

## **Chapter 13**

### **Defensive Strategy**

“Naturally,” Captain Jordan told Atlanta as they drove back to her Marineville apartment, “all charges against you have been dropped.”

But Atlanta wasn’t really listening. Her world had become one nightmare after another. “Captain Jordan, Marina is no more a traitor than I am.”

Jordan nodded, “I know that now Atlanta. Please — allow me to apologise for my earlier attitude. I think you were right to strike me.”

“But Captain...”

Jordan waved a dismissive hand, “I did not want to see the truth. It was unthinkable. But now it is obvious to me. You and I are pawns in a very dangerous game. And I think I now know who some of the players are.”

Soon Jordan’s car was drawing up outside Atlanta’s apartment. “May I come in Atlanta? I would like to discuss our next move.”

Atlanta managed a smile as she climbed wearily out of the car, “Of course Captain Jordan.”

“Please Atlanta, off duty call me Jacques. We were friends once. Remember?”

Atlanta touched Jordan’s arm as they walked to the door, “We are still friends Jacques.”

“Tres bien! I ‘ave the feeling we need all the friends we can get.”

A short time later Jordan was sitting in Atlanta’s lounge with a cup of steaming coffee while Atlanta took a quick shower. He knew he had to take

action soon — both of their lives were in danger. He was pretty certain that Admiral Beatty was behind the attempt to kill Atlanta. He would have to report their story before they were both silenced. But who should he report to now the World Security Patrol had been dissolved? The World President himself? Did he trust the World President?

“I feel a little more human now Jacques,” Atlanta announced as she joined the captain on the sofa. “I changed out of that uniform, I hope you don’t mind.”

“Oh, no... No of course not.” Not for the first time, Jordan found himself thinking that the WASP uniform just didn’t do Atlanta’s figure justice. And she had such beautiful legs... “Atlanta, I think you should stay here in your quarters for the time being. I’ll ensure there is someone on guard.”

Atlanta grimaced, “I think I’d be safer without the guard.”

“Yes. But I shall be your guard, for the time being at least.” Jordan checked his watch, “It’s just after eight. I have the feeling we should see what’s on the World News. Do you mind?”

“Good idea Jacques.” Atlanta switched on the television and settled back on the sofa.

“... high level talks in Unity City. So viewers,” newsman Johnny Jackson asked, as pictures of Marineville flashed on the television screen, “what is the real story behind these latest despicable acts perpetrated by the under-sea alliance? Captain Jacques Jordan, acting commander of the World Aquanaut Security Patrol, was not available for comment...”

Jordan snorted, “No-one asked me to comment...”

“As you know, Captain Jordan is the World Navy hero who defeated Titan’s monster submarine...”

“That’s a nice photo of you Jacques.”

“Shhh...”

“So viewers, let’s see if we can put together the pieces of what adds up to a terrifying picture of conspiracy, treason and terrorism.

A key figure in these events is the alien sea creature known only as ‘Marina’. As you may know, viewers, Marina was one of the despotic Titan’s most favoured concubines. It is now believed that Titan used this siren to infiltrate Marineville security. This undersea Mata Hari wormed her way into the Stingray crew, and became a *very* close friend of WASP hero, Captain Troy Tempest.

For over a year now, Marina has been at liberty to relay our security secrets directly to Titan himself...

As viewers will know, Marina was last seen heading for the undersea city of Titanica, in a Pacifican submarine. Soon afterwards, Stingray and her crew were lost in action. Did the siren lure Tempest and his crew to their deaths?”

“He’s not dead...” Atlanta whispered, “He can’t be...”

“But there’s more...” Johnny Jackson continued gravely, “Marina had accomplices within the WASP. Commander Samuel Shore, head of the WASP, has committed as yet undisclosed acts of treason, and was placed under close arrest. Shore is now being held on the Prison Planet, Conva.

Shore’s daughter, Lieutenant Atlanta Shore, is widely believed to be the traitor, who, together with her undersea creature friends, stole the WASP’s Swordfish submarine — after placing coralamic bombs in the submarine pens.

Now Atlanta Shore is under lock and key — but beware Captain Jordan — Titan’s agents are deadly!”

“Atlanta? Are you all right?”

“Oh, yes Jacques. I’m sorry, I was worrying about poor Troy.”

Jordan switched off the television. “Atlanta, I am afraid there is nothing we can do for Troy, but believe me...”

The telephone began to ring.

Atlanta looked at the phone apprehensively. After exchanging a worried glance with Jordan, she gingerly picked it up. “Yes? Yes he’s here Sergeant.”

Atlanta offered the phone to Jordan

“It’s the sergeant at the perimeter gate. He wants to speak to you sir.”

Jordan nodded and took the receiver, “Captain Jordan here... Yes Sergeant. Send him right over.” Jordan turned to Atlanta as he replaced the receiver. “We have a visitor. Space General Wilbur Zero of the World Space Patrol.”

“Hello Atlanta,” Zero smiled wearily, when Atlanta opened the door. “Sorry to drop in on you like this. I must speak with Captain Jordan urgently.”

Atlanta returned the smile, “Hello Wilbur, it’s been a long time. Please, come in, Captain Jordan is in the lounge.”

“I’m sorry about your father. We’re doing our best to get Sam freed. He has a lot of friends — some in high places.”

Atlanta squeezed the General’s arm as she escorted him into the lounge. “So I see... General.”

“He also has a lot of enemies,” Jordan said gravely, “also in ‘igh places.”

“Captain Jordan... Sorry to drop in on you like this; this is strictly unofficial.”

“I’ll get us all a coffee...” Atlanta told them as she disappeared into the kitchen.

“Captain,” Zero said crisply, “I’ll get right to the point. Will you support a move to have the World President removed from office?”

---

There was a loud crash as something smashed on to the floor in the kitchen.  
“Er,” Zero added carefully, “Legally of course.”

