hear this account of my journey. However, the knowledge that I obtained is a sacred trust from Xanthia. It's like they say in the spy movies, 'If I told you, then I'd have to kill you'. You'll learn a bit from what I learned by my demonstrating it in what I do. However, that is a far cry from you learning the same instruction that I learned step by step.

In the master level instructions, Thia's role changed slightly. Instead of sparing against her, I sparred against something like Beta Units. These were different in that they were keyed to act and be healed in accordance with Xanthia's power. Thia was still my coach but she fought beside me as the priestess who I was partnered with and pledged to protect. As we completed the last module of my becoming a spiritual master, the voice of Xanthia projected throughout the shrine as it did upon my arrival.

"I am well pleased with you both my daughters, Thia, and Ryla. It has come time for you to test that which you have learned. My daughters at the Rylatora Shrine cry out for deliverance from the assault from the Xurian cult who have infiltrated them. I send both of you to them to personify my deliverance. Go now in my power."

"And before another word was spoken, the two of us still outfit for battle were whisked away via teleport."

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Earth – Rally Corporation - Present Day

"Theresa, is the boardroom set up for my conference call?"

"Yes, Dr. White, The live feed from the Oligarchy Council is due to start in 10 minutes."

"Thank you. Please hold my calls until the meeting concludes. Has the final agenda been received?"

"Yes, sir. It's available on your E-pad and refreshments are available as requested."

"Thank you, Theresa.

"I performed the security protocol to admit me to the Board Room. I had a lot on my mind from the last few days. It was an ordinary perk for my job, that I was able to divert one of the first off the line deluxe 'Protector' uniforms for my daughter, Joyce.

The request to divert one of the deluxe 'Priestess' uniforms for her friend was something that had to be cleared with the company we were making them for, The Centari Corporation. What surprised me was that the clearance came from Sega Centari herself. She didn't get involved usually unless one of the game users showed potential.

The game in question, 'Priestess' was a girl's game, but the game user in question wasn't a girl. Yes, Linda Rogan played one repeatedly as a waitress for the family business. However, Sega Centari had monitored Linda's progress and had personally approved Linda receiving one of the coveted few uniforms.

Having a uniform would give Sega Centari a lot more data about Linda's performance in the game as well as give her an edge in the competition. Everyone who was invited to the Tournament would receive a uniform as an entry prize, but those who had one beforehand were judged to have a leg up on the competition. That's why the few uniforms which were sold before came at a steep premium price which Sega Centari had comped for Linda.

The agenda seemed ordinary except that Theresa had not warned him that this was also to be an official Star League Communique as well since Ambassador Enduran was set to address the Council as well. It was also noted that Centari's report from the Centari Corporation had been recorded instead of Centari attending live with the Centari Corporation being represented by Sega Centari and her Terran Subsidiary President, Maxwell Hart.

The countdown timer reached zero and the meeting stream came to life. His counterpart's images on the council were displayed in the Board Room's huge, divided monitor. As usual, his counterpart on the SpaceX Corporation was currently chair and she gaveled the meeting to order.

"As the first order of business, Ambassador Enduran will address the Terran Governing Council as part of the Star League Treaty specifying that from time to time we will be addressed on the State of the Star League. And now I give you Ambassador Enduran."

"Greetings, Terrans of the Oligarchy Council. I am pleased that your governance of Terra has led to the average Terran being oblivious to the fact that Terra being part of the Star League. The stability of the Oligarchy Council, as opposed to the continual infighting among the Nation states, proves that we made the right choice to deal with you all as agents of Terra in signing the Treaty."



"Terra has lived up to its treaty responsibilities in providing much more than its minimum share in conscripts to Star Fighter Command as well as supplying leadership in our current Star Fighter Commander Alexander Rogan of Terra. I am well pleased that your conscription campaign is expertly cloaked in the guise of the recently released Starfighter 10 video game. Not only is the game able to detect those who have the gift to be Starfighters but also gifted in Navigation, Technical, Engineering, and support as well when the game became a MMORPG involving millions of Terrans."

"I am pleased with the trade between Terra and the Star League which has been beneficial to both parties. Regular shipments off world continue to go undetected by mundane authorities and people which is to both our advantages. Centari Corporation has proved worthy of the trust given to them to feed technological advances to Terra at such a rate so that they will be adopted without social trauma. Terra is exceeding the projected rate at which advanced technology has been assimilated into its culture. "

"As for the Star League's treaty obligation to provide for Terra's interstellar defense, the new frontier is functioning better than its predecessor. Star Fighter Command is at peak strength and well able to defend against any incursions which might occur. A troubling development for Rylos itself has come to light recently but due to its religious nature should be contained on Rylos and not spread to Terra."

"All in all, it is a prosperous time for the relationship between Terra and the Star League. Thank you, members, of the Terran Oligarchy Council for your part in that success and for allowing me to address you all. "

"Thank you, Ambassador Enduran. And now we receive a recorded message from Chairman Centari of the Centari Corporation."

"Greetings. It is my pleasure to address the Council for this point of personal privilege. As I am getting on in years, I am going to pass to Emeritus status for Centari Corporation. The Chairmanship will pass on to my daughter, Sega Centari. I hope that I can count on you to give her the same courtesy that you have accorded me. Until she assumes her office totally, I have authorized the president of our Terran Subsidiary, Maxwell Hart, with decisions concerning Centari Terran Operations. Thank you for your time and attention."

The rest of the meeting went on as usual with each of the members of the council reporting that business was good. No problems seemed to be on the horizon, so profits should be up for all the council members. That was good for business and what was good for business was good for Earth.

## Chapter 5 - Rylatora Shrine

Rylos – Rylatora Shrine - Present Day

The teleport was complete and the scene around me looked the same in that it was identical to the bed chamber that Thia and I had teleported from except that beyond the sealed off entry portals I could detect the evidence of combat occurring. I addressed Thia who had materialized in the same spot relative to me in what I could only assume was Rylatora Shrine.

"What are your orders, my lady?"

"First address me as Thia, We lack the time to stand on ceremony and protocol in combat. Second, after I unseal the portal, we shall enter the next room and clear it of the Xurian cultists. I shall seal the portal behind us as we exit so this room shall remain clear. Once clear, we'll repeat that for the next room so that each room we clear remains clear."

"Understood clearly, Thia. By your command."

Thia summoned several energy blasts which hovered in front of her to be directed towards enemies once the portal was unsealed. I had an arrow nocked which I was prepared to let fly and follow it with more once the portal was unsealed as well. Once we were through and the portal resealed behind us, Thia's energy blasts had found the mark of Xurian Cultists who did not bear the mark of Xanthia. As I let my arrows fly, I guided them telekinetically to strike those same targets making sure that each was indeed neutralized. As each one fell, Thia teleported those outside the shrine and without life in them, then the charms each wore to prevent that ceased working.

"Good work, Ryla. Give Xanthia's water to our fallen sisters to revive them. Those who can fight can join with us and those who cannot pass through to the rest chamber to recuperate safely. I've teleported the fallen scum outside so that they may be food for the beasts that Xanthia has summoned for aid."

Upon administering Xanthia's water to our fallen sisters, one team of priestess and protector was able to join us and we moved the rest to the rest chamber and sealed them safely inside. When we were ready to attack, our two teams went through. Thia and I dispatched the Cultists while their protector revived our sisters with Xanthia's water and their priestess moved those who could not fight any longer to the rest chamber.

"Very good, Ryla. This chamber is cleared. As we add teams, let us make a further division of the task before us so that we may rapidly dispose of the Xurian cultist and redeem our sisters."

The fight continued and when we collected a total of 4 working teams, we split into 2 forces of 2 teams and cleared the rooms that much quicker. Finally, we had cleared all but the altar room where the Cultist had retreated to make their last stand against us. At that point, we had 4 forces of 2 teams, and we entered the altar chamber from 4 different directions at the same time. The scum was vanquished and our sisters safe. However, the damage had already been done and half of our sisters had fallen in battle before we had been able to subdue the enemy.

As I looked around the chamber, I found that there was some strange plant that I had never seen on Rylos before. Even stranger is that it was obviously a flowering plant since all of them had buds. Even though the plants did not appear to be the same age, none of them had any open buds. It puzzled me and I had to remember to ask Thia about them. As before when the battle was over, Xanthia herself addressed us with her voice penetrating every room of the shrine,

"My beautiful daughters! You have done well in disposing of our enemies. I send my blessing to those among you who fell in battle so that soon you may be fully able to join your sisters in defense of the shrine. Do not let those who come in my name in for I will not have sent them. Say farewell to your fallen sisters that I call to myself so that they may join me in battling evil in another dimension. Thia and Ryla you have done well. Return to whence you came from for I have need of you there."

All the sisterhood joined together in a song of Xanthia which bid them good journey as they were caught up by Xanthia in her service in a place none of us understood. When the song had concluded and our sisters were taken, Thia teleported the two of us back to Kerlogia Shrine.

"Quickly, Ryla. We must return to Centari. The time is near."

I followed Thia back to the healing chamber and back to the stasis bed where we had left Centari. At least I thought that it was a stasis chamber but since Centari's body was remaking itself, the chamber had instead contributed energy to the process which accelerated it. I thought that Xanthia must have great need of Centari.

"It is time to release Centari. I will remove the energy dome. Do not be dismayed for what you see. It is Xanthia's will and she has taken Centari into her service."

"So be it according to the will of Xanthia."

When Thia released the energy dome from the bed, the figure on the bed did not look like Centari at all. Instead, she was a young woman who had the same sign of Xanthia in the same position on her body that Centari possessed. Her eyelids fluttered open and she was awake and got up out of the bed.

"Call me Tisla. I am everything that your friend Centari was in a much prettier package. "

"Tisla, I thought you were dead."

"Me? Die, and miss all the excitement? Never! I won't bore you with the details. My body was dormant while Xanthia assisted with my makeover so that I could fully enter her service. Lesson one girl, Stop thinking human. Lesson two, Ryla, you've got a good thing going here. Don't blow it! Lesson three: Always trust Tisla Centari."

"I'm glad that you are back around Tisla. There is no way anything could be boring with you up to your old tricks. What's next?"

"I must return to Earth and the other planets where the Centari Corporation has a presence. They must see that there is indeed two Centari sisters still in charge, even if they believe that I am my own daughter. While I am undertaking that journey, I must also be about the service that Xanthia has called me to give."

"Will you be teleporting away from here?"

"Nothing so exotic my girl, come and see."

Thia and I followed Tisla out of the healing chamber to another one hidden away that I had not seen before nor had I seen the like in any of the other shines. It was a docking slip like the ones at Star base command and within it was a Starcar.

"Xanthia knew that I would need my Starcar once I woke up so she provided this unique room at Kerlogia shrine. This will be my new base of operations on Rylos since I am in Xanthia's service now. May the blessings of the Goddess Xanthia preserve you while we are parted, my girl."

With that Tisla tapped on the door and the gullwing lifted up to permit her entry. She was seated gracefully in the driver's seat.

"One last thing, Thia. Could you put me in a Terran LBD with pumps and purse and made up for a formal occasion? I've got a date with the Oligarchy Council and then maybe even a real date if he plays his cards right."

I should not have been surprised that Thia knew what Terran fashion was since she was the embodiment of the Goddess. With a wave of her hand, Tisla was dressed to slay all the men on the board, in a perfect match to what her sister Segia Centari was wearing, so that she could carry out the will of Xanthia. The gull wing door closed and we moved back as the Starcar went through the port where the outer door opened and the star-car blasted free of the ground, transitioned to spacecraft and flew up out of our vision.

"Back to your training, Ryla. You still have much to learn before you can be the protector to the high priestess of Xanthia."

"By your command, Thia."

Somehow, seeing Tisla born to a new life had given me hope and renewed strength that I would become all that Xanthia wished me to be in her service. I followed Thia to the teaching chamber, ready to learn whatever lesson was next for me.

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Earth - Present Day - Atlanta, GA



"I don't know what I did to deserve it but Sega Centari has me paired with the number one Protector in the Tournament, Joyce."

"It does not surprise me since you received the number one seed as Priestess with your performance in the preliminary rounds"

"Big Sister, I am so proud of you. You are in the final match with the number two seed Priestess and Protector.

"Thanks squirt, I only wish that Momma could come too but with the three of us gone she has to run Bon Voyage Cuisine by herself."

"Contestants to your positions. The match will start in five minutes."

"Good Luck, Linda. See you after"

"All my hopes, Sis!"

"Thanks Joyce and Squirt, Catch you on the flip side!"

The contest this round was the same as all the previous rounds. Independently, both sets of Priestess and Protector would clear of enemies the same battleground. What I did not know then was that the battleground was the same as the recent battle of Thia and Ryla at Rylatora Shrine and the tragedy that befell it after they thought it was clear of enemies. Since we battled against the same setup, the one who was first through successfully was declared the winner. We kept the same pace as Thia and Ryla in clearing the room of Xurian Spies and came to the last room where alien plants were rapidly growing.

"Those alien plants are poisonous, Protector Helen. Burn them! Burn them all!"

That is what we did, we burned them. With her flaming arrows and my fireballs, we cleared the room of plants and went back into the other rooms, sealing them as soon as they were clear of the plants. Finally, we returned to the first chamber where we had started burning the plants. The simulation was over, and our time was displayed in both of our HUD. We were transposed into a common MMORPG room with our opponent and waiting to learn our fate. I recognized Sega Centari and Thia from their pictures who stood before us in judgment.

"Greetings, Contestants, I am Thia and I represent the Rylan Priestesses and am the sponsor to the prize which gives the winners their choice of being transported to Rylos to see the real thing. I am here after a sad occasion on Rylos. All of the shrines were attacked at the same time either from Xurian spies or Zandozans in various manners. I gave the scenario of Rylatora shrine to the game managers to see if you contestants would get what we missed. One set did discover the entire danger and thus I award the victory to the team of Linda and Helen"

Greeting Contestants, I'm Sega Centari, there are no losers here and fourth to second place prizes have most of what the first prize winner gets with the exception to the trip to Rylos. I have the judge's decision and without further delay, we go. Fourth place goes to Elena Martez, The third place goes to Jane Hudson. Come on up ladies and claim your prizes."

Our opponents went up to the podium and collected their winnings. As much as I had learned to love Helen, I hoped to win the first prize, after all the game is called Priestess anyway.

"Second prize goes to Helen Johnson so our grand prize winner is Linda Rogan ! Come on up ladies and get your prizes"

I followed Helen up and received the first prize after she had hers. Now I had the power to do whatever I wanted to do. I could attend Thespian High School after getting back from my trip to Rylos. I leaned in close to Thia for her to whisper to me among the din of the crowd applause.

"Slip out to your dressing room and get changed into civvies. Sega and I have a surprise for you. Meet us at the star car display."

I nodded yes to her and left to my dressing room off the stage. Waiting with hugs for me was the Squirt and Joyce. Joyce handed me a phone with Momma on it.

"Hi Mom, can I put you on speaker? ..... Thanks. My trip to Rylos is going to start immediately. I think they want to debrief me after the good job I did in solving the disaster. I love you Mom, Joyce, Squirt. I gotta go."

The three of them told me that they loved me in unison as I was already changing out of the uniform and into my LBD and black pumps. I wished that I could wear the tiara but as soon as I was out of it, an official was waiting to take it away to make sure I had not cheated which I had not. With some makeup and some hair styling, I was ready to go. I paused to get a second hug from my sister and Joyce. I went to the star car which had Sega and Thia were standing beside as a garage door was coming open to let the car out into the street,

As you guessed your first surprise is that we are leaving for Rylos now. The rest of the surprises we will reveal on the way. Please join us, Linda Rogan. "

I quickly got in one of the back doors as Thia joined me on the other back door and Sega entered the Gullwing driver's door. All the doors closed, and we quickly got up to hundreds of miles per hour speeds prior to lifting off and heading out to deep space. I turned to Thia and ignored the wonderous sights outside wondering what the next surprise would be.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Linda. There is an off the books prize that I am prepared to offer you as a representative of Xanthia even if you do not accept any further offers. I am prepared to make you a genetic girl if you really want that. No hormones or surgery, just majick."

"Yes please, I want to be a genetic all female now."

She touched my shoulders and a wave of warmth spread from head to toe and I blinked my eyes closed. When I opened them again, I had no male left in me, I was 100% female with all of the reproductive organs. The first impulse in private would be to grope myself but I was even more curious now. This was the best gift ever! What could top this?

"Thank you, That was the best gift ever. You have my total attention."

"It was my pleasure. Now I have an offer from Xanthia herself. First, I have for you a real priestess uniform and Xanthia herself would like to ask you to enter her service. You are the only girl to have proven herself worthy to be her priestess. All the other priestess are serving Xanthia battling evil in another dimension. You are the Last Priestess. If you accept please put on the uniform and Xanthia herself will offer her mark to you here. I am the human incarnation of Xanthia, so you have already been in her presence."

"I accept. Please help me into the uniform."

We got me into the uniform and as I paused to catch my breath, I felt almost Rylan. I nodded to Thia and she disappeared and in her place was Xanthia. The interior of the Starcar had become a great hall, as in dimensionally transcendental. She greeted me with a hug and then I was kneeling in awe of her, waiting for her to speak."

"Greetings Priestess Linda. You have been recruited by the Star League to defend Rylos and the Goddess Xanthia's temple against Xur, his Xurian cult, and his Zandozans. Do you hereby swear fealty to the Goddess Xanthia - To speak and to be silent, to do and to let be, To come and to go, in need and in plenty, In peace and in war, in living and in dying, From this hour henceforth, until my Goddess release me, Death takes me, or the world end?"

"I so swear!"

I, Xanthia, Goddess of Rylos, Hear and shall not forget, nor fail to reward, that which is freely given: Fealty with love, Valor with honor, and Oath breaking with justice. Now rise and go in our esteem. High Priestess Linda Rogan. Receive now my mark!"

I received the mark on the oval of my tiara, just as in the game. I glanced down and noticed that I had kept all my stats and had some additions. When I looked up, the hall was gone and Thia was in Xanthia's place. Thia spoke to me just before I disappeared.

"Prepare for teleport!"

## Chapter 6 - Homecoming

Rylos – Starfighter Command - Present Day

I was in Teleport Transit and all was blackness about me. We had come out of Star Drive and the small disk of Rylos had grown even larger as we approached before I was teleported. I was not sure about my destination but with the stories and family pictures that Mom, Alex Rogan's baby sister, had told me, I was likely headed for a homecoming. 'Star Light Star Bright' was the movie made from the book that Otis wrote all about Alex Maggie and Lewis in the trailer park. On Rylos, they had a family where I had cousins, who had gone into the family business, Gunstars, mostly. Suddenly it was bright, and I had family all around me in the conference room at Starfighter Command on Rylos. First to hug me was my cousin Ryla Rogan who was dressed as a protector.

"Ryla, you bear the mark of Xanthia as a protector. How did you escape?"

"With Thia, whom I suppose you have met, teleporting me to Starfighter command when the attack came down on the temples. Linda? That is certainly a new look for you. You are not only a priestess but High priestess for Xanthia and you bear her mark as well."

"I always was a girl at heart and now I don't ever have to act like a boy again. Sega Centari told me when I won that I would be meeting an experienced Protector on Rylos, but I would not have imagined it would be you. Yes, I am the High Priestess since I am the last priestess. The rest of my life is pledged in service to Xanthia and I can't imagine a better life for me now. Uncle Alex, please give me a hug."

That began a group hug where Alex, Maggie, Ryla, Lewis, and Trevor all joined together. When we broke the hug, Alex held me at arm's length and spoke.

"I am so glad that you have come to Rylos and the culmination of your dreams. I can breathe a little easier knowing that it is two Rogan cousins who Xanthia put our faith into. You know, Ladies, as you are the Last Priestess and Last Protector, I was the Last Starfighter and Grigg the last Starnavigator. We saved the Star League, and I am sure that two Rogans will surpass even our accomplishments. Well done Ladies."

"Thank you, Uncle Alex!"

"Thank you, Daddy!"

"You must be Uncle Lewis; I hear good things about you."

"Ya hear that slimes, I'm famous. That line from the movie always breaks me up but I actually said that as a boy, but I am all grown up now. Thanks for the greeting, Linda. I am so happy for you that you found your true self and also the majick to make it happen for real. We Rogans stick together and if you need me, I will be there for you. Welcome to Rylos but more importantly welcome to the Rylos Rogan family.

"Hi, Cousin Linda, I'm Trevor Rogan, Alex and Maggie's son, and I am very glad to meet the real you. Actually, your arrival interrupted a war council about how we can solve the cloak hiding the Zandozan Cruiser which meteor gunned one of the Temples before we could take it out. That was way too close for comfort.



"Of course, Trevor. Aunt Maggie, is there someplace where Ryla and I can compare notes and start becoming a team?"

"You girls will want to get settled so I'll take you home. Sega Centari had been staying with us but she had told us to ship her things to Officer Quarters when her stint on Earth was started which has everything a young lady might want. That will be your room, Linda. I see that you had to travel light, you girls are about the same size so you can share civvies. I'll take you both there with a detour by security to get you credentialed for Starfighter Command for Linda so she can see any of us that she may need for both my girls' mission.

"Maggie, be sure to go by communications also to send a message to Centari Corp to ship a cargo trunk to Eva for Linda's things as well as to Eve herself to be expecting to pack up Linda's personal effects in the cargo trunk for shipment to Rylos and cash in her return trip to cover the charges. Don't worry about getting to Earth for a visit, Starfighter command has that covered,

"Thanks, Uncle Alex and Aunt Maggie for taking good care of me. We are ready, right Ryla? Let's go!"

"Confirmed, Linda. Let's go! "

The Xanthia marked ladies did their goodbyes and left with Maggie. Through the windows of the conference room, we witnessed them go to communications where they should have sent the messages that Alex suggested and picking up the translator pins for Linda. Next, the group went to security which had a pass waiting on the commander's authority for Linda as well. Then the group disappeared into the turbolift taking them to the Residential area where the commander's home was located. In the meantime, Grigg and Feli Grigg had joined them completing the war council ready to decipher how such a coordinated attack was able to be made on Rylos itself.

"We now know how the coordinated attack was made and why it succeeded. Most of the attacks were made from within as both Zandozans in some cases and Xurian cultists in others were made to look like priestesses and protectors. Somehow, they have been able to make a technological teleport since a psi or magic based teleport is limited to those with Xanthia's mark. Grigg, can you shed any light on that?"

"They must have discovered how to make the Heisenberg Compensator. The rest of the components for a technological teleport are rather simple to put together with current Rylan technology. But they would have to be in the line of sight in order to use such a device to teleport. That would as well as the space-based attack on one of the shrines would indicate a cloaked ship. We've caught all the Xurian spies in Starfighter Command and kept out any new ones but the last one got away with whatever they wanted before we knew it was a traitor. Unfortunately, that included the teleport and cloaking technology that was available under lock and key at the time."

"That would suggest that they have a troop transport ship equipped with a teleporter and a cloaking shield. How would such a ship be built since we destroyed the Xurian Shipyards inside the frontier and the frontier has not been breached?"

"They had to have built the ship in space within a cloaking shield. Since we chased the Xurian Cult off-world it is logical that they have a space base from which they are launching their attacks with that base cloaking shielded. It is also logical that since their resources are limited that they would have built one ship which could carry troops and contain a meteor gun and meteor storage as well. That would mean just one cloaked ship to carry out the entire attack including the one shrine meteor gunned from space.

"How is this ship vulnerable? Now that we know that they are using our cloaking technology, can we detect it?"

"Using our technology, the only time it would be vulnerable would be when they have opened a port to the outside world to attack or teleport since they can do neither with the cloaking shield intact. Magical and Psi teleports may be able to get inside a cloaked ship but technological teleports cannot since they need line of sight. In regard to detecting their cloak, it is possible only from another cloaked ship. Feli and I have just come back from scanning Rylos space from Gunstar X and their cloaked ship had withdrawn outside our space and then activated their star drive. They could be anywhere inside the frontier now."

"Gunstar X is our prototype ship with cloaking shield which hides the spacecraft in a pocket universe. How many of the cloaking shield generators do we have available now?"

"Hundreds. We have a factory turning them out from within a cloaking shield itself."

"Let's deploy them to all important military, first at Starfighter Command, and civilian sites first for a defense. Then we can deploy them to our Gunstar fleet. Since they are using the same technology, let's test if psi and or magic teleport can really penetrate the cloak. If so then we have the means to attack their ship without them attempting to attack us."

"We anticipated your wishes and I'll activate the deployment plan we have in place. Once the fleet of Gunstars is cloak equipped, we can send them to scan space for the Xurian cloaked ship. Your daughter and niece who have just arrived may have the skills given by Xanthia to test if the cloaking shield can be penetrated by psi or magical means."

Maggie, please go back and retrieve the girls from our home and fill them in on our plan to go after the Xurian Spaceship. It would be a blessing if one of them could transport Gunstar One into their pocket universe and blow that ship out of space. If they can only transport themselves then a different kind of mission would have to be planned.

Feli and I could go warm up Gunstar One and Gunstar X and get them ready for the tests when your niece and daughter arrive.

"Very good, Griggs. I leave it in your hands. Let's meet back here in the morning to update our progress. Dismissed."

Maggie and the two Griggs went their separate ways ahead of the war council which streamed from the conference room.

Rylos - Commander's home - The Present

Home was now a turbolift ride away from Starfighter Command in the same complex. Upon arrival, I took my LBD and pumps out of my bag of holding along with a few other things I had brought with me from home, placed in the Centaricorp Bag of holding that I had won in one of the preliminary rounds, that I put away in my new spacious room. Maggie and Ryla came in to see me as I finished unpacking.

"How are you doing in here, my precious niece?"

"Just finished unpacking. Ryla. thanks for sharing your wardrobe with me."

"My pleasure, cousin. Let's go to my room and you can pick out what you want.

"Let's go!"

And we went to Ryla's room where I picked up some more items from her and carried them back to my room and put them away. With that out of the way, we agreed that Ryla and I should practice and Aunt Maggie return to Starfighter Command.

"I can take you to the simulator room and the gym where we can practice, Linda. Bye, Mom!"

"Bye Aunt Maggie!"

"Bye, girls!"

Ryla brought me first to the sim room and showed me the egg-shaped capsules that were both simulators and sleep learning stations. We would try those out later when my space lag was catching up to me. Next, we went to the Gym with its black walls floors and ceilings which could theoretically absorb any stray attack. Ryla asked the room for some chairs which popped up beside us as well as a screen which came down in front of us.

"Let's start with your stats. I know that you are curious about what you finished with after Xanthia's mark and blessing was bestowed."

I nodded my agreement, and my stats were projected on the screen.

Name: Linda    Class: Cleric    Bond: Xanthia  
Sex: Female    Race: Human    Primary: High Priestess  
Age: 18        Planet: Rylos    Secondary: Stealth

Strength: 8        Intelligence: 10    Dexterity: 8  
Constitution: 8    Wisdom: 10        Stealth: 8  
Accuracy: 8        Charisma: 10      Hypnosis: 8

Majick: 8        Hidden: 6  
Spellcraft: 4    Hiddencraft: 2  
Loyalty: 9        Rescue: 7

Maximum Mana: 8    Maximum Cloak: 6  
Current Mana: 8     Current Cloak: 6  
Restore Mana: 4     Restore Cloak: 2

Maximum Health: 9    Healing: 4  
Current Health: 9    Number Heals: 4  
Restore Health: 4    HealingCraft: 4

Ryla pulled up her stats and projected them on the screen..

Name: Ryla    Class: Cleric    Bond: Xanthia  
Sex: Female    Race: Human    Primary: Protector  
Age: 18    Planet: Rylos    Secondary: Stealth

Strength: 10    Intelligence: 8    Dexterity: 8  
Constitution: 10    Wisdom: 8    Stealth: 8  
Accuracy: 10    Charisma: 8    Hypnosis: 8

Psionics: 8    Hidden: 6  
Psicraft: 4    Hiddencraft: 2  
Protect: 9    Rescue: 7

Maximum PsiEnergy: 8    Maximum Cloak: 6  
Current PsiEnergy: 8    Current Cloak: 6  
Restore PsiEnergy: 4    Restore Cloak: 2

Maximum Health: 9  
Current Health: 9  
Restore Health: 4

"That's very impressive Ryla, we complement each other well. I'm a bit space lagged. Would you like to try out the pod learning and save going over the inventory and skills till tomorrow? "

"Great Idea, Linda. Let's go!"

As we left the room reset to empty again. I suggested to Ryla that she set the exercise as we both entered the other room and got into the pods. Before long I was fighting in a dreamlike state which after the exercise was over evolved into a dreamless sleep which was abruptly interrupted.

"Girls please come out of the pod, your father and uncle have some tasks that they would like for you to do in order to be able to defeat the Xurian Spaceship that launched the attack on the shrines."

"Coming, Aunt Maggie. What is this about?"

"Likewise, Momma. What she said?"



The war council came up with a plan to outfit military and civilian targets with a pocket universe cloaking shield generator which has been turned out by a secret cloaked factory on Rylos. They believe that the last Xurian spy at Starfighter Command stole the plans for the prototype generator and that is what protected the Xurian ship from detection until it launched its attacks on the shrines. They want you girls to perform actually 3 tests now that I am thinking about it. Test one would be in the hanger to see if one or both of you can teleport inside a cloaked ship (Gunstar X). Test 2 would be if one or both of you could teleport a Gunstar in addition to herself, Test 3 would be to teleport Gunstar one inside the pocket universe generated by Gunstar X."

"Of course we'll help, Aunt Maggie, So we are going to the hanger to try to teleport into Gunstar X first?"

"Let's go!"

Rylos - Gunstar Prototype Hanger - The Present

And they went and arrived at the hanger where Gunstar X and Gunstar One were berthed. Griggs came out to speak with the girls and Maggie.

"Gunstars X and One are all warmed up. I suggest that you both try teleporting to the Gunnery Chair up their first uncloaked to get a feel for the teleport.

They both agreed and both made it into the gunnery chair and both teleported back. Next, it was Ryla's turn to try teleporting with the Gunstar under the cloak. Ryla failed since she needed line of sight, but Linda succeeded."

"I tried to teleport Gunstar X while under cloak, but the weight of the pocket universe was too much for me. Are we trying the teleport with Gunstar One? If so I want Ryla in the gunnery chair with me. She told me she could work the weapons if it came to that with typical Rogan skills. Also, she is my partner, so I want her with me in case something else happens. Aunt Maggie, will you be flying Gunstar One?"

"Yes I will be relieving young Feli for the test. Gunstar One is ready. If that test is successful, Alex and Grigg will take Gunstar X out and increasing the cloak where a second Gunstar will fit as a target for our last test. Let's get aboard then first you two get in the Gunnery chair, Ryla will show you how, Linda."

"All set, Momma. Let's Go! "

"Navigation to Teleport. Teleport now!"

The Frontier - The Present

Linda began the teleport and suddenly Gunstar One was on the Rylan side of the frontier. While Ryla had seen it many times during the upgrade and repair of the frontier, this was Linda's first time, and she was amazed at the engineering feat which dwarfed by many times the Great Wall of China on Earth. The Frontier encircled all of the star systems of the Star League keeping out the enemies which lie outside.

"Gunstar One to Gunstar X, Linda made it to the frontier in one jump. Alex and Grigg please meet us there and set up your cloak."

"It's beautiful here, Aunt Maggie. When will Gunstar X get here?"

"It will take an hour. They will close within sensor range and give us a bearing to them just like if we had detected the Xurian ship from a cloaked Gunstar. On mission day we will take a Cloaked Gunstar to the location to confirm it hasn't moved. Then we will decloak and teleport inside, launch our missiles and then teleport out before the explosion and the pocket universe collapses onto itself. Until then just relax and enjoy the view."

"Thanks, Momma!"

While Gunstar One was in communication with Gunstar X the whole time, it was an hour later before they heard for which they were waiting.

"This is Alex in Gunstar X to Gunstar One. On Station. Begin Simulated attack with simulated missiles. Bearing 267 mark 118."

"Message received, Beginning simulation, NOW!"

Linda teleported inside the pocket universe with missile tubes facing Gunstar X.

"Shoot Ryla!"

"Sim Missiles away, Teleport NOW!"

Linda teleported outside the pocket universe, facing away from Gunstar X.

"Simulated escape vector initiated. Simulation complete. How did Ryla do with the simulated missile?"

"Grigg here, All simulated missiles impacted on vital areas of the ship, Race you back Maggie, standard bet"

Linda teleported herself into Grigg's lap at the navigation station of Gunstar X.

"Make a wish, Uncle Grigg!"

Linda teleported next to her Uncle Alex then teleported the Gunstar X back to its hanger at Starfighter command.

"The tests were entirely a success. Thanks for the lift home, Linda. Grigg and I have a lot of work to do. You, young lady needs to get some sleep following that display. Please teleport yourself to bed. We need you fresh in the morning in case we spot the Xurian spaceship."

"Compliance!"

Linda teleported to her bed in Alex's home and soon fell asleep.

## Chapter 7 - Justice

Frontier – Gunstar X - Present Day

While Grigg was busy coordinating the installation of cloaking shields in the Gunstar fleet, Alex studied the sensor logs for their recent trip out to the Frontier. One tiny blip that they dismissed at the time indicated something massive and extraplanar at exactly the site where the frontier had been breached years ago. He decided that he wanted a look to confirm if it was indeed the cloaked Zurian spaceship,

"Alex to Maggie, Please meet me at Gunstar X, I think I found the Xurian warship. Let's go out there and confirm it.

"Confirmed. On my Way"

Alex and Maggie went aboard Gunstar X. The ship was moved into takeoff position and liftoff blasted them away as they headed back towards the frontier.

"Alex, We are clear of Rylos space, activating cloak, forward sensors on full."

"Maggie set course for the frontier at the coordinates where the breach occurred."

"Compliance! Frontier at former breach course locked into navigational beams."

'Maggie, check with Grigg and Lewis to see if Gunstar One has the cloak installed and get her ready for launch. If we send the confirmation of the Xurian warship then have Lewis wake the girls and informed. We need Linda for the teleport and if there is any trouble having Ryla there may make a difference also being blessed by Xanthia plus she is a born starfighter like her daddy.'

"Confirmed, Alex. Message encoded and sent."

The proximity klaxon sounded indicating that Gunstar X had entered Frontier space. Maggie silenced it to report to Alex.

"Alex, we've reached the frontier. On course to the breach. Long range sensors indicate that there is a huge pocket universe manifestation ahead distorting subspace."

"Maggie, send encoded message: Warship found first. Dispatch Gunstar One with the girls & Grigg."

"Message sent and receiving the encoded reply. Girls & Grigg away "

"Visual Confirmation, Girls on site, Silence communications"

=====

Rylos – Gunstar One - Present Day

"Linda to Griggs, Are we intact and ready for the second teleport?"

"All systems nominal. We are on station with Gunstar X running radio silent. Gunstar One ready for teleport"

"Grigg do a complete scan of the warship before we fire our missiles. Teleport, Teleport now!"

"On station, Scanning warship. Scan Complete. Shoot Ryla! SHooooOOOOOOOoooooot!"

Once Grigg completed the scan. Ryla fired all the missiles at the warship"

"Teleporting now!"

Gunstar One teleported out of the pocket universe an instant before missile impact. They witnessed through the scanners the explosion expands outward which produced a instability in the pocket universe which collapsed to a singularity then winked out of existence."

"Gunstar One from Gunstar X, Well done all, Linda, this time just enjoy the ride home, you've just done three jumps straight. Time to rest.

When we get back, we will convene our war council in the conference room. "

"Grigg to Alex, Linda is taking a well-deserved rest. Ryla checked her and she is okay. On your wing back to Starfighter command."

"Confirmed. See you at the base."

Gunstar X led the formation with Gunstar One on the wing. Both were on course to Starfighter Command. Rapidly the base grew in their view until it was time for both to land. Both crews disembarked with a refreshed Linda and met the others in the Conference Room.

=====

Rylos – Conference Room - Present Day

Uncle Alex, it was too easy. They were just sitting and waiting for us to blow them away. Why?"

Linda, you were wise to order a full sensor sweep before destroying the warship. Grigg, what did you find?

Alex, Neither Xur or any of the Xurian cult were aboard. It was entirely crewed by Zandozans.

Alex could it have been a diversion so something else cloaked could sneak in?"

Excellent thinking, Lewis. Alex to Starfighter Command: Condition Red, Cloak the base and scan for cloaked ships, launch all our standby Gunstars to complete our scan of Rylos Space,"

Starfighter Command cloaked without any problems giving them protection from an attack from regular space and the scans would alert them if something was able to do the same thing they had done to the Xurian warship.



"Grigg, how are the crews doing with the cloaking shield installations?"

"Alex, the manufacturing crew have just completed the installations that you authorized by temporarily halting production. All Military and Civilian assets indicated are protected "

"Lewis and Feli please take Gunstar Two up and coordinate the Gunstar Legion. Grigg please take Gunstar Three up with my son and watch out for Gunstar Two."

The four left the conference room to go to their Gunstars, later we heard the launch announcements. Finally, there was just Maggie, Ryla, Linda and Alex left in the room.

Linda and Ryla, The key to Xur's attack must be centered on Xanthia. Go home and coordinate your abilities as a team. Thank you for being a key part of our operation against the immediate threat. Also, Ryla, just in case that you require a Gunstar, teach Linda to be a Star Navigator via the sleep teaching capsule.

"Thank you, Uncle Alex, we will get right on to that."

Maggie and Alex went out to coordinate things at Starfighter command while Ryla took Linda back home.

=====

Rylos – Commander's Home - Present Day

"Ryla, It just occurred to me why the Xurian Cult was spared the same fate as the Zandozans. What if they had a fleet of one-man ships with cloaks? Xur could get back on Rylos in the confusion if we are not ready for it."

"That makes sense Linda, please call daddy and tell him your insight."

"Starfighter Commander from Linda, Perhaps Xur spared the Xurian Cult since he needs them for the next part of his plan, what if they have a fleet of one man cloaked ships? Xur might slip in under the confusion."

"Linda from Uncle Alex, Good thinking, Linda. If any of those ships are detected, we will launch missiles through the opening they will have to have to interact with the real world. Call me back if you have any other insights. Uncle Alex, Out."

"Thank you, Linda. Would you like to hit the Gym and pick up where we left off?"

"Of course! I feel refreshed since my nap. Let's go!"

The Gym reset itself to the same setup with the two chairs and the screen as before. I transferred the abilities menu from my glance down display to the big screen to share it with Ryla.

Abilities - High Priestess Linda Rogan

Spear Fighting (6)

Staff Fighting (6)

Majick Blast (10)

Majick Fireball (10)

Majick Levitate (8)

Majick Force Wall (6)

Majick Mindlink (5)

Majick Teleport (12)

Majick Teleport Other (18)

Gunstar Engineering (10)

Gunstar Navigation (10)

Gunstar Scanning (10)

Gunstar Communication (10)

Universal Translator (10)

"When did you get all of those Gunstar Skills, Linda?"

This is the first time that they displayed and since we have not gone through the training yet. Ahh, the status message tells me that all those skills are a gift from Xanthia. It seems that she has supplied those skills so we can concentrate on coordinating our missions together.'

"I agree, Linda. Do your majick skills correspond to what you used in the contest?"

"Yes, Ryla. For the contest, it was advantageous to have a concentrated set of skills and level them as opposed to learning all the spells. Hopefully, Xanthia will grant whatever new spells that I will need."

"I am sure that Xanthia will do so. She always gives us what we need. May I see your equipment list?"

"Of course. Here it is: "

Inventory - High Priestess Linda Rogan

Light Decelerator Implant

Double Spear of Xanthia (+30)

Quarterstaff of Xanthia (+20)

2x Dagger of Xanthia (+20)

Bag of Holding

"Linda, I have the light decelerator implant too. Do you know what it does?"

"It is an almost infinite power supply directed at the base of the brain to be utilized through thought. It augments the power we get from Xanthia to serve her."

"Wow, that is unexpected but valued. I like the choice of weapons for you. It fits your style of fighting while casting. I wonder if we will develop those stealth fighting moves as well. Time will tell. Are you ready to see my abilities, Linda?"

"Of course. I look forward to seeing them., Ryla"

"This is my abilities list:

Abilities - Protector Ryla Rogan

Sword Fighting (10)

Archery (10)

PSI Bolt (10)

PSI Push (10)

PSI Levitate (8)

PSI Mindlink (6)

PSI Telepathy (5)

PSI Teleport (12)

Hypnosis (18)

Stealth Dome (10)

Stealth Shield (10)

Double Attack (10)

Backstabbing (12)

Starnavigator (18)

Starfighter (18)

Universal Translator (10)

I am impressed with your skill set, also. You cover the gambit from being a fully functional Gunstar crew in both positions as well as having stealth and Psi abilities. You are equally at home fighting a frontal attack with sword and backstabbing under stealth with knives. You are a very well-rounded protector. Do you have anything on your wish list?

"I just want to be the best protector that I can be. I am not sure what I lack but I have faith that Xanthia will provide everything that I need.

"As I too have faith in Xanthia. May I see your equipment list?"

"Of course. Here it is: "

Inventory - Protector Ryla Rogan

Light Decelerator Implant

Sword of Xanthia (+25)

Bow of Xanthia (+20)

2x Dagger of Xanthia (+20)

Quiver of Xanthia (+5)

Bag of Holding

"You look to be well equipped, too. How does the bonus work on your quiver?"

"It produces an unlimited supply of light bolt arrows with a +5-damage addition to whatever the bow has upon it. Are you ready for a simulation? We will make it a basic one of clear the dungeon so that we can get used to working together."

"I'm ready. Let's go!"

The cousins left the gym which again reset itself as they exited. They arrived at the simulation room where each of them entered a pod and laid down inside it.

=====

Earth – Eve Rogan's Home - Present Day

Eve and Julie were in Linda's room taking down the female clothes hanging in her closet and folding them and laying them on her bed. At the same time when they encountered some of Jeff's old clothing, those they put into a bag to be donated.

"It seems so sudden that Jeff is now Linda permanently. Donating his clothes is like a last goodbye. I am happy for her but sad at the same time since now that Linda is fully female that she is out of my life for now. I may need to start a franchise of my business on Rylos."

"I know what you mean, Momma. Linda's life used to be fullest when gaming and being one of the girls, now she gets to do both all the time. We both will miss her lots, She's followed in Uncle Alex footsteps in becoming indispensable to Rylos."

The front doorbell rang, and Julie left to answer it. She opened the door to find Joyce and several suitcases on the porch.

"What's all this, Joyce?"

"I brought all of my last year's fashions for Linda since she and I are the same size to round out her wardrobe. Has the shipping case come yet?"

"That's wonderful, Joyce. Momma is in Linda's bedroom, so come in and I will help you get the suitcases into Linda's room."



Eva came out and greeted Joyce with a hug and joined them in bringing the suitcases into the bedroom. The back doorbell rang and Eve went to answer that door. She opened it and it was Alex and Maggie. She saw beyond them a Startruck with the shipping case set on the back porch.

"Alex, and Maggie, come in. I never dreamed that you two would be delivering the shipping case. That looks big enough to hold her vanity as well as her other possessions. I love you, both. "

Julie came into the room squealing for joy and joined into a group hug amongst the four of them. Maggie joined the other ladies folding clothes in Linda's bedroom. Alex stayed and using the antigrav lift took the shipping case to Linda's bedroom. The four of them packed the shipping case with everything of Linda's that would fit. They soon finished and when completed, Alex took the shipping crate back to the star truck and secured it inside.

"Goodbye Eve, Julie, and Joyce. I will be sure to relay your messages and love to Linda. Sorry, but we have to go. Goodbye!

"Bye all. Love to all.

They left quickly but explained that it was intended as a surprise for Linda who had taken a key role in taking out the Xurian Warship. The Startruck (which was a third larger than the star car) rose into the air and disappeared quickly as it got steadily faster.

=====

Rylos – Commander's Home - Present Day

They had made good time clearing out the tunnel. Upon entering the main room of the dungeon there were three exits going forward. They first entered the left hallway which branched out into a number of rooms on either side. In those rooms, they had found a myriad of enemies to dispatch. To the right, the corridor was much the same as the left, but clearing it was no less challenging than the left corridor and no bosses were found in them. Finally, it was time to go through the center door to challenge the bosses and exit in a straight line.

From the geometry of what we had already gone through, we had 3 or Maximum 4 boss rooms left to clear. In the other rooms, we had started a routine way of softening them up and then going freestyle to complete the kill. Ryla would open the door and under stealth kill any right inside the door. When the entryway was clear I would enter and put up a shoulder high force wall to act as a protective barricade. I would throw fireballs and blasts while Ryla would cut them down with her deadly arrows and psi bolts. When the middle area was clear we would arrange my force wall as a dome and work our way closer to the center of the room. We were then able to pick off the remaining enemies. For the Boss rooms, we would have to use a different tactic once we reached the room center to take out the boss.

"Ryla let's use the same tactics except when we reach the center, I will erect a movable force wall to get you within sword range of the boss. Then after you have opened his defenses, I will teleport behind him under my stealth shield and backstab him. then teleport away.

"Good plan. Let's go!

Once Ryla took out the one foe, guarding the door, we executed our plan and took out the other two and got our first look at the boss, a Xurian cultist in an exosuit. We saw a weakness where the suit was joined at the waist, so we lobbed blasts, arrows, fireballs, and bolts which opened up a rift in the exosuit.

"Now we both finish him!" Ryla whispered to me and she teleported away while I did the same an instant afterward. Ryla's sword opened up an even greater gash in his exosuit which permitted me to backstab him with both of my daggers. Ryla ended it by slicing through the opening and up towards the heart, killing him.

"Way to go, Ryla. Let's do it again in the next room."

I received a status message which read:

=Xanthia grants you the ability: Majick - Join Pocket Universes=

"Let's Go!" We executed the same plan and the boss this time was a Zandozan in an exosuit who became just as dead. Before the next chamber was breached, I huddled together with Ryla to discuss our options.

Ryla the next boss might be Xur protected by a personal pocket universe shield. He must have some passive traps that he thinks we will set off and do ourselves in upon. Let's teleport as before but immediately raise our stealth shields. I have a new ability that will join the three-pocket universe into one. Both Xur and we will be unprotected but we will have the element of surprise since we will communicate through telepathy. Agreed?"

"Agreed!" when we executed the plan, we found that the boss was enclosed in a pocket universe and surrounded by a minefield. We each set off the bomb where we would have stood then teleported and erected shields. I telepathically told Ryla when I was going to join our three pocket universes together so we could finish off the boss and we did it flawlessly."

"Xur is dead! Praise Xanthia!"

The Goddess Xanthia came to us in all of her glory and both Ryla and I lay prostrate at her feet.

"Arise, my daughters. I call you back from the world of men to New Selortora Shrine which I have remade after Xur destroyed it with his rail gunned asteroids. You have done well in bringing the instrument of Xur's war against me to justice. You did well to warn the world of men of Xur's plan to slip in and try to take what is not his. Now I need to prepare you in order to bring Xur to his final justice. Say your farewells so your family will not worry and then let us go!"

"Aunt Maggie from Linda, Xanthia has called both Ryla and I, back into her service. She will be teleporting us away and she wants you to know that you now know what is needed to do your part in the defense of Rylos. Linda, Out!"

Immediately after I finished the message to Aunt Maggie, Xanthia teleported the three of us away to New Selortora Shrine.

## Chapter 8 - New Selortora Shrine

Rylos - New Selortora Shrine - Present Day

It was a vast sea of stars shining brightly over New Selortora Shrine on Rylos, The shrine was so beautiful and whole which was in steep contrast to the state the site was in after it had been annihilated by the railgun tossed asteroids. Upon arrival, Linda, Xanthia's Priestess, entered the temple with Ryla, Linda's protector, following behind. Linda Rogan knelt down at the altar, lightyears away from her life as Jeff on Earth, and began to sing a question to the goddess, Xanthia.

"Oh Goddess, fair and kind.

Please comfort my mind.

What could Xur think to gain

To cause fair Xanthia pain?"

"My beloved daughters, it is the prophecy which Xur has misinterpreted. I shall send Thia to reveal the prophecy and the true interpretation and Xur's bungled one."

The Goddess vanished and, in her place, beside us at the altar was Thia. We all reverently left the temple and found a convenient place where Thia had us all sit down to hear her message. But before we could start, a message was coming in from Uncle Alex.

"Linda, from Uncle Alex, where are you?"

"New Selortora Shrine. Xanthia teleported Ryla and me here. Is there an urgent need?"

"Not at this time but please give your Aunt Maggie a heads up when you get back. She wants to be on hand when you unpack the shipping container which arrived with your possessions from Earth. We did the transport and got to visit briefly with your mother, sister, and friend. But Second and more important we have a transmission intercept that I thought you would like to hear which came during your destruction of the Xurian Warship. I will play it now. The voice is confirmed as Xur's."

"Transmission coming in... The Last Priestess is... Transmission ends. What could it be? The last Priestess is dead! Nothing can stop me now!"

"Back. Xur's ego keeps making the same mistake over and over again. Just thought you should know. Uncle Alex out."

"Xur's voice sounded strange, almost as if Xur has become female. Surely, it's just more hysteria coming from Xur. Linda, out!"

"Thia, please forgive me for the delay, please enlighten us."

"The prophecy goes like this: Two priestesses, last of their order, each serve a goddess, one of light and the other of darkness. The strongest shall prevail, and shall become their goddess's avatar, filled with her power and all mortals shall reverence her."

"Two goddesses? There is only one goddess, Xanthia. She is surely the light and there is no darkness in her!", I shouted.

"And now the true meaning is revealed. In the distant past, Rylos had another moon, Raglos which was barren and lifeless, upon which Decieva, the goddess of darkness made her temple. As there was no life aside from Decieva, she had no being to worship her. Decieva was so black that no light could escape her and none could see her except Xanthia who has goddess sight. Decieva hated Xanthia who had a planet for her temple and all Rylans to worship Xanthia. "

"Was Deceive satisfied with having second choice?"

"She was not. Decieva created a sort of reverse Dyson sphere encircling Raglos, where the outward surface, like Decieva herself, was the blackest black because it absorbed all light and energy in its area. the inward surface radiated that light and energy to the moon below. Decieva made an atmosphere appear which was trapped by the outer sphere and was much denser than could be captured by Raglos weak gravity. The now planet sized Raglos, was now too close to Rylos and caused great damage to Rylos. Decieva, who still stood upon the black sphere, could not leave it for her being there was all that sustained it. Xanthia saved Rylos by tearing Raglos from orbit and flinging it into outer space, beyond where the frontier is now, cursed to ultimately wonder forever."

"What would Xur have thought that he could gain from the prophecy?"

"Xur believes that somehow Raglos will return and that will set up the final conflict between Xanthia's priestess and Decieva's priestess. Decieva created the Raglan people to worship her who survived the fury of a supernova in Raglos direct path hurling it directly backward retracing its course. Xur and a Xurian managed to get past the frontier, leaving the rest of the Xurians to carry out his orders, to try to catch up with Raglos.

"Did Xur and the Xurian reach Raglos and meet Decieva?"

"Xur and the Xurian bowed before Decieva and begged to be changed to females and for Xur to be Priestess of Decieva and the Xurian to be Xur's protector. Decieva granted both their requests and has empowered her priestess as Xanthia has empowered hers. Even now, Xur hones her powers determined that she will be the last priestess standing and reap the power and glory she covets. Xanthia now calls her priestess to worship her."

I left quickly and bowed again at the altar. Xanthia appeared to me in all her glory.

"My priestess, you have been faithful with the minor gifts that you have used. Now the final battle approaches so I trust you with the gifts to aid you in saving all Rylos. Receive now my gifts!"

I felt great power envelop me and a popup appeared in my sight.

Xanthia has granted you the gifts:

Goddess Sight

Goddess Empowerment (single use)

"Thank you Xanthia for your abundant gift!"

"I release you to your great task. Go in my good pleasure"

Xanthia left and I stood up to face the others

"Xanthia has given me new gifts. I am going to use the one called Goddess Sight."



The vision came and overwhelmed me in awe of the cosmos. Soon my vision cleared, and I was seeing the unseen planet Raglos. Xur and her protector was upon it. The Raglan people had all gathered near Decieva's shrine which faced the frontier and Rylos. Raglos was in enemy space beyond the frontier streaking toward hitting Rylos. I observed that nothing in its way hindered it and there was no way to stop Raglos from hitting Rylos. I returned to normal vision to reveal to the others what I had seen.

"I've seen Raglos and it is real. Worse than that it has reversed its course to soon hit Rylos. We have some time to prepare since it is in enemy space beyond the frontier."

"Oh my goddess! We must alert star fighter command!"

"Star fighter command from Linda, Uncle Alex I have some bad news and I have found Xur"

"Linda from Uncle Alex, what is your bad news?"

"Xur is on a cloaked rogue planet, beyond the frontier, which is on course to hit Rylos. Only I can see it so we are going to meet it at the frontier in my Gunstar. I'll get you more details once we are on our way. I will attempt to stop it but its power drains anything in its way."

"Just do your best, Linda. I will alert civil authority and get Rylos ready. I await further details when available."

"Xanthia gave me the cosmic analog to your Death Blossom. I only have one shot so I will have to make it count. Linda out"

"Uncle Alex out."

Thea returned to Xanthia and I teleported us to Gunstar One.

=====

Rylos Space- Gunstar One - Present Day

Once I gave the course, we were on our way to meet Raglos at the frontier. I had taken the gunnery chair and had teleported Ryla to the navigation chair so that I could think about my new gifts and how they could be used to deflect Raglos. If we were to detect enemy ships, Ryla and I would have to teleport to swap chairs since she was by far the better starfighter.

"Linda, we are on course to meet Raglos at the Frontier. It seems different not having Grigg with us. I guess Xanthia knew it would need to be the two of us alone in the final battle to face Xur and her protector. I'm monitoring the scopes closely in case we need to go into combat."

"Ryla, I too am keeping watch with Xanthia's gift of my Goddess sight for cloaked ships. Uncle Alex will like having Grigg back so the Gunstar crews he had to shuffle to lend us Grigg will be back to normal,"

"How are we going to stop a planet? Even Death Blossom would have no effect. It would just swallow the energy. I heard you tell Dad that the Goddess gave you a gift that could help but you only have one shot. What will you do?"

"Ryla, I don't know but we've got to come up with a plan. Xanthia gave me, Goddess sight that lets me see Raglos and a onetime gift of Goddess Empowerment to take one action with infinite power. We just have to come up with the right action to take out Decieva and keep Raglos from impacting Rylos. Go ahead and tell your Dad on the radio everything that Thea told us while I give this some thought. "

"Linda, I'm on it.

While Linda pulled up her abilities and studied what she could do with them one by one, Ryla contacted her father, who was also Linda's Uncle Alex, to fill him in on the details that Thia had shared about the prophesy and the present dire situation. Once Ryla had finished, she had an urgent question for Linda.

"Linda, what would happen if you were to teleport something without a destination?"

"Ryla, let me check my read out for an answer. It says that it will be teleported to /dev/null, that is out of existence."

"What if you teleported that entire shell around Raglos with Decieva attached to /dev/null before it reaches the frontier?"

"We might be rid of Decieva and alter Raglos path enough to miss Rylos. That's better than anything I have come up with, Ryla. I was hoping for a plan before we got to the Frontier."

"WHEEEEEOP, WHEEEEEOP, WHEEEEEOP", sounded the alarm.

"What was that Ryla?"

"The Frontier"

"I'm on it, Ryla"

Linda locked on to Raglos' shell with her Goddess sight and invoked her Goddess empowerment while teleporting the shell and Decieva to /dev/null. She was fully recovered from the teleport a moment later when the empowerment left her. A pop up came up.

Goddess Empowerment removed from abilities

Seconds later the moon Raglos, in flux from losing its reverse dyson sphere shield and its Goddess, began to lose atmosphere so that it was only life supporting 10 ft from its surface. Hurricane winds at the surface carried the unanchored Raglan people aloft, ejecting them into space as all the excess air left the now moon. Only Xur and her protector survived, being inside the shrine.

"Look out, Raglos is going to tear through the frontier!"

Ryla kept the Gunstar out of harm's way as Raglos surface was rained upon with pieces of the Frontier, as the moon tore through it.

"Computing Raglos new course. It's going to miss Rylos now!"

"That's a relief, Ryla. Now all we have to do is defeat Xur and her protector. Give your dad the good news!"

"Starfighter Command from Ryla, please confirm Raglos course will now miss Rylos.

"Ryla from Starfighter command, We confirm that Raglos course will lead to orbit around Rylos. Well done! Awaiting your return after defeating Xur. Starfighter Command out."

"Ryla out."

"Ryla, I can't believe it was so easy to get rid of Decieva and the Raglos threat and people in one fell swoop. Xanthia has surely blessed us by making it able to make the impossible, possible. Praise be to Xanthia!"

"Praise be to Xanthia!"

"Even though it seemed easy because Xanthia lent me her power, It took teamwork to figure out just how to use that power. I could have made things much worse applying that power had we not discovered a way to use that power with wisdom."

"We have become a great team in so short a time, Linda. Our teamwork gave us the wisdom to perform the right action with Xanthia's aid."

"We also had the advantage of surprise and being underestimated by Decieva. She could not comprehend that mere mortals could be a threat to her. Decieva must have also been preoccupied with her impending rematch with Xanthia, to take her revenge for banishment. Decieva had only herself to blame for creating something so fragile around Raglos that only her constant contact with the shell over the moon sustained it."

"Xanthia be praised that she took two weak beings and overcame a Goddess by hiding a bit of her power within you, Linda!

"With my goddess sight I see no ships in the area of the moon Raglos. Xur and her protector are on the surface. Their armor no longer cloaks them, it must have been Decieva's power that did that. The cloaks must have been removed when Decieva vanished ."

"The scopes are clear as well, Linda. What do we do next?"

"Ryla, please enter Raglos orbit. We'll teleport down to finish Xur and her protector."

"Compliance!"

=====

Rylos - Starfighter Command - Present Day

"Commander, Multiple targets, identified as Xurian one person fighters, have shown up in the space surrounding Rylos!"

"Tactical Alert! Launch Standby Gunstars! All Starfighters and Star Navigators report to your Gunstars for immediate launch! This is not a drill! Victory or Death!

"Gunstar 4 launching, Koin Krill and Amu Grigg. Gunstar 4 away. Starting Invasion Protocol. Wing 4 form up with me upon launch! Victory or Death!"

"Gunstar 3 launching, Trevor Rogan and Grigg. Gunstar 3 away. Wing 3 form up on me upon launch! Victory or Death!"

"Gunstar 2 Launching. Lewis Rogan and Feli Grigg. Gunstar 2 away. Wing 2 form up on me upon launch! Victory or Death!"

"Gunstar X Launching, Alex and Maggie Rogan. Gunstar X away. Wing 1 form up on me upon launch! Victory or Death!"

One by one the rest of the Gunstars launched and each joined their wings. Invasion protocol called for the wings to surround the invading fighters and take out those straying from the mass. Once all were in range, Death blossom would be unleashed taking out all in DB range

"All Gunstars from Starfighter Command. All Gunstars have joined their wings. Engage Cloak!"

The Star fighter legion did its job and the remaining enemy had been corralled into a spherical space. Gunstar X had left it's wing and was fighting to reach the center of the enemy with Death Blossom deployed and ready to be triggered.

"Alex, all enemies within DB range, Trigger Death Blossom!"

"Maggie, Compliance!"

Gunstar X began to whirl around in the familiar pattern so that the bolts coming from the DB panels struck and destroyed all enemy ships within Death Blossom range. The Starfighter Legion in their Gunstars waited in safety in case DB missed any ships. When Gunstar X ceased being a whirling dervish of death and came to a stop, all the enemy fighters had been destroyed.

"Alex, Death Blossom has drained all primary power. Switching in secondaries. We did it, Alex!"

"We all did it, Maggie! Well Done!"

"Starfighter Legion, from Supreme Legion Commander Alex Rogan. The invasion has been stopped thanks to you all! Well done all! Staged Recall to Starfighter Command. Wing commanders lead your wings home. The Xurian threat is ended and Xanthia's priestess and protector are on their way to defeat Xur once and for all. Alex, out!

As ordered the wing commanders led their wings home including Gunstar X which had returned to lead in Wing One. As the Gunstars settled into the hanger, the assembly hall began to fill up with Gunstar crews beginning to celebrate their victory. Finally, all the wings had landed, and the assembly hall was crowded with all of star fighter command personnel. Ambassador Enduran and Alex took the stage as the tumult calmed, waiting to hear from them.

"Attention all Star Command Personnel, Ambassador Enduran will now address us!"



"Greetings Star Legion! We are gathered on a day to remember. A day when the Xurian plague has been ended once and for all. Each one of you did their part to achieve this victory! All Rylos salutes you! "

A cheer went up from every one in the room which continued loudly for several minutes. Finally Ambassador Enduran raised his hands to quiet the crowded assembly hall. The tumult gave way to silence and the ambassador again spoke.

"I present to you Supreme Star Fighter Legion Commander Alex Rogan!"

"Well done everyone! We have won this battle and we will win the war! Rylos rogue moon, Raglos, will return to its ancient orbit soon, deflected from its collision course by the power of Xanthia. The Raglan people have all perished in the calamity that fell upon their moon. Our ancient enemy the Goddess Decieva is no more as well! We have ended the Xurian threat with our victory in this battle. All that remains is Decieva Priestess Xur and her protector's defeat for total victory. Even now Xanthia has sent her High Priestess Linda Rogan and Protector Ryla Rogan to do battle with Xur and they shall win the war with Xanthia's help."

Alex raised his right fist above his head in the Rylan salute. "Victory or Death!"

All joined Alex in standing with their right fists saluting, shouting as one. "Victory or Death!"

"Victory or Death!

"Victory or Death!

=====

Earth - Denver, CO - Last Week

In the Eve Rogan household, It was business as usual, almost. Eve was rushing around in her bedroom getting ready to cater for a big client. She called out loud enough that her daughter could hear her whatever she was involved doing, or so she thought.

"Julie, I need you as a server for the event today! I know it's your day off helping me in the kitchen, but one of our servers called in sick!"

Back in her bedroom, Julie and Joyce were in the Priestess VR game that was online as a MMORPG. They had been playing in tournament mode and had just finished a game beating a really tough scenario. Both wore the custom deluxe VR game uniforms, Julie had on the Priestess uniform and Joyce had on the Protectors uniform. Joyce was getting a popup which proclaimed. =Protector Record Breaker= The popup grew till it was all she could see then it vanished. Julie received =Priestess Record Breaker= at the same time in the same way. A popup replaced the game menu for Julie

=Message for Julie from Mother: Julie, I need you as a server for the event today! I know it's your day off helping me in the kitchen, but one of our servers called in sick! =

"Mother, Joyce and I were about to go to the mall and meet the gang for shopping. We're in Priestess now!", Julie called into the real world after. She ejected from the game and removed her headgear. Joyce had shut down the game and was removing her headgear, too!

"I'm sorry, sweetheart, but I have to work all day and all evening as a server too. You can meet me at the event, I'll leave the address. I need you in server uniform ready to go at 5:30 pm. You can take a ride share, my treat, instead of the bus."

"Okay, Mom. I'll do it! Excellent news! Both Joyce and I broke the records for Priestess and Protector High Scores!"

"That's nice, sweetie! Could you send Joyce to me after she's out of the game?"

"Nice? It's totally awesome!", Eve Rogan had walked from her room and was now standing in the open door of Julie's bedroom.

"Mrs. Rogan, I heard part of what you told Julie. Do you need me at the event as well?"

"Please, Joyce. It's a last-minute addition for a great client. I have to call everyone in for this one. It's triple pay."

"Mrs. Rogan, I'll do it too. Is it okay if I catch the ride share with Julie?"

"Thank you, Joyce and of course you may share Julie's ride share."

Ding Dong.

"I'll go get the door., ladies", Eve went to the door and answered it and recognized her friend and client, Sega Centari of the Centari Corporation. Sega came in and made herself comfortable in the living room.

"Are Julie and Joyce in? They just both set record breaking scores on Priestess. I have something to discuss with the three of you."

"They are here still in their costumes. I'll get them."

Eve went to bring the ladies into the living room where they all settled in to chat.

"Julie and Joyce, Congratulations on your great victory. I'm so glad we had that rule change, allowing children of affiliates to participate, that let you enter this time, Joyce. You've both won the tournament grand prize, an all-expenses paid, week long, trip to Rylos to visit New Selortora Shrine. You'll be able to see the real life setting that inspired the game. But that's not all. what I came to discuss with you all is separate and involves the three of you."

"Wow, that's great news, Sega. Can I go, Mom?"

"Of course, Julie."

"Sega, I'll have to ask my Dad, but I want to go too."

"Of course, Joyce. Talking to him is my next stop. But now I want to discuss something different with the three of you."

"What else could top that, Sega?"

"What I initially came to do is to invite the three of you for an all-expenses paid week long Rogan Family Reunion on Rylos, which will also celebrate Linda becoming Xanthia's High Priestess. Linda would want you there which is why you are invited as well, Joyce. It's scheduled for a week from today and will be a surprise for Linda and her cousin Ryla."

"So soon? How will my business cope losing all of us? Joyce's vacation can be moved up. You can go, Joyce."

"Alex authorized Beta Unit Replacements for you all. They will have your DNA, memories, and judgement. You'll be able to train them before you go to take over your lives for a week. We can supply face masks for you all so you can pretend to be other people when you train them in public."

"I'm sold. Is there anything hindering you from going next week, Julie?"

"I'd love to go next week. Sega, could I schedule my prize week for the week after the Reunion and have my Beta Unit still be here to help my Mom?"

"That can be arranged easily, Julie. There will be downtime in your reunion week where you could do your prize activities too."

"I'll have to get my parents' permission before I could accept either trip, Thank you for the vacation, Mrs. Rogan. I'm sure that will help me and I could do both trips at the same time. I'm not sure if my parents will want a Beta Unit of me."

"Joyce, visiting your parents is my next stop. If you and Julie are on board, Eve, we can get started preparing your beta units. I brought them with me. Is there some place that they could lay down while they cook, that is their bodies will be in flux until they transform into your perfect duplicates? Alex prepared them with family DNA so the process will be shortened."

"Sega, they can lay down in Linda's room. She has a queen-sized bed."

"I'll go bring them in. Please don't any of you touch them until they are in bed. I will guide you on how to 'prime' them, later."

They all agreed, and Sega brought in a mother and daughter who looked related to them. Sega led them to Linda's bedroom and the Beta units were both sitting up in bed. Sega directed Eve to come in and stand by the Mother and Julie on the other side by the daughter.

"Now, Eve shake hands with the Mother and Julie shake hands with the daughter."

They shook hands and felt a sharp sting and a popping sound as both DNA and a copy of their memories were given to each Beta Unit.

"They will have to cook overnight before they will be presentable. It can be a gruesome process and generate some sound so it's best if they have everything covered and are not disturbed."

The women rejoined Joyce in the Living Room. Sega was going to leave with Joyce to talk to her parents while Eve had to leave to get to work. Joyce and Julie made plans to meet up before it was time to go to the event. They all left leaving Julie in the house alone.

## Chapter 9 - Victory!

Earth - Denver, CO - Present Day

"The week we had to get ready passed all too quickly. I, Julie Rogan, could not believe that we were going to ride in a Starcar to Rylos, today. I was thrilled that I would be sharing this adventure with my mother and best friend, Joyce. Mom, how do you feel about that clause in the contract, with the job offer, that Joyce and I signed as the prize winners?"

Julie, I'm willing for you to follow your future wherever it leads. I'm glad that I could also spend time with the crew, while pretending to be the outside trainer. They are ready to take over the business on earth replacing all of us. If you need to stay on Rylos with Joyce, we'll all stay. With the connections the Rogan family has, I'm sure that I will find something to do on Rylos.

"I'm glad you have decided that. If it works out we can have the Rogan family back together in one place."

"Julie, the beta units are off to work. Can you believe what a nice time we had training them? Sega was right though about them being able to handle the job. Have you heard from Joyce?"



"She said that Sega was going to pick her up first. Thank you for extending her vacation so she can be with me on both weeks I'll be gone. I've learned to trust Beta Julie not to mess up my life while I am gone. I bet Joyce is relieved that her parents are letting her go without a beta so she knows her earth life will be right how she left it when she comes back."

"Well our way you both will be getting round trip passage to Rylos another time since doing the trips back to back saves that to take later. Sega is floating the story that Joyce won another contest to explain her 2-week vacation while we appear to still be on Earth. The left-over round trip will stand in for the Priestess Game Prize for both of you. Everyone wins."

"Mom, do you have everything? I'm ready to go!"

"I'm ready too. All we have to do is wait on our ride. Let's wait on the porch with our luggage and I'll lock up. "

We did not have long to wait before the Starcar pulled into our driveway. The gull wing doors on the front and back rose up and Sega and Joyce got out to help with our luggage which was soon stowed away. Mom joined Sega in the front seat while Joyce and I shared the back seat.

"Are you ready for this Joyce?"

"I was born ready, Julie."

"Can you believe that on Rylos everything in the game is real? That the Goddess Xanthia is real? That that taking the initiate's mark binds you to Xanthia's service forever?"

"I talked with my parents about this and they gave me their blessing to follow my dream. I'm scared that a real-life fight of good versus evil is going on at Rylos. Sega says that after Linda and Ryla defeat Xur that there will be a time of peace and rebuilding. Unfortunately, evil rises up unbidden and good must oppose it. Hopefully by the time we face it, we will have turned these virtual skills that we have into real ones just like Linda had to do."

"I agree that it is facing up to a reality unlike any that we have ever known. It's a difficult position to be in because if a Goddess asks you to do something, you do it, no questions asked. Linda must have felt the same way, even more since she was the chosen one and she took it and bound her life to Xanthia and Rylos for the rest of her life.

"I trust that Xanthia is merciful and will not offer us the initiate's mark without the foreknowledge that we possess all that we need to thrive in Her service. If she offers me the initiate mark, I will accept it. I'll turn my back on earth and commit totally to Xanthia and Rylos because they will be my future. Let's Go!

Sega drove the Starcar to the airport where we entered the designated Starcar take off runway. After getting clearance, we quickly got up to speed and the rockets blasted us into the sky, and we were all pressed back in our seats. The blue of the sky turned to the black of space. Our weight returned to normal when the boost cut out and we coasted at great speeds through the solar system.

"Sega Centari to Star Fighter Command, Entering Star Drive at Colomba Zeta.", radioed Sega

The Star Car entered a warp field where everything was blue till, we reached midpoint, and everything shifted to red. The effect was beautiful and did not cause any discomfort. When we exited the field, a brand-new planet filled our windows. This was Rylos, our destination.

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Raglos Space - Gunstar One - Present Day

The holocaust in orbit of Raglos was overwhelming. What should have been a simple thing to achieve orbit was gruesome since the whole of Raglos dead population was caught in orbits of Raglos. The overwhelming air force throwing the population off the moon when most of its atmosphere was vented to space was not enough to achieve orbital velocity. Instead of space burials, the bodies were a navigation hazard. In spite of the damage from pieces of the frontier hitting the surface, the moon was green with plant life and blue with bodies of water and it had a breathable atmosphere, even though it was a shallow one. Once Raglos entered Rylos orbit, it was not unimaginable that it would be colonized.

However, it was not the future that concerned Ryla, it was the present. In the present all the bodies presented a navigation hazard, particularly to an empty ship in orbit which is what Gunstar One was about to become when the crew teleported down. Ryla swapped with Linda and took the gunnery chair and began removing bodies by vaporizing them with its weapons. She used the weapons fire to herd the bodies into a sphere and finished them up by using death blossom on them. The primary power went out and Linda switched in the secondary power. They settled into orbit but the automatic defenses needed primary power so they had some time to kill before it would be safe to leave the Gunstar.

"Ryla, we are building up power before we should teleport down to Raglos. Our orbit is stable and clear of navigation hazards. While we are waiting, there is time for careful planning. First, we should know our current stats, abilities, and inventory. Second we should have a plan of attack."

"Linda, I agree. We can assume that Xur and her protector will have like abilities.

"Ryla, here are my readouts:"

|                 |                  |                         |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Name: Linda     | Class: Cleric    | Bond: Xanthia           |
| Sex: Female     | Race: Human      | Primary: High Priestess |
| Age: 18         | Planet: Rylos    | Secondary: Stealth      |
| Strength: 8     | Intelligence: 10 | Dexterity: 8            |
| Constitution: 8 | Wisdom: 10       | Stealth: 8              |
| Accuracy: 8     | Charisma: 10     | Hypnosis: 8             |

Majick: 8      Hidden: 6

Spellcraft: 4      Hiddencraft: 2

Loyalty: 9      Rescue: 7

Maximum Mana: 8      Maximum Cloak: 6

Current Mana: 8      Current Cloak: 6

Restore Mana: 4      Restore Cloak: 2

Maximum Health: 9      Healing: 4

Current Health: 9      Number Heals: 4

Restore Health: 4      HealingCraft: 4

Abilities - High Priestess Linda Rogan

Spear Fighting (6)  
Staff Fighting (6)  
Majick Blast (10)  
Majick Fireball (10)  
Majick Missile(20)  
Majick Levitate (8)  
Majick Force Wall (6)  
Majick Mindlink (5)  
Majick Teleport (12)  
Majick Teleport Other(18)  
Majick Join Pocket Universes(10)  
Gunstar Engineering (10)  
Gunstar Navigation (10)  
Gunstar Scanning (10)  
Gunstar Communication (10)  
Universal Translator (10)  
Goddess Sight(50)

Inventory - High Priestess Linda Rogan

Light Decelerator Implant  
Double Spear of Xanthia (+30)  
Quarterstaff of Xanthia (+20)  
2x Dagger of Xanthia (+20)  
Bag of Holding

"Linda, this is what I have now:."

Name: Ryla    Class: Cleric    Bond: Xanthia  
Sex: Female    Race: Human    Primary: Protector  
Age: 18        Planet: Rylos    Secondary: Stealth

Strength: 10      Intelligence: 8    Dexterity: 8  
Constitution: 10    Wisdom: 8        Stealth: 8  
Accuracy: 10      Charisma: 8      Hypnosis: 8

Psionics: 8      Hidden: 6  
Psicraft: 4      Hiddencraft: 2  
Protect: 9        Rescue: 7

Maximum PsiEnergy: 8    Maximum Cloak: 6  
Current PsiEnergy: 8     Current Cloak: 6  
Restore PsiEnergy: 4     Restore Cloak: 2

Maximum Health: 9  
Current Health: 9  
Restore Health: 4

Abilities - Protector Ryla Rogan

Sword Fighting (10)

Archery (10)

PSI Bolt (10)

PSI Push (10)

PSI Levitate (8)

PSI Mindlink (6)

PSI Telepath

PSI Teleport (12)

Hypnosis (18)

Stealth Dome (10)

Stealth Shield (10)

Double Attack (10)

Backstabbing (12)

Starnavigator (18)

Starfighter (18)

Universal Translator (10)

Inventory - Protector Ryla Rogan

Light Decelerator Implant

Sword of Xanthia (+25)

Bow of Xanthia (+20)

2x Dagger of Xanthia (+20)

Quiver of Xanthia(+5)

Bag of Holding



Linda, I feel that I should take out Xur's protector as quick as possible while you hold Xur's attention. Once I do that, we can team up against Xur."

"Ryla, I like that. You could stealth behind Xur and hit her from the back while I attack her from the front."

"I like our plan. It is so simple that it should actually work."

"I'm scanning the surface and identifying the scan with information from my goddess sight. Xur and her protector are outside of the shrine, under cover provided by a chunk of the frontier in a grassy field that goes on for miles. Do you see them?"

"Yes. Why don't we split up and flank them on either side with a clear line of fire. Just put me down on the side with my sights on Xur's Protector."

"That's a great idea. I can do that easily, Ryla."

"Are you ready to go, Linda?"

"Primary power is restored. Teleporting now"

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Raglos - Decieva Shrine Field - Present Day

When we touched down on Raglos. Ryla invoked her Stealth Shield and I built my Force Wall. Both of us had cover and neither of us had been seen yet. Ryla teleported away Xur's Protectors armor and followed with an arrow to the heart killing the protector instantly. Ryla invoked her stealth shield. immediately after and hid.

Xur invoked her force wall in my direction since she could see me but could not see the source of the arrow that had killed her companion. She launched a fireball in my direction, but it was put out by my force wall.

I followed with a fireball and a blast to weaken his force shield and a Majick Missile which was able to avoid Xur's force wall and impact on her helm, knocking her senseless for a moment. I took that chance to repeat those actions over and over alternating between hitting her helm and back with the Missiles. The effect was that Xur's helm and back armor were worn paper thin and were ready to be pierced by Ryla's attack. I continued firing until I got word from Ryla.

\*\*\*Attacking\*\*\* came from Ryla's telepathy. I ceased fire as she stabbed Xur in the back with both her daggers then cut off Xur's head with her sword. Xur fell down dead.

"Xur is dead. Praises be to Xanthia! Well done, Ryla!"

"Linda you are now indeed The Last Priestess! Xanthia be praised

We teleported back to Gunstar One with me in the Navigation Chair just in case for the flight home. Now we could call to Rylos with the good news.

"Star Fighter Command from Gunstar One, Victory is ours! Xur and her protector are dead! Praise be to Xanthia!"

"Gunstar One from Supreme Star Fighter Commander, All the Star League joins you in celebrating our Victory over Xur! You are directed to set course to land on Rylos at Rogan Plateau where you will be met with Rylan officials and well-wishers. Praise be to Xanthia Alex Rogan out!

"Linda and Ryla Rogan are setting course as ordered. Looks like Raglos will enter orbit of Rylos about the same time we touch down. Gunstar One out.

"Setting course as ordered. Engaging! I'm keeping a close eye on the scope and with my Goddess Sight for hazards. I would not to be caught unawares on the way to our Victory celebration."

"Why not just teleport Gunstar One to Rogan Plateau and cut out the trip?

"Tine to settle down and time for Rylos to assemble the celebration. We've been through too much to cheat us out of all we are due, Ryla."

"You have me there, Linda."

The flight passed without any alarms and quicker than I was ready for it to end. We landed safely on Rogan's Plateau as ordered.

=====

Rylos - Rogan Plateau - Present Day

We looked out over the edge of the plateau into the valley below which contained a gathering of every Rylan on the planet that could get there with the short notice they had been given which filled it. Now was the time to not do things the ordinary way and one way to escape the welcoming committee and get right to the main event. We teleported to where Alex Rogan was talking to Ambassador Enduran.

"Greetings, gentleman. How is this celebration going to work?"

"Welcome Linda and Ryla. You really know how to make an entrance! I'll arrange for Gunstar One to be returned to it's hanger at Star Fighter Command. As part of today's celebration, we are going to induct both of you into the Star Fighter Command Reserve. If you need a Gunstar again, just ask.", Alex signaled Star Fighter Command to return Gunstar One.

"Thank you, Uncle Alex. I hope that Tisla and Sega Centari will be doing most of the universe hoping for a while. Ryla and I have to do for the Priestess and Protectors what you had to do for Star Fighter Command. I only hope we do as good a job with Xanthia's help."

"I'm just glad that Xanthia let us fight together to defeat Xur and Decieva and give us victory."

We all glanced back in the direction where we had left Gunstar One as it took off to make the short hop back to Starfighter Command. Ambassador Enduran cleared his throat and we all looked back at him.

"I'm sorry for your loss Ambassador" Ryla offered, empathizing with the mixed emotions he must be feeling.

"I lost Xur a long time ago, when she became the cult leader filled with megalomania. I cast her out and I have never looked back on that decision for it was for the good of all Rylans. She took to becoming female without any regret. I can only wonder if I had allowed her to enter Xanthia's service when a child as she asked, that we could have avoided the civil war her cult pushed us into. Alas, there is no way to know, now."

The crowd which missed us at the ship had caught up with us. It was time for our moment in the spotlight, which was unavoidable. The look in Ambassador Enduron's eyes told me that he would keep it mercifully brief for all our sake.

Greetings to all Rylans. I am joined here by Linda and Ryla Rogan who together with Star Fighter Command, defeated the Zandozans, the Xurians, the Raglans, the Goddess Decieva, and finally Xur and her protector, but most of all avoided the disaster of Raglan hitting and destroying Rylos by returning our ancient moon back into orbit and giving us final victory, which has been long in coming. I give you the High Priestess of Xanthia and her protector.

The people cheered as one where all that could be heard was their voices. Members of Star Fighter Command gave the Rylan Victory Salute over and over. They tapped the side of their right fist to their heart twice then raised it over their heads. Ryla and I enjoyed the attention but more than that enjoyed the relief that the long nightmare of the Xurian War was finally over as well as ending a conflict with more cosmic significance. The crowd hushed as Alex Rogan, hero of the Battle for the Frontier stepped forward while Ambassador Enduran placed medallions of the Star League's Highest honor around Ryla's and my neck.

"On behalf of the Star League, I award Star Fighter First class Ryla Rogan and Star Navigator first class Linda Rogan, the honor of becoming the first members of the Star Fighter Reserve and release them to their duties as Xanthia's High Priestess and Protector. Congratulations!

The crowd cheered just as loudly and salutes from Star Fighter Command came as enthusiastically as before. Alex pinned a set of Star League Wings on each of us. This time nothing was going to quiet the crowd as they gave us our due. We knew that we were not the only heroes on the plateau that day, but we were standing in for all of them living and dead who gave their all that this Victory could occur. Unknown to us, among the many Rylans in the crowd, three Terrans were also enjoying the celebration.

"All Rylos salutes you! Praise be to Xanthia! I am glad that the rebuilding of the legion of her priestesses and protectors lie in your capable hands, Linda and Ryla Rogan. I know we will hear about great things coming from both of you."

"Thank you, Ambassador Enduran. We will do our best.

We stood there basking in the cheers from the crowd for a while. When we had stayed long enough, Uncle Alex led us to a star car to carry us back for a more private celebration, the Rogan family reunion.

=====

Rylos - Rogan Family Reunion - Present Day

We were led to a huge banquet hall where the Rogan Clan were all gathered standing to greet us at the entrance. They all came up and hugged us one by one. Uncle Alex, Aunt Maggie, Uncle Lewis, and Cousin Trevor all took their turns. After that three more women came out from a side door and joined the line, My mother, Eve, my sister Julia and my friend, Joyce. I sobbed in their arms since I was so glad to see them, I cried tears of joy.

The banquet laid before us was abundant and well received by us all sitting around a long table as a family. While there was loads of small talk and getting caught up, the one thing that struck both Ryla and myself is that Julia was wearing a real priestess uniform and Joyce was wearing a real protector's uniform. I was dying to hear the story behind that and in between other talk, the adventure of how they had won an online Priestess VR tournament and had been recruited by Sega for an eventual meeting with Xanthia.

Our talk with them about entering Xanthia's service had to wait since it could only be done among the four of us. The gathering broke up after desert with the men going back to Starfighter Command to take care of a few things which could not wait. Mom and Aunt Maggie led the women back to my bedroom. I had been asked not to open the shipping case from earth without Aunt Maggie but as wild as my life had been, this was the first time I had laid eyes on it. Mom opened it and took out something that was very well wrapped and set it aside.

My curiosity over the object gave way to fun as the ladies in a flurry of activities removed each item and put it up in my room. Mother had emptied my room and everything except Jeff's clothes and bedroom suite and things distinctly masculine were in the shipping case. Instantly my room here had been transformed from a guest room into my room. I marveled at all the new clothes in my closet and knew that there was going to be a fashion show in my future. Then Mother unwrapped the object and I saw it was an antique jewelry box and she handed it to me.

"Linda you must promise to always keep this box safe. It has been passed down from oldest daughter to oldest daughter over many generations in our family. At the time when your oldest daughter leaves home for good, you should pass it to her. All the jewelry inside is real so it is truly priceless. I love you Linda!"

"I promise to keep it safe and pass it on to my oldest daughter when she leaves home. I love you, Mother!"



My mother and I hugged and kissed each other while the other women each let out a sigh. When we finished, Aunt Maggie led Mother away which left the four of us wearing Xanthia's uniform alone.

"Do you ladies realize what getting those real uniforms mean?"

"Yes, sis. It means that we will face Xanthia and she will offer the initiates mark?"

"And do you know what taking the mark means, Joyce?"

"That it isn't a game. It is all real and we will be in Xanthia's service for the rest of our lives."

"Have you decided if you will accept the mark if offered?"

"Yes, we, as a team. will both accept the mark. We've had a chance to see a bit of Rylos and learn about Xanthia for real. We feel called to this as our life's work."

"That is wonderful because the four of us have been called to New Selortora Shrine for an audience with Xanthia. Teleporting now!"

=====

Rylos - New Selortora Shrine - Present Day

This was now a familiar place to Ryla and I, what we noticed in the reception chamber was standing Tisla and Sega Centari along with Thia. Julie and Joyce took in every detail for this was completely new to them. I made the introductions, and we all took turns hugging each other. Thia took me aside into the Goddess chamber.

"Linda, you have been found worthy in the eyes of the Goddess. My time as avatar is ending, Xanthia created me because there was no one else to train you. Now I take my rightful place again being one with the Goddess. It is a mystery but know that as Xanthia is always with you, I am with you also.

Xanthia appeared on the platform and I bowed before her. I looked on as Thia joined Xanthia on the platform and the two of them became one again.

"I call into my presence High Priestess Linda Rogan. You have been faithful in a few things, now I make you ruler over many. Do you hereby swear fealty to the Goddess Xanthia - To speak and to be silent, to do and to let be, to come and to go, in need and in plenty, In peace and in war, in living and in dying, From this hour henceforth, until my Goddess release me, Death takes me, or the world end?"

"I so swear!"

I, Xanthia, Goddess of Rylos, Hear and shall not forget, nor fail to reward, that which is freely given: Fealty with love, Valor with honor, and Oath breaking with justice. Now rise and go in our esteem. Avatar and High Priestess Linda Rogan. Receive now my spirit!"

I glanced down and noticed that I had gotten increases all my stats and had some additions. I noticed that I glowed with white light around me just like Thia sometimes did. Now I was to take Thia's place and call the rest of my group into the presence of Xanthia

I went into the reception and called Ryla into the presence of Xanthia.

"Greetings Protector, Ryla Rogan. Do you hereby swear fealty to the Goddess Xanthia - To speak and to be silent, to do and to let be, To come and to go, in need and in plenty, in peace and in war, in living and in dying, From this hour henceforth, until my Goddess release me, Death takes me, or the world end?"

"I so swear!"

I, Xanthia, Goddess of Rylos, Hear and shall not forget, nor fail to reward, that which is freely given: Fealty with love, Valor with honor, and Oath breaking with justice. Now rise and go in our esteem. High Protector Ryla Rogan"

I knew that Ryla had been granted a bump up in her stats as well as some new additions that she should be pleased with along with new abilities. Next, I called into the presence my sister, Julie.

"Greetings Priestess Julia Rogan. You have been recruited by the Star League to defend Rylos and the Goddess Xanthia's temple against all who would oppose Xanthia. Do you hereby swear fealty to the Goddess Xanthia - To speak and to be silent, to do and to let be, To come and to go, in need and in plenty, In peace and in war, in living and in dying, From this hour henceforth, until my Goddess release me, Death takes me, or the world end?"

"I so swear!"

I, Xanthia, Goddess of Rylos, Hear and shall not forget, nor fail to reward, that which is freely given: Fealty with love, Valor with honor, and Oath breaking with justice. Now rise and go in our esteem. Priestess Julia Rogan. Receive now my mark!"

Julie received the mark on the oval of of her tiara, just as in the game. She glanced down and noticed that she had kept all her stats and had some additions.

I finally called into the presence, Joyce White. I felt no urging to call anyone else, so I guessed that Sega and Tisla had gotten their rewards summoned by Thia before we arrived.

"Greetings Protector Joyce White. You have been recruited by the Star League to defend Rylos and the Goddess Xanthia's temple against all who would oppose Xanthia. Do you hereby swear fealty to the Goddess Xanthia - To speak and to be silent, to do and to let be, To come and to go, in need and in plenty, In peace and in war, in living and in dying, From this hour henceforth, until my Goddess release me, Death takes me, or the world end?"

"I so swear!"

I, Xanthia, Goddess of Rylos, Hear and shall not forget, nor fail to reward, that which is freely given: Fealty with love, Valor with honor, and Oath breaking with justice. Now rise and go in our esteem. Protector Joyce White. Receive now my mark!"

Joyce received the mark on the oval of of her belt, just as in the game. She glanced down and noticed that she had kept all her stats and had some additions.

Once the callings were complete, Xanthia vanished and we all met back in the reception chamber. Sega and Tisla hugged us all and were taking their leave of us. Tisla filled us in while we followed her to the Starcar Launch Deck.

"We received some record breaker hits on a couple of Priestess games in the Star League. Hopefully, we will be back with some new recruits to add to you training class. Xanthia released the hold on Rylan recruits now that the Xurian threat is over, so with the backlog being tapped, you'll have even more. We expect to be very busy filling up your training class and bringing back the number so that all can be accomplished for Xanthia. Farewell, my friends!

Tisla and Sega Centari entered their Starcar and left on their missions for Xanthia.

Ryla showed Julie and Joyce to a small control room off of the Starcar Launch Deck that was filled with monitors with radio equipment.

"Julie and Joyce, you both have time now to tell, via radio, your parents about your decision and make any arrangements you need to make for leaving earth permanently."

"Thank you, sis. Momma and I talked about what it would mean for me to take the mark. She said she would stay on Rylos herself and try to find a job here. Do you think she could work here with us?"

"With my new authority, as Xanthia's Avatar, I could make a place for her here until Xanthia's will is known. We will need someone to cook meals when our shrine starts filling up with priestesses and protectors and there is always monitor duty. I can make the offer to her officially, but you can tell Mother about it. It comes with a nice room here, to live. We'll show Joyce and yourself, your rooms later.

"Thank you, sis! I'll call Mom now."

Joyce waited in the control room for her turn to talk to her parents. Linda and Ryla withdrew to discuss how they would train the initiates.

"Eve Rogan from Julia Rogan, Mom, I have some wonderful news. I have been accepted as an initiate of Xanthia. I'll be staying here on Rylos for the rest of my life. Xanthia made Linda her avatar so she's in charge when the Goddess is away. Linda has a job in mind for you, without becoming an initiate, that we think you might like, Mom. This place is going to fill up with initiates as Xanthia adds to our number. She will need someone to cook meals and for monitor duty. It comes with a nice room to live here."

"That is wonderful, sweetheart. Congratulations on your life choice and achievement. I too, will be staying on Rylos now. The job seems like something I'll love doing and enjoy, Did Joyce become an initiate, too?"

"Yes, she is an initiate too. She's here with me, waiting her turn to speak to her parents."

"I'll let you Uncle Alex know so he can help us and Joyce with the move to Rylos. I'll be going back to Earth to turn over the business and get us packed for the move. I'll be back before you know it. It will be good to have the three of us back together again. I love you, Julie. Mom out."

"I love you, Mom! Have a safe trip! Julie out."

Joyce, with the aid of a voice assistant placed a phone call to her parents on Earth.

"Hello Mother, Daddy? It's Joyce and I have some news to share with both of you."

"We can both hear you, darling, you can tell us your news."

"I've been accepted as Xanthia's initiate. I'll be staying on Rylos in Xanthia's service for the rest of my life. I can call you all regularly to keep in touch. Could you put my affairs on Earth in order and pack my things?"

"We'll be glad to do that for you, darling. How will your things get to Rylos?"

"You'll be receiving a shipping container from Star Fighter Command. Once you have it packed you can call for it to be transported by them. Mrs. Rogan is making arrangements with Linda's Uncle Alex and they will call you with the details."

"We love you so much, darling. We are going to miss, you. Call again soon!"

"I'm going to miss you both too. I love you, Mother and Daddy! Goodbye."

Once Joyce and Julie had completed their calls, Linda and Ryla returned to start the initiate's training.

"Julie and Joyce now is the time to start your training. we'll start with the simulator beds. Ryla can show you the way and I'll be along shortly."

I had a faraway look in my eyes as I considered how far we had come and how far we had yet to go. Ryla noticed it and paused a moment to speak to me.

"What is it, Linda?"

"I just realized that I am no longer the Last Priestess. Now I am the first of many. Praised be to Xanthia!"

"That you are, Linda, that you are."

The four of us walked together out of the control room and into Rylos' future.

**THE END**



## The Last Priestess Cast List

### Alex Rogan 's Family

- Alex Rogan, The Last Starfighter
- Jane Rogan, Alex's Mother
- Lewis Rogan, Alex's Brother
- Margaret 'Maggie' Gordon Rogan, Alex's Wife
- Trevor Rogan, Alex and Maggie's son
- Ryla Rogan, Alex and Maggie's daughter
- Eve Rogan, Jane Rogan's daughter

### Jeff Rogan's Family

- Eve Rogan, Jeff's mother
- Jeff Rogan, Eve's 14 yr old son
- Linda Rogan, Jeff's female alter ego
- Julia 'Julie' Rogan, Jeff's 10 year old sister

### Joyce White's Family

- Joyce White - Linda Rogan's 14 yr old friend
- Tony White - Joyce's 12 yr old brother and Jeff's Friend
- Dr Jonas White - Chairman of Rally Corporation and Joyce and Tony's Dad

### Grigg's Family

- Star Navigator First Class Grigg, "Gunstar One" Engineer
- Grigg's Wifeling
- Feli Grigg, One of the thousand little griggings
- Amu Grigg, One of the thousand little griggings

### **Ambassador Enduran's Family**

- Ambassador Enduran, Star League leader
- Xur, Enduran's estranged son

### **Lord Krill's Family**

- Lord Krill, Commander of Kodan Command Ship
- Koin Krill, Lord Krill's son

## Jo Dora Webster's Author Website

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