

The Incident at Station 23

A Qattusverse Novel

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Chapter 5

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The Oligarcy squads were all standing in the secondary command center, the room was dark with the exception of an occasional flashing from a monitor struggling to stay alive. While they had managed to gain entrance, they weren't able to return air to the room, so the 10 young people were all in space suits.

Oscar and Timothy's suits appeared to be having trouble staying still while doing their work. Sam had asked them several times what was wrong, however he went unanswered. After several minutes Sam found the channel they were on.

His speakers filled with laughter from the two boys, both had obviously found something very funny, or their suits were malfunctioning.

“Did you know they were covered in so much fur,” Oscar blurted out in a fit of laughter.

“No, I wonder if their poop ever gets stuck to their fur,” Timothy responded and both boys were in a fit of laughter again.

“Cadets, Why aren't you on the proper channel,” Sam demanded filling both of their speakers.

The boys brought their laughter under control somewhat, and stood there head pointed to their feet.

“We will discuss this later, for now get back to work, and get on the proper channel,” Sam barked one last time.

“I think this will do it,” Nathan said into his mic as he connected some wires and the view screen came partially to life.

“Station time 23:16 rotation 57,326. They came from the subspace portal and opened fire with out provocation. We attempted to return fire ...”, static filled the screen. “Cubs were moved to the safety

ward, hopefully when the Oligarcy ship arrives they will be able to take them to safety.”

“Sorry sir, looks like that is as much as I can get out of the system, they were damaged pretty badly by whatever hit the station,” Nathan said as the screen filled with static.

“Do we have communication,” asked Adam.

“We barely have station communication, the subspace communication seems to have been destroyed when our ship arrived here,” April announced from the communication station.

“Be creative people, anyway we can send a call for help,” Sam said in an authoritarian voice as he could muster.

The group was silent for a few moments, checking readouts and hitting buttons. Everyone was busy with their own panels trying to find something. Sam stood fully erect, and tapped the back of his helmet, shook his head and went back to work.

“I think I found something here,” April announced triumphantly.

Everyone came to her panel, it was showing through bars of static a piece of equipment.

“What's that,” Sam asked.

“This is the emergency beacon. It has a self contained subspace engine, so it can jump on its own with out use of the conduit,” April quoted from memory.

“Can we ride in it,” asked Nathan.

“No, its only 3 meters in length, and most of that is for the subspace engine. However, we can send it to the base 43, it should get there in about a week,” April said after looking some information up on the system.

“A week! We are supposed to be on our way out of here in just 2 days,” Sam and Nathan said almost in unison.

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Her tail twitched, while she watched Deanna, talking to Shen. They both sat on one of the couches. She kept her eyes on the upper part of his body though. *Silly Oligarcy and their rules about clothing*, thought Kami. She kept looking at the two of them sitting on the couch.

“What's wrong,” asked Min-Jee.

“Wha? Don't you see what Shen is doing? He's trying to make me jealous, with that stupid Olidiem girl,” she replied moving one of her pieces on the board.

“I don't think he's trying to make you jealous,” Min-Jee replied, moving her own piece on the board.

Kami was silent for a while, barely noticing when it was time for her to move her pieces. After a while she looked to the middle of nowhere, as if in a daze. A smile cracked over her face, and she laughed.

“Oh this is going to be good!” She announced, in a voice much louder than she intended. Everyone turned to look at her for a second, and then resumed what they were doing.

“What is going to be good,” asked Min-Jee, still concentrating on the board.

“Wha.... oh nothing, nothing at all....”

“It looks like the younger ones, have a good idea,” Min-Jee said as it became obvious that she was going to lose this game.

The younger ones were all gathering for a pile sleep. Yawns seemed to be flowing from one member of the Olidiem to the next.

“Yes, that does sound good,” Kami said as they both got up and joined the pile.

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The doors to the safe room opened, and in came the squads of Olidiem. The lights were turned low.

“How did the mission go,” asked Deanna stifling a yawn.

“It went well, we have a rescue beacon charging up, it will be ready to launch when we wake up,” replied Adam as he removed his helmet.

“Permission to prepare for bed, sir,” saluted Oscar, already out of the space uniform.

“Granted, and tell anyone else not yet a sleep to join in,” replied Adam. “Where are the Olidiem,” he asked turning back to Deanna.

“They all dropped a few tics ago. They are in a pile over there,” she said indicating a pile of heads, paws and tails. It appeared to be all reflexively moving at the same pace. Breathing as one giant being instead of several independent beings.

The remaining Oligarcy laid out their bed rolls, and almost all were soon fast asleep.