

## Chapter 20

Dee Burkemeier had a vision for Massilia: a colony world, far from warring factions of Earth and the heavens. At the moment, the only colonists were those, who, like herself, were not trusted to keep the Stargate secret when on Earth, but were still useful to the project and were willing to live apart from family and friends in exchange for not having to lie to them. Maybe five per cent of the population fell into this category. Another ten percent or so had been actively involved in the program but had decided that they didn't need to go back to Earth. From Massilia, the Galaxy was just a shuttle ride away. On Earth, the only door to the Galaxy was buried inside a secure mountain in Colorado. The adventurous Massilia as the place you came back to after you were done playing tourist. The fact that the planet might blow up at any moment in a naquadria accident was just an added bit of spice. Burkemeier encouraged the tourists by keeping seats available for them on every Tel'tak supply run.

Another ten percent of the population consisted of science teams from Langara, who had an active interest in keeping the naquadria on their world from blowing up the planet. Armed with all the research records of Thanos and Saturn, as well as what had been learned here on the Massilia, they raced to find a way to control the unstable material before one of the deposits on their world decided to go boom on its own.

The remainder of the world's population was transient military and scientists from Earth, the Jaffa, the occasional Tok'ra, and service staff for all of the above. Since these comprised the majority of the population, the world had more of a feel of a Holiday Inn than a Little House on the Prairie.

However, because she thought of Massilia as a colony world, she demanded that it have first-class medical care. Including obstetrics and gynecology. After all, to sustain a colony you had to have babies, right?

Mary Steinhauer was the staff OB/GYN. Given the transient nature of the colony, she had what was probably its most boring job. Today, however, was different. Her first off-world amnio was going to be administered to a woman in chains.

Well, no. "Unchain her."

"We can't do that, Ma'am, orders."

Steinhauer looked at Jackson. "Daniel, you've got six Army MPs, she nodded toward the base guards, "another six guys who look like MPs," the *Galactica's* contingent, "and Teal'c Teal'c. Not to mention the guy who looks like he's lost." Meaning Baltar. "Let her go. If she's so dangerous that over

a dozen trained military can't handle her, then those chains aren't going to stop her either."

Jackson considered. The chains had been Adama's rule on the *Galactica*, not hers, here. Wilkes would have probably ruled otherwise, but she and O'Neill weren't here, which left him in *de facto* command. "Unchain her."

The *Galactica's* Sergeant balked. "Sir, I have my—"

"Orders," Jackson finished for him, "which I'm going to override." He tried to casually put his hand on his Zat. As an acting job, it was rather poor. "If you want to confer with Commander Adama you can do so, but Lieutenant Valerii will remain here, unbound."

The Sergeant was fairly good at counting. Forgetting the non-military, it was six of his to seven of theirs, but the seventh man was Teal'c, who was probably good for two or three. Not to mention that the Teal'c and Jackson both carried Zats. He produced the key.

"Thank you," said Valerii, as the chains came off.

"Don't mention it," said Steinhauer. "Just don't make a liar of me. I'm not a good liar, and I'm not good dead either. Do you understand what they want me to do?"

"Yes. They want to get genetic information and sonograms of my baby."

"That's right. How far along are you?"

"About sixteen weeks."

"Good enough." Steinhauer looked at the guard contingents. "Well?"

"Ma'am?" asked the *Galactica* Sergeant.

"Get out."

"Ma'am —"

"Out. All of you!" They looked like they were going to balk, so she modified it a bit. "Daniel and Teal'c, you can stay, along with the village idiot there." (Baltar was still in a world of his own.) "But get these *guards* out of here and give us some privacy. They can guard us from outside. Hell, if we're not done in one hour they can blow up the whole lab. OK?"

The Sergeant looked at Jackson, who nodded. The guards exited, As they went out the door, they might have seen the needlepoint hanging on the wall. The Colonials wouldn't have been able to read it. Steinhauer's staff on Earth had given it to her on her "retirement."

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, because I am the meanest bitch in the valley.*

"Now, Lieutenant – hell, what's your name?"

“Valerii. Sharon Valerii.”

“OK, Sharon, I guess you know about ultrasound and amnio – “

“Yes, we have them – had them – in the Colonies.”

“Right. Well, these have been a little bit enhanced. With the technology we’ve picked up over the last few years, the ultrasound pictures are going to be unusually sharp, and we’ll be able to run a complete DNA scan from the amnio fluid. We’ve still got to get the needle in, though, so there will be some pain.” Steinhauer was about to go through the standard: this could kill you, your baby, or civilization as we know it routine, but realized that this particular patient didn’t really have a choice in the matter.

“OK, let’s begin.” She started to pull the curtain around the bed to give her patient some privacy. Jackson started to object, so she said, “Daniel, if you hear my neck snap, you’ve got my permission to zat her. One, two, three times, your choice. But give us some privacy, OK?” Jackson backed off.

Six was a vision of loveliness. She and Baltar were standing next in a field, looking over the ruins of Kobol. That didn’t matter to Baltar, who could not concentrate on anything except Six. “Gaius, this should have been our baby. This is the one, the culmination of the plan. We have to protect her, do you understand?” He’d forgotten he was in a vision, and that Jackson and Teal’c were in the same room, but when he made to answer Six put a finger to his lips, silencing him. “You need to be more discrete, Gaius. Trust.” She walked away. Gaius couldn’t take his eyes off of her.

A low moan brought him back to reality. No, that wasn’t him. That was Valerii, behind the curtain.

The curtain came open. Steinhauer had a vial of fluid in one hand. In the other was a memory key. She showed the key to Daniel. “The sonograms are on the key, we can use the hospital computers to view the results. The amnio fluid goes to the lab, I’ll take it down there and start the analysis. You’d better bring the guards back in.” She started walking out the door, but paused and turned to Jackson. “But, Daniel, I’d appreciate it if they didn’t chain her while she was in my sight.” Jackson nodded.

The guards reentered. Along with them came O’Neill, Wilkes, and another two MPs. Jackson gave O’Neill a “now what?” look. O’Neill responded by grabbing one of Baltar’s arms, putting it behind his back, following suit with the other arm, and then securing them both with cuffs.

Baltar started to protest, but O’Neill pulled the cuffs a little tighter, and

frog marched the scientist out the door.

“Jack, what’s going on?” asked Jackson, “Dr. Baltar is our guest, not a prisoner ... Isn’t he?” The last bit was rather uncertain.

“I have a brand-new movie that I’d like Dr. Baltar to see, Daniel,” replied O’Neill. “I’m afraid it might require a captive audience.” He continued to direct Baltar’s movements. Wilkes, Teal’c and the guards followed, with Jackson trailing behind.

Baltar and his admirers entered a room. A bare room, except for a video projector, screen, and some chairs. Baltar was recovering from the shock of being handcuffed and marched off, and was starting to protest. O’Neill didn’t bother to listen, and sat Baltar down in one of the chairs, rather hard. The guards stood in back.

“Jack?” It was Daniel, O’Neill realized. “What’s all this about?” Fortunately, Jackson wasn’t making a big protest. He knew that O’Neill wouldn’t have done this unless he felt it necessary.

“I want to show Dr. Baltar some home movies,” he replied. Then, turning to Baltar, he said, “I’m sure you’ll find these very interesting.” He picked up a remote control, pressed a button.

The picture showed Baltar’s laboratory on the *Galactica*. Seated at the computer console was Baltar. Across from him was Sharon Valerii. “Am I a Cylon?” she was asking.

The Baltar figure on the screen hesitated for a moment. He appeared to be having some sort of internal conversation. “That’s right, Gaius,” said Six, who had suddenly appeared behind the seated Baltar, massaging his neck, “that’s what you look like when we’re having a conversation.”

Baltar shook his head, as if trying to awake from a trance. He managed to get O’Neill in focus. Brazen it out. “How did you get this? I was acting in a medical capacity, this should have remained quiet.”

O’Neill stopped the video. “Your ship’s Mr. Gaeta showed Carter the most interesting things about your computer system, Dr. Baltar,” he replied. “Looks like everything on the *Galactica* is recorded on paper or on tape and stored. It’s a leftover from the Cylon war, when the Cylons could wipe out entire sets of records off a hard disk. The problem is that you can’t just search it, you have to know where to look. We were looking for information about Lieutenant Valerii – who, as a Cylon, has no privacy rights, by they way – and found this. Commander Adam was *very* grateful for our help, and says he’s looking forward to seeing you.”

“But there’s nothing wrong with what I’ve done.” Baltar protested.

“Just wait. Watch.” O’Neill restarted the video.

Screen Baltar said to screen Valerii, “no, you’re not a Cylon. Everything is green.” In fact, nearly every light was red.

O’Neill cut the tape.

“The machine was defective!” cried Baltar. “I fixed it later. Lieutenant Valerii was upset, I didn’t want to alarm her. It was completely innocent!”

“And yet,” said Teal’c menacingly, “Lieutenant Valerii is, in fact, a Cylon.”

“But I didn’t know that. It was all a mistake on my part! An innocent mistake!”

O’Neill pulled up a chair, it’s back to Baltar. He sat down, facing Baltar, arms on the back of the chair. “Dr. Baltar. You are under arrest. Commander Adama would very much like to see you, but I’d like to have a little conversation with you myself, first.” Teal’c got *very* close to the back of Baltar’s chair.

Baltar was sweating. “I tell you, I’m completely innocent.”

“Pay no attention to that man on the screen,” said O’Neill. He looked a Teal’c.

“Torture is against Colonial Law!” shouted Baltar.

“And against the laws of the United States of America,” agreed O’Neill. “I’m not going to torture you. However.” He paused.

“The United States of America does not engage in torture. We have, at times, practiced what is called extraordinary-rendition. Do you know what that means?”

Baltar shook his head.

“It’s a rather unique practice,” said Jackson, who could see where O’Neill was going, “wherein we surrender you to another government. Some of these governments have been known to torture prisoners. Of course, we would never allow that. Would we, Jack?”

“No, of course not.” O’Neill turned to the Jaffa. “Teal’c,” he asked, conversationally, “does the Jaffa council prohibit torture?”

“It does not, O’Neill,” replied the Jaffa, omitting the fact that the council had very little power to prohibit anything.

“And so, Dr. Baltar,” said O’Neill, standing up, “we’re going to put you in the custody of the Jaffa council, represented by Teal’c, who is one of its leading members.” He started to walk out the door, Jackson following.

Baltar looked up at the Jaffa. He tried to turn far enough to look at O'Neill. "Wait!" he shouted.

O'Neill and Jackson paused. Baltar continued. "I'll tell you everything. Everything! But you have to keep me from this – this torturer, and away from Adama!"

O'Neill looked over at Jackson. "Well, Daniel, I guess we don't have to give Dr. Baltar up to the Jaffa council." He went back to his chair and sat down, leaning in towards Baltar.

"However, Dr. Baltar, whether or not I turn you over to Commander Adama depends on the story you're about to tell me, and how well you tell it."