

### Chapter 3

The VIP section of the Mess was a small room off the main dining hall. Seating consisted of four card tables. P7M-3527 (Massilia?) obviously didn't get many important visitors, or it took a lot to impress Deloris Burkemeier.

Daniel, Teal'c and Mitchell were seated at one of the tables. Teal'c had what Sam recognized as his "polite Jaffa" look. He could probably repeat what Daniel was saying verbatim, but he wasn't really listening. Mitchell just looked bored. Daniel was in his talk-real-fast-so-Jack-doesn't-get-bored mode, even though O'Neill wasn't present. Maybe he was doing it for Cameron.

"So when Thanos was driven off of Langara, he sought an alliance with the Goa'uld Saturn, offering him his naquadah-naquadria technology. Saturn eventually killed Thanos in order to steal the technology. When Ra heard about it, he organized the System Lords, who tried to capture Saturn. But Saturn was able to flee, here. It's an ideal location, really. The system is mostly hidden by a nebula, so it's not easily seen by a passing ship. It's far enough away from the central Goa'uld worlds so that there was no Stargate, meaning no one could gate it."

"If there was no Stargate in this system, Daniel Jackson, how did we arrive in this system?" Apparently Teal'c was listening, at least a bit.

"We brought it in on the *Prometheus* when we realized what this world was."

"And that is?"

"I was getting to that. This world has large deposits of naquadah. One of the smallest is on an island a few hundred miles off shore from here. Saturn used the deposits there to manufacture naquadria. He shifted that to another island for his experiments on how to try to control the energy release. The main control center was here, far enough away to be safe from any explosions. In fact, there is evidence that Saturn destroyed several islands. We won't know until we can explore the undersea bed, the above water parts of the islands were completely vaporized."

"And what happened to Saturn? Why is there no human or Jaffa population on this world?"

"Well, it turns out that this system *was* found, by a small group of Tok'ra. They converted Saturn's children ..."

"Did not Saturn eat his children?"

"That is how the myth was related on Earth. I didn't know that it was known among the Jaffa."

“It is not. However, on Earth Saturn is frequently thought to be a manifestation of Cronus, and I have a strong interest in all things related to Cronus.”

Of course, thought Sam. Teal’c’s father had been Cronus’s First Prime, and was killed for the failure of a mission.

“Oh, yeah, I should have known,” said Daniel. “Apparently the two gods were only confused on Earth. In any case,” and here he went into talk-fast mode again, “Saturn had with him twelve Goa’uld, who he referred to as his children. Probably they were born from the same Queen. Saturn wanted to use naquadria technology to become a rival to Ra and the System Lords. There are also records which say that he was trying to breed a new race of humans to serve as better hosts, much like Nirrti did. But then the Tok’ra came, and converted his children. They and the humans on this world fled, we don’t know where. Saturn took a few Jaffa and followed them, seeking revenge. He never returned.”

“And the remaining Jaffa?”

“The were abandoned here. No ships, no Goa’uld larva. And so”

“The matured symbiotes could find no hosts, and the Jaffa could find no Goa’uld larvae, and so died when their immune systems failed. Saturn would not have willing left his warriors behind. He must have been defeated by his ‘children.’ Much as Zeus was able to defeat Saturn, his father, in your mythology.”

“That’s probable,” agreed Jackson. Story done, he switched to a more normal speaking mode. “So, Sam, how was your morning?”

“Fascinating. You know, Dee Burkemeier is *the* expert in high-Z nuclear physics. She’s been able to use all of the information and technology Saturn left behind, along with what we know learned about force-fields from Atlantis, to try to stabilize the power output from naquadria. If she’s right, it should be possible to siphon off enough power from the first fission of naquadria to moderate the reaction, so that it behaves more like a fission reactor than an atomic bomb. You know, she’s studied the alpha- to gamma-”

Mitchell didn’t even try this time. “That sounds *fascinating*, Sam. I can’t *wait* to read her paper on the subject.”

OK, maybe not everyone was interested in hyper-quantum physics. “OK, Cameron. How was your day?”

“Enjoyable.” Mitchell leaned back, with a cat-ate-the-canary look on his face. “They have a lot of the X program stationed here. Since Burkemeier might just blow up the planet, the Stargate’s on a moon circling a gas giant.

Which means that you need a lot of transports to supply this place and to move everyone off of it if these guys explode the world rather than just an island. Not to mention the naquadah that's being mined and shipped off-world. And you've got to have a lot of techs to service all those transports, so you might as well do some development work. So they're working on the X-307. Stealth fighter, Ancient, Goa'uld, Asgard and human technology. Limited FTL capability. Teal'c and I flew a pair out to the Stargate moon this morning! It only took an hour each way. I'm almost tempted to stay here on, what did Dr. Burkemeier call this place, Massilia?"

"Yes," replied Carter. "That's what she calls this planet."

"Why is that?"

Carter started to answer, but Jackson was quicker on the draw. "Massilia was the Roman name for Marseilles. After the Punic wars, the Romans controlled the province around the city, but it retained a nominal independence. As such, it became a popular place for those Romans who were driven into exile during the late Republic. If you committed a crime, or had enemies who convinced a jury that you had committed a crime, you could escape punishment by going into exile. Except that you could never go home, of course. Massilia was a popular place for exiles. Rhodes was another."

"So why would Dr. Burkemeier consider herself exiled?" asked Mitchell.

"You don't know?" Sam was surprised, but only for a moment. "Oh, right. you were in rehab when it all happened. Dee Burkemeier was a big name in the SGC. She had a lot of political clout. And she wanted to use it to open up the Stargate program."

"You mean, to declassify it and make it public?"

"Yes. And that led to a split between her and the Stargate program. She was going to lose her security clearance. But then we found P7M-3527, and Saturn's naquadia research program. So"

"So I made the SGC an offer it couldn't refuse." Burkemeier was standing in the doorway. "I'd exile myself here and do naquadia-control research. I can't give away the secret to anyone. Everyone who comes here already knows about the Stargate program. The whole *galaxy* knows about the Stargates. Everyone in the galaxy except the population of Earth, that is."

"The secrecy of the Stargate program is to protect the population of Earth from panic, Dr. Burkemeier," said Teal'c.

"I understand that, Teal'c. But two years ago there were lights *all over the planet* from the Ancient weapon that destroyed Apophis's fleet. And a few months ago an entire office building just *vanished* when the *Prometheus*

yanked it out of Seattle before it could explode. How long do you think you can keep people from finding out? And don't you think that there will be less of a panic than would occur if a fleet of Goa'uld ships showed up carrying a bunch of Ori priests?"

Whoa! Slow down, girl, thought Burkemeier. They've heard all of the arguments, they're unimpressed. Military mind-set, and Jackson's been living with it so long he sees it as normal. "Sorry, I get carried away sometimes. But I do want to help defend Earth from the Goa'uld, the Ori, the Replicators, whatever else we come upon. So I'm willing to be in exile here rather than be back on Earth and not helping at all."

"Besides," she continued, "we try to make this as home-like as possible. Do you like your steaks?"

"This," said Mitchell, "is the best food I've ever eaten in an Army mess." Not that Air Force food was much better, of course.

"Of course. It was raised here. Saturn wanted this world to be his home base. So he did extensive terraforming. He brought in cattle, sheep, pigs, not to mention corn, rice, and wheat. We've fenced some of the livestock and fattened it up. The Goa'uld didn't stop on the land, either. He stocked the ocean with salmon and tuna, the rivers with bass, trout, catfish, whatever. Plus some predators to control them. As close to Earth as you'd like, except that it's been uncontrolled for twenty-five thousand years."

"Fish? You mean there *are* fish here? I knew General O'Neill brought his gear, but"

"Didn't you read it in the reports on this world? It's spawning season, the rivers are full of salmon going upstream to mate."

"It figures," said Daniel Jackson, "that was the *one* report that Jack O'Neill read."