Date: August 31st, 264th Season cycle.

Time: 1000 hours

Engine temp: 110

All pressure gauges seem to be in check.

So far this day is looking pretty good. I mean, after last week’s incident with the compression valve almost leaving us stranded in the middle of the badlands anything looks pretty good.

Not much else to do in the engine room might as well see how the rookies are doing.

“Hey Jodi”

Sal waved to me as I entered the training grounds. Sal’s a great guy, a little on the dumb side but has a good heart. Trains all the rookies we pick up for the long convoys.

“Sup Sal, how’s the rookies?”

“They a’right.”

“Not best of the litter, most of them probably will end up on post duty for a while.”

I took a good look and could see that Sal was pretty accurate about them. Most look like they hadn’t seen the brighter side of a dawnbell.

“Well after last week I’ll need whoever I can take. The big hull is next week and We’re taking the Grand Courier on its final trip.”

“Really? Damn, that thing has been around longer than I have.”

The Grand Courier is a real living legend. It was one of the first Mega-Convoys that the city built. They have enough supplies and armory to last an entire year’s trip for 50 people. Mainly used to reach our sister city on the west and fend off any ravagers.

“Yeah, it’s been 100 years tomorrow. Even with all the upgrades she’s gotten the main engine just needs to be retired.”

“Then why not just put in a new one?”

“I wish it was that easy. The Mega-Convoys work on ancient-tech that allows it to circulate mana easily.”

“I mean they were able to fix shouldn’t making a new one not be that hard.”

“Trust me Sal, they’ been trying for years, none of the ones they’ve made are nearly as efficient I mean look at how many times I’ve brought back a 20-man convoy with barely any juice left.”

“Yeah that’s true-“

A rookie walks over to us. Short red headed boy, looked not much older than 13.

“Sal sir, we’ve been doing this drill for over 20 minutes now. We were wondering if we could get a break.”

“Heh, twenty minutes? That’s nothing; you’d be dead in a real battle if you could only last 20 minutes.”

The boy was dripping in sweat, look like he was about to pass out. They were green, but even a veteran needs to break. I turned to Sal as we met eyes. He could tell from the expression my face that he needed to give them a break.

“You know what, each of you does one more round and you get a 20 minute break.”

The little red was ecstatic even though he was barely walking back into formation.

“You’re pretty hard on this kids Sal.”

“I know, but this is the only way they’ll learn. If any of them make on the Grand Courier they won’t be of much use to you if they can’t carry their own weight.”

“That’s True but I know that they still get proper training on her so they’d be in good hands for the first part. Plus it’s not like we’ve pretty much paved out the path to Levora a hundred times.”

“Yeah,true.”

We both had a good chuckle but as I was about to mention why a stopped by but got a call to come to the main office.

“Well, I had another motive to see you than to just say hi but I’ll just tell you tonight. Duty calls.”

“Later Jodi.”

As I walk into the office, familiar faces greet me when Sasha walked up to me.

“Glad to see ya Jodi” she said with a smile that always lit up the room. “We got some news for you.”

“News?”

“Yeah… You sound confused.”

“Well, usually when I see you, its something along the lines of ‘ Hey Jodi! I’ve got fantastic news!’ You just saying news has me concerned.”

“That’s because I wouldn’t call this the best news, but certainly not the worst.”

I could tell more words were piercing through the smile of hers as she was quick to respond. “Anyways, lead me to the Councilman, I figured he would want to talk to be before we leave tonight.”

We headed into the Councilman Chen’s office. He led the entire convoy detail. Nothing left Nahone with him knowing.

“It’s good to see you again Jodi.”

“Councilman.”

“Please Jodi, we’ve known each other long enough. Call me Abe.”

I gave him a jaunt smirk. He tried to get me to drop formalities every time we meet. I have some rules that I keep no matter what. And being open with him is not one of them.

“I see you’re taking the GC on her final tour.”

“That’s correct sir.”

“Fantastic. As you know, we carry some of our most important cargo on our convoy to Levora.” He began to pace the room as he continued to talk. “This time we have something even more precious than normal.”

“And that is sir.”

“It’s classified.”

I scoff, why even bring it up if you didn’t plan on telling me?

“But I need you to be aware that it exists because some of the boys at intelligence found that neighboring cities and war-caravans have heard that its going to be on this voyage.”

“Pardon me sir, but why not just have it sent at a later time on a different convoy. Have it go from some of our sister villages that have reliable outposts?”

“We thought about that Jodi and its great idea. Problem is that they’ve been spotted scouting out those villages in case we did.”

“Even so sir, this thing must not be that big if you even thought about tackling the problem in that way.”

“Oh Jodi, I wish it was that easy. The problem is this piece of cargo I need you to take isn’t something small, in fact it’s quite massive, and once you see that container it’s in you’ll quickly understand why.”

I stare at him. He knew what he was doing. I never had a say in this plan of his and basically was in the palm of his hand.

“Well sir, when are they planning to put the ‘precious cargo’ onto the GC?”

“Right now.”

He pulled out a small rectangular screen the size of the notepad. On it, I could see what easily look like a 3 story tall steel crate. Carved on its side was “ AMAW”.

“AMAW? What does that stand for sir?” Sasha asked, breaking her silence since we walked in.

“That is also classified. Trust me girls, in due time everyone will know about this precious cargo and with it, the Sister Cities will become legendary landmarks in this new world.”

Chen always seemed to be a bit smug when it came to making a name for Nahone. I didn’t let that bother me like it normally did because I could tell that whatever they were putting on the grand courier had to be dangerous.

“A’right Councilman Chen, is there anything else I need to be informed about?”

“That is all Captain Wallash. You are dismissed.”

He turned back around to look at his blackboard filled hundreds of pinned papers and photos. Sasha escorted me out of his office.

“So what do you think it is?” She asked.

“Not sure, but for it to be that big and Chen tell us nothing about it. It had to be dangerous.”

She looked at me with that smile again. This time it was waning a bit.

“Don’t worry Sasha, They’re entrusting me to get it to Levora. That means they know I’ll get it there and everyone on the GC in one piece.”

We continued to walk having some small talk as I made it back to the transportation hub for the city outskirts.

“Be safe Jodi, I don’t want to have to her about how the GC was taken down by some raiders.” Sasha’s face was complete devoid of that smile she once had.

“Like I said Sasha, they entrusted me. You should have more faith in me.” As the train pulled up to the hub, I gave her a kiss on the cheek. “For good luck.”

Her smile grew back onto her face.

“Just be safe Jodi.”

“You know I will.” I stepped onto the train; it was scarce of people at this time of day. We smiled at each as we both knew this would be the last time we see each other for quite some time.