

The Angel of Death

****Summary of "The Angel of Death, The Demon of Unrest" Chapter****

On April 12, 1861, Captain Gustavus Fox aboard the *Baltic* arrived at his fleet's rendezvous point off Charleston in treacherous weather. He was expecting to see lights from the other ships, especially the *Powhatan*, but it was still too dark, and there was no sign of them. During his search, the *Baltic* was nearly grounded on Rattlesnake Shoal but managed to break free. Only one ship, the *Harriet Lane*, was present, and it faced crew dissent after being given sealed orders to assume a naval role, prompting a confrontation with its captain, John Faunce, who demanded obedience. Eventually, the crew complied, and the ship continued toward Charleston.

Meanwhile, at Fort Sumter, Captain Doubleday prepared for a looming confrontation after receiving an ultimatum from Confederate officers. He chose not to fire until dawn due to the lack of visibility. In Charleston, anticipation built as spectators gathered to witness the imminent bombardment, with a heavy silence permeating the crowd, described by Captain Ferguson as feeling like the "Angel of Death" was present.

At 4 AM, a "long roll" signal prompted the Confederate troops on Morris Island to awaken and prepare for battle. As rain fell, they awaited the firing signal, which was delayed until 4:30 AM. The first shell fired illuminated the dark sky, leading Ruffin to fire back at Fort Sumter, which still remained silent despite continuous bombardment.

Despite the Confederate guns raining shells on Fort Sumter from multiple directions, the fort did not return fire for two hours, causing concern among the attackers. Captain Doubleday, initially awoken by assaults on the fort's structure, eventually rose from his quarters to face the ongoing barrage. Bombardment continued relentlessly, with Confederate mortars launching shells that landed heavily within the fort, creating chaos amidst the steadfast yet unresponsive defense of Sumter.

At Mrs. Gidiere's boarding house, Mary Chesnut, along with other boarders, watched the unfolding events from a rooftop, invoking mixed reactions of fear and fervor in the air, culminating in a moment where she almost caught fire but was swiftly helped.

The stage was set for a historic confrontation, defined by tension, anticipation, and the desperate cries of those on both sides of the conflict.