

## Chapter 19

I should really be used to this by now, thought Carter. Daniel Jackson can cause an uproar any time, any place. For the *Galactica's* people were all reacting with various degrees of outrage. Funny. They call her a toaster, but when someone wants to do something to her, she becomes human, and vulnerable. I guess they did live with one of her copies for a long time.

The uproar continued. Tigh was yelling that they could dissect their own Cylons on their own time, Apollo was saying something about not harming Sharon's baby, Starbuck was projecting a look of outrage that threatened to break into tears. Only Adama seemed calm.

Baltar, now Baltar was interesting. The scientist hadn't made any comment, but his lip was quivering. He was still gazing at Jackson. No, that wasn't quite right, Carter realized. Baltar was staring just above Jackson. Carter glanced toward her friend. There didn't seem to be anything there. That didn't mean anything, of course, there were all sorts of ways to hide objects, given a sufficiently advanced technology.

Baltar was watching Six. When Jackson mentioned examining the fetus, the Cylon had actually winced. Now she was near tears. "You must not let them harm the child, Gaius. Please!" She seemed sincere, though by now Baltar knew that there was no way he could trust anything she said. *Great*, he thought, not for the first time, *I'm in love with a manipulative robot.*

Jackson was trying to calm the storm. "Wait! I don't mean to harm either Sharon Valerii or her baby. I just want to examine them. We can do that down on the planet's surface. Sonogram, amniocentesis, that sort of thing. Nothing that millions of women on Earth don't undergo every year. I just want a genetic profile of the baby."

While the hubbub subsided, Adama considered. Cottle was a fine surgeon, but he was no obstetrician, and certainly not trained in studying gencode. Had he been, of course, it might have been much simpler to detect Cylons. As it was, the fleet had only one scientist of any stature, Baltar, and he hadn't been much use in detecting Cylons, except for Doral that first day. Maybe Jackson could give them a weapon against the Cylons. Besides, it enabled him to rid himself of another worry.

He held up his hand, and waited until the final murmurings ended. "Agreed. So long as Lieutenant Valerii and her child are not harmed, and that Dr. Baltar and Dr. Cottle are present for the exam and testing. You can take everyone down to the planet in your ship."

"The ring system would be much faster," said O'Neill.

It would also leave the rings here on the *Galactica*. “You know, General,” Adama replied, “I’m not sure that dissolving a pregnant woman and reassembling her thousands of clicks away would be safe. I think you should take your ship.” Or she’s not going, he left unspoken.

Jackson started to say, “Oh, its perfectly safe, no one –,” but O’Neill stopped him. Jack nodded to Adama. “Agreed. Daniel, they don’t have the experience with the ring system that we do, so we’ll do it the slow, safe way.” Besides, he’d have hostages down on the planet, he didn’t need to hold on to the whole ship.

Jackson and Carter were conferring. Carter turned to O’Neill. “General, if we had what medical records are available on the Cy– on Lieutenant Valerii it would help us immensely. Could we ask for a copy of those records?”

O’Neill turned to Adama. “I don’t see why not,” replied the Commander. Whatever it took to get that Tel’tak off his ship. Besides, she was right, it might help the investigation. He turned to the intercom. “Mr. Gaeta, Dr. Carter will be coming down to Records. Join her there and give her all medical records concerned with Lieutenant Valerii.”

“Searching for records might take some time, General,” continued Adama. “As you’ve probably noted, we do not rely on computers as much as you do. I suspect that applies to record-keeping, as well. Perhaps you should return to the planet now, and Colonel Carter can communicate the results to you as well.”

Carter got it immediately. Mutual hostages. In that case, she thought, it would be good to have some backup. Teal’c or Wilkes? Too obvious. Daniel? He was needed down on the planet. Which left, “Commander, I could use some help on our side for the search. Perhaps Dr. Burkemeier could stay here and help?” *Please, Dee?* she silently pleaded, looking Burkemeier in the eye.

I *could* have stayed on Earth, thought Burkemeier. Well, you wanted to live out in the wild, dangerous galaxy. Let’s see. Two Earthwomen, one not trained in combat, against a whole army of desperate aliens. Good odds, right?

Right. Aloud, however, she said, “I’d be happy to help, Sam.”

Guards brought Valerii to the Tel’tak in chains. She looked resigned as they led her up the ramp and into the cargo hold, the only place where there was enough space to hold the entire entourage. Wilkes was with her, but, O’Neill thought, that probably wasn’t the best choice. Not exactly the warm

and fuzzy type, was the Colonel.

Mitchell, happy for something to do, climbed into the pilot's seat and prepared to take the craft home. As he was about to close the gate, there was an uproar in the hanger bay. A man was trying to get past the guards, yelling something. O'Neill, at the top of the ramp, stopped and looked back. The man, a pilot from the look of his uniform, slugged one of the guards, kicked another, broke free of a third, and headed up the ramp.

Had O'Neill had time to think about it, he would have done it anyway. He still didn't entirely trust Adama, and wanted to make sure that the Colonial leader knew who was in charge, at least in the long run (for in this particular system, Adama still had the most firepower). He didn't have time, however. It was instinct that lead him to draw his zat'ni'katel, aim at the charging soldier, and fire once.

The man collapsed in a heap on the ramp. "He'll be all right," he told the guards. "Help him up, carry him to a bed, and let him lay there until he wakes up. He'll be good as new." Well, except for the headache, muscle aches, general soreness, etc., etc.

The guards outside the ship, now wary of the man with the strange gun, did as they were told. The hatch closed, the hanger cleared, air was evacuated from the bay, the entryway doors opened, and the Tel'tak headed back to Massilia.

"Who was that?" O'Neill asked the Colonials on board. Valerii answered him, "that was Karl Agathon – he's the father of my baby."

Carter and Burkemeier looked over Gaeta's shoulders at the computer output. On paper. It was, thought Carter, much like being back in school in the 1980s. How could a civilization with such primitive computer technology have created the Cylons in the first place? "Interesting way of presenting the data," she said aloud. *Damn*. Was that too condescending?

Apparently so. Gaeta looked up and said, "On the Colonies we had all sorts of flat screen displays, databases you could sort six ways from market day, all the worlds information available at the touch of a button. The Cylons were able to infiltrate the network, and destroy us all. The silly thing about it is that they did the same thing in the last war. That's why the *Galactica's* designed this way: No networked computers. If one is compromised, the rest are safe. The disadvantage is that if we want to transport information from one computer to another, we can't use digital access. We have to print it out and scan it back in. Hence the printouts. The paper also serves as permanent

read-only storage.”

“Sorry,” said Carter, “I didn’t mean to sound like this was a primitive setup.” Though of course she did.

“The worst thing about it,” said Gaeta, who wasn’t really listening to her, “is that there’s still some kind of Cylon virus in our operating systems that we haven’t been able to eradicate. It doesn’t affect the operation of a single computer, but as soon as two or more computers are connected together it appears. We almost lost the ship once because of that.”

“Maybe we can help with that. The Tau’ri are renowned throughout the galaxy for being able to crack into computer systems. We’re good at eradicating viruses, too.”

Gaeta looked doubtful. “I don’t think the Commander will be willing to let you access the operating system. He’s from the old school of computers. For most of the last forty years, since the end of the Cylon war, people who hacked computer code were thought of as – as almost Cylons. It was only when Dr. Baltar showed that we could write improved codes that were unhackable that computer science became popular again. Ha! Unhackable. Boy, was he wrong about that.”

Ah, so the enigmatic Dr. Baltar was supposed to protect the Colonials against further computer attack, thought Carter. I wonder why he’s treated so well here, then? Probably because he’s the only technical specialist that survived the attack.

Oh well, back to work. “So what do you have on Sharon Valerii?” she asked Gaeta. “I guess we’d better look at all the medical records, as a start.”

“OK,” said Gaeta. He started paging through the filing cabinet. “Valerii. Here it is. Born on Troy, daughter of Abraham and Catherine Valerii – makes sense, Troy was destroyed in a major mining accident, it would be a perfect place for infiltrators to claim as a birthplace. Hmm. Assigned Galactica, year 50 of the Colonial Federation, Raptor Pilot, didn’t do too well at landings, normal physicals ... Nothing out of the ordinary, until she shot Commander Adama. Take a look, see if you see anything I missed.”

“She shot the Commander?” It came from both Carter and Burkemeier.

“Well, the copy that lived on this ship did,” Gaeta replied. “The current copy we have was actually captured on Caprica. That was the first indication we had that she was a Cylon.”

Carter started looking through the printout. “What’s this notation? It says ‘Baltar Exam Ctest’.”

Gaeta looked at the output. “This came from Dr. Baltar’s computer.

We don't have any computers networked, as I said. So every night, someone dumps the files of each computer onto a tape. A summary is printed out, and entered into the library computer, here, where it is indexed, and printed out for the records. This notation you found says that there is a tape concerning Lieutenant Valerii on Dr. Baltar's computer. Or, at least, it was on Dr. Baltar's computer when the backup was made."

"Can we find the backup tape?" asked Carter.

"Of course. It would be on the tape dumps in Dr. Baltar's office. If your comm units can reach him we can ask—"

"No," said Carter, "I don't think we should ask permission from Dr. Baltar." Think fast, Sam. How do we get the data? Ask Adama? He might stand on principle. Who else do you know here? She looked at Gaeta, trying to keep her lips from breaking into a smile. "Can we get permission from Colonel Tigh?"

Gaeta considered. He never really liked Baltar, who had a tendency to look down on anyone not above him in the chain of command or mental ability. Also, as far as he knew, Baltar had never claimed to have any contact worth documenting with Valerii before the original shot Adama. So why not? Tigh's contempt for anyone not military was legendary. He picked up a nearby handset, punched some buttons. "Colonel Tigh? We've found that there might be some interesting information about Valerii on Dr. Baltar's computer. Since he's not here, Sir, can you give us authorization to search his backup tapes?" Gaeta listened, then hung up the handset, stood up, and addressed Carter and Burkemeier. "If you will follow me, ladies ..." Gaeta headed out the door.

Carter gave Burkemeier a wink. The two followed Gaeta down the corridor.

The *Galactica's* storage system was bulky, but efficient. It didn't take long to find the records they wanted. Part of the entry turned out to be a video file. Carter, Burkemeier, and Gaeta looked at the video. Then Gaeta picked up Baltar's handset, called Adama, and started an earnest conversation. Carter turned to Burkemeier, who officially outranked her. Burkemeier reached for her comm unit and pushed the "phone home" button. "Base, this is Burkemeier. We're downloading a very interesting video. Show it to General O'Neill." She looked at Gaeta, who nodded. "Tell him that Commander Adama has authorized him to detain Dr. Baltar."