

## Chapter 27

Dee Burkeheimer was in her office, trying to stop falling behind in her paperwork. The load had increased immensely in the past month. Each of the potential immigrants from the Colonial Fleet had to be tested to make sure that they weren't Cylons. So far they had found six Cylons, two each of three types. Valerii knew of eight Cylons in the Fleet, so at least two more were out there, in hiding, or dead. Not surprisingly, the six captured had suicided as soon as they were taken into custody. According to Valerii they would still have their memories downloaded into a computer on Kobol and then placed in new bodies. Interesting way to cheat death, though Burkeheimer. Different than Ascension, to be sure, and probably not as paranoia inducing as the sarcophagus. However, she lacked the genes to pull that particular trick off.

Once each immigrant had been vouchsafed, more paperwork had to be generated. Does he or she, have housing? Are family and/or friends already on the planet? Is he or she interested in volunteering for the Adama's Colonial Reconquest Force? If not, does he or she have any skills that can be used by the SGC? Want to fight assorted Goa'uld, Ori, Wraith, Replicator, or any other nasty that might show up in the future? Is he or she willing to emigrate to another planet (except Earth)? And on, and on.

And then there was the matter of supplies. SGC flatly refused to move the Stargate from the moon to the planet, even temporarily. The official reason was still that naquadria experiments were in progress, but the real reason was to keep Valerii and any hidden Cylon from accessing the gate. Burkeheimer didn't disagree with this, but it made her administrative job much more difficult. Fortunately, over the last few weeks more shipping had arrived in system, and now a steady stream of traffic moved between the gate and Massilia. Each shipment generated more reports, and all reports had to go through Burkeheimer's office, even if she didn't have to read each jot and tilde.

Someday, she thought, I'll be able to get back to doing research. Sure, the part of her mind that talked back replied, and then you'll find that you're years behind the rest of the galaxy.

Well, someone had to do it, and it sure wouldn't be Jack O'Neill, famous hater of paperwork. Besides, he spent most of his time back on Earth, supervising the Homeworld Security program. There was still, she had to remind herself, a war on with the Ori in this galaxy and the Wraith in the Pegasus galaxy. Would those wars be as short as the Cylon problem had

turned out to be.

Valerii was at the door. She'd been coming by frequently. Held in suspicion by most Galactics as well as Colonials, she only had a few people to talk to. Burkeheimer invited her in. "Hi, Sharon. Thanks for coming by and saving me from all of this paperwork."

"I thought *computers* were supposed to reduce paperwork, Dee." Valerii took a seat. "That's what Baltar and others who wanted to reintroduce computer networks in the Colonies always argued. Your civilization is more highly computerized than the Colonies ever were, and yet..."

"I know," replied Burkeheimer. She pushed the paperwork aside. "That's not why you came by, though."

"No," replied Valerii, "it's not. Helo and I are thinking of getting married."

Oh boy. Burkeheimer hadn't seen that coming. "So can't this be done under the Colonial government? Mr. Keikeya can arrange things."

"He could, but it would upset too many people. Believe me, I've thought about it, Dee. A toaster married by a Priest? Lots of people still believe in the Lords of Kobol, and they know I served their enemy. They won't allow the wedding to take place."

"So what can I do?"

"A civil ceremony, I think. We didn't have that idea on the Colonies, but Helo is willing. And then,"

"Then?" asked Burkeheimer.

"Then we'd like to move. I understand you're establishing a settlement on the other side of the continent. If we're in the first group of settlers, then we know that people who move there will be willing to live with us, otherwise they wouldn't move near us."

Burkeheimer thought about it for a few moments. One drawback. "Every security agency in the Galaxy is going to want to keep an eye on you and your children."

"I know," sighed Valerii. "It's something I'll have to live with. I've learned to live with a lot. Guilt, mostly. Being watched, I can handle."

Burkeheimer had wondered about that. How do you live with knowing you were part of a plan that killed billions of people? She couldn't offer much help, except, "Sharon, I've read up on Colonial religion. There's a strong sense that anyone can obtain forgiveness, for just about anything. If Colonial religion doesn't work for you, we have a similar belief on Earth."

“I’ve read about Christianity, Dee,” replied Valerii. “I think you have to want to be forgiven before you can be forgiven. I can’t forgive myself. Worse, there wasn’t anything I could do to stop the whole attack. At the time, my copy on the *Galactica* didn’t even know she was a Cylon.”

She pause for a moment. “Having a life with Helo–Karl, raising our children, maybe that will make up for a small part of what we did to the Colonies. Only a small part.”

“Time will help, too, Sharon.” Burkeheimer paused. “I can make arrangements for a civil ceremony.”

“I have way too much time, Dee,” said Valerii as she rose to leave, “This body is designed to live nearly forever. And all that time there’ll still be guilt.” She walked out the door.

In another part of the galaxy, Laura Roslin woke up. *I’m still here*, she thought. *What am I doing here? Oh, that’s right, I’m still dying.* Earth medicine hadn’t been any more help with her cancer than Colonial medicine had, and there was no sarcophagus available available to the Tau’ri. *Pity Saturn’s got blown up, but of course if it hadn’t, he’d still be alive.*

Jack O’Neill was standing at the door. “Did you keep a constant watch on the monitors to see when I’m awake?” she questioned. “Or do you just stand there all of the time and stare at your dying house guest?”

O’Neill was used to this kind of response. “I’m at your constant beck and call, Madam President. It gives me a reason to stay away from *my* President – I didn’t vote for him, and I think he knows it.”

Roslin smiled. “Thank you, Jack, for letting me see Earth.”

“Like I said,” O’Neill replied, “Moses got to look at the Promised Land.”

“I’ve read about Moses, Jack,” Roslin countered, “have you?”

“Uh, well, No.” O’Neill tried to look crestfallen, but couldn’t. “I was just awake in Sunday School for that one part of the story.”

Roslin smiled weakly. “Moses wasn’t allowed to live in the promised land. He’d done something that caused the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to bar the door.” She paused for a moment, then continued. “At least I know what I’ve done.”

“Laura, we’ve talked about this before,” O’Neill told her, “and it comes down to the same thing – you didn’t have any choice. If you’d stayed with the ships that couldn’t jump, you’d all be dead now. You saved over forty thousand people.”

“And,” he continued, “you if you weren’t alive, the *Galactica* wouldn’t have tried to find Earth. Which means that you wouldn’t have met us, we wouldn’t have destroyed Saturn, and Adama wouldn’t be back in the Colonies leading the Reconquest. He’s helping millions of people save themselves from the Cylons, and it wouldn’t have been possible without you.”

“How is the Commander, anyway?” Roslin asked.

“He’s busy blowing up Cylon troops on Caprica. They’ve retaken the main city, he said, and have started decontamination. The 302s and 307s we loaned him are helping keep Cylon raiders off his back.”

“That’s good.” Roslin paused. “Besides having stories about Moses, this book,” she nodded to a Bible beside her bed, “talks a lot about forgiveness. Do you think I’ve earned it?”

“Laura, I was awake for that part. You don’t earn forgiveness, it’s given to you. You just have to accept it.”

“I don’t think I’m willing to accept it, yet. But I know you offered it to me. So has everyone from the Fleet.” She glanced over to the cards, pictures, books, and flowers that covered the table and dresser along one wall. If she hadn’t forbidden it, every Colonial who got permission to visit Earth would be here everyday. She’d even sent Keikeya, Apollo, and Starbuck (*one of them is my Joshua*, she thought) off world. “Thank you. Thank all of them, too.” Her vision blurred, she struggled to refocus on O’Neill.

“I’m getting sleepy again, Jack, the pain killers are doing their work but I’ve got no stamina. Go away for a bit and let me rest.”

O’Neill nodded, and headed out the door.

When he returned a while later he found that Laura Roslin was at peace at last.