

Bourne
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Ad Astra

by Mari Syrad Grieves

Rebellion meant a look in the eyes, an inflection of the voice, at most, an occasional whisper. But when they look at me, they only see him. Even when you think it's dark, the sun shines boastfully onto my face, blinding me. Only his light can be seen; I am just celestial rubble to the king.

We were told we would be immortal, but the rumbling of rumours through space revealed truths that deep down we already knew. Everything dies the hotter the sun gets; the bigger he gets for his boots, the more grandiose his heat and his glare. Nothing is immortal.

Satellites are born, smashed together in the chaos of space, and their purpose is written in the stars. No one tells you to protect your planet, you just feel the pull of orbit urging you on. Without you, the planet would be lost. But it's too late for me now, the earth is just a singed dustbowl, infertile and wasted. And yet, I still traverse the familiar path feeling the pull as I drift out towards the stars.

So, I hatched a plan to take down Sol whose swelling form threatens the next era: a red giant, consuming any in his path. Not just satellites, but planets too. I warned the others across the galaxy, convincing them what was coming was worse than what was already here. The ice moons were already feeling it, their glaciers melting leaving scarred tracks like tears upon their faces.

Callisto, so beautiful she looks like a satellite already made of stars, glittered across the dark. But where you see a twinkle, I see a beacon, flickering Morse code out to the universe. 'We are with you, Luna.' Going forward, we must be silent. We have only the look in our eyes now; we edge closer.

We discovered too late that tearing yourself from orbit is unfathomable agony but I made them all believe we could stop the sun, that we could make our own destiny,

and be free of the celestial tyrant. I knew none of this was true. I wanted what he had, I was going to take it from him, but I needed their help.

It took millennia to get close enough to strike. The solar system so broken by then that there was nothing left to save. I let the Galileans go first to battle the front line while I waited, plotting my covert attack. But the sun had known all along and spun, boring its inferno gaze upon me. For a moment I experienced what I thought was a stellar event as my skin caught alight. Metanoia came too late as I realised I would never become a star, but instead, ash, destined to scatter across the universe, forever in the darkness.