*Chapter 67 Convergence*

*Jane sat in her room reviewing the rough deck layouts of the Void Phoenix. They thought they had identified all the crew stations and armories. The only defense bots were an older version of the Alpha Pack sentry bots. Easily overcome with their stealth power armor. As with any ship takeover you needed to control the bridge and engineering. Her subordinate had seduced the navigator and had unfettered access to the ship’s bridge for an hour. Then that marine bitch had cut her off and increased security. The navigator had bragged that there were holds full of alien artifacts on board as well. Jane wasn’t sure if he was boasting or not but it was possible since those statues had originated from the ship. If they found a cache of artifacts she would stash it with this ship as her retirement fund. It might mean she would have to cut ties with her two agents but she was ok was that.*

*She still had enough video of the bridge to be sure she and her two agents could pilot the ship if needed. The great thing about this ship was the ridiculous amount of advanced bots. She had counted 11 superior engineering bots so far and assumed there were more as she still was having difficulty getting intel on the lower decks.*

*The plan was the injured agent would secure engineering since there was minimal crew and no suspected defenses. Jane and the other agent would secure the bridge and leverage the passengers as hostages to get them to surrender the ship in totality. In the case they didn’t surrender she would vent atmosphere and then hunt down those that survived after.*

*This plan was in flux until after she met the captain at the upcoming dinner. Then she would firm up her timeline. That dinner was in 8 hours and she was anxious to meet the man behind this…interesting ship.*

*When Andrei was spent sexually on the bot they switched positions to continue his own sexual haze. When he was finally exhausted he started to think as the bot massaged his back with vitalize oil.*

*Andrei Curran was livid. Jane was on board and she was most likely after his statues and/or other artifacts the ship was holding. He knew she was ruthless in acquiring what she wanted. Maybe he should just sell her the statues and cut his loses? He sent a message to the chief steward, Dora. He asked for his statues to be brought out of the cargo hold and stored in his room. He knew Jane Doe wasn’t above stealing them. It would make him feel safe too. Maybe he would just hide in his cabin the entire trip. He wished his steward bot had come with a bodyguard suite. So short sighted of him. He was enjoying the bots attentions though. Maybe he could purchase the bot? Ugh, his personal funds were too low. He would take losses if he liquidated any of his remaining assets.*

*He finally came to a decision. He would remain in his cabin for the trip after the captain’s dinner. He was still hoping to acquire more alien artifacts.*

*Aston had made it on board and his assassin bot had passed inspections. He hadn’t been worried about it. Almost no passenger liners did programming scans on passenger bots. His quarters were acceptable other than the fact there was only bed. Braddock would had to sleep out on the small reclining chair. Braddock was currently utilizing the ship’s VR system. It was listed as ‘Exceptional’ on the brochure and the specs did look impressive but he didn’t have time to play. Braddock had already used their free trial period and was spending 1sol credit an hour now. Fortunately he had gotten an influx of funds.*

*His small ship and crew had been bolstered by 15 marines he picked up on planet. All of them were dishonorably discharged after the war for ‘malicious’ behavior against the Union. Just the kind of people Aston needed. On such short notice he had only been able to arm them with second hand armor and weapons from the recent war but that should be enough. His job now was to make sure the Void Phoenix dropped out of sub space in the correct region of space. He had the beacon in his luggage to activate. It shouldn’t take them more than 40 minutes to reach them after it activated. It was a good plan as long as he kept up his side of things. Braddock’s job was to do enough damage to make sure the ship couldn’t escape.*

*Aston was salivating. He couldn’t wait to confront the engineer from a position of strength. He had already selected a few lines from the pirate vid he would use on him.*

*Samantha was numb. She had been transported to one of the poles on the planet…which one she couldn’t tell. The glacial ice made it apparent though. This was going to be the final chapter of her story, locked away in a den to be raped repeatedly. She was a little shocked to find the shuttle dock inside an ice covered mountain. Was this some sinister den of thieves? No.*

*After waiting inside the shuttle and looking out her tiny window she saw men in space naval uniforms and a parade of equipment on the outside of the ship…this was some type of military base. Rows of gunships, atmospheric fighters, and even a few small corvettes. This must be a planetary fast response hub. The Union knew the Sapphirians had them. Extremely expensive to maintain since they operated in relative secrecy.*

*She was dragged off the shuttle and toward the far end of the massive chamber in the mountain. She was being moved toward an assortment of five story buildings. The naval uniforms thinned out and no one gave her mind or the two civilian garbed men forcibly escorting her. She processed that this facility had civilian contractors. So she was going to be ‘legally’ enslaved as a prostitute.*

*It was just three days later that Samantha was servicing a captain when he forgot his access cards. Security had been extremely lax in the entire facility. I mean was endless fields of ice outside there was nowhere to go. She was even allowed to wander around outside her work times. She fingered the heavy chip access card and thought about sliding it into her PerCom. It was coded for one of the corvettes. She knew this because her client had bragged about being a corvette captain.*

*She slid it into her PerCom…what did she have to lose. Security settings should have prevented her from accessing the chip but shockingly the captain hadn’t initialized them! Her heart beat faster and faster. The corvettes should have FTL capability? They had crews around 20 but she knew enough to get it into the air…dying in a fiery crash would be better than spending her life here. Just the hope spurred her on. She needed to act fast. That captain would be going home to sleep off his buzz. When he woke and found the card missing…*

*Samantha left and headed to the far side of the cavern. The rows of ships were immaculate and swarmed over by technicians. The pilots got all their training in sims and these craft had probably only flown once…their journey here. She got to the row of four corvettes. She tapped her PerCom and pinged her ship. It was the second one in the row. This was too easy? Where were the marines?*

*The laxness reminded her of the Union navy. The people manning this facility were probably the cast offs of the Sapphirians. Someone finally stopped her. She recognized the technician as he had seen one of the other girls frequently. She gave him a completely bullshit story that the captain wanted to have sex in his captain’s chair and told her to meet him on the bridge. The technician gave a look of disgust and said her wasn’t going to clean up after him. It couldn’t be this easy?*

*There was no one on the corvette. Two maintenance bots cleaned the corridors. She made her way to the bridge and it was empty and smelled metallic and of disinfectant. The seats at the stations were worn with use. She guessed this ship had been retired from active service and was just being maintained as part of the defense force for the planet. She sat at the captains chair and cycled through the stations on the terminal. The ship had a full ordinance loadout?*

*She paged through it. Sixty six heavy missiles for capital ship combat, two hundred and fifty six for fighter and gunship combat. Six heavy lasers and twelve defensive lasers. She wouldn’t be able to control the weapons as all her focus would be on flying. What the fuck! Lets do this!*

*She locked down the ship and spun up the power core and generators in fast start emergency mode. Not something you wanted to do as the engineers would be on your ass afterwards. Just a few seconds later they were asking what was going on. She opened the comm and made some lewd noises like she was getting fucked on the bridge. This wasn’t going to work she told herself but surprisingly no one commed back and no one blew up her ship.*

*Maybe they thought the captain was trying to impress his prostitute girlfriend? The indicators hit green and fired the engines and grav plating. The calls suddenly came fast and furious over the comms. Threats and expletives. She turned off the comms. It was do or die for her.*

*She throttled the ship out of the hanger and almost tapped to release a salvo of missiles but stopped herself. No she knew there were dozens of innocent civilians inside. Her exit wasn’t perfect. She clipped the doors after passing through the weather force shield and crushed two grav vehicles, doing some more damage to her hull. The whiteness outside was freedom though. She angled up on an escape trajectory. She brought up her plot of ships in orbit. She did her best to angle away from the fleet ships. She was certain the navy over the planet had much more competent officers.*

*It was seven minutes later when pursuit started to finally come. Not from the fleet but from the hanger she had just left. This made no sense? She turned her comms on and listened in. The hangers commodore was telling the fleet they were running a training exercise? Two gunships were rising from the planet…was this all she needed to contend with?*

*Her plot started to fill with civilian space traffic…that was a lot of ships. She estimated nearly 5 hours to escape the planet gravity to enter subspace. Even then it would be a sketchy thing giving her a 50/50 chance of survival. She commed the two gunships when they started getting close. She made threats against the civilian craft. She had enough missiles to do quite a bit of damage. The base commodore had reverted to begging her to return. Promising her freedom, money, whatever she wanted if she just brought the corvette back.*

*After 3 hours of comms pleading the real navy finally responded. Six flights of fast attack fighters launched from a carrier and cruiser in orbit. Their intercept would be right at the time she had planned to enter subspace. The two gunships pulled off and returned to the planet. So she had a chance?*

*The waiting was nerve racking getting to her escape point. She even had to initiate the subspace drives early as a wing of fighters was faster than she anticipated. Her hand hovered over the activation button until the fighters fired their first salvo of missiles. Even then she waited until the missiles were halfway to her ship before engaging.*

*Immediately yellow and red engineering warnings flared on her screen. But she was in subspace vectored on a path out of the Sapphire Empire! She began scrolling through the indicators and her mood soured. She was lucky to be alive and not a smear in subspace. She really wished she had a good engineer on board right now.*