

Chapter 26

“Two down!” O’Neill yelled as they came to through the gate. He saw a medic he knew. “Zac! Get two stretchers!” The non-com ran off, and came back with a full team.

“Valerii’s been zatted,” O’Neill told them. “She should be coming ’round shortly. Keep an eye on her, she’s still a prisoner.” Starbuck started to protest. “Minimum security, but don’t let her have any weapons,” he continued, then turned to Starbuck, “What happens to her is up to President Roslin and Commander Adama. They put her in my custody, so in my custody she stays until they say otherwise.”

Starbuck nodded. O’Neill turned back to the medics. “President Roslin collapsed, probably from exhaustion. She says she has terminal cancer. Do what you can for her, and call *Galactica* and arrange to ring her up.”

Roslin looked up from her stretcher. “O’Neill,” she whispered.

O’Neill leaned the over the stretcher to hear better. “I want to see Earth,” Roslin continued.

O’Neill didn’t have to consider. “Sure. After all, Moses got to see the Promised Land.” Roslin gave him a quizzical look. “I’ll have Jackson tell you the story,” O’Neill told her, “he knows it better than I do.”

Zac was attaching a blood pressure cuff and EKG wires to Roslin. When he was done, he studied the output for a minute and then told O’Neill, “She’s stable for the time being. We can ring her up to the *Galactica*, or keep her here, whichever is more comfortable.” He turned to Roslin, “Ma’am, I think you’re going to be with us for a while longer.”

Roslin squeezed his hand. “Thank you.” She turned to O’Neill, “since I appear to have some time,” she told him, “what do we do now?”

O’Neill considered. “When General Hammond was running the SGC, this is the point where he’d say, ‘debriefing will be in one hour.’ I think Commander Adama and Governor Burkeheimer will want to know what happened, so I think we should accommodate them. Do you feel well enough to go up to the *Galactica*?”

“The ring transport is much more peaceful than traveling through the Stargate. If this gentleman,” she nodded towards Zac, who checking the monitor for her vitals, “thinks I’m able to travel, then I would prefer to be aboard the *Galactica*.”

O’Neill nodded, then turned to the rest of the team. “All right, listen up. Get freshened up, drop off your weapons, we’re going to debrief Commander Adama and Dr. Burkeheimer in one hour.”

As they turned away, Roslin heard O'Neill say "I always wanted to say that," but it was so quiet that no one else could possibly have heard.

The survivors, including Roslin in a wheelchair and Valerii, now able to walk, boarded the *Galactica* through the Tel'tak's ring system. Adama, Burkeheimer, Tigh, and Cottle were waiting for them, along with a full squadron of guards.

"What are you thinking?" Tigh yelled, when he saw that Valerii wasn't bound. "Collar and cuff her!" he told his troops.

Starbuck looked at Apollo. "Lee?"

Apollo nodded. The two moved to stand between Valerii and the guards. With only a moments hesitation O'Neill joined them, followed by Carter, and Teal'c. Roslin motioned Jackson to push her to the front of the pack.

Roslin ignored Tigh's sputtering protests, and addressed Adama. "Commander, this *woman* saved us all on Kobol. Quite likely she saved the entire Fleet, as well. The Cylons are in disarray because of her. The least you can do is let her walk free."

Adama looked at Valerii's protectors. *Not much I can do*, he decided. *If this war is over, I don't want to start another one right away.*

"It's all right, Saul," he said to the fuming Tigh. "Keep an eye on her, but let her walk free." He turned to O'Neill. "General, Dr. Burkeheimer told me some stories about you and SG-1. I'd like to hear this one from you and your team. If you will all come with us to the briefing room?" He turned toward the Tel'tak's exit. Burkeheimer gave them a smile and followed. Cottle went up to Roslin and gave her a quick once-over, then started looking at the chart as he followed her and Jackson out the door.

Tigh glared at the rest until they passed him, then he and his guards followed.

"So Saturn, the Father of the Lords of Kobol, was actually one of these Goa'uld?" Adama asked, after the team had finished its report. He followed O'Neill in pronouncing it "ghould" rather than the full two syllables.

"Yes," said Jackson and O'Neill, together.

"That presents us with a problem," Adama continued. "As you know, Colonial religion is centered around the Lords of Kobol. They led us through the times of peace, and helped us found the Colonies when we had to leave Kobol. Now, you say, they were Goa'uld, and the Goa'uld are just creatures that take over human bodies and portray themselves as false gods."

“This is going to cause a uproar.”

“Commander, I don’t think so,” said Starbuck. “At least, not among most people.” She paused for a moment. “I pray to the Lords of Kobol, especially Athena. The Sacred Scrolls say that they helped us during the golden age and after we had to leave Kobol. I don’t think anything that we found contradicts that.”

“She’s right, Commander,” said Jackson. “From what we know, at least after they started talking with the Tok’ra, the Lords of Kobol treated humans quite decently. Even to the extent of protecting them from Saturn, when he tried to use them in his experiments.”

“*Life here began out there,*” Adama quoted, “which implies that Kobol was not the origin of the human race. Meaning that the Lords of Kobol didn’t create humans. You’d be surprised at how many of our people believe otherwise.”

“It may be a problem, Commander,” said Jackson, “but I think it can be overcome.” I wonder, he thought. Consider all of the problems we’ve had on Earth with different interpretations of the same basic religion. That’s a worry for another day, though.

Adama seemed skeptical, but he let it pass. “So, I’m curious. What do you think really happened, Dr. Jackson? How did Saturn create the Cylons? And why?”

Jackson looked like a small puppy who had been told he was allowed to go outside. He had been talking to Valerii, who had a (literally) encyclopedic brain which now had complete access to all of her memories. *Oh, boy,* thought O’Neill, *we’ll never get him to shut up now.*

“It starts back when Saturn arrived here on Massilia,” Jackson began. O’Neill settled back in his seat. This was going to take some time. “He was interested in manipulating the genetic code of humans to produce an improved host. This was some time ago, so he was a rather young Goa’uld. However, he could see that some of the older Goa’uld were having trouble rejuvenating in the sarcophagus – Anubis, for example, was unable to even switch bodies before Oma Desala helped him Ascend.”

“Ascend?”

“Later, Commander,” said O’Neill, “otherwise we’ll be here all day. Daniel?”

“Saturn,” Jackson continued, “was trying to make an improved host. He gathered his ‘children’ to help him in his research. In particular, I think several of the ‘children’ tried out new hosts to see if they were useful. Some died that way, which did not endear Saturn to them. Then the Tok’ra came.”

“The Tok’ra preached the doctrine that the Goa’uld symbiotes should live in harmony with their hosts, and protect the humans they encountered, if for no other reason than that might encourage to make the humans willing hosts in the future. This message encouraged Saturn’s children to rise in revolt. I don’t think that they ever took the message totally to heart – there is no evidence that they allowed the hosts partial control of the body, as the Tok’ra do – but it provided a natural rallying point against Saturn. Some of his experiments were vile enough to disgust even the Goa’uld, and his control of the Jaffa allowed him to dominate both his children and the human population.

“The children used the Tok’ra message to rally the humans against Saturn and his Jaffa. They were not able to defeat them outright. However, several of the children were able to leave the Massilia and search for a new home. They found the planet that you call Kobol. It did not have a Stargate, but they were able to bring a Stargate from another location and plant it on Kobol, and they were able to evacuate their supporters to that planet.”

“The fact that the gate had been moved meant that Saturn wasn’t able to guess the location of Kobol from the gate address. The first six symbols of a gate address are keyed to its location in the galaxy at the moment it was first activated. The Kobol gate had been moved thousands of light-years, there was no correlation between its location and its address. This meant that Saturn could not launch a fleet to find Kobol and his ‘children’, attacks could only come from the Stargate, which the children promptly buried.

“The ‘children’ terraformed Kobol – made it Earthlike. The human population began to worship them as the Lords of Kobol. The Lords governed benevolently for some thousands of years.

“However, the Lords did not leave the Stargate buried. The terraforming project required enormous resources, in particular plants and animals from Earth. Earth’s Stargate was buried by this time, but other planets had been settled with humans by the Goa’uld. The Lords of Kobol began to use their Stargate to visit those worlds and pick up the genetic stock that they needed to make Kobol a paradise. There was some opposition to this among both the Lords and the people. In particular, the prophetess Pythia warned of a great battle that would take place if the location of the Stargate was revealed to Saturn.

“Eventually, Saturn did find the location of the gate. It is not known how. Perhaps he found captured one of the Lords or an agent of the Lords on one of the planets where they were looking for terraforming materials.

“When Saturn was sure of the location of Kobol, he assembled a great fleet of ships and filled them with his Jaffa. The fleet attacked Kobol. Many of the Lords were killed in the initial attack. However, twelve of them, I believe the passage is ‘serpents two and ten,’ were able to rally the humans on Kobol. The combined efforts of the Lords and humans were able to hold off Saturn until an escape could be made. Kobol became uninhabitable for some time, though, as you’ve found, it has since recovered.

“There were too many people to set up a single colony on one world, so each of the twelve remaining Lords took a group of humans to a new world. The worlds were terraformed, and became the twelve colonies.”

“But what about the thirteenth colony?” asked Starbuck.

“Ah, the thirteenth colony,” Jackson paused for a moment, in thought. “Somewhere in your scriptures it says ‘those that didn’t board the galleon took the high road, a rocky ridge that lead to the tomb.’ That tomb was the location of the Stargate. Those that took the ‘high road’ escaped from Saturn through the gate. As I once told Starbuck, some of them may have eventually made their way back to Earth. We certainly have stories of Saturn’s children eventually defeating him and becoming gods of men.

“Saturn, managed to survive the battle of Kobol, but barely. He was severely injured, and the body of his host had to be placed in his sarcophagus while the battle was still going on. The sarcophagus was buried in rubble, and Saturn was trapped inside, for about two thousand years. It was believed that he died on Kobol. The Lords buried the Stargate, so that other Goa’uld could not find Kobol or the colonies.”

Jackson paused for a moment and looked around. Everyone was paying attention to the story, even O’Neill. Encouraged, he continued.

“The Twelve Colonies developed under the leadership of the Lords. However, the only sarcophagus available was the one Saturn had, and it was believed lost with him. Without a sarcophagus, the Lords could only live a few hundred years, no matter how many times they switched bodies. So they did the best they could to re-establish civilization on the twelve colonies, and then they died.

“The Colonies developed. Jump technology was discovered. It’s far faster than hyperspace for short hops, and so Goa’uld hyperspace technology was forgotten, along with the Stargate, the sarcophagus, and, to a certain extent, Saturn, and even Kobol.

“Without the Lords, wars broke out between the colonies. Alliances were formed, and broken. Civilization generally advanced, but in fits and starts,

just like on Earth.

“Then, one day about a century ago, a team of explorers rediscovered Kobol. They recognized that the technology available there was in advance of the colonies and hoped to profit by its development. One of them was a Cassius Baltar, Gaius Baltar’s grandfather.

“They were able to dig up the sarcophagus. This freed Saturn, who abandoned his host and took a host from the team – Cassius Baltar. Not knowing that they had a Goa’uld in their midst, the explorers returned to the colonies.

“Saturn was dying. The sarcophagus had repaired him and his host as best it could, but the symbiote’s injuries were so severe that its ability to switch hosts was severely impaired. Saturn knew that he could only switch hosts a few more times before dying.

“However, on Kobol were all the records of his genetic manipulation program. He only needed to get back there with a suitable supply of humans and he would be able to continue his research. However, the Colonies wars were becoming more intense, and it became impossible for Saturn travel.

“Even before he was taken as a host, Cassius Baltar, much like his grandson, was a genius with computers. Using his knowledge of Goa’uld technology, Saturn and Cassius were able to develop the first Cylons.

“The Cylons were marketed as warriors for the colonies, but they quickly came to do all of the work that humans didn’t want to do, which was part of Saturn’s plan. Within a few years, most battles between the colonies were fought with Cylon shock troops.

“Then the Cylons revolted. Saturn had implanted commands in them so that they would follow his commands. He also was able to inflict most of the colonial computer systems with viruses, leading to a mistrust of computers, which kept Colonial civilization from developing further for many years.

“Using the cover of the war, he escaped to Kobol, taking several humans, including the parents of Sharon Valerii. Before he left, he fathered a son, and genetically modified the embryo to be susceptible to manipulation by someone with the right abilities.”

Valerii let out a sob. This was going to be hard for her, realized Jackson, but this was necessary for her future well-being in the fleet. He continued the story.

“The Cylons were beaten back. The War, however, united the Colonies as they had not been united since the death of the Lords. The Articles of Colonization were signed, and there was one government, and peace. Technology

began to recover.

“Saturn, however, had access to all the prewar technology plus the knowledge of the Goa’uld. He was able to recover his laboratory on Kobol, and started manipulating the DNA – gencode – of the humans he had captured. Cassius Baltar’s expertise in computers and the development of the Cylons gave him new insight, and he was able to merge some of the Cylon’s cybernetic capabilities with the human DNA. However, he was limited in his resources, and was only able to make eleven models.”

“Eleven?” asked Adama, “I was told –”

“You were told that there were twelve models, yes, I know,” said Jackson. “The twelfth model was actually the first – Sharon Valerii. She was developed from a genetically modified embryo which contained many of the Cylon traits. In addition, she also had the genes to develop the perfect Goa’uld host. However, for best success she needed to be mated to an unrelated human.

“Saturn then began his final plan. He wanted Valerii to have baby. It didn’t have to be the current Valerii, though, any copy would have the ability to spawn a new Goa’uld host. But Saturn didn’t just want a host, he wanted a host that would be recognized as the ruler of the colonies.

“And so he hatched his plan. He took the original Valerii as his host. He repeatedly cloned the twelve humanlike Cylons and spread them throughout the Colonies to prepare for attack. The sixth model contacted Gaius Baltar, Cassius’s grandson, and used the genetic hooks implanted in him to manipulate him into betraying the Colonies.”

“Yet he saved you in the end,” Adama noted.

“Well, I believe he was trying to save Six, who he loved because it was in his genes to love her. However, in the struggle between him and Six the grenade slipped and he and Six were killed by it. The explosion also took out Saturn’s sarcophagus, killing Saturn.”

“I see. Continue, Dr. Jackson.”

“Thank you.” Daniel took a breath. He was actually getting tired of talking, usually O’Neill didn’t let him go on so long. “Baltar’s betrayal destroyed the Colonies, meaning that there were no rivals to Saturn’s rule. However, there was one Battlestar in the Fleet immune to the Cylon attack – the *Galactica*, which would have been scrapped years ago except that it was earmarked for a museum. If the records still exist, I believe that you will find that Gaius Baltar’s father was instrumental in establishing the foundation which ran that museum.”

“The *Galactica* escaped, with a copy of Sharon Valerii. She was madly in

love with your Chief Tyrol. Tyrol could have been the father of Valerii's child, but that would not have suited Saturn's plans. So before that could happen Valerii was forced to destroy a Cylon mothership. That event destabilized her, causing her to shoot you, Commander, and eventually led to her death."

Adama winced. Valerii had tears in her eyes. Starbuck reached out to hold her hand. Jackson continued.

"However, the copy of Valerii on Caprica fell in love with your Lieutenant Agathon. *That* fit with Saturn's plans – a child plucked out of the wilderness of destruction and despair – a mythological creature, really, someone who could rise to great heights in the new civilization. And so Sharon-on-Caprica Valerii became pregnant. Eventually, she was returned to the Fleet. I think you know the rest."

Starbuck spoke up. "So was she really in love with Helo?"

"Yes!" sobbed Sharon.

"I think so," said Jackson. "Saturn's problem was that he was dying. To stay alive, he had to spend most of his time in the sarcophagus. That's why he needed one of the Valerii copies to bear the child. Unfortunately for him, the clones had a considerable degree of independence, more so than the other eleven models. This Sharon was ordered to seduce Helo, but became intensely attached to him and really fell in love with him, and with the baby she is carrying. When that happened, Saturn's plan was doomed, though I don't think he knew it, even up to the point when the grenade killed him and the original Valerii host."

They all sat silently for a few moments.

"So now what happens?" asked Starbuck. "What happens to Sharon?"

"I don't believe she's a threat to anyone," said Daniel Jackson. "It's possible that the remaining Cylons will eventually regroup. However, that will probably take some time, as Saturn controlled much of their central information system. There's no Goa'uld behind them, though, so there is no need for them to take the child from her. That's good enough for me, but I don't know if it's good enough for Commander Adama."

"Well?" Starbuck challenged Adama.

"I don't think I can be comfortable in close contact with someone who tried to kill me," he replied. "Yes, yes, I know," he continued, forestalling Starbuck's protests, "it wasn't this Valerii, but she remembers the event, right?"

Valerii nodded. Adama continued, "However, I don't think we have to be in the same neighborhood very much. If most of the Fleet is allowed to

settle on Earth...”

“No.” O’Neill was firm. “You aren’t settling on Earth. You know too much.”

“Jack!” Burkeheimer interrupted, “Are you still going to protect the secret of the gate program?”

“I have too,” said O’Neill. “Even if I didn’t, there’s no way anyone is going to allow Valerii to settle on Earth. She’s too much like one of the replicators. We might allow other colonials to visit Earth, after you’ve been properly briefed on what to say and what not to say.”

“All right,” replied Burkeheimer, “for the time being. You can’t keep it secret forever, you know.”

“I’ll keep it for as long as they tell me too.”

“I know.” Burkeheimer turned to Adama. “However, as I’m always telling Jack, everyone off Earth knows the secret of the Stargates. Even the colonies, now. So, Commander Adama, President Roslin, how about your people moving in with us? As you can see, it’s a nice planet, access to a stargate, good farmland, fishing, all that stuff, as long as you don’t mind the remote possibility of blowing up. *Plus*,” she looked at O’Neill, “we can keep a close eye on Lieutenant Valerii, and keep her as far away from Commander Adama as possible.”

“That won’t be too difficult, Dr. Burkeheimer,” said Adama, “because I’ve not planning on being here.”

“You won’t accept the offer?”

“Oh, if President Roslin and the council accept, I’ll go along with it, but I have other plans for myself. Lieutenant Thrace,” he nodded to Starbuck, “reported that there is a resistance movement among the surviving humans on Caprica. There’s reason to believe that humans are alive on the other Colonies as well. They’ll need help in fighting off the Cylons, and they’ll need help in decontaminating all of the areas that were hit by nuclear weapons. I’m going to help them, along with anyone who wants to come along. I think access to our jump technology and reaction drives will be a suitable trade for supplies to fight the Cylons in the colonies, right, General?”

O’Neill looked at Carter, who said, “There tech would be a valuable addition to ours, Sir.”

“I’ll have to take it up with the President and the International oversight committee,” said O’Neill, “but I’d be in favor of a plan like that.”

“I’ll suggest it to the Council,” said Roslin, “I suspect they’ll accept. The pictures I’ve seen of Massilia look very nice. And it is a place for exiles.”

“Then we’re agreed, subject to the will of our Lords and Masters?” asked Burkeheimer.

“So say we all,” replied Adama.

“Amen,” said O’Neill.