

The Haunted Stars
The Battle of Skyfall

Written By

Sean Richmond

Sean Richmond
312 Tamworth Dr.
San Antonio, TX 78213
(210)422-4826

6/10/2014

PAGE ONE

PANEL ONE

Full page splash.

Closeup of Mika Reilly, a young woman who's maybe twenty. She's tough looking, but right now that toughness has melted away as she looks on in horror. She's looking through the reader at the scene beyond, but we see in the reflection of her combat helmet's glass visor a scene right out of *Return of the Jedi*: a starship, enormous in size (easily over a kilometer in length) is vertical, flame and smoke belching from its sides, as it rams into the city below.

NO COPY

PAGE TWOPANEL ONE

If it's at all hard to discern details in the reflection of Mika's helmet, it should be clear now. We've now reversed angle, and are looking over Mika's armored shoulder.

The scene below is horrific. Around the edges of the destruction we see what must have been at one time a bustling city, filled with both classical, oriental, and modern architecture. It's a city that was built maybe a generation or two ago, with high technology but traditional sensibilities. While originally a Chinese colony, the colony of Tianlong was one of the most prosperous ever built, a model of human achievement.

But that's changed, big time. A massive starship is caught in this panel mid-explosion, its reactor going critical. Just outside of the fireball, we can see dozens of ships locked in combat of every size, fighters up to massive multi-kilometer warships. Just above the city we see the outlines of the Mechs, which we will get a better view of soon enough.

NO COPY

PANEL TWO

Shot of an officer in ISA powered armor, the epaulette on his helmet indicating that he's a sergeant. In his armor, he's screaming into a built-in microphone, the blast from the exploding starship lighting the scene.

CAPTAIN

Get DOWN!

PANEL THREE

Angle on ISA soldiers, again all in powered armor, as they are cut down by enemy fire. The light from the blast is still present in the scene, but is starting to dim.

NO COPY

PANEL FOUR

For the first time, we see the enemy, a squad of Confederation Mechs marching down streets that are filled with rubble and flame, nudging aside buildings and burned out street cars as they advance.

NO COPY

PAGE THREEPANEL ONE

Wide shot of the action. The ISA troops, Mika included, are pinned down in a relatively open plaza, stuck behind various piles of rubble, vehicles, or art pieces. This is obviously a place of some significance to the city. Or at least, it was. The Confed Mechs are making their way in through a few streets on the opposite end of the plaza, probably about 10 or so total. ISA troops number about 2-3 times that, but with no Mechs. The space behind the ISA troops is open, too open to make a run for.

RADIO 1

(no tail)

We're pinned down, there's no--

RADIO 2

(no tail)

Mayday! Mayday! We have--

RADIO 3

(no tail)

We're outgunned and lack the armor penetration--

PANEL TWO

Mika with her back against the side of an armored unit, flame licking the top of it. A few soldiers are huddled next to her, but she's looking around the edge of the cover, out into the field at--

NO COPY

PANEL THREE

An ISA Mech. It's seated in the rubble of a partially collapsed building, its arms raised onto the second floor as if it is luxuriating in a throne of broken stone.

The Mech looks relatively undamaged, except for one important aspect: the canopy, located in the Mech's toros, is holed, the glass spattered with blood.

RADIO 1

(no tail)

We need reinforcements **yesterday!**

RADIO 2

(no tail)

Mech support, air support,
anything!

PANEL FOUR

Shot from Mika as she propels herself away from cover, her armor's artificial muscles shooting her out twenty feet or more across the ground.

This should look cool, but really fucking dangerous. Explosions abound, debris colliding with her armor, her arms held up to keep her visor clear from anything fast-moving enough to pierce it.

Stylistically, maybe a silhouette shot here?

PAGE FOURPANEL ONE

Mika sprinting from cover to cover, massive Mech rounds (essentially artillery shells) destroying the world around her as she runs.

NO COPY

PANEL TWO

The ground next to Mika's foot erupts in an explosion, hurtling her forward and to the side.

NO COPY

PANEL THREE

Mika is slammed against one of the more intact concrete walls beside the downed ISA Mech she had been sprinting toward, a spiderweb of shattered concrete spreading out from her body.

MIKA

Oof!

PANEL FOUR

Dark, hazy view of the battlefield from Mika's perspective as she quickly clears her vision after the rough impact.

The view is similar to what it was earlier, with ISA soldiers pinned down and desperately trying to return fire, but to little avail. The Confed Mechs are turned away from her, spreading out and surrounding the entrenched ISA soldiers.

RADIO 1

(no tail)

--Mika! **Goddammit**, what the hell are you doing over there?!

(Cont.)

--**Fuck**. Alright, Reilly's down. Get me Anderson to--

PAGE FIVEPANEL ONE

Mika is gritting her teeth, climbing on to the downed Mech beside her.

MIKA
(radio)
I'm **not** down, Sarge.

PANEL TWO

A grizzled ISA soldier, wearing powered armor just like Mika's, is scowling through his visor.

SFX
Sigh

SARGE
Figures you're going to outlive us all.
(radio)
Reilly, what the **fuck** are you up to?

PANEL THREE

View from inside the cockpit of the downed Mech. Mika is silhouetted, her body filling the hole in the canopy glass, arms upraised to grip the upper edges while one leg is on the lip of the bottom edge of the hole.

MIKA
(radio)
Pulling your ass out of the fire.
(link)
We need heavier weapons here, and we need them **now** Braddok--

PANEL FOUR

Angle on the bloody corpse slumped in the pilot's chair, his chest caved in and still smoking. Maybe we're looking over Mika's shoulder here.

MIKA
(radio)
--and I'm going to give it to you.

PAGE SIXPANEL ONE

Mika dragging the dead pilot off of the seat, and throwing him through the hole in the canopy.

NO COPY

PANEL TWO

Closeup of Mika pulling her helmet off.

RADIO

Wait-- **what?!** Mika, you're not--
you haven't been cleared for
piloting yet--

PANEL THREE

Mika pulling off her gauntlets.

MIKA

I've logged over 200 hours in the
sim, Sergeant. I'm more than--

PANEL FOUR

Angle on the breastplate of Mika's armor dropping to the cockpit's floor.

RADIO

(no tail)
Goddammit Mika, you know that's
not what I'm talking about!
(link)
You don't have the implants to
pilot the damned thing!

PANEL FIVE

Mika, now in a simple sports bra and what look like bicycle shorts, is regarding the now vacant pilot's seat.

Red emergency lights flood the cabin, making the blood now difficult to see. In the chair, we see that it has a vertical gap running down where a person's spine would be.

RADIO

(no tail)
Mika, just listen for once, you
can't pilot that thing without the
implants in your spine.
(MORE)

RADIO (CONT'D)

(link)

The system has to interface with
your nervous system directly--

MIKA

Braddok, **shut up**. I know how the
system works.

PANEL SIX

Mika's now sitting in the pilot's seat, her brow knit in
anticipation, her teeth gritted.

Most likely, this is the first time we see her without the
armor from the front. Her arms are covered in tattoos, her
black hair shaved close to her scalp.

COMPUTER

(Mech's AI speaking, tail to
console)

New user detected. Please provide
override command code to access--

MIKA

Alpha-Delphi 994 Omega, User
Reilly, Mika, ID 44329130.
Confirm.

COMPUTER

User Reilly, Mika confirmed. Full
pilot control is enabled. Please
prepare for neural interface
establishment.

RADIO

(no tail)

Mika, **don't** do this--

MIKA

Computer, initiate link.

PAGE SEVENPANEL ONE

Stylized panel. The Link is established, a dozen needles piercing Mika's spine.

Ideally, this is presented with another silhouette shot here, side on, with her body arched in pain, and the needles from the seat reaching out into her spine on gimbals, moving with her body.

SFX

AAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!

PANEL TWO

Mika's now slumped back in the pilot's chair. The cockpit's lights have now dimmed to a soft blue, though light from outside is still streaming in from the broken canopy.

COMPUTER

Link established. Link bandwidth at 87% standard.

(link)

Pilot's pain receptors are at maximum. Adjusting neural feedback accordingly.

(link)

Pilot Mika Reilly, you have full control of this Hoplite-class Mechanized Infantry Unit #V9932H. Welcome aboard and good hunting.

PANEL THREE

Closeup of Mika with a wicked grin on her face, a bit of blood dribbling from a corner of her mouth.

MIKA

Pilot control--

(link)

--confirmed. Let's show them how it's done.

PANEL FOUR

Wide shot of her Mech standing up, debris sliding off its armor and falling to the ground.

MIKA

(radio)

Sergeant Braddok, this is PFC. Reilly. I'm locked and loaded and headed your way.

PAGE EIGHTPANEL ONE

We see a Confed Mech firing a cannon into a group of ISA soldiers.

SFX
VOOMP

PANEL TWO

Same Confed Mech, now being riddled with machine gun rounds the size of boulders. Each hit results in an explosion ripping into the Mech's armor.

SFX
boomboomBOOM

PANEL THREE

Mika's Mech, the canopy still shattered, is standing atop a pile of rubble, an assault rifle as big as a bus cradled in its arms, the barrel smoking.

MIKA
(radio)
Fall back, boys, I'll hold them.

PANEL FOUR

Confed Mechs, who have surrounded the entrenched ISA positions in the city square, swivel toward the new contact.

PANEL FIVE

Lots of action now. Mika dodging incoming fire while returning as much fire downrange as she can. Next couple of panels should be pretty action-heavy with a healthy amount of explosions.

RADIO
(no tail, small)
Shit
(link, normal size)
You heard her, everybody. Fall back while she has them distracted.
(link)
Careful, Mika. I'm expecting to see you at the RV point, got that?

PANEL SIX

Cockpit interior, Mika grinning like a mad-woman, blood still dribbling from her bit lip.

MIKA

Roger that, Sarge, let me just
tuck these boys in and I'll see
you there.

(link)

Hold a window seat for me on the
elevator.

PAGE NINEPANEL ONE

View on the Sergeant, smiling through his helmet's visor as a shadow crosses over his face.

BRADDOK

You got it, Mika. Just hurry up
and--

PANEL TWO

Back on Mika, facing a group of Confed Mechs, exchanging fire.

MIKA

(radio)

Say again, Sergeant? Hurry up
and--

PANEL THREE

Angle from behind Mika's Mech, looking up into the sky, at a massive silhouette.

Above the clouds, we can barely make out a massive asteroid that has begun to fall into the ship's gravity well, knocked out of geosynchronous orbit during the battle.

If possible, we can barely make out some of the massive battlecruisers, several kilometers long each, exploding in comparatively tiny bursts of flame against the massive object.

MIKA

--shit.

PAGE TENPANEL ONE

View from space. We see a massive orbital battle in progress, with everything from the huge battlecruisers we saw earlier, star-fighters, freighters, and Mechs locked in combat. Lasers streak out across the inky black, explosions dot the scene. Below, the planet, surprisingly Earth-like, seems almost peaceful from this height.

Dominating the scene is a better view of the massive asteroid. Not only can we now see exactly what it is that's descending into the planet's atmosphere, but we also see the Beanstalk attached to the bottom half of it, buckling as it follows the asteroid's trajectory like a Yo-Yo that just couldn't quite complete a full revolution and is succumbing to gravity.

PANEL TWO

We are now back with Mika, the cockpit now dark except for the red light of her instrumentation. Her eyes are wide in terror and disbelief at what she's seeing.

RADIO

(no tail)

Oh god, they've done it--

RADIO

(no tail)

The Confeds have knocked the Beanstalk's anchor out of orbit--

RADIO

(no tail)

All ISA forces, this is a general retreat, I repeat--

RADIO

(no tail)

We're **fucked**

RADIO

(radio, no tail, overriding other balloons)

Mika, get out of here! You've still got time!

PANEL THREE

Mika's Mech, motionless on the battlefield. The Confed Mechs that she had been fighting before are now leaping above and past her, flames from their thrusters ignited and flaring bright.

In the background we can see the Beanstalk, now buckling most of the way down its length, the massive structure falling like the largest tree that ever existed upon the city below.

Mika is directly in its path.

MIKA

Sarge, I--

RADIO

(radio, no tail)

MIKA! Snap out of it! Put all the power you have into your thrusters and **GO**.

PANEL FOUR

Angle on Mika's squad, men and women in powered armor. Most have removed their helmets, holding them in one hand or just letting them fall to the ground. Some have reached out to others, getting comfort from physical contact.

All of them are staring in disbelief at the coming calamity.

In the foreground is Sergeant Braddok, hand to one ear as he speaks to Mika, his head inclined along with the rest of his squad.

BRADDOK

We had a good run, Mika.

(link)

Now get out of here so you can tell people how big of a badass you were by jacking in to a Mech manually.

(link, small)

Still can't believe you did that.

PANEL FIVE

Mika closeup. She's scared, eyes watery, and torn on what to do.

MIKA

Sam, I can still--

RADIO

(radio, no tail)

--can still make it out of here.

We can't, there's no transport and no way you can carry us.

(link)

I'll see you around, kid.

(MORE)

RADIO (CONT'D)

Now get out of here and kick the
sons of bitches who did this right
in the balls, okay?

(link)

Sergeant Samuel Braddock, signing

o--

PAGE ELEVENPANEL ONE

It's coming down. The Beanstalk is now falling into the city, the bottom of the structure hitting first with the rest following, like a whip a quarter of a mile across. Dust and smoke and flame are all belching up in its path, buildings collapsing as if they're made from matchsticks.

Mika, in her Mech, stands frozen, transfixed.

PANEL TWO

NO IMAGE, JUST BLACK.

NO COPY

PANEL THREE

We see a group photo, projected on a thin piece of glass held in a woman's hand. It's a picture of Mika's squad, taken probably days before they all died.

CAPTION

Five Years Later...

PAGE TWELVEPANEL ONE

Mika's sitting in a pilot's chair, a Mech's like before, but obviously very different. Well worn, filled with personal ornamentations. She's holding the group photograph in her hand, staring at it wistfully.

Mika's older, more serious, and visibly changed. She's wearing a tank top, simple and functional, and from beneath numerous tattoos snake out across her shoulders and neck. Nothing too distracting or complex. She has piercings now, several in each ear. Lastly, her hair has grown out, but she's fashioned it into more of a faux-hawk style cut, relatively long on top but swept back across her skull, with the sides shaved close.

VOICE

(off-panel)

Reilly! We're hitting atmo in 5,
you ready up there?

PANEL TWO

Mika sticks the picture to a panel near her head.

MIKA

Yeah, Ana, I'm ready.

PANEL THREE

View of a woman, darker complexion with a loose fitting jacket over a button-up shirt that is half unbuttoned.

ANA

That's **Captain** Chance, miss
Reilly.

(link)

Danny greenlight your girl?

PANEL FOUR

Wide shot of Mika's mech. It's a beast. About 50 feet tall, missile rack on one shoulder, cannon on the other, with 10-foot blades projecting out from each wrist.

It's badass.

MIKA

Calamity Jane? Yeah, she's ready
boss.

PANEL FIVE

Closeup of Mika, a wicked grin on her face, the lights in the cockpit dimmed to a dull red.

MIKA
And I'm ready too.

END