

Chapter 25

The humanoid Cylons, Valerii included, started to go down on one knee. As they did, they pushed the humans so that they were on the floor, as well. The Goa'uld addressed the humans. **"I am Saturn, your God. It was my will that brought your ancestors to this world."**

"Well, not exactly," interrupted Jackson. "We know that your 'children' revolted and led the—" He was stopped by a slap to the back of the head from one of the white coated Six copies.

"Silence! Everything which happened was for the purpose of the creation of the child before me. When it is grown old enough, she will become my host! The plan will be fulfilled!"

Six was trying to speak. "Oh God, this One of yours has betrayed you. She actually fell in love with the human who is the father of Your Child. Another copy fell in love with another human. I know that you must protect the child, but you must not let her raise it. I will raise it. With Baltar!" She was practically screaming.

"Ah, Dr. Baltar," said Saturn, **"I knew your grandfather. He was a great inventor. You, I understand, were instrumental in fulfilling the plan."**

Baltar was trying to get as far away from the talking Six as he could. He felt himself reverting to his basic coward mode. "Well, your, your, ... My Lord, I'm sure he was a great help to you, but was it really necessary? If all you wanted was a human body to take over, why didn't you just take one?"

"You do not understand," replied Saturn, eyes flashing, **"just another host would not do. I had to create a *proper* host, one that would rejuvenate myself. That required the invention of these children of mine. Unlike the children that betrayed me, they are loyal. The first model,"** she nodded toward Valerii, **"was based on the DNA of this host. The other models were my own design. This is why One can breed with humans while the others cannot."**

Six started sputtering. "Oh Lord, how can this be? Was not the child to be mine?"

"Silence!" shouted Saturn. **"You do not know of my plan."** She turned to Valerii. **"One, the child was to be born on the *Galactic*. My other children there would have protected her, and seen to it that she would have risen into a position of power among the remaining humans. You have deviated from the plan. Why?"**

"My God," Valerii addressed the Goa'uld, "I had no choice. By chance,

the *Galactica* encountered these humans,” she gestured towards SG-1, “who are of the Tau’ri. Except for this *Shol’va*,” she indicated Teal’c, “who betrayed his God Apophis and joined the Tau’ri.”

“The Tau’ri had information about the location of the *Chaapa’ai*” (“Stargate,” whispered Jackson to Roslin.) “here on Kobol, and persuaded the Colonials to come here to obtain information necessary to defeat the Cylon fleet. I knew that I must come along, to warn you of the danger.”

“Yep, pretty classic betrayal,” O’Neill remarked to Carter.

“You should really do more planning, General,” Starbuck spoke up.

“Never have time, Lieutenant, never have time. Always something that has to be improvised on the spot—”

“**Silence!**” Saturn shouted at them, then turned back to Valerii, “**These Tau’ri are no danger to me, but with them fighting alongside the *Galactica* might have led to conditions where the *Galactica* would be destroyed. You did right to come here.**”

Maybe time to stir things up, O’Neill thought. “OK, isn’t this the time where you tell us how great and powerful you are, and how we’re all going to suffer fates worse than death?”

Saturn actually sighed. Her eyes ceased to glow, and she spoke in Valerii’s voice. “My dear Tau’ri, you don’t understand. I have no time for that kind of thing. I am old, and I must spend most of my time in the sarcophagus. If I do not, I will be unable to transfer out of this body into the child’s when the time has come.”

Then she turned to Six—the one that seemed to be in command. Saturn’s eyes again glowed. “**One, here, is the bear the child. I am sorry if you thought anything else. Her model is the only one with the human genes to allow conception. But, as you say, she is weak. The human part of her, which you do not share, has fallen in love, both with her mates and her child. Take her and lock her away! And dispose of the others!**” She rose from the throne, then started towards the sarcophagus.

“By Your Command,” Six said. She motioned Valerii to step away from the others. As Sharon did so, the cover of the sarcophagus closed.

The mood among the other Valerii copies changed. Glancing around, Roslin saw that there were more Ones than any other model, except the Sixes that surrounded them. She looked over to Valerii, who was trembling. “Sharon, you can’t let them take your child!” The Six behind her slapped her in the back of her head.

Valerii looked over to one her other copies. “Back on the mother ship,” she said, “when one of ours was about to set off the bomb, others of us came up to her. We knew that she had to survive. We told her we loved her, and allowed her to set off the bomb.”

“We love you to, Sharon,” said the One she addressed. Then she drew her firearm and shot at Six. Six managed to duck out of the way, grabbing Valerii with her.

A general melee ensued. The five human warriors and one Jaffa ducked and rolled, trying to get out of range of fire and to acquire weapons. One of Valerii’s copies managed to throw O’Neill a machine gun before she was cut down by one of the Six copies. O’Neill didn’t dare let off a full clip, but he was able to put the gun in semi-automatic mode, firing as fast as he was able. He looked around. Apollo, Starbuck, Carter, Teal’c, and Mitchell were all struggling with individual Cylons. Roslin, Baltar, and Jackson had decided that discretion was the better part of valor (good choice) and were hiding behind the sarcophagus. O’Neill set himself up behind some of the bodies and tried to pick off the attackers when he could get a clean shot. Sometimes it was hard, because Ones were attacking the other Cylons. O’Neill didn’t really want to hit any allies, even though there seemed to be many copies.

Semi-automatic fire in close quarters is a great equalizer. It looked like the humans and Ones were winning, when the first Six yelled “I have Valerii. Stop at once. Tau’ri, Ones, put down your weapons.”

Everything got very still. I could just shoot them both, thought O’Neill. We don’t owe Valerii anything. But that would certainly turn the Ones against his team, making it impossible to escape. He put down his weapon.

“Excellent choice, General,” said Six. She was holding Valerii in front of her. In one hand she had what Apollo had described as a grenade, and standing near the sarcophagus. It looked much like a regulation issue US grenade, and was probably as deadly. She looked at the humans and the other Ones. “If you do not surrender, I will blow both of us up right now. My mind will be downloaded into another copy. One of the One’s can take Valerii’s place on the *Galactica*, and the plan can begin again.”

Sharon Valerii was crying. “No!” she said. “You will not control this child!” She grabbed at the grenade. Six tried to grab it back. As she did, something came loose from the grenade. Six looked at the piece in her hand. To O’Neill, it looked like the safety pin.

“It’s live!” shouted Apollo, “everyone down!”

Six tried to grab the grenade away from Valerii, or, failing that, push her

away.

Then Baltar jumped up from behind the sarcophagus, yelling “No!” Somehow, he crashed into Valerii, knocking the grenade from her hand. It rolled onto the sarcophagus. Six yelled and tried to reach for it. Baltar’s momentum landed him on top of her, with the grenade under Six’s body. The grenade exploded.

O’Neill had dived back behind his barricade of Cylon bodies. He peered out from behind. The sarcophagus was smoking. Scratch another Goa’uld, he thought. Baltar and the copy of Six under him were clearly dead, as well. Their bodies and the metal of the sarcophagus had shielded everyone else from the damage.

Others started to get up. The Cylons seemed stunned, which allowed the humans to reach for weapons. Valerii – the one in the Colonial uniform – also got up, weapon in hand. Well, thought O’Neill, she seems to be on our side, so I guess it’s OK.

Teal’c gave the standard speech for this situation. “Your false god is dead! You are free!”

“You’ve killed our God,” replied one of the male Cylons. “You will never get out of here alive.”

O’Neill sighed theatrically. “You have no idea how many of our enemies have said that to us.” He looked at Valerii, “we can get out of here alive, right?”

“I believe so,” she answered. “Communication between us isn’t immediate, it takes some time for information to be passed between copies. The Six that was killed will have her memories downloaded, but it will be a while her new body wakes up and she can tell everyone what happened. If we don’t kill too many of these,” she pointed at the various Sixes, and, presumably, Twos, Threes, etc., that had been herded into the center of the room, “then the managers of the duplication center shouldn’t notice an increase in downloads. Copies get killed all of the time.”

“So what’s the plan?” O’Neill asked.

A weak smile came to Valerii’s face. “As you might have noticed, My model has a certain status around here. I think I can use that to get us home.”

“Home?” inquired Roslin.

“Yes, home,” replied Valerii, “with the father of my child, and the people I’ve lived with for the past few years.”

“We’ve got to take her, Madam President,” added O’Neill, “she’s our ticket out of here.”

Roslin thought it over and realized that they didn’t have a choice. If Valerii wanted to go with them, her copies were able to enforce her wishes. She nodded.

“All right, people,” said O’Neill, addressing the remaining Cylons, “that thing over there, Saturn, who said she was your god, is dead. She won’t be coming back to life. So I suggest you figure out how you’re going to deal with that. We’re going to get out of here.” He started toward the door, then turned back.

“Carter, do you have a camera on that thing?” he asked, meaning her comm-set.

“Yes sir, I do.”

“Then take a picture of each model before we go. We’ll make plenty of copies. If they try to go to ground on a human world, we’ll know.”

“Right, Sir.” Carter took pictures. The resolution wouldn’t be all that good, but with luck the Cylons wouldn’t figure that out for awhile.

“Good. Let’s go.” The humans, with one Cylon, exited. The remaining Valerii copies held back the rest of the Cylons.

“Now what?” asked Starbuck, as they headed down the hall.

“We try to get out of here before there’s a general uproar,” said Valerii. Then “Wait!” Footsteps, with a vaguely metallic sound, approached down a cross hall. “The Centurions are awake. Stay here.” She glanced out, ducked back. “There’s a Six out there with them. Roslin, I need you. Now. Apollo, I need that gun. The rest of you, stay hidden. If you need to do something, pray that the news hasn’t propagated yet.” Apollo considered for a moment, then tossed her the colonial rifle. Valerii grabbed Roslin by the hand and pulled her out into the hall.

The metallic steps stopped. Roslin looked up. There was one of the white-coated Six models, leading four Cylon warriors. Gods, they were unnerving.

Valerii addressed the Six. “Saturn has ordered me to go back to the *Galactica*. This one,” she indicated Roslin, “will be the only other survivor.”

“Of course, she will corroborate your story,” Six’s voice was full of sarcasm.

“She will. We have offered to cure her cancer in exchange for her cooperation,” countered Valerii.

Could they do that? wondered Roslin, *or is it just supposed to be a ruse?* A trick, no doubt.

Six studied Roslin, “A typical human. I suppose it may have some marginal use.”

“It is the order of God,” stated Valerii, in a sterner tone that Roslin had ever heard her use, “escort us to the Gate.”

Six didn’t exactly shrug, but she plainly thought it a waste of time. “By your command,” she told Valerii.

Six and the Cylons turned around, backs to Valerii and Roslin. Valerii pushed Roslin behind her, then started firing. From the number of explosions, Roslin realized that she was shooting on full automatic.

There were several “thunks” as the Cylons hit the floor. Valerii pulled Roslin to her feet, then shouted “OK, you can come out now!” to the remaining humans.

Four Cylon warriors were lying in a heap. All had been shot in the back. There wasn’t much left of Six. Apollo’s rifle had been armed with Centurion-killing ammunition.

Valerii was shaking. “Are you all right, Sharon?” asked Starbuck. She put her arm around Valerii.

Sharon looked up at her, “it goes against my programing, you know. I did betray them. I am Shol’va.”

“You are not, Shol’va Sharon Valerii,” said Teal’c. “I, too, have been called Shol’va. Neither of us is. We are people who have fought for freedom from the Goa’uld.”

“Am I a person?” asked Valerii, “or just a toaster?”

“You’re a person, Sharon,” said Starbuck. “Certainly Helo and the Chief thought so.”

O’Neill was growing impatient. “While I understand all of this is important, it’s nothing we can’t do back through the gate.”

Valerii was shaking again. “My other copies will die. The rest of them will be killed by the others.” She began crying, hysterically.

O’Neill drew his zat, fired once. Valerii collapsed. “I wasn’t sure that would work,” he said. Starbuck and Carter were giving him a harsh glare. “What? I understand what she’s feeling, but if she’s crying like that something’s bound to hear. Better she’s unconscious. Teal’c?”

The Jaffa hoisted Valerii over his shoulder. The team continued on back to the ballroom.

The place was deserted. “This isn’t right,” said O’Neill. “If the alarm has been raised, this is the first place they should look.” He thought for a moment. “Did we pick up any grenades as we went out the door?”

“I got one, General,” said Mitchell. He handed it to O’Neill. “Didn’t have time to stop for more.”

“Wonder if these will knock out Cylons,” wondered O’Neill. Then he shrugged, fingered the grenade, ready to pull the trigger. He turned towards the others. “In case I miss the target, you’d better get behind the door.” They did.

Carter was standing by the ring control panel. “Ready, Sir. On my mark in five, four, three, two, one.” As she reached zero, O’Neill pulled the pin and rolled the grenade into the circle made by the rings. The rings rose up, and the grenade disappeared.

Two Cylon warriors appeared. They’d been waiting for something like this. O’Neill got off the first shot, and Carter another. Bullets bounced off the metal. Carter and O’Neill were able to use the noise to get out of the door.

Teal’c, and Mitchell were on one side of the door, Apollo and Starbuck on the other. “Any ideas on how to handle this situation?” O’Neill asked of anyone.

“We need explosive rounds to take them out!” shouted Apollo. “Ordinary rounds will force them back, that’s just conservation of momentum. But they won’t penetrate the armor. We only had the one that Valerii used on the other Cylons, and now its out of ammo. Will those zats of yours work on them?”

“I think we’d have to get three shots off at each target!” replied O’Neill. One shot stunned, two shots killed, three shots disintegrated. On humans. On Cylons, you’d probably need three shots just to get a reaction.

“O’Neil!” Teal’ set Valerii down. Somehow he still had his staff weapon. “Cover me.” He charged the weapon.

O’Neill set his rifle on full automatic. “Go!” he shouted, then rolled across the front of the doorway, firing into the ring alcove as he went. From the other side, Teal’c came in behind him, firing his staff weapon.

There was a loud “thunk!” One down, thought O’Neill. “Try it again!”

“Go!” Again the double roll. Another “thunk!” O’Neill felt something hit is arm. Mild bleeding, nothing more. Luckily. He looked back. Teal’c was OK. Carter came up with a med kit and started bandaging his arm.

“All right,” he said. “Teal’c, Mitchell, join me. Carter, send us up. If one of us doesn’t come back in a few minutes try another way to get out of here! Maybe Valerii can tell you when she wakes up.”

“Sir.” Carter worked the platform controls. The rings came up, the three inside vanished.

And reappeared in the Stargate chamber. Two more Cylon warriors were laid out, injured or killed by the grenade blast. Fortunately, the DHD was unharmed.

“Mitchell, go back and get the rest.” O’Neill worked the ring controls. A very short time later, everyone was back in the gate room. Valerii was starting to awaken. Tears were in her eyes. Starbuck and Carter went over to comfort her.

Roslin was in a daze. All of this had happened so fast. They had found Saturn, legendary father of the Lords of Kobol, and killed him. One of his avatars, Sharon Valerii, was carrying a partially human baby, designed by Saturn to be its host. Her head started spinning.

“Madam President!” Apollo yelled, grabbing her as she collapsed. Weakly, she said “let’s go home, Captain Apollo, back to the Fleet.”

“I’ll carry her,” Apollo said.

“What’s the matter with her?” asked O’Neill, “She wasn’t hit.”

“I have cancer, General O’Neill,” replied Roslin, almost in a whisper, “I’m dying.”

“Not today,” said O’Neill. “You just ran out of gas. Daniel, dial us out of here.”

Jackson pressed the appropriate buttons on the DHD. The Stargate whined, “whooshed,” and opened the door to the Universe.

Teal’c carrying Valerii, Apollo cradling Roslin, they stepped through the gate.