

AQUARTUS ASCENDING  
VOL 3

CONSIGNED  
TO  
OBLIVION

GW MILLER II

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Joseph, famous for designing the algorithm that relays the size and complexity of a human's pattern anywhere around the world for teleportation. However, Joseph, nor anyone else has solved the distance dissipation paradox. Joseph discovered almost a decade ago that anything teleported over 3,269 miles would dissipate upon resequencing. The object's atoms lose all cohesion, and the object disintegrates.

Although, having three jumps to get from Tokyo to New York only takes about five minutes, even with security scans. It isn't a faster travel time that motivates Joseph, but the future applications for space travel. In his world, space travel is an old abandoned dream. Deemed useless by the Air Force's RDATEC, or Research and Development of Advanced Technologies Commission.

Joseph has watched the many hours of vlogs left preserved forever in crystal from the failed space program of the early twentieth century. The last mission being the generational ship UESS Providence with a crew of eighty-six launched in 1921. Because no adequate forms of propulsion in the vacuum of space exist, and no reasonable way to travel the stars in a single lifetime. Therefore, a decision was made that a generational spaceship would be the best plan for success. Earth aimed the ship at the closest galaxy, Andromeda, and shot those 43 couples off into oblivion.

The mission cost over sixteen trillion dollars and sent the Earth into a few decades of depression and war that slowed down the global unification initiative. As the Providence passed Jupiter, it seemed to catch an unknown etheric current. This etheric current much like an ocean current increased the starships velocity. The increase was so exponential it left the solar system sixteen months early. Once the Providence entered the Kuiper Belt, they lost all visual and radio communication.

Eighty-six souls in the crew of the Providence are lost in space with no way to navigate and direct their trajectory through space. They are adrift in an endless sea with no one coming to their rescue. Since the ship was lost, all space travel has been halted. There is no more space program. That is exactly what Joseph is hoping to change through teleportation. With enough power and signal cohesion, it will be possible to travel the stars.

Joseph has an idea to teleport satellites out, to form a network that can be continually expanded upon. Through this way they might travel anywhere in space. Maybe even reach the UESS Providence and set up a return teleportation station to rescue the crew. Which may be one thousand souls by now, and the ship's capacity is only one thousand two hundred. The crew of the Providence would be in their third generation by now.

Joseph has been trying to get the RDATEC to reopen the space program for years. The only way to change their minds is to develop a method of steering through the stars. He doesn't know much about sailing a ship through ether, but he knows a lot about teleportation. Which right now is the fastest and safest form of transportation. The last step before it can be a viable method of space travel is to solve the distance dissipation paradox.

Joseph is well into his forty-second consecutive fourteen-hour work day. He is running multiple simulations trying to solve the paradox. "Increase the power flow through the pattern cohesion buffer", he directed his assistant. "It's already at 121 gigawatts, if we go any higher...", "Yes I know what will happen, just do it", Joseph interrupted. "Okay sir that's everything, 130 gigawatts," his assistant warned. "The buffers are full, transmitting signal now", Joseph said before he sent another test object.

A few seconds that seemed like hours passed before his comtab rang. The call was from the test location in Hawaii. To activate the comtab Joseph used the verbal command, "call on screen". The call came through over the closest monitor, "Sorry Joe; it's another no go. Only 72% signal cohesion, but we're definitely getting closer." "End call", Joseph said sadly. Then went right back to his computer creating an entirely new simulation.

He was focused on that computer model for hours barely aware of the passage of time. Until his concentration was broken by his lab assistant asking, “Sir, it’s almost midnight. Do you need me anymore or can I go home?” “Oh yeah, you are free to go whenever. I know that your new but yeah go on home.” Joseph has to let his assistants go home because they keep quitting on him. Joseph likes to think most people can’t match his dedication or passion. They usually think, he is crazy and going to work them into an early grave.

His assistant was gone for hours before he finished running models and noticed she left. After another thousand models Joseph was ready to run another test. What he would explain to his assistant if she were not at home sound asleep, is that the signal cohesion loss is directly related to the amount of power supplied. He will have to use a great deal more power than what he has been. Joseph estimates it will require at least 180 gigawatts to make it to Hawaii and the power requirements will increase exponentially the further away.

The only problem being, how could he possibly generate 180 gigawatts. After consulting with an engineer colleague in the lab, they are convinced they can pull another 40 gigawatts out of this electro-crystalline generator. He sends his friend to work on the modifications, while he removes some of the safety parameters and gauges the power output potential. Joseph watches as the potential output rises to 170 gigawatts. A loud electrical buzz can be heard all over the lab.

Luckily all the other staff are out for the night except for a few of the other obsessive scientists. Who have gathered around to watch Joseph make history or destroy the lab. His colleagues even formed a betting pool with 3:1 odds he will destroy the lab. “Go back to work you vultures”, Joseph shouts at them. “How can we work with this damn buzzing”, said one scientist. “Not to mention that you are always hogging all the power”, said another.

“Well don’t just stand around, somebody open the power relay while I input these final calculations”, lead Joseph. “On it”, said an engineer coming in from the other room. Joseph asked, “What’s the cohesion buffer status?” “It is full, ready for transmission”, answered a colleague. “Hawaii, says they are a go”, helped another. Joseph pushed the button sending yet another test object on its way past the point of dissipation. As the object departed the electro-crystalline generator blew, taking out a small section of the underground lab. Fortunately, all personnel were safely watching the experiment.

Another long wait of a few seconds, and the lab’s comtab rang. “Call onscreen”, Joseph said. Only this time it wasn’t Hawaii, but instead his commanding officer. As Joseph is making headway on his project his CO calls him in for a briefing about a special duty assignment. “I see there has been a little accident in the lab”, the captain continued. “Fortunately, no one was injured. Lt. Cmdr. Joseph Fury, report to my office at 0600 for briefing.” Before Joseph could

respond the call was ended. Someone asked, “How did he know we weren’t injured”?

Joseph’s last experiment destroyed the lab’s electro-crystalline generator, which cannot be replaced for at least 72 hours. It will take weeks to repair all the damage done to the lab in the generator explosion. When the call from Hawaii came through with exciting news of 92% cohesion. The winners of the bet still celebrated because Joseph destroyed the lab. Everybody except Joseph went out for a round of drinks. Only 0430 and the clubs in Tokyo are open all night long.

However, 0600 came quickly and Joseph had to report to the briefing with no sleep. He is not told much about the top secret assignment. Just that he was called in to extract an ancient artifact from the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, with a deep water teleportation. It is located approximately fifty miles East of the Japanese coast. The artifact is buried under 300ft of ocean floor, but is partially visible at the base edge of an underwater rift in the tectonic plates.

According to his commanding officer, “Lt. Cmdr. Joseph Fury is the only person capable of such a job”. Joseph’s CO was a short stocky middle-aged woman with a flat top and a beer belly. Most men are afraid of her intimidating and aggressive appearance. She draws her eyebrows in, but she draws in angry eyebrows. Captain Holloway is known for being a bitch who tells you exactly how



it is. If she says, he is the only man for the job, people will listen. She is his commanding officer, so Joseph doesn't really have a say in the matter.

Joseph, tries to argue that he was in the middle of the biggest breakthrough of his career. "Your breakthrough this morning halted every project on that level of the lab. I can guarantee you will be back from this mission before the lab is even operational again", his captain assured him. "I can't go, send Franklin, I'm so close", Joseph said making one last attempt. "You're going", his captain replied lifting her eyebrow to emphasize her point. Joseph left before he laughed.

He grabbed his weekend bag, already packed, and waiting in the closet near the front door of his barracks room. Joseph headed downstairs and got in the shuttle that had just brought him. The shuttle was still waiting on him with specific orders to get him to the ship. He made his driver stop by for some quick noodles before delivering him. While in line at the noodle shop Joseph suspected he had been there before. It was a dark feeling of déjà vu. He left without getting noodles and quickly got to the teleportation station.

Joseph could teleport there in just two minutes and was on the ship stationed just above the artifact. Once onboard Joseph checked in with his commanding officer on the boat and asked, "Do you know anything about the artifact we will recover"? "I was going to ask you the same question", answered the captain. "Of

course you were”, Joseph said. “How long until we launch the probe to the artifact”, asked Joseph. “About three and a half hours, why?” “Wake me up when the time comes”, said Joseph as he went to find a bunk and get sleep.

A few hours later he was woken by an Ensign to let him know they would launch within the half hour. Joseph awoke, feeling as if he had just closed his eyes and no time had passed at all. Now, time for the important top secret mission, so secret he is not even sure what he is doing. He went to the head and splashed water on his face. The ship must be in stormy waters because it is listing heavily. The standing waters on the deck of the bathroom, or head as sailors call it, was flowing from one side to the other.

Looking in the mirror Joseph once again felt that strange feeling of déjà vu that made his body hairs stand on end. He could not explain, but something did not feel right. A few of the images of an empty ship were ringing in his head, but he couldn't remember much about it anymore. Joseph splashed more cold water in his face. He thought to himself, maybe it's just these depressing yellow ship lights. Then, he carried himself to the bridge, still feeling out of it, as if he were lost. Joseph just assumed a lack of sleep was causing his strange behavior.

As soon as he arrived at the bridge of the ship, it was GO time. Everybody had been waiting on him and he can tell because everyone went silent and stopped

to look at him. For a few seconds until the ship's captain gave the order to carry on. "Sorry about that we have been circling this thing for a week with no idea about what it is we are doing here. Maybe you'd care to fill me in," the captain prodded. "Actually, I know less than you do, and only found out about this artifact hours ago", Joseph explained.

First, Joseph needs to investigate the artifacts dimensions and every visible or scan-able detail. The teleport has to be as exact as possible to prevent bringing part of the sea floor onboard. To retrieve the most detailed scans of the artifact the captain agrees to launch an unmanned submarine probe with realistic humanlike robotic hands to examine the site details. The probe is controlled remotely via radio waves from onboard the ship.

Joseph navigates the probe as close to the artifact as possible which looks as if the whole continental plate has grown around it for millions of years. This artifact could not have possibly been put there by humans, yet here it is. It looks similar to the many torii gates found in Japan. The artifact has two tall pillars, one of ivory and the other onyx. At the top is a similar cross-section to a torii gate, but this one is gold and in the center is a large crystal ball sitting atop a flat plate made of interlocking hollow circles.

Having completed the scans Joseph returns the probe to the ship to complete the teleport. The artifact has a specific shape, so the coordinates of the scan have to be exact. The only way to ensure exact coordinates is with the scans taken from the submarine probe. Once the probe is back, onboard the ship Joseph scans the memory files into the ship's computer. From there he uploads the scans into his teleportation program and presses the button bringing onboard the artifact.

Curious to see it in person Joseph went to the flight deck where it was being chained down. The artifact was laid on its side and looked to be about twelve feet tall. It also looked as if it needed a serious scrubbing but was surprisingly untarnished for having been down there for millions of years. The pillars were as wide as oak trees and covered in engravings from a strange language Joseph had never seen before. When he walked around it, the symbols reflected a blue glow. He was curious as to how this artifact came to be on the ocean floor millions of years ago. Who could have made this, and what language were these inscriptions?

As he investigated the artifact, the boat rolled hard to one side, and he fell forward onto the pillar. Then the ship listed back in the other direction just as hard and it flung Joseph up into the air. He thought for sure he was going in the water, but was abruptly caught by the hard cables and metal connectors of the net on the side of the ship. The impact from his body hitting the net knocked Joseph out cold.

The fall triggered the nightmare he had worked so hard to forget. Joseph once again went through it all over. Stuck on the ship, almost being decapitated by the helicopter. As he lived it all over again it carried out the same way until the end. While Joseph is talking to the man in the shadows, he is completely unafraid.

The man says to him, “well here we are again Joe, so what’s it going to be”? Joseph as if he knows what is about to happen stands up slowly and opens the door. The dead stand there hungry waiting for him, and he steps outside closing the door behind himself. Joseph raises his arms inviting them in as if for a pleasant hug, and they grab his arms biting and pulling them off. The others go straight for his body, all of them tearing and ripping at his flesh. Joseph has no fear and welcomes the pain of death. This time the experience isn’t a nightmare, just a dark dream.

The Lieutenant Commander woke up to a horrible smell, a corpsman waving smelling salts in his face. Joseph pushes them away and tries to get up, the corpsman stops him, “look at where you are sir”. Joseph looks around to see himself sitting in a cable basket dangling off the side of the carrier about a hundred feet above the turbulent ocean. “Grab this”, the corpsman said as he pushed the padded end of a rescue hoist into his chest.

The ship was still listing heavily as he is pulled up to the flight deck. Joseph is helped to his feet by another shipmate. There is an entire rescue party running about trying to secure aircraft with chains, put out the fires, and help the injured. One jet sits burning with broken landing gear and one wing touching the deck while the crew tries to push it the rest of the way overboard. Joseph gets escorted away, down to a lower deck, and they send the hoist back down for the corpsman.

As they walk down a couple stairs Joseph grabs the hand rail to keep his balance with the swaying ship. As he does the ship rolls hard again, this time the flight deck is filled with people and they all go tumbling overboard. Joseph has to watch the corpsman who helped him out of the net get launched out of the same net like a boulder from a catapult. It rolls back the other way and Joseph loses his grip and tumbles down the last few stairs.

He climbs to his feet and makes his way back up to the flight deck. Joseph runs in an arc across the flight deck using the timing of the ships list to bring him back to the tower. The tower hatch is jammed by the aircraft arresting cable which has been wrapped around the tower. He tries but has no luck trying to move the gigantic cable himself.

Joseph follows the cable around to see if he can disconnect it from the source. The end of the cable he arrives at is wrapped around and stuck between the afterburners of a demolished burning jet. He has no way to separate the jet from the cable, so Joseph finds his way to the other end of the arresting cable. It is still attached to the ship, so he tries to disconnect the cable from its harness. Joseph grabs a large metal piece of an aircraft fuselage lying nearby and uses it as a lever to break the cable free.

When it finally snaps the broken cable end snags his pant leg and pulls him along with it. His head hits the deck as he bounces through the air and everything gets fuzzy for a second. When the ringing finally goes away Joseph is a few feet from the edge of the ship and he realizes that he is being pulled to his death. He starts frantically kicking the cable attached to his pants but only tears them a little more. Joseph rolls over as he goes over the side and grabs for his life onto the frame of the safety net. He bounces a little but catches himself with his fingertips just as the cable tears the rest of the way through his pants, freeing him.

Joseph pulls himself up and back into a net like the one he found himself in a few moments ago. He climbed back up to the flight deck and made his way to the tower hatch. Once inside he makes his way to the bridge where all of the controls are located. Only a skeleton crew remains, and they are calmly dealing with the catastrophe. Joseph overhears that there are dozens dead onboard and even more

reported overboard. While the crew are talking about the destruction aboard the ship. The news wire reports of untold death and destruction in Japan.

He interrupts them to ask, “What the fuck just happened out there?” The Lt. who seems to be acting captain begins, “Well, the extraction of the artifact created a space in the ridge of the sea floor and all of that weight was no longer bearing on this unbreakable artifact. So, the tectonic plates shifted causing earthquakes.” He continued, “the earthquakes caused a thirty-ton rock to break off and slam into the ocean floor. Just a minute ago another rock three times the size of the first also broke off.”

“Each falling rock created a tidal shift in the ocean. The ship almost sank twice because we are right above where the last two chunks of ocean floor fell.” Joseph sat there listening with the weight of his actions setting in. The recurring dream he had forgotten about was all right back in his face. How could he have forgotten? It was so obviously a warning of the events happening here and now. He had just refused to accept that his dreams could prophesy the future.

Now, Joseph was just hoping that all the people were still ok back on the island. “Lt. we need to get back to Japan.” “We are already on our way sir, should be there within the hour”, said the acting captain. With that word Joseph went back out to see if he could help. He put out fires and helped lift a helicopter off the deck



so that a man could be pulled free. However, when they pulled him out by his arms, they realized his lower half was no longer attached. Joseph saw the man's intestines spread out across the deck and his blood running free as life left the man's eyes.

After a few more rescue attempts and no actual rescues, Joseph's head was spinning. He felt like he was stuck in a new nightmare. Only this one was far more real, and he could not wake up. Before any land was in sight Joseph could see the black clouds that filled the sky more and more the closer that the ship got to Japan. Reports were coming over the news wire of giant earthquakes and tsunamis that ravaged Japan and killed thousands of people and left the entire island in turmoil.

As they got closer, the land became visible on the horizon. The entire island is covered in a fiery blaze. More reports from the newswire tell of nuclear meltdown at one of the local nuclear power plants. The earthquakes caused a crack in the cooling tank and leaked radioactive material into the atmosphere. Steps have been taken to quarantine the location and prevent environmental contamination, but the destruction is not yet over.

As the ship cruises in closer and closer Joseph can see the rumbling smoke stack of an active volcano. Between the earthquakes, tsunamis, and added radiation Mt. Fuji had all it could take and vented tons of smoke and burning rocks into the

air. Liquid hot rocks the size of smart cars rained down all around the island.

Whole apartment buildings were being destroyed by these natural flaming cannonballs.

The boat stopped a few hundred yards off of the coast of Japan, but Joseph could still see the people running around in terror fleeing for their lives. He watched as tens of thousands of people tried to evacuate to save their families and their own lives. Joseph watched as they were all swallowed up by the sea when a tsunami took down an entire suspension bridge. The entire bridge ripped apart so fast all the various automobiles went under in moments; all the helpless pedestrians were flung into the air like water droplets coming from a sprinkler.

It wasn't hard for Joseph to put it together. This large rock slide under water must have created the massive tsunamis that obliterated Japan. The earthquakes and the massive rock slide that caused the tsunamis all happened because Joseph teleported that mysterious artifact out of the rift in the tectonic plates on the seafloor. Thousands of people are dead and dying because of his mistake. Joseph can't help but to blame himself for all of this death and destruction.

While he watches the destruction of Japan first hand, a helicopter arrives and lands on the flight deck behind him. The pilot gets out and walks over to Joseph, "Are you Lt. Cmdr. Fury?" "Yes", he replied confused. The pilot handed Joseph a

satellite telephone and said, “It’s for you”, as he walked over to hook his hoist to the artifact. Joseph put the phone to his ear and heard a voice he hadn’t heard in months, “Good work out there. Are you ready to come home my boy?”

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