

# Space: 2299



## 07: Mind Games

By Stephen J Outton

# **Space:2299**

## **07: Mind Games**

The alien species that engineered the Psychons made sure to develop a means to control them. However, when one of the control devices falls into the hands of the Red Mars terrorists on the moon the life of Colonel Koenig comes under threat from the most unlikely sources...

Copyright notice:

Space:2299 is based upon Space:1999 produced by ITC Entertainment and RAI. This project is unofficial and neither ITC Entertainment nor RAI have approved or endorsed it in any way.

# I.

Moonbase Theta had the same transport links as the other major settlements on the moon, served by travel tubes as well as possessing launch pads for Eagles and other similar sized spacecraft. However, being a high security prison meant that the number of visitors that the base received was much lower than most of the other bases and there were no crowds for those people that did go there to hide themselves in. However, although as the leader of the terrorist group Red Mars, Carlos Garcia was not concerned about being arrested as he stepped off a travel tube car and walked towards the nearest security checkpoint.

"I'll handle this." one of the guards present told his partner before he leant towards the transparent barrier that separated them from the corridor on the other side, "Authorisation." he said simply, glancing at his partner to make sure that the other man was not watching.

"This should cover it." Garcia replied but instead of presenting a communicator or computer tablet that had a security pass stored on it to the nearby reader he instead placed his hand down into the trough provided so that objects be passed from one side of the barrier to the other. Then when he withdrew his hand the guard took the packet that had been placed there and took a quick look inside. Seeing the bundle of banknotes as well as the packets containing drugs he smiled.

"I need to see this guy through." he told his partner, opening the door for Garcia to pass through. Then the guard exited the security checkpoint and indicated the direction that he wanted Garcia to go, "This way Mister Garcia." he said softly.

"Of course." Garcia responded.

The two men walked past the scanners that most visitors to the prison were required to pass through before being allowed into the main facility regardless of whether or not they were intending to have any contact with any of the inmates and the guard showed Garcia through a side door that opened when he presented his comlock to it.

"I think I've managed to find a prisoner that can give you the answers you want." the guard told him.

"You think? Don't just think, know. Can he or can't he? I take it that it is a he and also that he speaks a language I can understand." Garcia replied.

"Don't worry Mister Garcia, about half of them now know enough English to get by." the guard said before bringing his comlock up to his mouth and activating, "Has prisoner seven-six-one-nine been moved to the visiting area?" he asked.

"Yes, he's in room fourteen as requested." another guard responded.

"Thanks." the guard said before shutting off his comlock and returning it to his belt. Then he glanced at Garcia and added, "The security monitor in room fourteen has been rigged to duplicate the feed from fifteen and that will be empty." he said.

"Good. Privacy is essential for this. That includes you by the way." Garcia said and the guard frowned.

"Are you sure. Have you seen one of those things up close? We're under orders to use four guards when moving one."

"Have they caused you trouble?" Garcia asked.

"No more than any other prisoners." the guard answered before he stopped to open another door that led to a corridor that was lined on both sides with more doorways. Stood opposite one of these there was another prison guard who wore an armoured vest and holding a magnetic accelerator weapon that was equivalent to a shotgun, designed to fire multiple projectiles at once.

"He's in there." this guard said when Garcia and the guard from the checkpoint entered the corridor.

"Good." the first guard said, "You're dismissed." he then told the armoured guard who frowned in response.

"Are you sure?" he asked.

"Yes. I am armed." the first guard replied, tapping the stun gun on his hip, "You'll be called when the prisoner is to be taken back to the cells."

"If you say so." the armoured guard said, turning around and walking off down the corridor.

After the armoured guard had left the corridor the first guard took out his comlock again and opened the door to the room that he had been guarding to reveal the prisoner sat inside.

The Dorcons were a humanoid reptilian species that had launched a large scale attack on the moon when it first left the Earth's solar system, intending to enslave the inhabitants. Resistance to this had been far stronger than the Dorcons had expected and their attack ships had withdrawn leaving behind several hundred of their troops. Stranded on the moon and facing overwhelming opposition these had had no choice but to surrender and as the only facility on the moon intended to hold large numbers of prisoners they had all been relocated to Moonbase Theta where they were given a dedicated wing of their own.

The Dorcon stood up as Garcia entered and let out a low growl, staring at him. Even had he not got to his feet it would have been obvious to Garcia that the alien was significantly larger than he was and if everything

he had heard about them was true then it would have little difficulty in killing him with its bare hands.

"What?" the Dorcon said when the door slid shut again, leaving the alien and Garcia alone in the room and Garcia smiled.

"Sit back down please. I'd like to ask you a few questions." Garcia replied and the Dorcon growled again as he sat back down, glancing at the door as if expecting it to open again. This did not surprise Garcia. With the Dorcon having at least a basic understanding of English it was likely that he had been questioned already by officers from the Global Defence Force but equally unlikely that any of the military intelligence officers would have willingly been left alone in a room with him.

"I answered already." the Dorcon said, confirming Garcia's suspicion that the GDF had questioned him before now.

"Not my questions." Garcia said as he reached inside his jacket and removing an object that looked largely organic, "I have heard that your forces brought a number of these devices to the moon when you invaded. Your troops were seen aiming them at people as if they were some sort of weapon but they had no effect. The most interesting thing though is that they don't look like any of the other devices you brought. Your guns, communication devices and computers all have a very specific look and markings. Just like human technology does. Now I can guess who made this but I want you to confirm it and to tell me what it does." The Dorcon hesitated and Garcia wondered whether perhaps the alien had not fully understood him.

"It was made by us." the Dorcon replied eventually, "But the Outsiders designed it."

The Outsiders was the name given by the Dorcons to the alien species that had attacked Earth during the mid twenty-second century before mysteriously vanishing and leaving behind technology that both species had plundered since then. A lot of the original Outsider technology had a biological element to it but most of the devices that humans and Dorcons had created by reverse engineering it lacked this element, being entirely electronic or mechanical.

"But what does it do? Or what is it supposed to do since it obviously didn't work during your attack?" Garcia added.

"Controller. For Psychon slaves." the Dorcon told him.

The Psychons were another species but one that had been artificially created by the Outsiders from humans abducted from Earth and then abandoned when they disappeared. When the Dorcons discovered them they had enslaved them, recognising the natural abilities that the Outsiders had given them as immensely useful. The males of the species had a natural technical aptitude that allowed them to easily understand whatever technology they were presented with and the Dorcons used them to maintain many of their spacecraft and other devices. However, the abilities engineered by the Outsiders into female Psychons had far greater potential. Female Psychons were natural empathes, able to sense the feelings of those around them and this also extended to being able to rapidly learn languages they overheard. The most powerful among them were even capable of compelling others to follow their commands. If what the Dorcon was saying was true then it appeared that the device Garcia was holding gave him a similar ability although just over Psychons. Despite the obvious physical similarities between the two species the device had been shown to have no effect on humans.

"How does it work?" Garcia said.

"Made from brain. Strong brain of woman slave." the Dorcon said. Then he held out his hand in a fist, "Grip and speak command. Brain listen. Brain send."

Garcia looked at the control device again, at once both amazed and horrified by what he was hearing. Just by holding this device he could order a Psychon to act exactly as he wanted but to create this power the Dorcons cut the brain from one of the stronger Psychon females and placed the relevant parts inside it, presumably killing the Psychon in the process in a most gruesome manner. The function of the device had been suspected but the source of this ability came as a total surprise. At most it had been suspected that specific tissue had been engineered and grown in a vat, not that it had been harvested from a living donor. However, no matter how distasteful even a man like Garcia, who was no stranger to torture or killing, may have found it he was not about to let this device go to waste.

"Thank you. That's all I needed to know. I'll make sure you get the extra rations you were promised." Garcia said, getting to his feet and knocking on the inside of the door, "I'm done in here. Open up." he called out and moments later the door slid open so that he could leave.

The guard escorted Garcia back as far as the security checkpoint before leaving him to return to the travel tube station where he was the only passenger on the car he boarded to take him back to Moonbase Beta. When the car was underway Garcia took out his communicator and activated the device, manually entering a number rather than taking it from the communicator's memory.

"It's me." he said when the call was picked up but before anyone spoke, "We guessed right. Apparently this thing gives us the power to control Psychons. I'm not just going to take the word of that alien though. I want it testing before we put it to proper use."

The club was crowded with people who just wanted to enjoy themselves after finishing work. Among them were a group of GDF enlisted personnel who had also come here to relax. None of them wore their uniforms, since the departure of the moon from orbit around Earth feelings about the GDF had become divided among the civilian population and there were those who were agitating for violence against them. Wearing civilian clothes provided them with anonymity and let them mingle with the crowd drinking and dancing to the loud music being played. Along with this group there was one other individual though, a young woman with long red hair that came to a widow's peak although it was her sloped eyebrows and pale eyes with dagger shaped pupils that marked her out as not being entirely human.

Maya was the only Psychon on the moon, a powerful empath who had been rescued from slavery under the Dorcons and been given sanctuary. When the group entered the club she came to a stop and placed her hands over her ears.

"Maya are you okay?" Francis Baker, one of Moonbase Alpha's control staff and the only other woman in the group asked. The two women shared quarters together and Baker was doing her best to get Maya used to living among humans.

"This music is very loud Francis." Maya replied.

"Sorry, I forgot about your heightened senses." Baker replied.

"We can go somewhere else if you want." one of the men commented. This was Master Sergeant Arnold Washington, the highest ranking of the group. The other men present were all soldiers under his command as part of Alpha's security force.

"I know you and your men would rather remain here. I will be able to tolerate the volume." Maya said and Washington smiled.

"Told you." he said to his men, "She knows everything you think so keep it all clean."

"So what do we do first?" Maya asked.

"Find somewhere to sit and get drinks." Washington said.

"A table opened up over there Top." one of his men responded, using the informal term for a non-commissioned officer of Washington's rank.

"You grab the table, Maya and I will get the drinks." Baker said and Washington nodded before he and his men made their way through the crowd to claim the vacant table before anyone else could get there before them.

"Shouldn't we have asked what they want to drink?" Maya asked.

"They're soldiers Maya, they want beer." Baker answered and then she started to head for the bar.

"What will it be ladies?" the bar tender asked when she and Maya reached him before he smiled at Maya, looking her right in the eyes, "Nice contacts." he added and she frowned.

"What beers do you have?" Baker said before Maya could say anything.

"Just the house special." the bar tender replied, "The last of the Earth imports were used up six weeks ago."

"Four beers and a vodka tonic then. Actually that's two vodka tonics." Baker said before leaning towards Maya and adding, "Just stick with what I'm drinking until you get used to it, okay?" and Maya nodded.

"Forty-nine dollars." the bar tender said as he grabbed an empty glass and began to fill it with beer.

Maya then looked at Baker while she was paying for the drinks.

"Why buy these if you think the cost is too high? We have water and suitable ingredients for beverages in our quarters." she said.

"Going out for a drink isn't just about the drink Maya. Well for some people it may be but it's about spending time with friends as well. Now help me carry these to the guys." Baker said and she grabbed the four beers, leaving just her and Maya's drinks for Maya to carry.

"Thank you." Maya said to the bar tender as she picked these up and then looked around, seeing Baker on her way to the table.

Following Baker through the crowd Maya had trouble keeping up and she rapidly fell further behind.

"Stop." a voice said from close by unexpectedly and Maya found herself coming to a sudden halt without thinking about it. Turning towards the source of the voice she saw a man that she did not recognise standing in front of her with his hands in his jacket pockets.

"Do I-" Maya began but the man interrupted her.

"Quiet." he said and she stopped talking immediately, "Lean in so I can give you my number." he continued and Maya leant towards him. Taking one hand out of his pocket the man produced a folded piece of paper that he slid down Maya's collar. Then he leant closer to her and began to whisper in her ear while his hand moved towards her chest.

"Get off her creep!" Baker snapped, pushing the man away from Maya, "Maya come on the guys are waiting for us." she added, pulling Maya away from the man and towards the table where Washington and his men waited.

"You found her then." Washington said when they reached the table.

"Yeah, you wouldn't believe it though. Some guy was about to feel Maya up right here in public." Baker told

him.

"Is there going to a problem?" Washington added, looking towards the bar to see if he could see anyone staring at Maya.

"I hope not." Baker answered, glancing over her shoulder and seeing that the man was no longer in sight. Then she noticed that Maya had taken out her comlock and also retrieved the slip of paper given to her by the man, "What are you doing Maya?" she asked.

"Inputting this communication number into my comlock. I do not want to lose it before I need it." Maya replied.

"You took his number? What for?" Baker said.

"He instructed me to send him images of myself without any clothing on." Maya said and there was a spluttering as Washington and his men choked on their drinks when they heard this.

"How much has she had to drink already?" one of the soldiers said.

"Looks like she hasn't touched a drop yet." Washington replied, picking up Maya's glass and inspecting the contents.

"Maya the guy was a creep. Why would you want to send him naked pictures of yourself?" Baker said, snatching the paper away from her.

"Have you never sent such pictures to anyone?" Maya asked.

"That's not important right now. You don't send them to complete strangers." Baker said. Then she looked across the table at the four soldiers looking back at her and Maya, "What are you all staring at?" she asked and Maya turned to look at them as well.

"They are all picturing us both naked and photographing ourselves." she said and Baker frowned.

"Well this evening ended quickly." Washington said before gulping down his drink as quickly as he could.

After being interrupted by Baker the man who had spoken to Maya in the club left it and headed straight for the nearest travel tube station where he boarded a tube car that was heading for Moonbase Beta. Once there he disembarked and made his way to one of the base's commercial districts where at this time of day most of the businesses were closed. Checking to make sure that he was not being observed by anyone he stopped outside an unmarked door and knocked on it. Then he turned to look straight towards a spot where he knew that there was a concealed video camera monitoring the door, standing so that the person monitoring the footage captured by the camera would be able to see his face and also that he was alone.

"Come in. Mister Garcia's waiting for you." the woman who answered the door told him.

"Is he in a good mood?" the man asked as he walked past her.

"That depends on what you have to tell him." she answered, walking alongside him down the hallway and the man smiled.

"Then I think he's going to be in a good mood." he added before he and the woman halted outside another door that the woman opened.

"Mister Garcia, O'Rourke is here." she said, stepping into the room on the other side of the door.

"Ah O'Rourke. I take it you have tested the device?" Garcia asked and O'Rourke nodded at the same time as he took the control device from his jacket and placed it down on a nearby table.

"I only got to give her a few commands but she followed every one of them up until the last." he said.

"What went wrong then? Did she disobey?" the woman asked.

"Please Garner, let Mister O'Rourke speak." Garcia told her before turning to O'Rourke and adding, "Do go on. What happened to stop Maya from following your last order?"

"Well for all I know she still might but we were interrupted by the GDF where she was with. I'd have hung around to try again but there were more GDF thugs with them as well and I didn't want to risk them getting hold of that. I'd tested the device and my scanner had grabbed her comlock ID so I just got out of there."

O'Rourke said and he pointed to the controller, "But I'm telling you Mister O'Rourke it works instantly. If I'd had the time bet I could have got her to follow me into the bathroom and-"

"Wipe your ass for you?" Garner said and O'Rourke frowned at her.

"Jealous?" he said.

"That's enough the pair of you." Garcia said angrily, "We're not here for the pair of you to brag about sexual conquests." then he picked up the control device and held it up in front of him, "This works, that is all that matters from tonight. With this device we can give whatever orders we want to that Psychon woman Maya. She'll do whatever we need her to."

"But she doesn't have security access. She's not GDF." Garner pointed out.

"Have you not listened to any of the reports we've had about her?" Garcia responded, "She doesn't just read minds she can control them as well. Anyone, not just others of her own people. That means that she can get wherever she wants to be. Wherever we need her to be. It also means that by extension we have control over anyone we want. All we need to do is order her to give someone else an order and she will."

"So what's our first move Mister Garcia?" O'Rourke said, "Something small to test the control."

"No, you carried out the test tonight. I want to hit the Earthers at their heart. It's still possible that they'll figure out that Maya is a security risk and either cut her out of their command structure entirely or send her off to Theta with the lizards. I don't want to waste what we could have here on something trivial like raiding a weapons locker. No, we're going to go right to the top." Garcia said and he turned to a nearby wall that was covered in old fashioned printed photographs, each one showing a member of the GDF's senior staff on the moon. The pictures were grouped so that all images showing a particular individual were all clustered together, with candid images centred around a larger formal profile picture. These were organised so that the most senior officers were towards the centre with lower ranked ones further towards the edge and Garcia walked up to the middle of the wall and plucked the picture at the very centre from it, "Colonel John Koenig." he said, holding up the picture, "Highest ranking GDF officer on the moon and de-facto military governor. He's the one that rescued Maya from the Dorcons and brought her back to the moon. Then he made her an advisor on alien cultures and if all goes to plan by this time next week she will have been the cause of his death. Comrades we are going to kill John Koenig."

## 2.

"Good night out last night?" a woman asked when Baker entered main mission the next morning and she hesitated.

"Well captain considering that the last time I actually had a proper night out it was when you and the other senior officers took me out to celebrate me getting married and I ended up getting stripped naked and locked in a chastity belt I suppose it was a step up. This time all that happened was that the guys Maya and I were out with ended up just picturing the pair of us naked after some creep came on to Maya." she replied.

"Seriously?" the woman asked.

"It's true Benes." a male officer commented from close by.

"Major Carter does everyone know?" Baker asked.

"I ran into Washington and his men when they went to another bar after leaving you." Carter answered, "I've got to say I never thought I'd hear that Maya was wanting to send compromising pictures of herself to someone, let alone a stranger. Tanya Alexander on the other hand, that I'd believe."

"In your dreams major." another female officer called out from across main mission.

It was then that a pair of armed soldiers entered main mission, escorting a woman who wore plain combat fatigues devoid of any markings. The woman walked towards Benes, the guards following her and Baker snorted when she saw this, moving towards her own station as quickly as she could.

"Can I help you Miss Keynes?" Benes asked.

"Is he in yet Sandra?" Keynes responded and she looked up the steps at one end of main mission that led to Koenig's office, the retractable wall that divided the two rooms currently closed.

"No the colonel's duty shift doesn't being for another half hour. Major Carter is currently in command." Benes told her.

"And you should address the captain by her rank." Alexander commented, glaring at Keynes.

"What do you need to see the colonel about?" Carter said and Keynes turned to face him.

"I wanted to discuss our supply situation. I'm noticing a lot of discrepancies and I wanted to discuss them with him." she said.

"Then wait inside for him. It'll keep you out of the way and stop you bothering the command staff." Carter told her, glancing across main mission at where Baker kept looking up from her console to glare at Keynes. Then he took out his comlock and pointed it at the retractable wall, using it to open the way into Koenig's office.

"Fine. Okay I'll wait in there." Keynes said.

"You two make sure she doesn't touch anything." Alexander then ordered the two guards and one of them nodded before they followed Keynes up the steps into the office. Then once they were all inside the wall slid shut again.

"What's that traitor really doing here? She could have just called to see if the colonel was here." Baker said as soon as main mission was again separated from Koenig's office, "She's trying to worm her way back into people's good books, that's all. That's why she spoke to Captain Benes like-"

"Just concentrate on your own work spacewoman." Carter interrupted, "According to the latest estimate we'll be pulled back into that wormhole in a little over six hours. We need to be ready for the transition and whatever might be waiting for us on the other side."

"Yes major." Baker responded as she looked back down at her console.

When Koenig arrived half an hour later he was in the company of Doctor Helena Russell, Moonbase Alpha's senior medical officer. The pair had been holding hands as they walked from the quarters they shared to main mission but as soon as they entered the room they let go of one another, both of them keen to maintain a professional appearance even though their relationship was widely known about.

"You have a visitor colonel." Carter said, "She's waiting in your office."

"Under guard of course." Alexander added.

"Alyson Keynes." Russell said.

"Afraid so." Alexander replied.

"Okay I'll see her now." Koenig said.

"We'll see her now." Russell added and the pair then headed for the steps at the side of main mission and as they climbed them Russell took Koenig's hand again, "Just to remind her John." she whispered and Koenig smiled as he used his comlock to open the wall.

"Miss Keynes." he said, "What can I do for you today?"

"Doctor Russell, I wasn't-" Keynes began when she saw Russell accompanying Koenig.

"I doubt there is anything you have to say to colonel Koenig that cannot be said in front of me." Russell interrupted, letting go of Koenig's hand so that she could sit down beside Keynes.

"You two can leave us. Wait outside." Koenig told the guards and as they were walking down the steps



outside his office he closed the wall again, "So why are you here?" he then asked, looking directly at Keynes. "Colonel since I've been reviewing our supply situation I've been noticing a number of discrepancies. At first it was just small things and I was often able to correct them." Keynes said.

"Understandable." Russell commented, "After we got shot through the wormhole things have become a bit disorganised while we adjust to not being able to rely on regular resupply from Earth."

"Yes and as I said I was able to correct most of the inconsistencies due to that but I'd have expected the situation to improve steadily over time as we adjusted and supply databases were updated properly." Keynes said.

"Are you saying that they haven't?" Koenig said, leaning forward and resting on his desk.

"At first they did. Missing equipment was either accounted for or confirmed as destroyed. There were still a few errors of course, that's inevitable in a system as complex as the one we have here but more recently we've seen a massive increase in the rate of supplies and equipment that cannot be properly accounted for. Here." Keynes said and she held out the memory stick she carried to Koenig and he plugged it into his computer, opening the data file it contained. Then he frowned.

"Eagles?" he said, "How the hell do we manage to lose three Eagles?"

"Three?" Russell exclaimed when she heard this.

"They're actually all civilian owned." Keynes said, "But the fact is that all three disappeared from berthing records in the space of a week."

"Could it be Red Mars? They did manage to get hold of a Swift." Russell suggested.

"Possibly but none of the owners have actually reported them lost. I need your permission to contact them." Keynes said.

"If they are civilian vehicles then the owners could have been listening to the stories about the GDF seizing vehicles and hidden them." Koenig pointed out, "But what about these other entries. There seem to be a lot of them."

"Yes colonel. For the past couple of months I've been noticing a lot of supply transfers where the despatch is properly logged but it never arrives at the listed destination. More than sixty tonnes of stores in total drawn from rations, spare parts and medicines. All vanished." Keynes said.

"Medicines?" Russell said when she heard this and Keynes nodded.

"Drugs are always going to be a target for theft even without the black market for pretty much everything that's springing up right now but the quantities are much bigger than expected for that." she said.

"I wouldn't have thought that the black market would want six crates of anti-diarrhoea medicine." Koenig added.

"That's the other point. A lot of the missing materials have no real value on the black market. It's cheap and is found easily traceable. Exactly the opposite of what criminals would want." Keynes said.

"There's a lot of construction equipment on this list." Koenig said and he reached for the communication panel on his desk, "Major Capston." he said and moments later the dust covered face of another GDF officer appeared on the screen in front of him.

"Yes colonel?" he said.

"Major I'm here with Alyson Keynes. She says that a lot of equipment has been going missing. You're in charge of our construction efforts, haven't you noticed anything?" Koenig asked.

"Nothing out of the ordinary colonel. We always lose a few tools during a project, in fact I've got an Eagle grounded right now while my techs take it apart to make sure there's not a hammer in the engines. They get dropped outside and then buried in lunar dust." Capston told him.

"I take it you aren't including that Swift that Red Mars got hold of in that then major? I'll remind you that you had it logged as destroyed." Koenig said.

"Colonel with respect that's not exactly fair. That Swift was at Eta when the *Landau* crashed. We found a few pieces of scrap that all pointed towards the Swift having been utterly destroyed." Capston protested.

"Very well major but I want a full inventory of your supplies by this time tomorrow. This missing equipment is going somewhere and I want to know where. Send it to Keynes as soon as its done. Koenig out."

"But colonel-" Capston began, however Koenig ignored him and simply turned off the communicator.

"A bit harsh weren't you John?" Russell asked.

"Capston is asking for it. He's still holding regular meetings with Edwards Foxworth and his little group." Koenig said.

"The Citizen's Committee?" Russell said and Koenig nodded.

"Who are they?" Keynes asked, frowning.

"Self appointed do-gooders. They want to set up a civilian led government that has the sole purpose of abandoning the moon and settling on the first habitable and vacant planet we find." Koenig answered.

"But what about returning to Earth? Plus the fact that if the Dorcons found us we'd be enslaved or wiped out." Keynes said.

"Helena I'm going to need an inventory from you as well." Koenig added and Russell nodded.

"Don't worry. If someone is stealing medical supplies I want to know about it." she said.

Maya's role as an advisor when dealing with aliens that the moon encountered meant that she was not required to be in main mission she filled her free time going through Alpha's large digital library, reading as much as she could about human culture to try and better understand the people who had taken her in. Lying on her bed she was reading from the screen of a tablet when her comlock chimed to indicate an incoming call.

"Hello?" she said, picking up the device, seeing that the call was voice only.

"Maya it's Doctor Russell." Russell's voice said.

"Hello doctor. How may I help you?" Maya asked.

"Maya I need to see you immediately. Can you come to promenade four?"

"Of course doctor. I will-" Maya began but before she could finish the call was suddenly ended. Maya then turned off her tablet and set it down before leaving her quarters.

### 3.

"Okay that sounds like she's on her way." Garner said, looking around from the portable computer terminal that she had just used to mimic Russell's voice and O'Rourke grinned.

"You sure she won't suspect anything?" he asked.

"Of course not. This software is good enough to fool anyone. It won't stand up to a digital analysis but it doesn't need to and when she gets here I'll delete the call from the log." Garner told him.

"Great, let's go watch for her." O'Rourke said and he started to head for the door.

"Just remember O'Rourke, we're here to do a job. We're not here to mess with her or indulge in any of your sick fantasies. Just tell her what to do and then send her on her way." Garner added as she followed him.

"Whatever." O'Rourke said.

The promenade was a civilian commercial area of Moonbase Alpha, its two levels lined largely with shops. This time of day was not a peak shopping hour but there were still enough shoppers present that the two Red Mars terrorists could loiter without drawing a great deal of attention to themselves. Garner and O'Rourke stood on the upper balcony of the promenade so that they had a commanding view of as much of it as possible.

"There she is." O'Rourke said, smiling when he spotted Maya's distinctive ginger coloured hair that made her stand out even from a distance too far away for her inhuman eyes to be seen.

"Okay so close does she have to be for that thing in your pocket to work?" Garner asked and when she noticed O'Rourke's smirk she scowled, "Oh grow up. You what I mean."

"If what that lizard told Garcia is true then it ought to work from here. I was within a metre of her though when I tested it." he answered.

"And what if we're too far away when you try? Will she know what's being done to her?" Garner said but O'Rourke shrugged.

"How should I know. Look, she's heading this way anyway so how about we just wait until she gets a bit closer?" he suggested.

"Very well. But there's a sheriff down there. If she panics and kicks up a fuss he could bring a platoon of Earthers down on us." Garner said.

"Why would she panic? Besides the sheriff is irrelevant. If she wants help she could call for it using her comlock." O'Rourke pointed out as he watched Maya continuing to head towards them.

For her part Maya was searching the promenade for Doctor Russell. She had expected her or perhaps a member of her medical staff to be standing in a prominent location waiting for her so the absence of any GDF personnel confused her. She did see a uniformed man with a stun gun holstered on his hip talking to one of the store staff but she could tell that he was in a perfectly calm state of mind and not anxiously awaiting the arrival of anyone so she carried on walking along the promenade. Every now and again someone got a good enough look at Maya's face that they noticed her eyes and she would sense the surprise from them but aside from that she could not detect anything that would indicate why she had been summoned here and so she came to a stop and took out her comlock. She was just in the process of attempting to contact Russell when all of a sudden she heard a familiar voice.

"Stop what you are doing." O'Rourke said from behind her and Maya froze, unable to move a muscle as he and Garner walked right up to her stood either side of her.

"I'll take that thank you." Garner said softly as she took Maya's comlock from her hand, Maya powerless to even try tightening her grip.

"Come with us." O'Rourke said and Maya found herself suddenly starting to walk, guided by the two people beside her. She recognised the man as being the same individual from the club the previous evening but the woman was unknown to her. Maya desperately wanted to ask them both what they wanted with her but she found herself unable to speak. Even her empathic abilities failed her now and a sense of dread overcame her as she remembered the only other times that she had felt this way. All of those had occurred before she had been freed from slavery and her Dorcon master had decided to use a controller on her. Quite where this pair would obtain such a device was beyond her but its effects were obvious to her.

Escorting Maya away from the public area of the promenade Garner and O'Rourke took her to an office unit that looked as if it had not been used for quite some time and in the middle of the dust covered room they took her there was a single chair.

"Sit there." O'Rourke commanded and Maya sat down in the chair, staring straight ahead of her.

"We better let Garcia know what's going on. Plus I need to remove my call from this." Garner said and she held up Maya's comlock.

"Stay right where you are and don't make a sound." O'Rourke told Maya before he and Garner left the room, using a door behind Maya so that she was unable to watch them as they left. On the other side of the

doorway was a smaller room that included a computer and communication terminal that looked much newer than everything else in the abandoned office. The computer was turned on and the screen showed an image coming from a security camera located in the room where Maya was not sat alone. While Garner sat down and began to study Maya's comlock O'Rourke instead went over to the computer and looked at the screen, relieved to see that she was still sat motionless in the chair. Then he activated the communication panel. No one answered his call, instead he got an automated message but this was exactly what he had been expecting and he spoke.

"We have her. Proceeding with stage two of the plan." he said before turning off the communicator before looking at Garner, "Are you done?" he asked.

"Of course I am. All I needed to do was delete one call from the log. By the time the Earthers can recover that it will already be too late for them. What about her?" Garner responded and O'Rourke looked at the computer screen.

"Perfectly still, just like I said." he said and he took the control device from his pocket and held it up where Garner could see it, "Looks like this thing keeps working even after we take it away from her."

"Good. This plan wouldn't work if it didn't." Garner said and she walked back to the door leading to the room where Maya sat.

O'Rourke held the control device openly in his hand as he and Garner walked back over to Maya and stood in front of her while Garner slid the comlock back into Maya's pocket.

"Tell me who this is." O'Rourke said, the control device in one hand and a tablet in the other while he showed Maya an image of Koenig.

"Colonel John Koenig." Maya responded, not surprised at finding herself able to speak when being instructed to. Although now that she could see the control device she took no comfort from being right since she knew that this meant she had no chance of breaking her captors' hold over her.

"And what does he do?" Garner asked but Maya did not answer.

"You need to be holding this, remember?" O'Rourke reminded her and he held up the control device.

"So you ask her then." Garner told him.

"What does John Koenig do?" O'Rourke said to Maya.

"He rules the moon." she answered and Garner snorted.

"She thinks like an Earther." she said.

"Maya would you like to help us kill Colonel John Koenig?" O'Rourke asked.

"No." Maya answered and O'Rourke smiled.

"Let me put that another way." he said, realising how he had worded his statement, "Maya you are going to help us kill Colonel John Koenig. Will you obey?"

"Yes, I will obey." Maya responded and the two Red Mars terrorists looked at one another and smiled.

"See? You just need to know how to phrase it properly." O'Rourke said.

"Ah Professor Bergman, come to watch our trip through the wormhole again?" Major Morrow, Koenig's second in command at Moonbase Alpha asked when Professor Victor Bergman entered main mission just minutes before the moon was expected to be drawn back into the wormhole that now caused its travel through space. With the time of the moon's next trip through the wormhole the distortion in space-time had grown so large that it was clearly visible on the lunar horizon through the viewports in main mission and Bergman looked at it.

"Yes major, I am understandably interested to know the accuracy of my calculations." he replied.

"Well they look pretty good so far." Carter commented, "Right Benes?"

"Computer puts our next jump to within two minutes of the professor's original calculation." Benes responded.

"And computer is never wrong about anything." Captain Kano, the head of Alpha's technical section added from beside the large computer panel he stood beside.

"All traffic is locked down and an EVA alert has been issued." Alexander announced.

"Sounds like we're ready then." Koenig said as he descended the steps from his office. Then he looked at Bergman and added, "Now professor if you could just manage to control the timing and destination of our travel that would be even better."

"I am trying colonel." Bergman replied and Koenig smiled.

"All bases reporting ready colonel." Benes said.

"Right on time." Alexander added, "Here we go."

The entire moon shook as it was pulled into the wormhole, though not violently enough to cause damage to anything that was not unsecured and in just moments the view outside main mission changed radically. First there was the bright coloured lights of the wormhole that lasted for barely a second before the moon was expelled out of the other end of the wormhole into an entirely new solar system and the opening rapidly shrunk to the point where it was no longer visible from Moonbase Alpha. Instead the new star patterns of the

new system into which the moon had arrived filled the skies.

"So where are we?" Koenig asked.

"None of the constellations look familiar colonel." Alexander commented.

"I'm picking up two large masses." Baker added, "They look like planets. I think we emerged at the Lagrange point right between them."

"They're pretty close to one another, probably twins sharing an orbit." Carter said as he checked his own console, "If you want to check either of them out then it's a forty-five minute trip each way in an Eagle."

"Does either planet look habitable?" Koenig asked.

"No colonel. They're lumps of rock just like the moon." Baker said.

"In that case we'll pass on the day trips." Koenig replied.

"Colonel computer has processed our sensor data and run it through the professor's equation. It estimates that the wormhole will pull us back in in a little over thirty hours." Kano said and Koenig nodded.

"I assume you'll be taking a look at that equation." he said to Bergman.

"Of course colonel but there was something else that I'd like to look at if Lieutenant Alexander would be willing to assist." the professor answered and then he looked across main mission.

"Sure professor." she said.

"Go ahead." Koenig added and Bergman crossed main mission while Alexander grabbed hold of a nearby unused chair so that he could sit down.

"So what do you need professor?" she asked as he sat down beside her.

"Lieutenant can your sensors pick up background energy emissions? Specifically I'm interested in stellar emissions." Bergman said and Alexander frowned.

"These sensors are more for traffic control and space defence really professor." Alexander admitted, "But I can search for pretty much any EM frequency you want."

"What I'm actually looking for are the regular pulses given out by pulsars." Bergman said.

"Pulsars?" Baker commented.

"Yes, it's a type of neutron star that rotates very rapidly and emits its energy-" Bergman began.

"Yeah, I know what one is. I'm just not sure why they are of interest to us." Baker interrupted.

"I think I do." Kano said.

"Individual pulsars can be identified by their frequency of rotation." Morrow added and Bergman smiled and nodded.

"The observatory at Moonbase Zeta has a vast stellar database." he said, "Including the frequency of every pulsar known to mankind. If we can identify the positions of even a handful, perhaps as few as three, then we should be able to determine our exact location in space relative to Earth."

"And knowing where we are is the first step in getting where we want to be." Koenig said, smiling, "Please give the professor whatever help he needs with this. If modifications are needed to our sensors then bring me the requirements."

Maya looked up as Baker entered their quarters in a hurry.

"Sorry I'm so late back." Baker said, "Professor Bergman thinks he's found a way for us to tell where we are."

"Is that important?" Maya asked.

"Very. We may not be getting home yet but this could be a big step on the way to that. Have you eaten?"

Baker answered as she made her way to the refrigerator and opened it, searching for something to eat.

"Yes." Maya replied simply before Baker took out a pre-packaged meal tray and placed this in the nearby microwave and set it to warm the food while Maya still watched her and it was just as Baker was taking her meal from the oven and putting on the table that she realised how little Maya had said since she had returned.

"Maya is something wrong?" she asked.

"No, I am fine Francis. I am just tired."

"Oh okay. Today's been a bit hectic for me as well." Baker said before she began to eat.

"I do have one question for you though." Maya said.

"Ask away."

"If you return home does that mean you will be getting married?" Maya said and Baker froze. When Red Mars had attacked Moonbase Mu and triggered the nuclear blast that had sent the moon into a wormhole Baker had been scheduled to leave both the moon and the GDF permanently, intending to return to her native Canada to get married just a few days later.

"I-" Baker said, suddenly having to consider whether her fiancée would even think she was still alive and how long it might be before he gave up on the idea of her returning to him, "Maya I'm sorry but that's really not something I want to talk about. If not for that traitor Alyson Keynes we'd all still be back there."

"Except for me." Maya pointed out, "I would still be a slave."

"Oh I'm sorry I didn't mean to say that you'd be better off like that." Baker said but Maya did not reply, instead

watching her discretely as she finished her meal.

Baker got ready for bed as soon as she had finished eating, climbing into the bunk above Maya's.

"Goodnight Maya." she said.

"Goodnight Francis." Maya responded before Maya turned out the light.

Maya then lay in bed and waited, using her empathic ability to determine when Baker fell asleep and then she smiled, took a deep breath and closed her eyes as she projected herself into Baker's subconscious thoughts.

9.

The public news displays in Toronto were dominated by the reports of the declining political situation in the solar system and the preparations being made both on Earth and the colonies for the war that almost everyone expected to break out very soon. Francis Baker paid no attention to these though as she looked out of the window of the car she was being driven in, her father at her side. For a moment Baker was confused and she could not understand where she was.

"It's my wedding day." she said to herself, realising that she was wearing the wedding dress that had been made for her and that the car she was riding in was driving towards the church that she and her mother had picked out and she smiled.

"Yes and you look beautiful Francis. Mike is a lucky man." her father said, "Are you nervous?"

"Of course not. If anything I was afraid that this day would never come." Baker said and then she peered upwards into the sky, "Is it still there?" she said softly.

"Is what still there?" her father asked.

"The moon. Is it still there?"

"Of course it is Francis. You may have been on Moonbase Alpha's command staff but the moon isn't going to disappear just because you left." her father said, smiling at her as the car came to a stop outside the church, "Here we are." he added, opening the door to get out and then walking around the car towards the side where Baker sat. However, instead of him opening the door to help his daughter from the car nothing happened and when Baker looked around again she could not see him anywhere. Likewise the driver of the car had also disappeared, leaving her alone.

Baker could still hear music coming from inside the church though and she assumed that for some reason her father must have gone inside without her. Opening the door herself she got out of the car and began to walk up the path towards the church. However, just as she reached the doors the sound of music from inside suddenly stopped and when she peered in she could not see anyone sat in any of the pews visible from where she stood and so she went inside to find the church totally deserted.

"Hello?" she called out as she walked down the aisle, looking around for the people she had expected to be present but there were no signs of them at all, "Hello? Where is everyone?" she called out as she neared the front of the church.

"They're all gone Francis." a familiar voice responded and she spun around to find Koenig standing right in front of her in full GDF dress uniform.

"Colonel Koenig, what's happening?" she asked, looking around again.

"They're gone Francis all of them." he replied.

"Gone where?"

"Does it matter? I sent them away."

"But Mike-"

"Yes, I sent him away as well. You can't marry him Francis. Not ever."

"But why not?"

"Because he's there." Koenig replied and he pointed over Baker's shoulder.

Turning around again Baker suddenly found herself back on the moon, standing in Moonbase Alpha and looking out of a window at Eagle Park where she could see the statues of the Apollo astronauts who had pioneered the exploration and settlement of the moon and behind these statues was the Earth itself.

"What's happening? Why am I back here?" Baker snapped, spinning back around to look at Koenig.

"You never left Francis. I couldn't let that happen."

"But why? I'm supposed to be getting married." Baker protested.

"Yes I know that but it is more important to me that you stay here. Keynes is going to betray us and if I can't escape then no-one can." Koenig said, smiling at her.

"You know she's a traitor?"

"Of course I know. I've always known but she has always been my favourite and now I have all the excuse I need to have her to myself. She'll suffer for what she did but she'll survive no matter how much she may wish otherwise. You on the other hand are not worth saving." Koenig said, his expression becoming colder.

"But I can't. I have to go home." Baker said, pressing her hands against the inside of the window and Koenig laughed.

"That's not happening Francis. You're staying here forever Francis. You'll never see Earth or Mike again. He'll forget you and move on."

"No!" Baker screamed as she sat up in bed.

"Francis are you alright?" Maya asked from the bunk below, listening to Baker breathing rapidly.

"What? Oh I'm fine, it was just a bad dream." she said.

"Go back to sleep. I'm sure the dream will not trouble you any more. If it does then just think about how much better it would be if he was dead." Maya said and Baker nodded.

"Of course." she said as she lay back down but as she closed her eyes she was certain that she heard the voice of Koenig.

*"I'll never let you go Francis."*

Two soldiers stood on guard outside the quarters occupied by Alyson Keynes. Their purpose was twofold, although they were under orders not to allow Keynes to leave her quarters without an escort the modifications made to the door meant that she could not even open it from the inside, making exit impossible for her. This left the primary purpose of the guards as protecting her from revenge attacks. It was common knowledge on the moon that the former Captain Alyson Keynes had used her position as Koenig's adjutant and Moonbase Alpha's head of security to assist Red Mars in carrying out the attack on Moonbase Mu, providing them with the clearance codes they needed to penetrate the security perimeter defending it. It was also well known that she had only avoided spending the rest of her life in a cell at Moonbase Theta was because of her useful skills and a deal had been made at her court martial. Keynes had still been dishonourably discharged from the Global Defence Force and placed under house arrest in her quarters that had been emptied of most of their contents but she had still avoided actual prison time and there were a number of people who had made threats against her.

The guards turned to see who was approaching when they heard the sound of footsteps down the hallway. The hallway itself was not a restricted area and so the guards did not call out a challenge but they watched as Maya walked calmly towards them wearing her nightclothes.

"Are you okay there miss?" one of them asked and Maya smiled at them.

"Open the door." Maya responded, using her power to compel the pair to obey her and one of the guards reached out to open the door to Keynes' quarters using the panel beside it. With the door open Maya was able to connect with Keynes' mind and she instantly determined at she was asleep, "Now give me your comlock." she added, holding out her hand to one of the guards and the man obediently handed over the device. Maya then stepped through the doorway into Keynes quarters and turned around, "Tell no-one I am here." she said before using the guard's comlock to close the door.

Now alone with the sleeping Keynes, Maya walked over to her bed and gently sat down on its edge, taking care not to disturb her sleep as she pushed deep into her sleeping mind.

*Keynes opened her eyes to find she could neither move nor speak. After attempting to end her own life she had been strapped down to the bed of her cell in Moonbase Theta's isolation wing. While this was happening she had pleaded with the guards to be allowed to speak with Colonel Koenig and after she had refused to be quiet she had been gagged before being left alone in her cell.*

*All of this had already happened Keynes knew. Eventually Koenig had come to see her, bringing with him an offer of freedom in exchange for her help and she turned her head towards the cell door and waited for it to open. Keynes had no way of measuring time as she lay immobile but it seemed to her as she waited that Koenig ought to have made his appearance by this point. However, with no way of calling out she could do nothing but continue to wait.*

*After what seemed like an eternity the door to the cell suddenly opened to reveal Koenig standing in the corridor outside and he entered the cell and looked directly at Keynes.*

*"Hello Alyson." he said, "I think we should have a little chat." and then the door slammed shut behind him.*

*Keynes lifted her head from her pillow and looked at Koenig as soon as he entered, initially letting out a muffled grunt as if she had forgotten that she was gagged and then she watched in silence as he walked towards her bed. So far every part of this was playing out exactly as Keynes remembered it and so she was expecting Koenig to reach under her bed for the latch that would enable him to lift her into a sitting position. This time though he just collected a chair and then placed it at the end of the bed so that he could sit down and she was forced to lift her head to be able to look at him. Koenig then activated the computer tablet he had brought with him.*

*"Two thousand, one hundred and sixty two people were killed in the explosion at Moonbase Mu. Including Lieutenant Colonel Gorski and my personal friend of many years General Simmons. Added to that are the entire crew of the Anderson-class frigate Landau who died when their vessel crashed into Moonbase Eta after losing helm control after they were pulled into the same wormhole the destruction of Mu created. That crash also killed more than seven thousand people at Eta itself, including its entire command staff. Further to that you may have heard that we lost more good people at several bases when we were attacked by the Dorcons, the alien species that we now have almost two hundred of here at Theta. None of that could have happened without you giving Red Mars access to the weapon storage bunker at Mu. Am I correct?" Koenig said and he looked up from his tablet to look at Keynes in the face while she struggled to hold her head in*



*the correct position to look back at him, "Well am I?" he added after waiting. Unable to speak Keynes nodded, "I saw your message by the way, the one where you told me that Red Mars had threatened to harm your sister and her family. The problem you have is that the threats made to you by Red Mars are not proportional to the harm that was caused as a consequence of your actions so you aren't going to get away with a legal defence of coercion Alyson. A court martial will inevitably mean that you spend the rest of your life in this cell or one like it."*

*This was it, Keynes remembered, the exact point at which Koenig offered her the deal that would free her from this prison in exchange for her help. What came next though was not what she remembered at all. "Frankly that seems like a good idea to me. You're a traitor Alyson, you gave direct assistance to a terrorist organisation who attack a GDF facility and committed mass murder." Koenig said, "However, I do still have a use for you." he added and Keynes breathed a sigh of relief, expecting him to now explain the plea deal to her but once again she was to be disappointed as Koenig placed his tablet on the bed she was strapped to, got up and walked around the side of it, his hand stroking along her body her as he moved, "Now it's tempting to just keep you tied up her for my personal use. Helena will never know if I come in here every few days and make use of you in whatever way I want. On the other hand I think you might enjoy that too much, yes I know all about your feelings about me so I'm going to be putting you to a different use. You may have heard about the aliens we've encountered, the Dorcons. Well I've been able to liberate one of their slaves, a woman from a species called the Psychons. The Psychons are engineered from humanity and the Dorcons wanted to see what would happen if I bred with the slave I rescued and they're upset at losing her. With you though there is a solution to this, I'm going to offer you to them for their breeding."*

*Keynes shook her head furiously when she heard this but Koenig just glared at her. Then he reached down and grabbed the collar of the lightweight gown Keynes was wearing with both hands. This was followed by the sound of tearing fabric as he began to rip it off her, "The Dorcons will be able to send us as many of their male Psychons as they want and they can come in here to mate with you as often as they need to to produce the offspring they want. A hybrid child every nine months or so ought to buy the Dorcons off and let the rest of us continue in peace until we can get back to Earth. Then I'll just hand you over to them to do with as they want." Koenig said, tossing aside the pieces of her gown. Leaving Keynes still bound and gagged but now also naked Koenig retrieved his tablet and after taking a moment to observe Keynes as she squirmed helplessly he turned and walked away, heading for the cell door. Keynes turned her head to watch him leave, trying to call out and plead for him not to leave her like this but he ignored her muffled grunts and knocked on the inside of the door.*

*A prison guard opened the door and Koenig left the cell. Watching this Keynes then saw the guard grin as he glared at her, taking out his comlock to photograph her and record a brief video before slamming the door shut once more.*

Keynes' eyes opened suddenly and even in the darkness of her quarters she could see that someone was sat on her bed.

"Who-" she began as she reached for the light switch.

"Don't." Maya said and Keynes stopped. However, she did recognise the voice.

"Maya? What are you doing in my quarters?" she asked and Maya smiled as she got up off the bed.

"Forget that I was here Alyson. Just remember the dream. The dream is what matters. Now go back to sleep and dream again. This time think about how much he deserves to die." she said and in response Keynes lay back down and closed her eyes.

"The dream." she said to herself just as Maya used the comlock given to her by the guard outside to open the door.

*"You're a traitor Alyson. You'll stay here forever."*

The guards did not react as Maya stepped out of Keynes' quarters and as the door slid shut behind her she handed the comlock back to its owner, "When I am gone you will forget that I was here." she said.

"Of course miss." the guard replied and as he put the comlock away Maya began to walk back towards the enlisted personnel's quarters. However, just after she had rounded a corner and was out of sight of the guards she suddenly stumbled, overcome by the effort needed to manipulate the minds of Keynes and the two guards in such rapid succession. Attempting to steady herself Maya knocked against a decorative plant box and knocked it over as she fell, producing a loud 'crash.'

The guards outside Keynes' quarters heard this sound and immediately came running.

"Security section this is detail six. We have a disturbance in the officers' quarters." one of them said into his comlock as they ran and as they rounded the corner they saw Maya attempting to get back to her feet, "Security it's the Psychon woman. It looks like she's collapsed."

"Understood. Alerting medical section now. Do not leave your post unguarded." the voice of the duty security officer responded.

## S.

"Are your people prone to sleepwalking Maya?" Doctor Vincent, one of Russell's deputies asked as he examined him. Maya had not offered an explanation for why she had been in a corridor in the officers' quarters in her nightclothes and so Vincent had looked for a purely human explanation.

"Yes. Sometimes." Maya replied before the door to the medical section opened and Baker rushed in.

"Maya, are you okay?" she said.

"Francis you did not need to come." Maya said.

"I called her." Vincent said.

"It's okay I wasn't sleeping very well anyway." Baker commented.

"Bad dreams?" Vincent said and Baker nodded.

"Perhaps I should prescribe you both something to help you sleep." Vincent said.

"No thanks doc, I think I'll be fine." Baker replied.

"And I'd like to check with Doctor Russell before giving anything to Maya." Vincent added.

"Are you going to call her doctor?" Maya asked and he smiled at her.

"Are you kidding? Wake up a lieutenant colonel and a full bird colonel over a minor case of sleep walking? Russell and Koenig would find me the worst possible duty assignment on the moon. Probably giving physicals at Theta." he said and Baker snorted, "Something wrong spacewoman?" he asked.

"I could just without hearing the high and mighty Colonel Koenig's name being mentioned right now." Baker replied.

"Well as far as I can tell Maya will be fine, though you should both watch out for her walking in her sleep again. If it repeats then it could be a sign of a larger problem that we need to deal with, plus of course there's the safety risk of sleep walking on the moon in that she could accidentally try to walk right out of an air lock." Vincent said.

"I'll keep an eye on her." Baker said before turning to Maya, "Come on Maya, let's get back to our quarters." and she beckoned for Maya to follow her.

"May I leave doctor?" Maya asked and Vincent smiled and nodded.

"Yes, you may leave Maya." he answered and she got up off the bed she had been lying on before she and Baker left the medical section.

"Spacewoman Baker, why are you almost twenty minutes late?" Morrow asked when Baker walked into main mission for the start of her shift the next day, doing her best to go unnoticed and she froze.

"I'm sorry major." she said, turning to face Morrow as he approached her, "I didn't sleep well last night and I overslept. Right through the alarm."

"Just take your station and don't let it happen again. You're lucky Colonel Koenig has gone to meet Lieutenant Colonel Verdeschi at the landing pad." Morrow said.

"Colonel Verdeschi is coming here?" Baker replied.

"Yes, Major Capston as well so you can see why being late today is a bad idea." Morrow told her and she nodded before rushing to her console and sitting down.

"Can't make the great Colonel Koenig look bad in front of his minions." she muttered as she sat down.

"Careful spacewoman." Kano commented when he heard this.

"Just remember that in that case you're a minion as well." Alexander added and Baker frowned.

Koenig arrived a short time later in the company of Russell, Verdeschi and Capston, all four officers headed towards the steps leading to Koenig's office.

"Morrow, Carter would you mind joining us in my office?" Koenig said and both officers got up from their stations to join the others. Then as soon as they reached the top of the steps Koenig used his comlock to close the wall behind them.

"Uh-oh." Kano said.

"What do you say that for captain?" Alexander asked.

"Didn't you notice what just happened there?" Kano responded, pointing towards Koenig's office.

"Of course I did. Koenig just called a meeting. He does that a lot." Alexander said.

"A meeting that has every single surviving GDF officer of major or higher rank on the moon at it." Benes pointed out.

"Uh-oh." Alexander said, suddenly turning her head towards Koenig's office.

"Hey Baker where are you going?" Benes then called out when she saw Baker get up from her console and walk quickly towards the exit from main mission.

"Personal emergency." Baker answered without turning around.

"What the hell? Baker get back here." Kano ordered but Baker was already hurrying through the doorway.

"Should I go after her?" Alexander suggested but Benes shook her head.

"And leave just me and Kano in charge of the minions?" she said and the enlisted personnel present all looked up from their consoles and towards her.

"Back to work minions." Kano told them.

"If she gets back before the colonel's meeting ends then maybe we can find out what's wrong without involving Koenig." Benes added.

Inside Koenig's office the moon's senior GDF officers all sat down before Koenig began to speak.

"We have a problem." he said, "Even at our most optimistic estimates our supply situation is critical but someone is making things worse by helping themselves to our stockpiles. Alyson Keynes has been monitoring the problem for some time now."

"Keynes. The traitor?" Capston commented.

"She's bloody good at keeping track of things." Carter pointed out.

"Well there had to be a reason why you all voted to keep her out of prison, or least four out of the five of you." Capston said, looking around at the five officers who had made up the board at Keynes' court martial, the board that had voted by four to one to accept the plea deal agreed between Koenig and Keynes.

"What I want to know is how accurate her calculations are." Koenig said and he looked at Lieutenant Colonel Verdeschi, the commanding officer of the military facility at Moonbase Epsilon.

"Well you'll be glad to know that none of our ships are missing." Verdeschi replied, "But my people have found discrepancies in our resupply records. Parts that were supposed to be delivered to us apparently never arrived and in a random visual inspection we found an entire pallet of ammunition for our ships was loaded with empty cases. Someone's been helping themselves."

"If they can get to Epsilon then they can get anywhere." Morrow said, shaking his head in disbelief.

"What about the nukes?" Carter asked.

"Oh god, if someone has stolen-" Russell began.

"Don't worry doctor." Verdeschi interrupted, "The nuclear charges for the *Ultra* are all accounted for. Each one is visibly inspected daily and the entire store is kept under permanent guard by an entire company of my men in a bunker that no-one can get to without being seen."

"It's not like they're very good as weapons yet anyway. Other than dropping one as a free fall bomb from an Eagle or Condor we don't have suitable delivery systems in place."

"Maybe that's what those responsible are waiting for." Russell suggested.

"Let's hope not." Morrow said.

"What about our medical supplies?" Koenig asked and Russell sighed.

"I wish I had better news but Keynes was right. We're missing large quantities of medication. Not enough to cause any visible shortages yet but if we carry on losing supplies at this rate then we're going to start running out of essential drugs in under a year." Russell said.

"It's the same with my inventory." Capston added, "Everything I was expecting to find was there but when I checked the order log I saw that my construction teams are supposed to have taken delivery of twice the materials we have. I don't have a clue where the rest can have gone."

"Who would want to steal construction materials?" Morrow asked, "It's about the one thing that there's no shortage of here on the moon. The production plants at Delta can make all we want."

"But there'd be a record major. Someone might have a construction project they don't want us to know about." Verdeschi pointed out.

"Such as what colonel?" Morrow asked.

"How about a storage facility to fill with their stolen medicine?" Russell replied.

"Red Mars could also be building a fortress." Verdeschi suggested, "We lost all our satellite surveillance when we left Earth orbit and the only way we can monitor anything over the horizon from a base or outpost is to go out there ourselves and take a look."

"Can't we load a pair of Eagles with surveillance gear and use them in place of satellites?" Russell asked.

"We could." Carter said, "The problem is that they can only stay up for so long. We could pilot them by remote to spare our crews but the real problem is that we have to bring them back down every time we go through a wormhole. The professor's timings are getting good but he still can't predict our travel with one hundred percent accuracy so that's going to leave us with gaps in our surveillance."

"Not to mention that surveillance Eagles won't be able to pick up subsurface excavation." Capston added. Then he looked at Koenig and added, "I know you don't want to hear it colonel but perhaps if we had a civilian authority to take care of the day to day running of the moon then issues like this could be dealt with more easily. We'd have more administrative personnel of our own to keep track of our supplies."

"You're right major, I didn't want to hear that." Koenig said, "I have no intention of surrendering any authority to your friend Mister Foxworth, no matter the circumstances. Getting civilians involved will inevitably lead to word getting out to the press and then we'll have riots on our hands when the civilian population start to think that there are only enough tins of beans to last until next week and all try stockpiling regardless of our

rationing system.”

“We may need to amend that rationing system if we continue to lose reserves. Then word is bound to get out.” Verdeschi pointed out.

“I know but at least for now we can try to keep a lid on this.” Koenig said.

“Perhaps if we could narrow down the suspects.” Morrow said, “Regardless of who is responsible they had to have help from inside the GDF.”

“Maybe not Major Morrow. There is a civilian who could have manipulated our inventories and knows our procedures.” Capston said.

“You mean Keynes.” Carter said and Capston nodded.

“Since Colonel Koenig put her in charge of organising our supplies she is probably the best placed person on the moon to rearrange things to benefit herself or her friends.” he said.

“It was Keynes that alerted us to the problem major.” Russell pointed out.

“Perhaps to cover up her own involvement.” Capston replied.

“Have you seen Alyson Keynes' quarters major?” Verdeschi asked.

“No but what does that have to do with anything?” Capston answered.

“Trust me if you'd seen them then you'd know that she isn't profiting from anything.” Morrow told him.

“At least that's one name struck off our list of suspects then. Now who else can't it have been?” Koenig said.

After leaving main mission Baker made her way to the main GDF hangar located deep beneath the surface of the moon. In here there were more than forty craft of a mix of types, a number of them undergoing maintenance. Baker walked past the maintenance crews without looking at any of them until she came to an Eagle fitted with a standard passenger module that looked to have no-one close to it.

“Anyone in here?” she called out as she walked up the steps leading to the Eagle's airlock module and when there was no reply she went inside and made her way to the cockpit to double check that it was empty.

Baker was not qualified to pilot an Eagle and it was not the ship itself that interested her so she left the cockpit immediately after confirming that there was no-one in there and went into the passenger module.

Here she walked up to the arms locker that all GDF Eagles fitted with such a module included and she used her comlock to open it. Inside there was a selection of weapons that varied from stun guns to magnetic accelerator pistols, carbine and rifles. The larger weapons did not interest Baker, her small stature would make it impossible for her to carry a rifle and ammunition without it being noticed and since she obviously had no reason to be carrying such a weapon security would soon be called and her plan would fail. Instead she took three smaller weapons from the locker, the first was a stun gun that she checked the power cell of before stuffing it into her tunic and then she took a pair of magnetic accelerator pistols from the locker as well. She loaded each of these with a magazine of ammunition before sealing the arms locker again and then she quickly located an equipment case large enough to hold the two pistols and fitted with a shoulder strap to make it easier to carry that she could put the two pistols inside.

Exiting the Eagle she headed back the way she had come, doing her best to look as if she was supposed to be there and hoping that no-one asked to check the equipment case she now carried. Fortunately for her if anyone had noticed her on her way to the Eagle they either did not see her on her way back out or failed to notice that she had removed something from the craft.

Once she was clear of the hangar Baker headed back towards Alpha's command section. However, she did not head straight to main mission itself, instead she made her way to a room close by that had been a storeroom until it was converted into an office for Keynes to work in so that she was kept separate from the GDF personnel she had previously worked alongside and also was unable to gain access to Moonbase Alpha's computer network. The door to this room was unguarded and as Baker approached it she produced the stun gun from under her tunic before opening the door from a distance with her comlock.

Inside there were two guards keeping an eye on Keynes as she worked and one of them looked towards the door as it slide open.

“What the-” he began when he saw Baker standing in the corridor outside with a stun gun and he reached for his own weapon. Baker fired before the guard could draw his weapon though and the bright pulse of laser energy struck him in the head, rendering him unconscious instantly. Seeing this the second guard attempted to draw his stun gun as well but Baker quickly fired a second shot from her weapon. This time her aim was off and although she hit the guard the energy pulse hit the armoured vest he wore. This was too thick for the laser energy to penetrate and he did not fall. However, the flash did disorientate him for a few moments and that was all the chance that Baker needed to charge forwards, firing again from closer range. This time this guard was also hit in his exposed head and he too collapsed to the floor right as Baker jumped through the doorway and closed the door behind her.

“Baker I-” Keynes said in astonishment when she saw who it was that had just downed the two guards.

“Shut up!” Baker snapped, rushing over to the guards and kicking their stun guns across the floor. Then she took their comlocks from their belts and also tossed them across the room.

"Okay now you cuff them both to that shelf." Baker told Keynes, pointing her stun gun at the other woman but she did not move, "Seriously Alyson it wouldn't be the first time I'd shot you with one of these. Remember how much it hurt? Are you anxious to feel that again?"

Not wanting to be shot again Keynes walked slowly across the room to where the two guards were lying unconscious and she took two sets of the plastic handcuff ties each of them carried and used them to secure the guards to the shelving unit that was fixed to the wall.

"So now what Francis?" Keynes asked and Baker smiled as she set down the equipment case that had been slung over her shoulder and opened it, taking out one of the magnetic accelerator pistols, "So this is it then is it? You're here to kill me?" Keynes added, staring at the projectile weapon as Baker set it down on the table she worked at.

"Kill you? I need your help Alyson." Baker replied, removing the second accelerator pistol from the equipment case, "I know you want him dead as much as I do. I can feel it."

"Want who dead?" Keynes asked and a smile spread across Baker's face.

"You know Alyson. You know what he's done to you." she said.

"Koenig." Keynes said and Baker nodded slowly.

"Colonel John Koenig. The time has finally come for him to die." she said and Keynes smiled back at her as she picked up the accelerator pistol from the table and she smiled back at Baker.

"Let's go." she said.

## 6.

Professor Bergman was smiling as he entered main mission with a computer tablet in his hand.

"Where is everyone?" he said, looking around and noticing that both Morrow and Carter were absent from their stations while Koenig's office was closed.

"The colonel's called a big meeting of senior staff from all over the moon." Kano told him.

"He even brought in Verdeschi and Capston." Alexander added.

"Did you need to speak with the colonel professor?" Benes said.

"I just thought he'd like to know where we are." Bergman said and from all around main mission people looked at him.

"Seriously?" Alexander said and Bergman nodded.

"Yes, after we were unable to pick out any pulsars here I paid a visit to Zeta to speak with some of the astronomers there and it took a few hours but they were able to help me out." he said.

"Well don't keep us in suspense professor. Where are we?" Kano said as he walked over to where Bergman was standing and the professor held out the tablet.

"In a star system listed in the Henry Draper catalogue as two-four-one-six-zero. It is located in the constellation of Eridanus and is approximately two hundred and seventeen light years from Earth." he said.

"Professor this is amazing." Kano said, smiling as he studied the tablet. Then he hesitated, "What's this?" he asked when he found an image that looked like a collection of black dots on a white background along with a single red one located roughly in the centre.

"Ah yes, that's why I came in person instead of just calling." Bergman said as he took the tablet back from Kano, "Come with me. In fact I think you'll all find this interesting." he added as he made his way to the row of windows running along the external wall of main mission.

"Oh I've got to see this." Alexander commented.

"My curiosity is peaked as well." Benes added and the two women followed Bergman and Kano to the window that Bergman was now looking out of.

"There we go." he said, "Do you see that group of stars over there that matches this pattern?" and he pointed at the sky.

"Yes, I see it." Alexander said, glancing at the tablet to see the pattern.

"Well look at that star in the middle. The one marked on this in red. That is a very significant star in terms of astronomy." Bergman said.

"Why?" Benes asked.

"It's home." Bergman said simply, "That star is Earth's sun."

"Professor you're brilliant." Benes said and then she kissed him on his cheek.

The statement attracted attention from everyone in main mission and they either just looked around or stood up to try and look through the window.

"Has everyone her got so little work to do that they can just stand and stare out of the window?" Koenig's voice called out as the wall separating his office from main mission opened.

"Colonel you're going to want to see this." Kano said.

"Professor Bergman knows where we are and he's shown us Earth's sun." Alexander added.

"Seriously?" Koenig said.

"I have all the information here colonel." Bergman said, holding out his tablet and the officers who had been in the meeting in Koenig's office all hurried to the windows as well, "I'm hoping that the information detailed here will allow us to modify Alpha's sensors to take the measurements needed to isolate our position without us needing to refer to Moonbase Zeta."

"Why just Alpha?" Verdeschi asked, "Don't the rest of us get a look in?"

"Oh of course. In fact if every base was able to search for pulsar emissions then it would speed things up immensely." Bergman said.

"John that's the sun." Russell said, staring out of the window after having the correct star pointed out to her by Kano.

"We can trial it here colonel." Kano said, continuing from what Bergman had suggested.

"This is good news professor." Koenig said, smiling, "In fact it's the best news we've had since we left the solar system. This could be the morale boost we've been looking for."

"Being able to show people where Earth is ought to let them know we're making progress in getting back there." Carter added.

"We'll need to handle the press release properly." Morrow said and then he turned around, looking at the main mission staff, "Where's Baker?" he asked.

The area outside main mission was regularly patrolled by armed troops and so Baker moved slightly ahead of Keynes to check each corridor in turn as they made their way towards their target. When she confirmed that each corridor was clear of security who might be suspicious that Keynes was present without her security detail Baker waved her on until they reached the entrance to main mission just as Morrow had noticed her absence.

"Baker where have you been?" Morrow said, walking towards the door and he frowned when Keynes followed her into main mission without the guards assigned to watch over her, "And what are you doing here?" he added but both women ignored him as they headed straight towards where Koenig stood by the window, the other senior officers gathered close by.

"Keynes what's going on?" Koenig called out just as Morrow stepped into her path and all of a sudden Keynes lashed out, striking Morrow in the throat.

The suddenness of the blow was enough to take him by surprise and Morrow clutched at his throat as he staggered back, struggling to breath but he was still able to reach out and try to grab Keynes. In response she grabbed hold of Morrow's arm and twisted it as she turned, bending forwards to flip him over her shoulder despite her much smaller size. At the same time Baker pulled her accelerator pistol from her tunic and aimed it at the surprised Koenig.

"Get down!" Verdeschi yelled before he tackled Koenig and knocked him to the floor just as Baker fired.

The magnetic accelerator weapons used by GDF forces could be set for variable projectile velocities, with higher velocities offering better penetration while lower ones reduced the risk of decompression from a stray round. Baker had not adjusted the setting on the pistols she had removed from the Eagle's weapons locker and both of the ones that she and Keynes were armed with were still optimised for penetration. Therefore, when Koenig was knocked out of the path of the projectile it continued on the same trajectory until it struck one of the windows behind him and punched a hole right through it.

"Hull breach!" Kano yelled as a klaxon began to sound and there was also a whistling sound as air began to escape through the hole in the window. Designed to resist shattering, the glass remained otherwise intact but Carter still leapt towards a large button marked 'EMERGENCY' that was one of a number of such buttons around main mission and slammed his hand down on it. As soon as this was pressed metal shutters dropped down over all of the windows and the sound of escaping air ceased.

Meanwhile Baker adjusted her aim towards where Koenig and Verdeschi had landed but before she could fire Benes lunged at her, knocking the pistol from her hands and pushing her to the floor as well where Benes landed on top of her.

At the same time Keynes leapt over Morrow and drew her pistol as well. Having seen Baker put a round through the window Keynes delayed firing to adjust the muzzle velocity of her weapon and this gave Carter enough time to vault over a control console and make a grab for the weapon, pointing it upwards right as Keynes fired and resulting in a round hitting a lighting panel that promptly exploded. And showered sparks down from the ceiling. Keynes stepped back, pulling the pistol down just enough to be able to fire another shot that clipped Carter's shoulder before embedding itself in a wall without penetrating it.

The sound of firing as well as the decompression alarm attracted the attention of the nearby security patrols and pair of soldiers came rushing into main mission. However, neither of them could tell what was going on and both men hesitated.

"Get Keynes." Verdeschi shouted as he and Koenig both got back to their feet.

Keynes turned to point her pistol at Koenig but before she could fire there was a flash of light as one of the guards fired a stun gun at her and she collapsed before she could pull the trigger.

Benes and Baker continued to wrestle with one another on the floor and Baker struck her superior in the face with the butt of her pistol, knocking her backwards with blood spurting from her mouth.

"Baker drop it!" Kano snapped as he grabbed her from behind while Alexander stepped forwards to wrap her hands around the barrel of the pistol, forcing it towards the floor.

"Let me go! He has to die! Koenig has to die!" Baker screamed as both Kano and Alexander wrestled her to the floor, pinning her down and ripping her weapon from her.

"There's a stun gun in her belt as well." Kano commented when he felt the second weapon.

"I've got it." Alexander said.

Now that the danger from decompression was over and neither Keynes nor Baker were in a position to fire at them other members of the command staff emerged from sheltering behind their consoles and rushed to help along with the newly arrived soldiers and both Keynes and Baker were swiftly disarmed and restrained.

"Get them out of here. Take both to the security section and secure them." Koenig ordered as another pair of soldiers arrived and both Keynes and Baker were dragged from main mission, Baker kicking and screaming while Keynes hung limply between the soldiers carrying her.

"What the hell was all that about?" Verdeschi said.

"Beats me but that was a close shave. Baker would have put a bullet through me if you hadn't intervened." Koenig said, looking at Verdeschi.

"I never thought about that. I could have been in charge." Verdeschi replied and both men grinned at one another.

"Sandra let me see." Russell said as she knelt beside Benes and peered into her mouth, "Looks like Baker broke one of your teeth. We'll need to regrow it."

"Can you regrow my shoulder doc?" Carter asked as he was being helped to his feet by another member of the command staff.

"Let's get you both to the medical section." Russell said, "Major Morrow as well." she added, looking down at where he had landed as she took out her comlock, "Russell to medical. I want a stretcher team in main mission now. I'm on my way in with two casualties."

"Way to get in there by the way Capston." Verdeschi commented, glaring at Capston who had managed to remain out of the fight entirely by diving for cover when the first shot was fired.

"What I don't get is those two conspiring with one another to try and kill you sir." Alexander said and Bergman nodded.

"Yes, Spacewoman Baker has not been shy about expressing her distaste for Alyson Keynes." Bergman pointed out, "If Baker was going to try and kill anyone I would have expected it to be Keynes."

"She seemed to be in a pretty bad mood when she arrived for her shift today colonel. It seemed related to you." Alexander told Koenig.

"Captain Kano you're in charge." Koenig said, "I'm going to security to find out what caused this." then he bent down to pick up the accelerator pistol that Baker had been armed with and he held it out towards Alexander, "Lieutenant internal security at Alpha is your responsibility. Find out where they got these and send someone to check on Keynes' security detail."

"Yes?" Garcia said when his communicator sounded and Garner's face appeared on the screen in front of him. Garcia himself was cautious about communication and so his terminal was set only to send his voice and not his image

"Our people watching the medical section at Alpha have just told us that three people have just been rushed in from main mission. At least one has a gunshot wound." she said.

"Koenig?" Garcia asked.

"Don't know." Garner answered.

"Another thing is that there are rumours floating around that there was a decompression in main mission as well so maybe Koenig got himself blown out onto the surface. Maybe even took a few other Earthers with him." O'Rourke added, leaning into the image behind Garner.

"That would be too convenient." Garcia said, "I want you to find out who was taken to the medical section and if Koenig wasn't among them then find out what's happened to him."

"What if he's not dead? How should we proceed?" O'Rourke responded.

"Don't take any action yourselves, I don't want you drawing attention to yourselves. What's the state of the Psychon?" Garcia said.

"We turned her loose after ordering her to find some Earthers to take the fall for killing Koenig. She may have pulled that off but I couldn't tell you if she's been found out." O'Rourke replied.

"If she hasn't and Koenig is still alive then I want you to draw her out again. Order her to try again." Garcia said and then he turned off the communicator.

"Our lord has spoken." O'Rourke said to Garner when their terminal notified them of the end of the conversation.

"And just you remember it. Come on, let's figure out how we're going to bluff our way into the medical section." Garner replied.



## 7.

"Where are they?" Koenig asked as soon as he and Verdeschi entered the security section, encountering Washington just inside.

"I take it you mean Keynes and Baker colonel?" he replied, "I've got Keynes in interrogation room two and Baker in five."

"Is Keynes awake yet?" Verdeschi said and Washington shook his head.

"No sir. She's as out cold as when my men brought her in here. I was told it was just a stun gun blast so we secured her to the chair and we're keeping an eye on her through the monitor." he said.

"I guess that means we're starting with Baker then." Verdeschi said.

"You might want to give her a while to calm down." Washington suggested, "She was hysterical when she was carried in. Ranting about missing her wedding."

"Her wedding? But that would have been months ago." Koenig said, "In fact I seem to remember that she shot Keynes with a stun gun on the day or thereabouts."

"Yes colonel, I was there." Washington commented.

"Well she shot at me, the master sergeant and assaulted Captain Benes so I'm not in the mood to wait for an explanation. We'll go in now." Koenig said and then he and Verdeschi walked towards the interrogation rooms with Washington following them. Along the way they passed by the monitoring station where a pair of Washington's men were observing the camera feeds from all of the interrogation rooms. On one screen they saw Keynes sat slumped in a chair that she was handcuffed to while on another they saw Baker tugging at similar restraints.

"She does not look happy." Verdeschi said.

"She'll injure herself if she keeps struggling like that colonel." Washington said, "Maybe we should call Doctor Russell and move her to a secure medical cell."

"Let's see what she has to say for herself first." Koenig said and he continued to walk towards the interrogation room.

As soon as the door to the room opened Baker looked up and she glared at Koenig as he entered with Verdeschi and Washington.

"Let me go!" she cried out, tugging at her restraints, "You can't keep me here, I'm getting married."

"Spacewoman do you know what the date is?" Koenig said, "Your wedding day was months ago."

"You can't make me miss it." Baker replied, still struggling.

"Baker calm down, you'll hurt yourself." Koenig told her, "Now tell me what happened. Why did you just try and kill me?"

"Because I had to. You kept me here on the moon to protect Keynes." Baker replied.

"That's ridiculous." Verdeschi said, "She's obviously not in her right mind."

"Listen to me Spacewoman Baker," Koenig said, leaning towards her and steadying himself on the table, "when did you decide to try and kill me?"

Baker hesitated, trying to remember exactly when the thought of killing Koenig had entered her mind.

"I don't know." she said.

"And why did you ask Keynes for help?" Koenig added.

"Because I knew she wanted you dead as well. I just knew." Baker told him.

"This is getting us nowhere." Verdeschi said, "Someone's messed with her head somehow."

Koenig nodded.

"I agree. I'm certainly not shipping her off to Theta for mutiny on the basis of what we have here. Master Sergeant Washington I want her moved to a holding cell for now. Contact the medical section and have a blood sample taken. If she's been fed some sort of psychotropic then it should still show up." Koenig said and Washington nodded.

"Yes colonel. What about Keynes?" he asked.

"The same with her. Send a blood sample to the medical section and ask them to check it. Then speak to every one of your men that's been assigned to her security detail for the past month. See if anyone could have slipped anything into her food. I'll have Kano check out both their quarters for any sabotage of the life support system." Koenig ordered.

"If someone tampered with the life support in Baker's quarters then it could have affected Maya as well.

Perhaps we should go and see how she's feeling." Verdeschi suggested before he corrected himself, "Or at least I should. I don't want her attacking you as well."

Gaining access to Moonbase Alpha's medical section was easier than most of the GDF administered areas. Civilian patients would sometimes be transferred there from the other clinics for specialist treatment and this

made it possible to enter without a GDF issued comlock. Therefore, all O'Rourke and Garner had to do to get inside was put on a simple disguise that made them appear to be GDF technicians and walk in through the main entrance, passing by a desk manned by a GDF administrator who barely even acknowledged their presence.

"So where first?" O'Rourke said as he and Garner looked around.

"We should stick together. We'll look more like a work crew that way. Other than that I suppose we should look for the emergency treatment area. That's where they'd take a gunshot wound."

"After you." O'Rourke said, smiling at Garner and he held out his hand ahead of them for her to walk in front of him.

The two Red Mars terrorists continued to walk through the medical section, passing by the operating theatres and room set aside for longer term care and quarantine until they reached the large open area used for emergency treatment and diagnosis. Here they saw a number of the medical staff clustered around a treatment bed occupied by someone clearly wearing the uniform of a GDF officer.

"There don't appear to be any bullet fragments." Russell said as she examined the wound to Carter's shoulder, "This wound should be easy enough to clean up and seal."

"So how long will I be here doc?" Carter asked.

"Well closing you up should only take about half an hour but I want you to stay here overnight so we can monitor you just in case." Russell replied, Then she looked over her shoulder at where Benes was resting on a bed that had been lifted so that she was half sitting up, her mouth wedged open while a probe inserted into the hole in her gum left by the loss of her tooth stimulated the growth of a replacement, "The same with you Sandra. We'll know by tomorrow morning whether the new growth has taken or not."

"You hear that Sandra?" Carter said, grinning, "We get to spend the night together." and Benes snorted, unable to laugh properly with the probe inside her mouth.

"It's not Koenig." O'Rourke whispered to Garner and she nodded.

"We should get out of here." she replied and the pair turned to leave only find themselves face to face with Doctor Vincent.

"Can I help you?" he asked, seeing instantly that neither of them were injured and knowing that no maintenance teams had been requested for the medical section.

"Err, we heard a rumour that Koenig had been shot. We came to see." O'Rourke said, thinking quickly.

"Wait here." Vincent told the pair, noticing that neither of them were displaying any visible identity cards and he promptly walked past them towards where Russell was working.

"I think he's made us. We need to go." Garner said as she and O'Rourke watched Vincent walk away.

"You think?" O'Rourke replied and the two terrorists both began to hurry for the entrance they had come in through.

"Hey, stop them someone!" Vincent shouted, noticing that they had not waited like he had instructed and upon hearing this an orderly stepped into their path to block their escape. However, O'Rourke responded to this by grabbing the orderly and shoving him up against the nearest wall before both he and Garner broke into a run, rushing towards the exit from the medical section. As they ran Garner produced a pistol and fired it ahead of them. The pistol was an old fashioned firearm that fired a chemically propelled round rather than a modern magnetically accelerated one but this was enough for Garner's purpose. The shot was not aimed at anyone in particular, instead the shot was intended to scare anyone else in their way not to try and prevent them from escaping. This had the desired effect and patients and staff alike took cover behind whatever was available.

"Don't try to stop them." Russell called out, "Let them leave before anyone gets hurt. Just call security and get them to go after them."

The other GDF personnel present did as Russell had ordered and as O'Rourke and Garner were running through the open doorway another orderly was already using his comlock to contact the security section.

"Colonel we have shots fired in the medical section." Washington told Koenig just as he was about to leave the security section.

"Injuries?" Koenig asked.

"No reports yet. I'm taking a team there now."

"Give me a vest. I'm coming too." Koenig said and he was handed an armoured vest that he quickly put on over his uniform, the camouflage pattern body armour looking out of place when compared to the dark blue of his tunic and trousers.

Koenig and the squad of soldiers led by Washington then made their way as quickly as possible from the security section to medical yelling for anyone they encountered in the corridors to get out of their way. The sight of a squad of armoured and heavily armed soldiers charging down a corridor was sufficiently intimidating that no-one disobeyed this order and in just a few minutes they were rushing through the doors of the medical section.

"Helena are you okay?" Koenig asked when he saw Russell nearby and she nodded as they walked up to one another.

"I'm fine." she replied.

"So what happened?" Koenig said.

"Doctor Vincent found two people here that he was suspicious of. They were dressed as technical staff but there was no reason for them to be hanging around and they weren't showing any ID. They made a break for it and produced a weapon. They fired a shot but it looked like a warning."

"Colonel we have a bullet casing over here." Washington announced.

"They had an old style pistol." Russell responded.

"That's helpful." Washington said as he looked around, searching for the impact point of the bullet, "we might be able to pull rifling marks off the bullet and tie it to the gun."

"Colonel." Doctor Vincent said as he walked up to Koenig.

"Doctor, you saw the intruders?" Koenig replied.

"Yes colonel. I thought that they could be connected to the disappearance of medical supplies but when I spoke to them they mentioned a rumour that you'd been shot." Vincent said.

"News travels fast. Especially when it isn't true." Russell commented.

"And also if they were in on the attempt on my life." Koenig added.

"You think they came here to finish you off?" Russell said.

"It's a possibility. In any case at least we'll have images of them now." Koenig answered and he turned his head towards a nearby security camera.

Returning to the disused shop that they were using as a safe house, Garner and O'Rourke quickly checked around them that they were not being watched before they hurried inside.

"That was close. They almost caught us." O'Rourke said.

"And now they know our faces. They'll pull us off the security footage." Garner replied.

"So we keep a low profile. Once we're back at Beta we'll be fine and until then we can still use the Psychon woman to act for us. I'll call her now." O'Rourke said and he took out his communicator.

"No." Garner told him, reaching out to stop him using the device.

"Why not?" O'Rourke asked.

"Right now the Earthers are going to be trying to figure out what made their people suddenly start shooting at Koenig. If that Maya vanishes now they might figure out that she's involved. We're better off heading for her quarters and catching her there. Tonight is probably best. We can create an override access to the enlisted personnel's quarters."

"She shares with that Earther, the one that interrupted me at the club when I tested the control device. What about her? She might recognise me." O'Rourke pointed out.

"We'll have to try and find out when she's alone but for the next couple of hours at least we should stay here. The Earthers will be combing Alpha for us." Garner said.



"Lieutenant Colonel Verdeschi, Captain Kano, what are you doing here?" Maya asked when she opened the door of the quarters that she shared with Baker and saw the two officers standing outside.

"Maya we need to come in." Verdeschi told her, "Kano needs to check the life support feed and I have a few questions for you."

"Of course. Come in." Maya replied and she stepped back to let the two men enter her quarters.

"I'll check the vent first." Kano said and he made his way to the vent that fed fresh air into the room.

Meanwhile Verdeschi made his way to the table and sat down, Maya following and sitting opposite him.

"What would you want to know colonel?" she said.

"Maya, Francis Baker has been arrested for attempting to kill Colonel Koenig." Verdeschi responded and Maya stared at him as if in disbelief. In fact as soon as she had heard what Verdeschi had said she remembered her manipulation of both Baker and Keynes exactly but was unable to express any of it thanks to the instructions given to her using the control device.

"But Francis does not like Alyson Keynes." was all she could say.

"Exactly. Her behaviour was out of character and erratic enough that we're working on the assumption that she has been exposed to some sort of external influence. Maya you're able to sense people's feelings, have you noticed any change in Baker recently?" Verdeschi said.

"She has not been sleeping well and she seemed angry with Colonel Koenig." Maya responded, again her answer limited by the orders given to her by O'Rourke.

"I can't find anything in here." Kano then said as he replaced the vent cover, "It could be in the water though. I'll need to check the inlet." and Verdeschi nodded as Kano approached the kitchen area, crouching down to open the cupboard under the sink so that he could gain access to where the water for Baker and Maya's quarters branched off from Alpha's main supply.

"Maya your senses are enhanced, right?" Verdeschi asked and Maya smiled.

"That is correct." she answered.

"Well have you noticed any strange scents or has anything tasted odd recently?" Verdeschi said.

"I am sorry but no lieutenant colonel. I am still getting used to living here with you and many things still smell and taste strange to me. Especially anything with alcohol." Maya said and Verdeschi smiled at her last comment.

"Well I don't see anything hooked into the water either." Kano said, standing up again, "I'll take a sample just in case but I don't think that anyone has tampered with the life support or water."

Verdeschi nodded.

"Maya would you mind coming with me to the medical section?" he said and Maya frowned.

"Of course but why? I do not feel unwell." she said.

"I just want them to run a blood test. Samples have been taken from both Baker and Keynes. If anything has been fed to any of you then it ought to show up." Verdeschi said. Then he looked at Kano and added, "Give me that water sample. I'll take it to medical section with me while you check out Keynes' quarters."

With the water sample in a sealed bottle, Verdeschi accompanied Maya to the medical section. When they arrived the section was still under armed guard while the bullet fired by Garner was being retrieved from behind the wall panel it had struck and penetrated.

"What's going on?" Verdeschi asked when he saw the casualties from main mission lying on a row of beds nearby.

"Ask them. I remained out cold through it all apparently." Morrow replied and he looked to his side where Carter and Benes lay.

Benes then made the shape of a gun with her hand and pointed it at a wall, grunting as she tried to mimic the sound of a gunshot while the probe was still in her mouth.

"Here take this, you're drooling again." Carter added, handing her a tissue to wipe her jaw with. Then he looked at Verdeschi and added, "For those of you who aren't trained dental professionals Sandra just explained how a pair of lunatics came in and started shooting."

Benes then grunted, holding up her index finger.

"There was just one of them?" Verdeschi said and Benes shook her head.

"Two people. One shot. Washington's boys are trying to find the bullet now to run tests on." Carter said, "So what brings you here anyway colonel?"

"What, can't I just come and see how you're all feeling?" Verdeschi asked.

"You could but you wouldn't." Morrow commented and both he and Carter smiled.

"Okay I admit it, I just brought Maya here to get tested." Verdeschi told them.

"I think Doctor Russell is running the tests now." Morrow said, pointing towards her office and Verdeschi

nodded.

"Thanks. Maya, come on." Verdeschi said.

"Of course." she replied and the pair of them began to walk towards Russell's nearby office.

"Aren't you going to tell us to get well soon colonel?" Carter called out after them.

"Nope." Verdeschi responded.

Russell had left the door to her office open and when Verdeschi peered inside he saw her sat looking at a microscope display.

"Doctor, how's it going?" he asked.

"Pointless." Russell replied, leaning back in her chair, "I've tried full spectrum reaction tests and a visual inspection of the blood samples from Baker and Keynes and I can't find anything out of the ordinary."

"In that case this could be a waste of time but I brought Maya with me so you could see if she'd been exposed to anything.

"Actually that could help." Russell said, getting up to approach Maya, "Maya I'd like to rerun some of the tests I carried out when you first arrived on the moon."

"If you wish doctor but what do you hope to find?" Maya replied.

"Depending on the method of application, some narcotics may not show up on a blood test but it will still be present in other parts of the body such as brain tissue. If I could run a scan of your brain activity I could see whether there is any chemical imbalance present." Russell explained. Then looking at Verdeschi she added, "This could take a couple of hours."

"I'll leave you to it then." Verdeschi said, "I'm going to check in with Koenig."

Koenig and Washington stood behind Alexander as she went through the recordings taken by the security cameras in the medical section.

"Freeze there. Those are our intruders." Koenig said when she reached a point where Vincent was shown confronting O'Rourke and Garner.

"I'll zoom in for a better look." Alexander said, adjusting the image on her console so that it focused entirely on the face of the two terrorists and Koenig nodded.

"Pull a copy of that and distribute it to our security forces." he said.

"What about the gun? We know it was an old forty-five but it might be nice to know what they're firing it from." Washington suggested.

"Good point. Alexander track forwards to the point where we can see their weapon." Koenig ordered and Alexander sped forwards through the footage until she reached the point where Garner produced her handgun. The weapon was small, a necessity if Garner was going to be able to keep it concealed given her small frame.

"Doesn't look like much." Alexander commented.

"I've seen guns like that before." Koenig told her.

"It doesn't look like those cannons hanging off your wall colonel." Alexander replied, looking up at him. An aficionado of the American wild west, Koenig had a number of items in his quarters that were related to the period and that include a pair of single action revolvers.

"Those revolvers are hardly cannons lieutenant, but they fire a similar sized round. That gun is about two hundred years more advanced than mine though. They were designed as personal defence weapons in areas where people were allowed to carry something like that in public. Size and weight were the main concern and that makes them easy to hide. Fortunately their effectiveness lags way behind a magnetic accelerator or even a stun gun."

"So they won't go through body armour?" Washington asked and Koenig shook his head.

"Not with standard ammunition, no and they aren't designed to fire armour piercing rounds." he said.

"That could be why she chose to carry one. No many people around want to cause hull breaches." Alexander said, "I'll look up the exact make and see whether there are any listed on our weapons registry."

"Don't forget to put their faces through our system as well." Koenig reminded her just as Verdeschi returned to main mission.

"I was just down in the medical section. What's all this about someone pulling a gun?" he asked, walking across the room to join Koenig and Washington at Alexander's station.

"It's true. A man and a woman armed with a pistol. They may have been checking to see if the attempt on my life was successful." Koenig told him.

"Well neither of them have their faces in our database. Whoever they are they've been able to keep a low profile." Alexander said as the computer finished searching its database.

"So those uniforms are fake and they don't have a criminal record." Verdeschi commented.

"Well we know what they look like now and we're distributing their images to every military and law enforcement station on the moon." Koenig said.

"What about running them past Baker and Keynes?" Washington suggested and the nearby officers looked

at him, "After all if these two did manage to drug them then maybe they did it in person." he added. "Kano certainly found nothing in Baker's quarters." Verdeschi said, "Russell told me that nothing showed up in the blood tests but she wanted to run some more tests to see there were any chemical traces anywhere else. I left Maya with her on the theory that whatever affected Baker, she may have been exposed to as well."

"Okay we'll see if either of them recognise these two but I think it's best if you ask the questions Tony." Koenig said and Verdeschi nodded.

"Yes, I suppose neither will be inclined to respond well to you right now." he replied.

"Care to join them Alexander? I can hold the fort here." Koenig added and Alexander smiled at him.

"Me and Alyson in the same room? I'm not so sure I can be as restrained around her as you seem able to manage colonel." she said.

"And they say true friendship lasts forever." Koenig commented.

"Or at least until one of them commits treason." Alexander added.

"In that case it looks like it's just us master sergeant." Verdeschi said, "Shall we go?"

"Anytime you wish colonel." Washington replied.

"Remember the drill Maya? Just lie still and relax while the scanner does its work." Russell said when a medical technician had just finished setting up the scanner at the end of the bed Maya was lying on. This scanner consisted of a long rectangular sensor mounted on a horseshoe shaped bracket positioned around Maya's head.

"Yes doctor, I remember." Maya replied.

"Try not to talk please." the technician said, "It will distort the readings."

"I'm going to leave you to it. I just need to go and see Doctor Vincent." Russell commented when she saw Vincent heading for the exit from the medical section and she hurried to catch up with him, "Ben." she called out and Vincent came to a stop.

"Yes colonel?" he asked, using Russell's rank instead of position.

"Ben I just wanted to thank you for staying on, I know your shift ended about five hours ago. I've spoken to Rob Mathias and he'll cover for you overnight." Russell said and Vincent smiled.

"Thanks doctor. I could do with the extra sleep." he said. Then he leant to look around Russell and added, "I see Maya's back. Is this about last night?"

"What about last night?" Russell asked, frowning.

"Maya was brought in here after she collapsed." Vincent said.

"So Baker brought her?" Russell said,

"Baker? No. Security called for a medical team. They found her in a hallway in the officers' quarters. I called Baker to come and take her back to their quarters after I'd given her the all clear. I told her that if she was sleepwalking again then she should come back. Isn't that why she's here?" Vincent said.

"No, no it's not. Look Ben do you know exactly which security team found her?"

"Sure. It was the protection detail stationed outside Alyson Keynes' quarters." Vincent said and Russell winced, "Is something wrong?" he asked.

"Yes, I think something's very wrong but I can't talk about it here. I need to go and speak to Colonel Koenig and I need to get away from Maya before she senses what I'm thinking." Russell said, and she took hold of Vincent's arm to usher him out of the medical section as well.

Leaving Vincent in the corridor, Russell took out her comlock and called Koenig while she was heading towards main mission.

"John where are you?" she asked.

"In my office. Why?" Koenig answered.

"Not this way, I'm on my way there now. I need to speak to you in person. We could have a major security problem on our hands." Russell said as she picked up her pace.

"Okay, I'll be here waiting for you." Koenig replied.

"Thanks John. I'll see you soon." Russell said and then she turned off the comlock and returned it to her pocket.

As soon as she reached main mission Russell hurried up the steps to Koenig's office.

"So Helena what's-" Koenig began.

"John it's Maya." Russell interrupted.

"What about here?"

"I think she's involved in the attempt on your life. In fact I think she's a key part of it. Baker and Keynes, I think they both tried to kill you because she ordered them to." Russell explained.

"Are you certain?" Koenig asked.

"As certain as I can be with the information I have at hand." Russell told him.

"Which is what exactly?"

"Doctor Vincent told me that Maya was admitted to the medical section last night. According to him she had been sleep walking and collapsed. She was found by security. The two men guarding Keynes' quarters to be exact." Russell explained.

"Oh I see." Koenig said, "So on the one hand we have Baker, who shares quarters with Maya and on the other we have Keynes, whose quarters she was found close to last night. "

"John we know that Maya can influence people's actions. We saw her demonstrate that ability when we first met her." Russell reminded him and Koenig nodded.

"Yes, the Dorcon guard. But doesn't she have to be face to face with someone to influence them like that?" he said.

"Yes, I think that she manipulated the guards to let her into Keynes' quarters and then made them forget. She's told us that manipulating someone's mind is difficult and takes effort so maybe that's why she collapsed."

"You mean she wore herself out controlling three people in rapid succession?" Koenig said.

"Exactly." Russell replied.

"Alexander." Koenig then called out.

"Yes colonel?"

"Lieutenant I need you to check the security log for Keynes' quarters. Was the door opened last night?" Koenig asked.

"Checking now colonel." Alexander responded.

"Keeping tabs on who talks to her John?" Russell commented and Koenig smiled.

"Just a precaution." he replied.

"Colonel the computer confirms that the door to Alyson's quarters were opened twice last night at an interval of just under a quarter of an hour. The first was done using the outside control panel and the second was triggered using a comlock."

"Whose comlock?" Koenig said.

"Corporal Roberts'. One of her assigned guards." Alexander said.

"So how do we arrest someone who can convince our soldiers to turn their weapons on one another?" Koenig said, turning to Russell.

## 9.

"Stand to attention spacewoman." Verdeschi said when he and Washington entered the cell that Baker had been moved to and she leapt up off the bed and stood up straight, "Good. At ease. Now I have something for you to see." Verdeschi added, holding out a tablet that had images of O'Rourke and Garner taken from medical section's security footage on the screen, "Do you-"

"Oh my God! It's that pervert from the club!" Baker exclaimed when she saw the image, interrupting Verdeschi.

"I'll take that as a 'yes' then shall I?" he said.

"You bet your – I mean yes lieutenant colonel. I saw that man in the club we went to. Can you believe that he tried to get Maya to send him naked pictures of herself? And she almost did as well. I don't know what came over her." Baker said and Verdeschi and Washington looked at one another.

"Behaviour out of character just like trying to kill a GDF colonel." Verdeschi commented.

"Some guy did hassle Maya. Baker saw him off." Washington added.

"What, did that creep do something to me?" Baker demanded.

"We don't know yet Baker." Verdeschi told her.

"It's one hell of a coincidence that he was around Maya as well if he didn't." Washington said.

"Baker you say you saw him in a club?" Verdeschi said and Baker nodded.

"Yes sir." she said.

"And were you drinking?"

"We all were." Washington said before Baker could answer.

"And could this man have come into contact with the drinks you and Maya had?" Verdeschi asked.

"Maya was carrying ours when I saw him with her." Baker said, "But Maya hadn't drunk any when he was talking to her."

"It could be a contact agent." Washington suggested.

"I pushed him." Baker said, "To get him away from Maya."

"I think Russell needs to know about this." Verdeschi said, taking out his comlock and calling Russell.

"Yes Tony?" she said.

"Doctor I may have more information about the drug used on Baker and Keynes." he said as soon as Russell answered.

"Where are you right now?" Russell asked.

"Security section." Verdeschi answered.

"Are you alone?"

"No. I'm with Master Sergeant Washington and Spacewoman Baker."

"Good. Look Verdeschi, this is important. All of you need to avoid wherever Maya is, she's the key." Russell said.

"Actually doctor I was about to mention Maya as well. Baker has identified the male suspect from medical section as a man who approached Maya on a night out. She and Washington have both confirmed that Maya was acting out of character immediately after encountering him." Verdeschi told her.

"We need to find a way of containing her." Koenig said, his voice picked up by Russell's comlock.

"Hold on I think we should discuss this more privately and include Washington." Verdeschi said and he and Washington turned to leave the cell.

"What about me? What's happened to me?" Baker called out but neither man replied said anything as they left.

Outside the cell Verdeschi and Washington made their way to an empty interrogation room where Verdeschi switched his comlock to speaker mode and placed it on the table.

"Okay we're free to talk now." he said, "What exactly do you mean by 'contain' Maya?"

"It means that we need to make sure that she can't start influencing anyone else's mind. The problem is that she could do just that to anyone we send to arrest her." Koenig said.

"How exactly does this mind control work?" Washington asked, "I've heard Maya say that part of her ability to tell what people are thinking and feeling is based on her heightened senses."

"That's right but her ability to control people obviously relies on more than that. You can't instantly hypnotise someone just by talking in the right tone. It does seem to need line of sight though, she can't control anyone over a comlock signal for instance." Russell replied.

"What if we just shoot her with a stun gun and toss her in a cell before she wakes up?" Washington said.

"A stun gun's range is too limited sergeant. Maya is likely to sense the attack coming before anyone can take the shot." Russell replied.

"Has anyone considered leaving her free?" Verdeschi asked, "We might be able to use her."



"In what way?" Koenig asked.

"Finding the two clowns that fired off a gun in the medical section. Look I think it's safe to say that Maya is another victim in this so why not make use of that? The people behind all this are bound to try and contact her again so why not arrange to track her using her comlock?" Verdeschi explained.

"That could work." Koenig replied.

"We'll need to make sure that anyone involved with monitoring Maya stays away from her so she won't find out." Russell pointed out.

"Washington you'll need to put together a rapid response team." Koenig said.

"Yes colonel, I'll get on it as soon as possible." Washington replied before there was a knock at the door of the interrogation room before it slid open and both Verdeschi and Washington turned to look at the soldier standing just outside the room.

"Sorry to interrupt colonel but Miss Keynes is awake. She's ranting about the Psychon Maya brainwashing her." the soldier said.

"Thank you sergeant, we'll be right there." Verdeschi said, "Koenig, Doctor Russell, did you get that?"

"Yes we heard. Go and see what happened. If she's been released from Maya's control then we need to know why." Koenig ordered and then Verdeschi turned off his comlock.

"Sergeant Washington, you put your team together. I'm going to go and see what Keynes has to say for herself." he said and Washington nodded.

"Yes sir." he replied.

The sergeant at the door led Verdeschi to the interrogation room where Keynes was still being held, her wrists secured to the table in front of her.

"Colonel Verdeschi." she said when he entered the room and he smiled back at her.

"Yes. I understand you have something to say." he said.

"What about Colonel Koenig? Is he alright? I didn't want to hurt him I promise. Don't send me back to Theta." Keynes said.

"Colonel Koenig is just fine." Verdeschi said as he sat down opposite Keynes, "In fact he was totally unhurt by your and Baker's little assassination attempt. On the other hand you put a bullet through Major Carter and I don't think that Major Morrow will live down being knocked out by a woman of your size for a long time. I would say that that was two counts of mutiny right there if you hadn't already been dishonourably discharged from the GDF."

"I want to talk to Colonel Koenig." Keynes said, "Or Doctor Russell. I know you voted against me at my court martial. Everyone does."

"Then everyone should consider that the discussions among a court martial board are privileged." Verdeschi replied, resisting the temptation to tell Keynes that he had in fact voted in support of the deal Koenig had presented to her and that it was Doctor Russell that was the dissenting voice among the five senior officers that had judged her, "Now why don't you tell me what happened and I'll tell Colonel Koenig whatever is relevant? Alternatively I'm sure that there's a travel tube car heading for Theta soon."

"No don't. Look it wasn't me okay? I had no choice."

"The Devil made you do it?" Verdeschi commented.

"Only if Maya counts as the Devil. She put a dream in my head, made me think that Colonel Koenig was going to hand me over to the Dorcons to be raped by their Psychon slaves." Keynes protested.

"How do you know Maya was involved?"

"Because when I woke up she was sat right there in my quarters glaring at me in the dark while I was sleeping. Then she told me to forget she was there and go back to sleep." Keynes said.

"Yet you know she was there now." Verdeschi pointed out.

"Yes but I didn't before. All I could remember was the dream and it felt so real. Maya twisted what happened when Colonel Koenig came to release me from Theta. When Baker burst in and shot the guards I thought she'd come to kill me. Then she told me that she wanted to kill the colonel and that she knew I did as well." Keynes said.

"All very interesting." Verdeschi said, "It sounds totally far fetched of course."

"It's true, all of it I swear. I'd never want to hurt the colonel." Keynes said.

"Fortunately we've already determined some of what you've said for ourselves." Verdeschi said, "We linked Maya to one of a pair of individuals who went into the medical section with a weapon and fired it as they were escaping. We've also confirmed her presence in the area of your quarters last night. Of course what we don't know yet is why you seem to have been freed from her influence when Baker hasn't."

"Does this mean I'm free to go?" Keynes asked.

"Not just yet. If we send you back to your quarters then Maya could come back. She's already shown that she can get past the guards so you're probably safer in here. I will have the guards remove those handcuffs though. Now I'm going to go and tell Colonel Koenig what you just told me." Verdeschi said before he got to his feet and turned to leave.

In the main area of the security section Verdeschi found Washington speaking to a unit of soldiers who were donning armour and preparing weapons so that they could act as his rapid response team, ready to act should Maya be contacted by her controllers.

"Did Keynes have anything interesting to say then colonel?" Washington asked, interrupting his briefing and looking away from his men to talk to Verdeschi.

"In a way, yes. I'd say she's definitely free of any outside control but I'm not sure why. Can you get someone in there to uncuff her?" Verdeschi replied and Washington nodded.

"Sure. If she causes any more trouble we can always stun her again." he said and Verdeschi grinned.

"That's it." he exclaimed.

"What is?" Washington asked.

"Keynes was hit with a stun gun. A pulsed energy projectile. Those things hurt like hell, right?" Verdeschi said and Washington nodded again.

"Oh yeah and then some. It feels like you're on fire for a moment." he said.

"So maybe that's what snapped Keynes out of it. The shock to her brain scrambled whatever it was that Maya did to her. Give me a stun gun."

"Sure, but what do you need it for?" Washington said and he drew the stun gun holstered on his hip and handed it to Verdeschi.

"I'm going to shoot Spacewoman Baker." Verdeschi replied as he took the weapon.

Returning to Baker's cell, Verdeschi found her pacing up and down.

"Colonel when-" she began but she stopped speaking when she saw the weapon in his hand.

"Spacewoman Baker we may have found a way to release you from whatever Maya did to you. However, it may cause you some temporary pain and discomfort so I need-" Verdeschi interrupted her but before he could finish she interrupted him back.

"Whatever it is just do it colonel. Where do we need to go?" she said.

"Actually we can do it right here." Verdeschi told her and before she could react he raised the stun gun and fired it at her.

The pulse of energy struck Baker in the chest, creating a brief explosion of plasma. In turn this disrupted her nervous system directly, causing her incredible pain as she collapsed but incapacitating her before she could cry out. With Baker now unconscious there was no reason for Verdeschi to remain in the cell any longer than it took him to check her pulse to be certain that she had not suffered any serious damage from the energy blast and so he exited it again. Walking back to where Washington was still briefing his men he returned to stun gun to him.

"All done colonel?" Washington asked and Verdeschi smiled.

"All done. But you might want to have someone check on her when she wakes up." he answered.

## 10.

"I've got a fix on Maya's comlock. She's in medical section." Alexander said as Koenig and Russell stood over her.

"Probably still undergoing the scan I asked for to be used as a comparison with Baker and Keynes." Russell said.

"Will she get suspicious that you left?" Koenig asked.

"I don't see why. Rob Mathias should be taking over soon so I'll message him to send her back to her quarters when the scan is done." Russell replied. Then she looked at Alexander and added, "So how accurate is this tracking?"

"We can pinpoint her position to within a particular room, even her rough position within it if it's large enough to have two comm relay antennas in it. Colonel do you want to maintain an audio visual link?" Alexander replied, looking at Koenig as she asked her question.

"You can do that? What if there are no cameras in the room?" Russell said before Koenig could reply.

"There's always a camera in the room if you have your comlock with you." Koenig reminded her.

"I tap into the comlock itself and turn on the microphone and camera." Alexander said, calling up a set of remote commands that she could apply to Maya's comlock now that she had been able to connect her console to the device, "We're at the mercy of where the camera is pointing of course, but there'll be no indication that we're watching and listening."

"What if she turns her comlock off entirely?" Russell said and Alexander smiled.

"That's the good bit. Now I have control of the comlock she can't power it down without me letting her. Oh it'll look like it's shut down but the mic and camera will still be recording." she said.

"The only way around it is to take the battery out entirely." Koenig added.

The door to main mission then slid open to allow Verdeschi to enter.

"Washington has a team ready to move as soon as they get the word." he announced with a smile on his face.

"I know that look Tony." Koenig said, "You know something. Tell us now. That's an order."

"Yes sir Colonel Koenig." Verdeschi said, saluting, "I think I know how to eliminate Maya's mental conditioning."

"That's amazing. How?" Russell asked.

"Easy. Shoot them. With a stun gun obvious, not live ammunition because that would be dangerous."

Verdeschi said, "I spoke with both Baker and Keynes and they couldn't have been more different. Baker was acting like everything she did was essential while from the moment she woke up from that stun blast Keynes was desperate to convince us that she wasn't responsible for her actions."

"Again?" Russell commented.

"This time I think we can agree that she wasn't Helena." Koenig replied, "Go on Verdeschi."

"Keynes remembered Maya visiting her during the night. She said that the conditioning took the form of a dream and that when she woke up from it she found Maya sitting there with her. Then Maya used another command to tell her to forget." Verdeschi said.

"So how come she remembers now?" Alexander said.

"Obviously the memory is just suppressed by Maya's psychic command. Once freed from that the victim still remembers everything." Russell said.

"Well we'll find out for certain when Baker wakes up." Verdeschi continued.

"You shot Baker?" Russell said.

"Only with a stun gun obviously and don't worry I got her permission before hand." Verdeschi responded.

"Somehow I doubt she was in full possession of the facts. I've never met anyone who was willing to be shot with a stun gun. Everyone knows how much it hurts." Koenig said.

"She told me to get on with it. Is it my fault she interrupted me before I used the words 'shoot' and 'stun gun'?" Verdeschi said, "Now what's going on with Maya?"

"I've managed to take control of her comlock. She can't make a move that we don't know about." Alexander said.

"Lieutenant I want you to monitor the feed in private. We're eavesdropping on Maya and I don't want all her private activities made public to everyone in main mission." Koenig said.

"But don't forget," Russell added, "we don't know exactly how easily Maya can sense what we're thinking so it's best if everyone with knowledge of this avoids her entirely. That includes talking to her over a communication channel of any sort. If she even suspects that we're hiding anything then all this will fail."

"Understood." Alexander replied, nodding.

"Great, now we just need to wait for whoever is giving Maya her orders to get back in touch with her."

Verdeschi said.

"Is Doctor Russell not going to look at those?" Maya asked Doctor Mathias, one of Russell's deputies while he looked at the results of the brain scan that had just been performed on her.

"She will but she and Doctor Vincent have both finished for the day. I've got the results of the original scans we took when you first arrived here on the moon and I don't see anything that looks significant so there's no reason to ask you to stay any longer." Mathias told her.

"Then I can go?" Maya said.

"Yes, if Doctor Russell wants anything else we'll let you know." Mathias replied.

Leaving the medical section Maya headed back to her quarters but as she was about to open the door she noticed a figure out of the corner of her eye and immediately knew that they were watching her.

"Can I help you?" she asked, turning to look directly at the man at the end of the corridor and O'Rourke stepped out into the open, Garner appearing behind him and looking around to make sure that there was no one else close by to see them.

"Aren't you going to invite us in?" O'Rourke said, glancing at the door to Maya's quarters.

"No." Maya responded and O'Rourke looked at Garner.

"Looks like your power over her is wearing off." Garner said and O'Rourke smiled.

"There's an easy way to solve that." he said and he took the control device from his pocket.

"No-" Maya began, her instinctive fear of the devices taking hold of her.

"Be quiet." O'Rourke said and the control device turned his spoken order into a psychic command that Maya could not resist, "That's never getting old." he added, looking at Garner when Maya stopped talking.

"Just get on with this and let's get out of here." Garner said.

"Come with us." O'Rourke ordered and when he started to walk away from Maya again she immediately began to follow him. On the other hand Garner waited so that she could follow on behind Maya, ensuring that she could watch her every move with a hand on the pistol in her pocket ready to use it if Maya made any move against the two Red Mars terrorists.

Meanwhile as the trio walked away none of them realised that the comlock in Maya's pocket was transmitting every word they spoke to Alexander who had started paying close attention the moment that she heard Maya first speak to O'Rourke. None of the trio spoke as they made their way through the corridors of Alpha but Alexander continued to monitor them, using the tracking function of the comlock to plot their movements. She watched as Maya was led back to the disused unit on the commercial promenade and taken inside to the room empty other than for the chair in the middle.

"Sit down." O'Rourke said and Maya sat down in the chair, "Now tell us what you did to arrange the attempt on Koenig's life and what happened since then. How much do the Earthers know?"

"I was able to enter and manipulate the dreams of Francis Baker and Alyson Keynes." Maya said and O'Rourke grinned in amusement when he heard this.

"Keynes, the Earther who helped us hit their nuclear weapon program then turned on us in exchange for her freedom. I like the idea of setting her up." he said and as soon as Alexander heard this she let out a soft gasp. O'Rourke's statement had just identified the source of the plan to kill Koenig as Red Mars.

"I was not in main mission to witness exactly what happened but they failed to kill Colonel Koenig and they were both arrested. Lieutenant Colonel Verdeschi came to see me, asking if Francis had spoken to me about anything that was connected to it. Captain Kano checked to see if any devices to dispense poisons had been installed in our quarters. That is what they suspect caused Francis and Alyson" Maya continued.

"Poison, I like it. That means they'll be looking in the wrong place." Garner said.

"So what now? Do you want me to send her out to have another go at killing Koenig? Maybe she can find another couple of stooges to take the fall." O'Rourke said.

"No, we should check with Garcia first. Now we know how she's manipulating people he might want to change strategy." Garner said and O'Rourke nodded.

"Stay here." he told Maya as he and Garner went into the next room again.

## 11.

Upon hearing Garcia's name Alexander turned around in her chair to look at Kano who had returned to main mission when he finished his fruitless check on Keynes' quarters.

"Captain I need a communication trace, quickly." she said.

"Where?" Kano responded, calling up the access menu for Alpha's communication system on his console.

"Commercial unit in promenade four. Number one eight, lower level. It's occupied by Red Mars and they're calling Garcia now." Alexander said and Kano hurried to gain access to the unit's communication and data transfer system.

"Did I just hear the name 'Garcia'?" Koenig said from his office, able to hear what was being said in main mission with the wall between them being open.

"Yes colonel. It looks like Red Mars are behind this." Alexander answered.

"Why is it every time I think we've crippled their operation they manage to turn up again?" Koenig said, descending the steps from his office.

"So far we only have two people with an antiquated pistol." Kano commented then when he was able to isolate the signals going into and out of the disused commercial unit he looked up from his console and added, "They aren't using a regular communication system." he said, "This looks like a pair of computers running an encrypted data stream."

"So we can't listen in?" Koenig asked and Kano sighed.

"That depends colonel" he said, "We've got one of the most advanced supercomputers every made by mankind so cracking the encryption should be straight forwards enough but getting it done in time to be able to listen in live is another matter."

"Get the computer on it." Koenig told him, "Now what about tracing Garcia?"

"Ah now that should be easier. Even with the encryption they can't hide the addressing in the data packets." Kano replied.

"I expect that they'll be bouncing the data around." Koenig said and Kano nodded.

"Same here which is why I'm going to fake their user ID and use it to send out a signal flare packet. It'll reply to me with the location of the forwarding node. Then I'll send another flare packet to that and so on until we get to the final node."

"Won't they notice that?" Alexander asked.

"They will probably. It depends on their computer security. It'll show up as an attempted intrusion and even the most basic of firewalls will lock it down. We'll have to move fast." Kano answered.

"I think we all know that Garcia is probably somewhere at Moonbase Beta." Koenig said, "Lieutenant Alexander we won't be able to get an Eagle there in time to do anything so we'd better alert Captain Hai." Captain Hai commanded the limited GDF garrison at Moonbase Beta. The level of support for Red Mars among elements of Beta's population and even among its civilian administration staff hampered the effectiveness of Hai's force in acting against the Martian terrorist group but they were the only military force in position to be able to take advantage of sudden intelligence that required an immediate response.

"If Koenig's not dead then nothing has changed." Garcia said when O'Rourke and Garner told him of the most recent events at Moonbase Alpha.

"Then you want us to send her out to have someone take another shot at Koenig?" Garner asked.

"What, are my instructions not clear? Yes, that's exactly what I want." Garcia snapped back at her, "I don't care how many attempts it takes I want Koenig dead."

"And if the Earthers figure out that it's Maya controlling their people? What then?" Garner asked.

"Then they'll just end up tossing one of their own in a cell at Theta instead of more of our own people." Garcia said.

"So you don't want us to extract her?" O'Rourke asked, "She could come in pretty useful."

"Right now her use is limited to her role in killing Koenig. Do that and then I'll talk about what we do with her next, assuming that the Earthers don't kill her or send her off to prison instead." Garcia said before there was a pinging sound over the communication channel.

"What was that?" Garner said.

"You idiots!" Garcia exclaimed, "The GDF have tracked this call." and then the channel went silent as Garcia disconnected his terminal.

"The Earthers know we're here. We better move fast." Garner said and she and O'Rourke both rushed out of the small room with the communication terminal and back to where Maya sat motionless.

"What about her?" O'Rourke asked.

"We take her too. Garcia gave us an order and I'm not about to risk the consequences of disobeying it."

Garner responded and O'Rourke gripped the control device he still had in his pocket. "Get up," he told Maya, "Come with us." and Maya obediently got to her feet to follow them.

"The link was just broken." Kano said when the streams of data being exchanged between Garcia and his subordinates came to a sudden end.

"Colonel I think they're onto Captain Kano's tap." Alexander added as she continued to listen to what was being picked up by Maya's comlock.

"Kano, did you at least manage to determine where Garcia is hiding?" Koenig asked.

"I traced the signal as far as an apartment at Beta." Kano answered, nodding.

"Hai did you catch that?" Koenig asked the man whose face was on the screen on his desk.

"Yes colonel. My platoon will ready in ten minutes. All we need is the address." Hai responded.

"Kano can you forward the address directly to Captain Hai?" Koenig said, looking down from his office into main mission.

"Sending it now colonel." Kano replied.

"Thank you. Captain Hai the details are on their way to you now, you are to proceed with extreme urgency. That information is about as time critical as it gets. We'll deal with the agents here. Alpha main mission out." Koenig said before he turned off the communicator and got up, "Captain Kano you have command." he said as he hurried down the steps from his office.

"Where are you going colonel?" Kano asked.

"To security section to join Verdeschi and Washington with that response team. Red Mars took a shot at me and I want to be there when they're taken down. Lieutenant Alexander inform security of the targets' movements. If we can figure out what their destination is then maybe we can cut them off."

Under normal circumstances moving with a hostage meant having to avoid open areas where there were witnesses and the process could be painfully slow, particularly if the captive was actively struggling. However, although Maya could not have been any more of a prisoner if she had been wrapped in chains O'Rourke and Garner were able to move about freely with her and kept up a fairly rapid pace while Maya was compelled to move along with them and unable to call out for help to any of the people they rushed past on the promenade.

"Cops." Garner said when she saw a pair of sheriff's deputies walking the other way.

"Think they're here for us?" O'Rourke said.

"No, they're just walking a beat." Garner replied.

"Still best to go around. We should head up." O'Rourke said and the pair changed the direction of their travel slightly, not enough to draw attention to themselves by completely reversing direction but enough to take them to a nearby escalator that would take them to the promenade's upper level where they could by pass the two patrolling officers.

"Just where exactly are we heading anyway?" O'Rourke said.

"For now let's just put some distance between us and the safe house." Garner replied.

"We should get away from Alpha entirely." O'Rourke suggested.

"That's going to have to wait. When the Earther's find out we've gone they'll be watching the travel tubes."

Garner pointed out and O'Rourke smiled,

"Aren't you forgetting her?" he said, looking behind them at where Maya stood silently on the escalator.

"Do you really think she'll get us past security at a public tube station?" Garner asked as they reached the upper level and stepped off the escalator.

"Who said anything about a tube car? With her to warp people's minds she'll be able to get us aboard an Eagle. Then we can go anywhere on the moon that we want to." O'Rourke said.

"And since when could you fly an Eagle?" Garner said.

"Aren't you listening to me? We get her to do it all. She can tell the crew where to take us. Koenig will never order it shot down with her and the crew aboard. Then once we get there you can put a bullet in the crew which leaves us in possession of the Eagle and everything it contains. The arms locker for example. Come on think of it, we can get away from Alpha and hand over Maya and a fully stocked Eagle to Garcia. He won't ignore that." O'Rourke said.

"We're a five minute walk from landing pad six. There's a stand by Eagle there, preprepared and ready to launch." Garner said as a smile spread across her face as well at the thought of the reward they could expect for delivering a GDF Eagle to Red Mars.

"Then let's go." O'Rourke said and they headed for the nearest exit from the promenade and as soon as they were away from the crowd of civilian shoppers he halted and turned to Maya, gripping the control device in his pocket, "Maya when we get to the landing pad you are to tell any guards present that there is an emergency they need to respond to then once we are aboard have the crew follow our orders for where they are to fly us to. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand. But-" Maya began.

"I don't care. Just do as you're told." O'Rourke interrupted before he continued to walk down the corridor.

"Captain I think I've got something." Alexander said as she continued to listen to the feed from Maya's comlock using a headset.

"You think?" Kano responded.

"They on a shopping promenade and the comlock is probably in Maya's pocket so it's distorted and there's a lot of background noise." Alexander said, "If I'm right though our suspects are planning on getting away from Alpha. They haven't said where to though."

"Probably back to Beta with the rest of their Red Mars cohorts." Kano said, "You'd better let the colonel know. That they'll be making for a travel tube."

"I don't think they are captain. Going for a travel tube I mean. I'm pretty sure I just heard the word 'Eagle' from one of them." Alexander said.

"An Eagle? Normally I'd consider that far fetched but with Maya with them they might just be able to pull it off." Kano replied, "That promenade isn't far from pad six and there's a standby Eagle there."

"Shall I have the Eagle pulled down to the hangar?" Alexander asked.

"We better run it by Colonel Koenig first." Kano answered, activating the intercom on his console, "Main mission to Colonel Koenig." he said into the intercom.

"Koenig. Go ahead captain." Koenig replied, his face appearing on Kano's console.

"Colonel it looks like the Red Mars pair are planning to use Maya to hijack an Eagle. They aren't far from the standby craft we've got on pad six. Do you want us to take any specific action? Take the Eagle back down into the hangar for example?" Kano said.

"No don't do anything obvious. If they see the Eagle is gone from the pad they might realise that we're monitoring them in real time. Just disable the Eagle remotely so they can't take off. We're heading for the pad now and if we don't manage to beat them there then at least we'll have them cornered." Koenig ordered.

"Yes colonel." Kano replied before rushing from his duty station to the one that was normally occupied by Carter but for the time being stood empty. In addition to allowing Carter to monitor the status of any craft assigned to Moonbase Alpha there was also a set of controls that resembled the flight control column of an Eagle that had a large monitor above them. Using these it was possible to pilot an Eagle by remote, with instructions entered using them relayed wirelessly to the Eagle. Usually this was used to allow Eagles to be operated without a crew but it could also be used to return a craft to the moon if its occupants were somehow incapacitated. Part of this remote piloting system included an override signal that would prevent someone aboard the Eagle feeding its computer instructions that contradicting those it was receiving from Moonbase Alpha and it was this that Kano was interested in. Connecting to the computer aboard the standby Eagle, Kano engaged the override and effectively took control of it from main mission. If he wanted to then he could have easily launched the Eagle there and then but instead he just left the controls as they were, knowing that when the Red Mars terrorists boarded it they would not be able to use it to escape.

"Okay the Eagle is shut down. They've got nowhere to go once they're aboard." he said, turning to face Alexander.

"Good because from this tracking data I'd say that they're only a couple of minutes away from it." she replied.

"Colonel Koenig." Kano said into the intercom.

"Koenig here, we're about half way to the launch pad. What's the status of Red Mars? Koenig responded.

"Closer than you it seems. Alexander says that they're only a couple of minutes away." Kano told him.

"What about the Eagle itself?" Koenig asked.

"The controls are locked out. The best anyone aboard will be able to do without ripping out the override is start the engines and listen to the sound." Kano answered.

"Good. In that case as soon as they're aboard the Eagle I want that launch pad locking down entirely. Seal the air lock until we get there. But don't do anything to slow them down in the meantime." Koenig ordered.

"Yes colonel, we'll be standing by. I'll let you know as soon as they're aboard the Eagle." Kano said.

## 12.

Most travel between bases on the moon was carried out using the subsurface travel tubes and their magnetically propelled cars but for some people their business was urgent enough that they would instead fly between bases and with this in mind the area immediately inside the boarding tube that led to the Eagle on launch pad six was largely dedicated to seating so that passengers could wait for their flight. None of these were occupied when the two Red Mars terrorists arrived with the captive Maya, leaving the two security guards standing by the entrance to the boarding tube as the only other people in the room. "Now we're going to walk up to them calmly and then you're going to get rid of them." O'Rourke whispered to Maya, his hand on the hidden control device.

The trio then walked towards the two guards, prompting the men to turn towards them and rest their hands on their sidearms. Given the value of the Eagle these were magnetic accelerator pistols instead of stun guns. "This is a restricted area." one of the guards announced, "You are not allowed beyond this point." "People need your help." Maya told him, focusing her mind on that of him and the other guard, "You can hear the alarm."

For a moment the guards both hesitated as they tried to reconcile the difference between the psychic order that Maya was giving to them and the information their own senses were providing. In the end though it was Maya's order that won out.

"Come on let's move." the first guard said, drawing his weapon and then both men broke into a run. The guards charged past Maya and the two Red Mars terrorists leaving the boarding tube unguarded and when they were gone Garner drew her pistol and stepped into the passageway linking the waiting area with the Eagle.

Garner halted when she reached the far end of the boarding tube, where it met the air lock module of the Eagle. The internal doors were open and she could hear the voices of the two men coming from the passenger module located in the mid section of the craft, talking while they waited in the modules relative comfort compared to cockpit to hear if they were going to be called into action. Remaining silent so that she would not alert the Eagle's crew she beckoned for O'Rourke and Maya to approach, then pointing towards the passenger module.

"Maya," O'Rourke said softly, "go into the passenger module and tell the crew to prepare to take off. They are to follow our instructions."

Maya entered the Eagle's air lock and turned to go inside the passenger module. As soon as she stepped through the open hatchway she saw the Eagle's two crew sat down close by and they both looked up when they saw her. Maya did not wear a GDF uniform but the crewmen could tell instantly from her distinctive eyes who she was and neither thought to challenge her presence because of this, assuming that she had been sent by someone from main mission.

"You're Maya aren't you?" one of the pilots said, "What are you doing here?"

Maya took a deep breath, preparing herself to compel the pilots to obey her orders and therefore, those of O'Rourke and Garner as well. However, before she could speak she suddenly collapsed, the strain of attempting to control their minds so soon after manipulating the sentries outside the Eagle into leaving proving too much for her to bear.

"She's fainted." one of the pilots exclaimed as both men leapt to her feet to try and catch Maya before she could hurt herself.

"I'll call medical section." the other added, reaching for his comlock but before he could take the device from his belt Garner suddenly appeared in the hatchway. Having heard the first pilot say that Maya had collapsed she knew that her and O'Rourke's original plan to use the Psychon to help them take the Eagle had failed so opted for a more direct approach instead.

"Nobody move!" she snapped, pointing her pistol at the two surprised pilots and both men froze.

"What the hell happened?" O'Rourke added as he rushed into the Eagle's passenger module as well.

"She collapsed. We're still taking the Eagle though so get that air lock sealed." Garner replied.

O'Rourke darted back to the airlock and closed the outer door, isolating the craft from Moonbase Alpha while Garner took the comlocks from its two crew to make sure that they could not use them to call for help.

"Okay flyboys, into the cockpit." she told them and leaving Maya unconscious on the floor she marched the pilots to the front of the Eagle at gunpoint, "You sit down. You stay here with me." she said, grabbing hold of one of the pilots and pressing her gun into his back while the other man sat in the pilot's seat.

"You won't get away with this." the man being used as a hostage said while his comrade sat in the pilot's seat.

"Don't bet on it." O'Rourke said from behind Garner, "We've got everything planned."

"So where do you expect me to fly you to?" the pilot asked.



"Just into the air for now. Don't bother asking for clearance." Garner said and the pilot shrugged. "Fair enough." he responded as he began the launch sequence.

"That's it. The Eagle's powering up." Kano said as he monitored the status of the Eagle from Carter's console.

"The airlock is sealed on our side and I've cancelled the comlocks of everyone aboard so the terrorists can't use them to get into the arms locker." Alexander added.

"Good idea. No point giving them access to more weapons." Kano replied and then he activated the intercom, "Colonel Koenig are you there?" he said.

"Koenig here. We're almost at the launch pad." Koenig responded.

"Colonel the two Red Mars terrorists have boarded the Eagle and taken the crew hostage. Maya collapsed when she tried to take control of them so they must be being held at gunpoint. Right now it looks like they're trying to power up for take off. Alexander has cancelled the comlocks of the crew and Maya as well so the pistol they brought with them is the only weapon they have."

"Understood. Have another Eagle prepared just in case the lockouts fail. If they do manage to take off I want to be able to follow them to wherever they go on the moon. Oh and make sure it's armed." Koenig instructed Kano.

"You're willing to shoot them down?" Kano asked.

"Only as a last resort. Koenig out." Koenig answered and then the viewing window that had had his face on it vanished from the console in front of Kano.

"Did you get that Alexander?" Kano said, looking across main mission at her.

"Yes captain. Combat Eagle Two designated and moving to launch pad one now." she replied.

"And have another transport ready to take the place of the standby Eagle on launch pad six. Colonel Koenig will want to go after them himself if it comes down to it and that's the quickest place to get him to an Eagle." Kano told her.

Despite doing his best to draw them out longer than usual the Eagle pilot had completed his preflight checks and the craft appeared ready for take off.

"All systems online." he said.

"About time too." Garner hissed, "Now get us off the ground."

"Disengaging boarding tube." the pilot said and he reached out for the control button that would retract Alpha's boarding tube from where it connected to the Eagle's air lock. However, when he pressed this the monitors in front of him all turned red and showed the same flashing message.

REMOTE COMMAND OVERRIDE ENGAGED. SYSTEM ACCESS DENIED.

"What the hell is that?" Garner exclaimed and the man she still had a gun pressed to grinned and looked at her.

"It means miss, that your of so well thought plan has failed. Alpha's taken control of this Eagle from main mission which means that it's not going anywhere. There are probably troops on the way now so you may as well-" he said to Garner but at that moment she snarled and lashed out, using the butt of her gun to hit him and he staggered back into the wall behind him before a second blow knocked him unconscious.

"Go and grab a weapon." she told O'Rourke and he frowned.

"Where from?" he asked.

"The arms locker you idiot." Garner replied.

"It'll be locked. That's why they call it a locker." O'Rourke said sarcastically.

"Cut it out. Just grab one of those comlocks we took and use it to unlock the weapons. We'll need more than just my pistol when those Earther soldiers get here." Garner told him.

O'Rourke hurried back into the passenger module and scooped up one of the comlocks. However, when he pointed the device at the arms locker and attempted to open it there was just a harsh buzzing sound.

Dropping the comlock he rushed to retrieve the second device but the result was the same when he attempted to use it to open the arms locker.

"It won't open." he called out, "The Earthers must have cancelled the clearance on these things."

"How the hell did they find us so quickly?" Garner said.

The team put together by Washington spread out in the waiting area just inside the air lock and boarding tube, all covering the entrance to the boarding tube with their rifles as they deployed. Koenig and Verdeschi took cover behind this line of soldiers. They too wore body armour for protection but they carried only pistols instead of rifles. To avoid rupturing the hull of either Alpha or the Eagle though all of these had been set for a reduced muzzle velocity.

"Koenig to main mission, we're at the launch pad now. What's going on inside that Eagle?" Koenig said into his comlock.

"They've figured out that they're grounded and have tried to get into the arms locker without success colonel." Alexander responded.

"What about Maya and the Eagle crew?" Koenig asked.

"We've not heard anything more about her so she's probably still out. One of the crew may have been rendered unconscious as well." Alexander answered.

"Can we get inside the Eagle?" Washington added when he overheard this exchange, using the headset built into his helmet to speak directly with main mission.

"They've closed the air lock but they haven't done anything to disable the mechanism that I can see." Kano said, "I can open it up at any time."

Washington then looked at Koenig.

"That's good enough for me colonel. I'll take my men in whenever you give the order." he said.

"The medical kit." O'Rourke said suddenly, calling out from the passenger module to Garner in the cockpit.

"What about it?" she replied, confused.

"It's bound to have a stimulant in it, right? So maybe we can wake Maya up and use her to get us out of here. If the Earthers know we're in here then it's only a matter of time before they break down that airlock door to come and get us. We'll use her to get them to shoot one another. She might collapse again but who cares? She might still give us the edge." O'Rourke explained.

"Do it." Garner said.

"Colonel I think the terrorists are going to try and wake Maya up." Alexander warned Koenig.

"We need to go now." Verdeschi said and Koenig nodded.

"Master sergeant, move in." he ordered.

Washington waved his men forwards and the armoured soldiers moved towards the door leading to the boarding tube. This slid open automatically as Koenig used his comlock to operate it and in two columns Washington and his men moved down the boarding tube with their weapons held ready.

"Approaching Eagle outer airlock door. Requesting override release." he told Kano.

Many of the drugs inside the Eagle's medical kit needed specific knowledge that O'Rourke did not possess to administer safely. However, there were also several pre-packed dispensers of certain medications that were intended for anyone to be able to administer. Each of these was labelled with their contents and purpose along with a set of generic instructions. O'Rourke read through the ingredients, not caring about the functions or safety warnings of any of them until he found one that contained a drug he knew to be a stimulant. Taking the cover from the end of this he pressed it against Maya's neck and pushed the activator button, ending the needle into Maya and injecting her with the contents of the dispenser.

Maya's eyes suddenly opened wide and she gasped as she regained consciousness. Looking at O'Rourke she saw him taking the control device from his pocket to give her another order. However, the shock to her system of the stimulant had released her from his control and before he could even think about the order he wanted to give her she lunged at him.

O'Rourke was taken by surprise by this sudden attack, expecting Maya to still be compliant and she knocked the control device from his hand to prevent him from using it. O'Rourke responded by punching Maya in her face and she screamed as she fell backwards with her hands now raised to try and protect herself. Hearing this Garner turned around.

"What the hell is going on back there?" she called out right before the Eagle's air lock door opened and the first EDF soldier stepped through the hatchway.

Garner fired her pistol and the soldier leapt back as a bullet hit his armour but then Washington appeared and fired his rifle, putting a rapid burst of projectiles into her. O'Rourke froze for a moment when he saw this before diving towards the control device in one last attempt to try and get hold of it. Before he could reach the device Maya dived on top of him again and grabbed his outstretched hand in hers.

"GDF!" Washington yelled as he and several of his men stormed into the passenger module, "Everyone onto their knees and place your hands behind your head."

Maya let go O'Rourke and got to her knees facing the soldiers now pointing their weapons toward her and O'Rourke. She could sense that Washington and his men now regarded her with suspicion and were ready to open fire with lethal force if they suspected any attempt to control them. On the other hand O'Rourke just glared at the soldiers for a moment before he lunged for the control device again and Maya flinched as there was volley of fire from the soldiers that riddled O'Rourke with projectiles and he landed in a heap on top of the control device.

"Clear." Washington announced, lowering his weapon and he smiled at Maya, "So I take it that you're back to normal then?" he added.

"What do you intend to do with me now Colonel Koenig?" Maya asked after sitting down in his office.

"Do with you?" Koenig asked.

"I compelled Francis Baker and Alyson Keynes to try and kill you. Surely I will be punished." Maya responded.

"Maya you weren't responsible for your actions. You did what you did because of Red Mars."

"Did Alyson Keynes not also act under pressure from Red Mars when she helped them?"

"Pressure, yes. But she still had a choice. As I understand it you didn't. I've already spoken to both Spacewoman Baker and Alyson Keynes and neither of them blame you either. You were in the same situation as them and neither of them will face any punishment. I asked you here so that I could assure you that all of the devices we have are to be destroyed. I don't see any reason to keep any of them. We don't know exactly how Red Mars came by the one they had but I'm not willing to take the chance of them getting hold of another from our stock."

Maya smiled.

"Thank you colonel." she said, "Each of those devices was made from the brain tissue of a Psychon woman like me. They were killed during the process. It has been said that a part of the person remained in each one, trapped in an eternal torment. By destroying them you will set them free at last. I only hope that you do not regret not having them available in the future."

"So do I Maya. So do I." Koenig replied.