

Dauntless

Story and Copyright by Brent Fisher

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Narrative Pitch & Summary

“Ooh-Shiny!” Pitch:

Airships! Adventure! Explosions! Drama! Treasure! Did I mention Airships?

Elevator Pitch:

In a world filled with mechanical and early industrial wonders, the prodigal scion of a wealthy transport company moonlights as a Robin Hood-like sky pirate with a self-mandated mission to help others, redistribute wealth, and search for her missing father who disappeared mysteriously when she was small.

The Elevator Got Stuck Pitch:

EVELYN FAIRWEATHER, or Eve to her crew and closest cohorts, is the intended corporate heir to the Winged Messenger, one of the largest airship transportation companies in the world of Tarra. That is to say, it's at least the largest company operating within the Blessed Empirum of Solaria that rules the vast majority of its largest continent in stiff competition with its rival, the Federated Commonwealth of Aris to the south. The two rival powers always seemingly on the brink of conflict before backing down.

Evelyn openly rebelled against the plan for her to take over the family business because of her father's disappearance as a child, of which most accept the story of him running off with embezzled funds.

She stole a smaller company delivery vehicle and retrofitted it, and is now effectively a self-romanticized and stylized sky pirate, using her family's transport ties to learn about and attack ships with questionable cargo (usually illegal weapons or endangered animals alive or dead), selling what she can and remitting anything truly heinous to the authorities like batman before vanishing into the skies again.

In the interim, her family actively tries to capture her to bring her back and rehabilitate her. Especially her younger sister, CYBIL, who is now forced to take over the responsibility of running the family firm and keep the family's honor intact.

EVELYN has just recently got wind of a big score - something huge is being moved, and it's transport is large, fat, and slow to carry it all. Details are fuzzy, but it sounds like some kind of illegal weapon of some sort, and she wants to be there to ensure something that deadly never gets made. But in raiding it, she uncovers something far more sinister: war plans designed to change the balance of power in the world.

PAGE ONE - SIX PANELS

Narrative Structure Note: PANEL 1 is large. Subsequent panels at artist discretion.

PANEL 1.1

A young EVELYN and her father, GREGOR are reclining together on her bed. She's tucked under the covers and he is lying above them, with a book propped up against one raised knee and angled so that they both could read it. The book is worn and threadbare on its edges from well-loved use, and on its cover is written *Secrets of Celuria* in delicate embossed script.

[ESTABLISHMENT BOX]

Once upon a time.

GREGOR:

...and Celuria cried out for her winged steed, "*Aspira, to me, evil shall not triumph in this final hour!*"

EVELYN:

Father?

PANEL 1.2

Closer shot of them sitting together, the top of the book framing the bottom of this scene of their conversation. He turns and looks down at her with a inquisitive look.

GREGOR:

Yes, pigeon?

EVELYN

Aspiria was the inspiration for your company, right?

GREGOR:

Our company, Evie, and yes. She's a mythic creature of speed and justice, you know that. Why do you ask? We're getting to the good part!

PANEL 1.3

Shot of the interior of the book with a fierce but beautiful-looking warrior woman in glimmering samite beckoning forward with a sword, with one arm wrapped around the harness of a beautiful pearl-white pegasus. EVELYN's hand can be seen gesturing at the illuminated illustration.

EVELYN:

Why not *Celuria*, **she's** the **hero**!

GREGOR:

But how did Celuria get *around*? Would she have been able to traverse the nine realms without her noble steed?

PANEL 1.4

Very small panel. EVELYN's face in profile with brow furrowed in serious thought in only the way a child can when processing something for the first time, or from a new perspective.

EVELYN:

No...

GREGOR (off panel):

There, you see-

SFX (off-panel):

FWUMP! ***Crash!***

PANEL 1.5

Same small structure/size as PANEL 1.4. EVELYN's eyes widen in fright at the sound.

EVELYN:

What was that?

PANEL 1.6

Long concluding panel, perhaps hugging the bottom of the page. GREGOR is standing in the doorway of her room, turning to her as he is about to leave it.

GREGOR:

You're mother's still out. It's probably Felif. That cat will be the death of every vase in this house. I'll be right back, Evie.

EVELYN:

Okay...

GREGOR:

No worries, pigeon. I **never** abandon a story just as it gets interesting!

PAGE TWO - FIVE PANELS

Narrative Structure Note:

PANELS 2.1 through 2.3 are written to be aesthetically identical.

PANEL 2.1

Young EVELYN sits in her bed, chin tucked up to her knees, staring at the fire.

PANEL 2.2

Same panel. But the fire is dead, and the oil lamp is off. It is dark, without a shaft of moonlight permeating the space. The light that stretches across the entire scene, if one was looking carefully at the edges of the frame, would see that it loosely fits the shape of the glass pegasus in the window filtering the moonlight in.

PANEL 2.3

Same panel. The bed is empty. The blankets look like it would if someone left the bed and got out of it without putting things back properly.

PANEL 2.4

Hallway scene just outside the bedroom. EVELYN, barefoot in her nightgown, can be seen at the far end of the corridor from the viewer's perspective, with minor illuminations of the same moon and starlight every few feet marking the position of a window in the space.

PANEL 2.5

View from above as EVELYN as she is walking down a large, carpeted fine oak staircase towards a main entryway hall.

PAGE THREE - SIX PANELS

PANEL 3.1

View is now positioned farther down a hallway looking directly at the bottom of the large stairs as they end into the main hall. EVELYN has reached the bottom step and is staring at the open front door with a look of apprehension and concern.

PANEL 3.2

Small frame. She gasps as she steps in something. The view is from the floor up as her eyes widen at shock at the sensation.

EVELYN:

Ah!

PANEL 3.3

View is now from her POV looking down, foot lifted up. She's stepped in the tiniest droplet of blood, the remnants of the errant dab smeared between one of the large white tiles and black tiles of the floor.

EVELYN:

What?

PANEL 3.4

Small frame again. Tight shot of her face in a panic.

EVELYN:

Father!

PANEL 3.5

POV is from EVELYN looking out the OPEN door. The vague suggestion/silhouette of a steam-powered flying carriage can be seen pulling away and slightly lifting up off the park drive into the sky as the morning sun begins to cast a glow across its side.

EVELYN:

FATHER!

PANEL 3.6

View position flips again, now in *front* of EVELYN, who is bowled over by a large noise and blast of light.

SFX:

REEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

SFX:

SNORT *SQUEAL*

PAGE FOUR - ONE PANEL (Full Page)

PANEL 4.1

View is in the same position as PANEL 3.6, but with EVELYN now turned around to look at the sound and the blast of light. She is staggered, and about to fall on her butt, overwhelmed by the sensory input. She has one arm raised to shield her eyes, and the other to break her fall. Before her stands a pegasus, glowing and magnificent, front legs raised in rampant fury.

PAGE FIVE - FOUR PANELS

PANEL 5.1

Small tight panel of an older, adult EVELYN. 20-something years of age. Her eyes are wide, haven't woken from what is now clear was a dream/memory hybrid.

PANEL 5.2

Side shot of her sitting up in bed, her short cropped hair even messier than normal. The layout of the shot is meant to low-key mimic the same shot of her sitting in bed, waiting for her father to come back. There are small portholes that are dotted along the interior wall and a wardrobe with its doors open, various roguish clothes spilling out of it onto the floor.

EVELYN:

No more grog, ever again.

PANEL 5.3

Exterior shot on the other side of the door. She is dressed, and if there would ever be a standard uniform of "sky pirate," she is it, replete with curved scabbard dangling off her hip. She's clutching the edge of the doorway, blinking weakly at a male figure with long blonde hair and telescopic spyglass in his hand, viewing something over the shoulder of the viewer. Ropes seem to dangle around the corners of the shot, running from one important high point to another. The sky beyond is blue and dotted with clouds.

ERIK:

Let me guess. You've sworn off grog, "Forever."

EVELYN:
Forever, Erik.

ERIK:
Again.

EVELYN:
I mean it.

PANEL 5.4

Closer shot of him passing her the spyglass with a subtle smirk. She accepts it, tossing him a glance of mock-doubt and consternation. On her collar you can see a worn, faded pegasus pin with a woman warrior riding it, sword raised. Behind them, a sailor scrambles up a rope ladder.

ERIK:
I never doubt you. Good timing though, we're here. I got word they're ready.

EVELYN:
Put down at the Gallowglass.

ERIK:
This tip better be worth it...

PAGE SIX AND SEVEN - FULL SPREAD BROAD ESTABLISHMENT SCENE

PANEL 6.1/7.1

A sweeping shot. The view is positioned far behind and above them both. It is revealed they are standing on the steering and command deck of a wooden and metal airship of some kind, with white cotton-ball like orbs of dissipating mist emerging from two exhausts jutting upwards from its backside. Two collapsible fabric wings half-extended out from slits at its sides.

Before them is a bustling port of airships darting back and forth from the gaping maw of an equally vibrant metropolis of buildings that tower into the heavens, their foundations hidden in the lower fog and mists of streetscapes below. The buildings almost take on corridor-like shapes, and the ships dart within them.

In the distance, a cathedral-like building of gilded marble towers above it all, seemingly nestled amongst its own foundation of clouds. The city seems to build upward and towards this structure, so that if it was not the epicenter of this place, it was designed to at least look like it.

[ESTABLISHMENT BOX]

The Luftgate, City of Homeport,
Blessed Empirum of Solaria

ERIK:

...we journey into the belly of the beast.

PAGE EIGHT - SIX PANELS

PANEL 8.1

Shot of the front part of the ship parked (for lack of a better term) out front of a large ramshackle building with various advertisements and flags/colors dangling off of it. Across the top of the entrance to this building, and its large open entryway, is a giant sword. The sword is clearly made of wood but painted (somewhat well) to resemble the real thing. It's a double-handed sword in size and design. Beneath this large martial adornment is a sign that boldly declares the building to be the *Gallowglass*.

EVELYN's ship has a carved figure of a pegasus for its front. Along the side, the name *S.S. Aspira* is painted in gold and black.

[OFF-PANEL DIALOGUE]

EVELYN:

Are you *sure* this information is good?

PANEL 8.2

Interior of the *Gallowglass*. It's clearly a large tavern of some kind. Swords are definitely the motif: different styles, sizes and types of swords - all in polished but used condition - adorn every available horizontal surface in various patterns, particularly circles and straight up and down arrangements. In the background, behind the bar, a burly man with red hair cleans the surface with a bright white rag.

In the foreground, EVELYN and ERIK are talking to SAMBIR, a shorter squad man with a large black bowler hat and single eyeglass attached to a brass chain.

SAMBIR:

Evelyn! When I have you ever steered you wrong!

PANEL 8.3

Tight view of EVELYN taking a shot of whiskey, with a healthy dose of side-eye in SAMBIR's direction. This gives the opportunity of highlighting an item pinned to her collar: an old but very detailed enamel pin of a white pegasus with a woman brandishing a sword flying upon her. The pin is chipped on one corner, and the colors are faded and yellowed slightly.

EVELYN:

Enough times that you get to call me Evie like everyone else.

PANEL 8.4

SAMBIR clutches his breast in mock pain.

SAMBIR:

I resent the besmirchment of my character!

EVELYN:

You resemble it. Really. Look at you.

SAMBIR:

You attack my reputation **and** my countenance, Evie!

EVELYN:

Captain is even better, and you look like the cartoon version of a wanted poster.

PANEL 8.5

ERIK leans in, pinching his brow in faux-pain. The cause of the pain could be either one of them. EVELYN raises a single eyebrow in skepticism, head cocked slightly to the side with a sharp nail tapping the corner of her quirked smile for emphasis. SAMBIR takes on a more serious air, like he's bestowing the greatest secret ever.

ERIK:

Back to the matter at hand?

SAMBIR:

Of course. The tip is *sound*. I swear it on my mother's name.

EVELYN:

But not your own. *Strange*.

PANEL 8.6

SAMBIR is sputtering, the eye-piece dangling down around his chin. Erik has one hand out in supplication to SAMBIR while glaring daggers at EVELYN, who has her arms crossed with a disinterested but playful air.

ERIK:

She's just playing, Sam. Just a joke, right, *Captain?*

EVELYN:

Mostly.

PAGE NINE - FIVE PANELS

PANEL 9.1

View is of the entrance to the tavern. The barkeeper stops cleaning the bartop to gawk at the party that just entered. The doors are held open by two large men in sharp-looking military-style like uniforms. On the labels of their jackets are white pegasus pins like EVELYN's, but they are more minimalist and stylized. Sleek. Modern-looking. Standing between them is a shorter woman (CYBIL) in a form-fitting business suit with alternating shades of grey, white, and black echoing down its trim. She stands out like a flash of light in a cave. She's scanning the room with a stern gaze.

PANEL 9.2

View is right behind CYBIL's head as her gaze becomes fixed on the table in the back where EVELYN and ERIK reside with SAMBIR. The other patrons of the bar are staring at her with the same kind of shocked look one would reserve for seeing a fully-adorned peacock entering the room.

CYBIL:

It can't be this easy.

PANEL 9.3

CYBIL now stands with her escort before the table, the entrance of the tavern in the background. Erik looks up in shock. EVELYN looks at her nonchalantly. SAMBIR rises.

CYBIL:

You should have sent word you would be in town, *sister*.

SAMBIR:

I see you have company. I'll take my lea-

PANEL 9.4

Focused scene: One of the escort plants a hand on SAMBIR's shoulder pushing him back into his seat. SAMBIR seems to roll with it and stare blankly and passively ahead, re-adjusting his eye-piece as his rump plops back down emphatically on the seat.

CYBIL:

You *stay*, story-broker.

SAMBIR:

So I shall.

PANEL 9.5

Panel now encompasses the entire table again. CYBIL keeps her gaze fixed on EVELYN, who returns the level of focus, though not the intensity. SAMBIR blusters in his chair while still being held firmly in place.

CYBIL:

What did *this one* tell you?

EVELYN:

Nothing of consequence, and I'm sure it's all wrong.

SAMBIR:

I **must** protest again!

ERIK:

Sam, if you value your life, *shut up*.

PAGE TEN - SIX PANELS

PANEL 10.1

The panel takes in the entirety of the table. EVELYN still keeps a poker face, and CYBIL smirks, but there is no joy or life in it. ERIK's face is one of somber concern as CYBIL cuts him off in an attempt to negotiate.

CYBIL:

Erik is still the voice of reason clutching to your hem, I see.

ERIK:

Cybil, maybe we can make a dea-

CYBIL (to EVELYN):

You'd never come back without a good reason.

EVELYN:

Maybe I missed you.

CYBIL:

You're **impossible**. It doesn't matter. I'm taking you to mother.

PANEL 10.2

CYBIL leans forward aggressively, pointing at EVELYN like ordering around a petulant child. Her stance is almost scolding in tone. ERIK just looks at EVELYN to judge her reaction to the demand and it's tone. EVELYN's eyes go hard, and her brow furrows.

EVELYN:

I'm **not** going back.

CYBIL:

You're going to *give back* father's ship. You're going to *sit* in father's chair. You're going to *take over the company* and *bring back our honor*.

PANEL 10.2

EVELYN suddenly grows in attentiveness and focus, eyes wild, and leans forward, elbows on the table, to stare CYBIL and her bodyguard down.

EVELYN:

Do you know **why** I won't go back?

CYBIL:

Because you're delusional and won't accept that father *ran out on us* with embezzled funds?

EVELYN:

It's a big world out there with big problems. I find solutions, Cybil. I **help** people. I make a *difference*, not just profit.

PANEL 10.4

Small frame. CYBIL leans in and plants both hands on the table, leaning in almost casually, conspiratorially. She's smiling, and it's a cold, dead thing, that smile. Teeth like a wolf. Eyes devoid of emotion. You can almost feel the snarl in the reply.

CYBIL:

I. Don't. **Care.**

PANEL 10.5

Scene flip again, same intimate intense tight shot, but now we're looking at EVELYN who stares right back with a face that could call any poker bluff.

EVELYN:

I figured. But do you know who does?

CYBIL:

Who, you annoying **witch**?

EVELYN:

Almost everyone in this tavern.

CYBIL:

What?

EVELYN:

I said ***EVERYONE*** in this tavern!

PANEL 10.6

View is pulled back to see CYBIL and her bodyguards looking around uneasily in shock as most of the patrons of the Tavern stopped talking and are now standing at their respective tables, staring at CYBIL and EVELYN. Even the bartender in the back is suddenly brandishing a giant double-handed longsword, draped over his shoulder. Suddenly, the tavern's name comes to relevance.

CYBIL:

Oh, shi-

PAGE ELEVEN - FIVE PANELS

PANEL 11.1

Panel is a tight shot on the bodyguard on CYBIL's right side getting smashed over the head with a chair that was hurled from off-panel.

SFX:

CRAAACK!

BODYGUARD:

GUH!

PANEL 11.2

EVELYN shouts, full-throated, and with grit and fervor as ERIK rises up beside her. Together, they flip the table as quickly as possible towards CYBIL and the remaining bodyguard as SAMBIR jumps away.

EVELYN:

NOW!

SFX:

KER-RAASSSH!

PANEL 11.3

Large panel. Pulled-out 2D sideways shot of EVELYN and ERIK scrambling for the door as several of the bar patrons begin piling on the BODYGUARDS. Not to be deterred, CYBIL is already in the midst of punching someone out. SAMBIR is jumping over the bar to take cover.

SAMBIR:

Godspeed, friends!

EVELYN:

Get to the engine room, tell the crew the situation has legs.

ERIK:

Putting it mildly.

PANEL 11.4

Shot of CYBIL in front of her two BODYGUARDS. Both guards are heavily bruised and grappling with at least two bar patrons. CYBIL's hair is a mess, her dress is ripped, and she's got a scuff mark on her face. A line of blood is trickling down from the corner of her mouth. An unconscious bar patron is dangling limply in her balled-up fists as she clutches the front of his waistcoat. She is staring past the viewer towards the exit.

CYBIL:

If you thought I wasn't prepared for this, you're *dead wrong*, Evie!

PANEL 11.5

EVELYN and ERIK vault over the rim of the *Aspira* at the same time. EVELYN is looking over at ERIK as she does so with a face of mock warmth, one hand on the rim of the ship as she vaults and the other pressed against her heart.

EVELYN:

Aw, she called me **Evie**. She still cares!

ERIK:

Hold off the sarcasm until we're out of danger, please.

PAGE TWELVE - FIVE PANELS

PANEL 12.1

Exterior shot as the *Aspira* pulls out of the docking platform adjacent to the Gallowglass into the midst of the open-air throughway. Directly down one of the “air streets” in this view are 2 WINGED MESSENGER transport ships with the new pegasus livery on their sails, their rear engines blaring hot, blowing plumes of steam behind them.

[DIALOGUE BUBBLE - ASPIRA CREW MEMBER]

Messenger ships down the main lane, Cap!

[WINGED MESSENGER VESSEL 1 (loud-speaker)]

You are ordered to power down! We have owner's rights to commandeer your vessel!

PANEL 12.2

Panel is of EVELYN at the steering column, spinning the wooden control on its axis for all it's worth, yelling into what looks to be an archaic walkie talkie of sorts dangling above her.

EVELYN:

She ready, Erik?

ERIK (On Device):

Good to soar.

PANEL 12.3

Very small panel of EVELYN's left hand gripping a well-worn chrome and wood throttle adjacent to the steering mechanism.

EVELYN (off-panel):

Okay, beautiful...

PANEL 12.4

Very small panel - same layout - except the throttle is now pushed forward all the way, and several dimmed-out micro-bulbs along the trim of the gauge spring to brilliant life to signify the speed setting maxing out.

EVELYN (off-panel):

...get us out of here.

PANEL 12.5

Front shot of the *Aspira* rocketing towards the viewer down one of the air-ways, ships passing above and below, with windows and moorings/doors blurring past on both sides.

PAGE THIRTEEN - SIX PANELS

PANEL 13.1

Tight shot of the controls as EVELYN's hand slams a button beneath the throttle.

EVELYN (off panel):

All hands, secure positions, we're going off-grid!

ERIK (On-Device):

Evelyn we're still *in traffic*.

PANEL 13.2

Same shot, she flicks a large switch.

EVELYN:

That's what I'm banking on.

PANEL 13.4

A pneumatic system in the floor projects a chair upward that arrives with a resounding sound, the world hurling by in the periphery of the shot. Other sailors on the ship are seen either latching themselves to a tether like mountain climbers, or jumping into chairs bolted to the walls behind her and buckling in.

SFX:

Sherrrrrr-THUNK

PANEL 13.5

EVELYN gets into the chair, and the entire assembly of steerage and control mechanism contort around her now sitting secure position like an open-air cockpit. The wheel flattens out before her and a gyroscopic joystick emerges from its epicenter as it mounts under and in front of her.

SFX:

Ksssshhhh

PANEL 13.6

Her hand wraps around the stick and the throttle, and she looks ahead with a fierce glare.

EVELYN:

You wanna dance? Let's dance.

PAGE FOURTEEN AND FIFTEEN - TWO PAGE SPREAD

PANEL 14/15.1 is across the entire spread. Additional panels are arrayed over it in opposing corner margins.

PANEL 14/15.1 (FULL SPREAD IMAGE)

Exterior shot of the *Aspira* rocketing down one of the thoroughfares, banking at an angle between two other ships, their crews staring agape and/or pointing at the *Aspira* as she cuts a swath through high-speed airship traffic. The WINGED MESSENGER ships are trying to chase, but one collides with another vessel, the front end coming to a stop in a plume of flame and shrapnel. The other swerves around the demise of it's fellow, still at chase.

PANEL 14.1

Shot of EVELYN in her command chair, pulling hard on the stick with both hands, her hair, jewelry and pendant necklace dangling upwards as the ship violently spins. The horizon is at an angle as behind her, slightly conveyed via an unnatural arrangement of buildings and sky.

ERIK (over device):

Glad we didn't have time to eat.

EVELYN:

Hey, *I'm* the funny one. We agreed.

PANEL 15.1

ERIK in the engine room at a command console of elaborate levers and a flickering radar screen of assorted green and blue blips with two red blips blinking in disharmony from the other dots with more subdued hues. His face is smiling while illuminated by the dashboard.

ERIK:

Right, sorry. Take the next right and pull up *hard*.

EVELYN (over device):

Got it.

PAGE SIXTEEN - FIVE PANELS

PANEL 16.1

Birds-eye shot looking down at the *Aspira* as she climbs almost at a straight angle upwards, engines blaring. The remaining WINGED MESSENGER ships chasing them try to mimic the move and intense angle of ascent.

PANEL 16.2

EVELYN smiling in the cockpit, putting the throttle back to maximum with one hand while keeping the joystick steady with the other, her eyes dead ahead but filled with a modicum of confidence and mischief.

EVELYN:

They think they can keep up, Erik.

ERIK (over device):

You're bragging about illegally modified engines.

EVELYN:

Cheating is fun.

PANEL 16.3

Small Panel. A tighter shot of PANEL 16.1. The WINGED MESSENGER ship begins to wobble off-center.

PANEL 16.4

Same scene. It's engines die and it falls back towards the traffic patterns below.

EVELYN (off-panel):

Good luck down there, boys.

PANEL 16.5

Far away shot as the *Aspira* clears the canopy of buildings that are the upper reaches of Homeport, pulling a bit of the lower fog with her in a thin white delicate line as she enters into the open heavens beyond.

[Transitional Dialogue Narrative Box]

ERIK: So...

PAGE SEVENTEEN - FOUR PANELS

PANEL 17.1

ERIK and EVELYN are standing before a map mounted on a wall with an area circled in red. Some sailors walk by attending to various tasks as they speak.

ERIK:

Do you *really* think Sam's intel was good?

EVELYN:

I feel it in my gut.

ERIK:

He said Winged Messenger was involved in an illegal weapons transport. I can't believe your mother would be involved in this, or even Cybil, if I'm honest. Your uncle...

EVELYN:

I know. But he's far from home right now. Plus, it's more than weapons: it's information. About father. He's out there and he needs help. I know it.

PANEL 17.2

She turns to him with a concerned but heartfelt, almost pleading look.

EVELYN:

We have to chase this down.

ERIK:

Agreed. He was like a father to me too, you know.

EVELYN:

This *is* based on Sam's info, but...

PANEL 17.3

ERIK puts a hand on her shoulder and stares at her with a warm certainty that brings a brightness back to her features.

ERIK:

I may not trust Sam. But I do trust *you*.

PANEL 17.4

They look up at the map again.

ERIK:

So what's the plan Captain?

PAGE EIGHTEEN - SIX PANELS

Page is written like a montage/flashback with narrative box summation.

PANEL 18.1

Shot of the *Aspira* flying in formation right below and behind a large grey and black transport ship emblazoned with the new pegasus logo.

[Narration - EVELYN]

We go in low and underneath her. The big transports they use now are so fat and overstuffed the radar can't make heads or tails of what's going on underneath a fully-laden ship.

PANEL 18.2

Small panel interior shot of cargo hold.

[Narration - ERIK]

Do we use the codes Sam gave us for the access hatch?

PANEL 18.3

Same panel scene, except this time a large arc of superheated metal comes shooting out of the wall with sparks in an arc as something begins cutting into the side of the ship.

[Narration - EVELYN]

I prefer something more direct.

PANEL 18.4

Same panel scene, the wall caves inward and some SAILORS and EVELYN and ERIK walk in brandishing elaborate pistols and breathing helmets.

SAILOR 1:

Boarding bubble worked. Cabin retained pressure.

ERIK:

Stay alert. We're going off secondhand layout intel.

PANEL 18.5

Shot down a hallway as the boarding party of a few SAILORS and ERIK and EVELYN continue forward, eyes up and alert and checking corners.

EVELYN:

This way.

PANEL 18.6

EVELYN and ERIK emerge through a doorway. They're clearly unprepared for what they're looking at, and the view is on their faces and reaction to what they are seeing as they enter the room.

[Narration - ERIK]

Right. Well, if we stick to the map we should avoid trouble.

PAGE NINETEEN - FIVE PANELS

PANEL 19.1

Panel view is now behind their shoulders looking past into the room. It's the bridge control center for the entire ship, full of Winged Messenger sailors and guards. Everyone is looking at them with a slightly shocked expression. One or two of the Messenger sailors are already getting out of their chairs, and the officer on duty is reaching into his double-breasted coat, undoubtedly to produce a weapon.

EVELYN:

God damn it Sam.

PANEL 19.2

Panel insinuates a brief passage of time to the inevitable fight. ERIK and EVELYN are briefly fighting back to back, shooting the guns out of two Winged Messenger crewman's hands. The men drop their weapons in pain. Immediately around this, sailors from EVELYN's boarding party and the command level crew of the ship are engaged in a great melee.

EVELYN:

We got this.

ERIK:

I know.

PANEL 19.3

Lots of punching, kicking, people being thrown over tables. Go nuts.

PANEL 19.4

EVELYN uppercuts a burly-looking sailor into next week, literally lifting him out of his shoes into the air a bit, while ERIK goes down into a grapple-fight with two men at once.

PANEL 19.5

The fighting is over. A bruised EVELYN leans down to help ERIK up. Their arms clasp together one each other's forearms. An unconscious opponent rolls off of his legs as the panel catches him in mid-rise with her assistance. Both are worse for wear but smiling.

EVELYN:

Told you we got this.

ERIK:

Never doubted for a minute.

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PANEL 20.1

The path begins to narrow and the walls rapidly turn to studier woods and metals. They reach a doorway that says *LIMITED ACCESS PERSONNEL* in bold red letters. EVELYN turns to ERIK.

EVELYN:
Shall we?

ERIK:
Lets.

PANEL 20.2

The door opens, and instead of crates there's cages. Cages filled with people that stretch down a long hallway. One of the SAILORS on EVELYN's team gapes at what is before them as she pushes a button that says RELEASE above it.

SAILOR:
Saints alive.

EVELYN:
Erik...

PANEL 20.3

As the doors shutter open and the prisoners walk out, they all seem to be malnourished and in dirty, but professional-looking clothing.

ERIK:
There hasn't been slavery in the Empire in a millenia...

EVELYN:
I don't understand.

PANEL 20.4

A voice from the back resonates outward toward them from a figure slowly stepping into the light. The other prisoners part for him to approach.

VOICE:

They aren't slaves. They're scientists, and they were on their way to be slaughtered for what they know. You saved them. You saved me.

EVELYN:

That voice...

PANEL 20.5

The figure fully steps into the light now. Older, tired, and covered in stubble. But nevertheless a face that has haunted EVELYN's dreams for years. He's in a worn lab coat

EVELYN:

Father!

GREGOR:

Hello, pigeon.

PANEL 20.6

She runs up and embraces him. He wraps his arms around her. He looks up at ERIK. ERIK, for his part, maintains a stoic distance but is equally moved at the display.

GREGOR:

Hi, Erik. Good to see you. You look like your father.

ERIK:

Sir.

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PANEL 21.1

GREGOR holds EVELYN by her shoulders and looks into her eyes. There's a shock still unraveling in his features. In his expression is the face of a man who has known despair for so long that hope is a stranger befriended once more.

EVELYN:

I have so many questions.

GREGOR:

The feeling is mutual. I'm sorry I wasn't able to finish that story...

PANEL 21.2

EVELYN looks away as if memory was a physical thing striking her. She looks down at the floor.

GREGOR:

But would you be able to help me finish something else?

PANEL 21.3

EVELYN looks back up. He is now deadly serious. Imploring in a way. An essence in his countenance that almost can't believe she's real.

EVELYN:

What?

GREGOR:

A war before it starts.

PANEL 21.4

Shot of EVELYN's face as she smiles.

EVELYN:

Of course.

PANEL 21.5

External view of *Aspira* flying away from the Winged Messenger transport as it explodes, heading towards an ocean surface.

[Narration Box - EVELYN]:

After all...

PANEL 21.6

Shot of EVELYN, ERIK, and GREGOR on the deck of the *Aspira*, surrounded by the survivors as SAILORS bring them blankets and tin cups of warm drink. EVELYN is smiling and laughing with her father as ERIK steers the ship, equally pleased.

[Narration Box - EVELYN]:

I never abandon a story just as it gets interesting.

END