Chapter 35

The week leading up to landing the *Void Phoenix* on the planetoid was pretty hectic. I had to pull a handful of bots from the ship to help prep the site and I had to do daily maintenance on all the bots building the cradle out of loose earth. The exterior bots had to remove all the sensors and emitters on the belly of the ship to avoid getting them crushed as well. I realized this may be a problem if we needed to make a hasty retreat so I was having Henry run preprogrammed plots for a short FTL jump that could handle the lower amount of emitters.

Besides prepping the site I was sending my Lux shuttle back to the Void Phoenix full with goods and getting them stored. I was getting irked as the interior of my shuttle was taking a beating. So bad in fact I had all the seats removed in the passenger cabin and now just had a very expensive small transport shuttle. I planned to have the shuttle refurbished when I got to a space port. I didn’t want to use the heavier shuttles because of the increased fuel consumption.

I did spend two days on my fabricators. It wasn’t as bad as I had envisioned. I managed to dry them and break them down for transport and expected I would only need two days for cleaning the material 3D printer fabricator unit as the water hadn’t reached the control panel. The electronics fabricator needed maybe a week of work and I could assign a few bots for most of the work. The material fabricator was important to get working as we needed it to manufacture more small crates to store the precious metals and archive disks.

I had converted the large container as my temporary residence on the planetoid. I would prepare everything for transport. Eve would fly the shuttle down and fly it back. While she was with me she checked on my health, we sometimes watched a vid and she gave me updates on the crew. I wasn’t concerned about the crew leaving me as I had put a lock on the FTL drive.

The crew updates were all pretty good news. The crew was spending a fair amount of time in the VR working on certifications. Eve for her part had deck 5 completely cleared and a make shift bay door ready to receive the large sensor module. We would load it once the ship landed. Eve also had deck 4 redesigned and just needed life support and wiring installed in the new rooms. Most of the work was happening on deck 8. Shinade had completely redesigned the entire deck. Looking at her plans it was definitely done with a marine mindset. She had designed five marine quarters. Each of the quarters were actually a suite of five small separate rooms. One suite was directly below the bridge and could respond to defend the bridge in short order. Three were aft and by the cargo elevators so they could get anywhere else on the ship in the shortest amount of time. The final suite of rooms was in the middle of the deck and were actually for a shuttle pilot, two fighter pilots and two flight deck technicians.

There were two armories, one was with the forward suite below the bridge and had 5 suits of combat armor and an array of weapons. The second armory was by the three quarters aft and had 16 suits and weapons. The 16th suit was for the chief security officer who would be housed on deck 9. I seriously doubted I would ever have a full complement of 20 marines but I guess it couldn’t hurt to plan for the possibility and it occupied Shinade’s time.

Shinade had expanded the fitness center on deck 9 to accommodate 32 people at once. She had added a small briefing room with 26 people, classroom style. She improved the security of the 12 holding cells, making them inescapable according to her. That last was probably a jab at me for the poor job I did on the Destiny’s Children. All her changes were tying up the bots and Nero’s time reworking life support and other ship systems.

Eve thought Henry and Gabby were courting as they talked to each other quite a bit. As long as it didn’t interfere with their duties and education I was fine with it. Tora spent too much time in VR in Eve’s opinion. She split her time between recreation and working on certs. I needed to get the sensor module on board for her to study. Nero was getting frustrated with all the changes to the deck layouts and was getting close to running out of replacement parts. We had been doing trash runs to dump bad components and wiring in a pit near the eventual landing site as too much had accumulated in the holds. To alleviate Nero’s frustration, I had Eve transfer 4 more engineering bots to his supervision.

The day had finally come. I reran fuel projections a half dozen times to make sure I wasn’t making a mistake and had Henry, Nero and Eve double check my calculations. The exterior bots would switch over to spider mode while on planet which would be beneficial.

Eve asked why we were not utilizing the mag trams. I hadn’t thought we could get them working but Eve said she could adapt our Union generators to power them from her research in the archives. Well damn. I just looked foolish in front of the entire crew. This would save a massive amount of shuttle fuel and speed up the plundering of the cities. I reran the fuel consumption scenario and even the most cynical one was in the green. Ok as long as the trams were functional we were golden.

Everyone was on the bridge for the landing. Henry nervously made the approach and made a relatively soft landing. About 200 yellow, orange and red alerts flashed on the engineering station. I slid in and began paging through them. Shit. I was no structural ship engineer but I guess I should have expected this with the age of the ship. There were 22 red alerts for cracks to ships internal frame. If the ship had been new then my load calculations would have been applicable. Nero was on another station because we were losing atmosphere on decks 1, 2 and 4. We would need some reinforcement patches and welds but I didn’t think there was anything overtly dangerous after I spent two hours reviewing and sending bots for site inspections. Well at least the crew had something to do now.

After the ship transferred to standby status and cycled down most generators I got Eve and we went to retrieve the massive sensor module.

I had to utilize the marine drop shuttle and selected the module that appeared in the best condition of the three that were present. I took almost the entire day attach it, transport it, and get it into the Void Phoenix. With that completed it was time to plunder an ancient alien civilization. What I was looking forward to most…was sleeping in a real bed.

I had spent the last 7 days on the planetoid and from here on out I was planning to sleep in my quarters. I found Shinade there to greet me and she was in an amorous mood. She joined me in the shower and we started by washing each other. We moved to the bed still wet and slightly slippery. She started on top teasing me with kisses, tongue, hands and gliding her lubricated hot sex over my shaft. If this was a contest of wills I was losing. When I could no longer hold back I rolled her over taking the dominant position on top and started intercourse. I was gentle and slow and made use on my mouth on her breasts, neck, mouth and ears to keep her excitement peaked.

We climaxed together and then repeated. For me I was sure this was more than just lust. I didn’t know what it was for Shinade which scared me a bit and I didn’t want to ask fearing an answer I wouldn’t like. We fell asleep with our bodies entangled.