**Pyrostasis Resurrection**

**Part XXIII.V - Smart Nuclei / Femto Cell / IPv8**

I was waiting in the Hexagonal tube for Lt. Mike Gruntess, after recuperating from my 12:00 o'clock tri-dot shots. I was playing with the empty lighter he had left one day after a joint briefing. Cpl. Zhang had arranged for this meeting, I could always rely on my Delta unit comrades to liaison this kind of stuff. This was basically a deprecated sniper position for in-house observation from the upper deck towards the bigger inner deck underneath. Most people walking down that corridor won't be able to observe this sniping position or its occupants, if there were any.

I was wearing my exo-suit of quadruple C60 Kevlar vest, with the tri-braid canals exposed on my back. Mike wore the pilots' regalia of two layers of C60 exo-suit with plenty of intubators prep holes. Their helmet alone receives 4 tubes, metallic ribbed tubes like the same one that we attach to the B-56 quadruple eye drillers, that serves as an extension point of our optic nerves. Mike had a weird 4.986 cm Mohawk haircut due to his supposed Iroquois descent, or something like that. My hair was braided before he showed up, but I let the un-braiding begin as he showed up. I had hoped that loosening my braids will make him more talkative. If he's into long, dark, wavy hair, that is.

“I heard you were looking for me, Ophelia.” Mike had appeared from somewhere behind a dark corner. How do they do this kind of stuff, Delta squad oriental voodoo?

“You forgot this lighter in one of our joint sessions, I thought you would want it back.”

“Thanks, I was looking for this baby for quite some time, it was a gift from Commander Terron Jaxx, he nearly bit my head off the other day for losing it, it was a birthday present.” He had pocketed the newly restored treasure.

“I should have known you for a smoker, the drop-ship always smelt foggy and not due to the red silica of this planet, and the amount of smart dust here is very little in comparison to that of smart cells.”

“Well aren't you as knowledgeable as you ever could? How about you give me a chance to show off for a change: ask me anything and I'll give you an Ophel-esque answer.” He had a very scanning stare for a while, optics nerves descending down to my female characteristics for about 152 mili-seconds or so.

“Maybe pilots see it differently, but I heard it is impolite to stare, especially the way you just did, but do explain to me if you will, how does the Uber den Geist knows each smart cell?”

“This is due to smart Nuclei of course, cells that sync through NFC and are interconnected via upper levels of communication on the 5 GHz bands, those communicate with lower 2.4 GHz bands, which are then uses ISM bands of 800-900 MHz inside the local Femto cells if there is no Wi-Fi connectivity to be found. And all this is done via IPv8, which is the NAT that IPv6 lacks.” Pretty accurate answer, I'm not sure I could explain it better myself.

“It appears you too could've been teacher's pet if piloting required actual brains, and not only control of flight sticks.” I bit my lower lip, a gesture that I had hope he finds sexy, though there was not much intelligence in doing that right now, except for flirtation sake. I think he took the bait.

“Nowadays, it is not really a flight stick anymore, every motor nerve is being directly fed from the brain to the flight computer, and there are numerous decisions which are pre-planned according to the flight path scanners of topography. Everything is duo-hexangulated from source to the target destination in as much as 50 nano seconds before scanners needs to re-adapt in case there is debris, or for other reasons when topography changes while in transit.” It appeared as if Mike chose to dismiss my teasing.

“You do however have this coolness when you submerge into the pressure sphere in your cockpit, is it hard to breath liquidated oxygen?” I think the answer for that was quite obvious but I wanted to hear it from Mike.

“The trachea warms up the oxygen back into its gaseous form, but take into consideration that I just inhaled a -183 Celsius degrees liquid and you might see why it is not very fun at first, but you get used to it after some time, with the necessary plasmids that enables us this kind of cold temperature endurance.” Cryo-plasmids, I knew they were cheating somehow.

“Sounds like a lot of stamina is simply wasted there, isn't it so?” For a moment I did care.

“No, the rationale here is that we can make it to the 45G force required of us to outmaneuver the Kerraahh vessels.” He had gestured a curved flight of vessels with his hands, both hands.

“Do you actually calls the dragoons by that name?” He did piqued my curiosity.

“That is the name of their planet, it seems fit that we should call them that.”

“For us, they are nothing more than humanoid dragons, using our kind of military strategies and weapons against us, but I'll tell you something, Mike, they don't scare me as half as our own forces. The Psyion priests, I hear their mental strength is enough to wipe out all humans and generiens combined. That's some scary shit, isn't it so?” He appeared to concur with me according to his nods.

“A few days ago I overheard that your Dante Romano had a run-in with Vega squadron from Kennel 256, I heard it ended quietly though, but watch your back from Lt. Nikita Raskolnikov, I'm not sure what's her story, but I would keep my distance from her if I were you.” Mike said.

“Thanks, I'll be on the lookout for her from now on. One other thing I wanted to ask you, Mike, if you don't mind, that is. There are rumours of a darker version of me that people can see from time to time. Have you heard of anything of that sort?”

“Nope.” The answer came quick but his gaze said he might have heard something as he was averting his eyes from a direct stare at me. Cpl. Gabriel Nox just so happened to walk by 5 minutes too soon, in the same hexagonal corridor where me and Mike were perched, on the upper deck of the promenade overlooking the lower deck.

“Ophel, can you help me out with something, I'm distributing ammo crates to the OPs if you don't mind to tag along, I'd really appreciate it.” She held two freshly printed wooden ammo crates.

“Well if you must go, then sure, I'll see you another time, Ophelia. Thanks for the lighter, you're a real life saver.” He seemed a bit relieved, in a way. I was also afraid he might get the wrong idea.

“See you, Mike. Gabby hold your hounds, I'm coming.” I wanted to linger on for a moment, but I wasn't sure if she'll circle back carrying 11,520 rounds of 7.62 mm which weigh considerably.

“Was the getaway really necessary, you seemed to be doing swell by yourself? Golf squad is doing fine on its own, but you 1st tiers are so dependable on us 2nd tier. Don't you have friends on Alpha or Charlie for these errands? Delta through Golf are busy doing 2nd tier AR training at the moment.”

“Let me count, there's me and you, Kacey, Nicole, Gong-Li, Vanessa, and I almost forgot Penelope. So if there are only seven girls on this outpost, Gabby, and nineteen males, this means that you need my help about two and a half times, especially considering the fact that your legs aperture is mostly above 90 degrees, leading to us being your escape partners every Monday and Friday night.”

“At least I have an aperture, you frigid -”

“If you say the B word, I'm gonna smack you so hard, they'll need to use nano-scale viewfinder to find DNA residues of you.” Cpl. Nox began to sweat and not from the crates she was carrying.

“Sorry, Cor... um, Ophelia, you're back to your usual self again, I was wondering where your old attitude comes from, but now, it is perfectly clear, that you're under a lot of stress lately...” I took one of the crates off her. She sighed aloud but I think she didn't mean to. It was likely a sigh of internal relief.

“Kacey doesn't count.” She said finally, after a few minutes passed.

“Why?”

“She's gay, and even you, probably picked on that, even if you are a bit socially retarded.”

“She's still my friend, gay or not, not to mention the fact she's more beautiful than both of us combined.”

“She's not my type...” a most disturbing look from her as if she's into me, but then she burst into one of her cynical laughter, with a very condescending vibe added to it as if she had not enough venomous approach to this whole ordeal in the first place.

“If you ever speak her name again in that context, they'll have to scrape you from that airlock, and believe me, I've been to that airlock many times, with dragoons crawling all over.”

“I suggest you cool off, Ophelia, before I will lose my temper and who knows what will I tell Mike, about this all practice of this arranged meeting and its nature.”

“Fine, let's agree for a relative truce, you don't tell Mike or Gong-Li, or whomever else from the 2nd tier that knew about this ordeal, and I won't crack your skull wide open in a vacant airlock as long as you don't mess up with Kacey Collins, due or not due to the fact that she's gay.” She made that peacock stare of hers, as if she's some sort of Austrian aristocracy. The rest of our journey to the OPs and back to the barracks was an elongated silence game with no clear winner. We could have transformed to elephants or some other carrier beast, and though we had sufficient bio-mass for the transition, the corridors were too narrow for that, and besides the OPs were only 700 metres away from us, so it seemed unnecessary to begin with.