Chapter 11

“I hope you enjoyed that little warm up, because now we get to the fun stuff.” Savvi grinned as he spoke. If Ryan could speak without being heard, he’d have boasted about being right. The Green recruits had all finished reassembling their weapons. After inspecting them all, Savvi, Zordo and Chrysanthemum led the recruits to the training rooms on the fifth floor. They all stood side by side against one wall of the room. The two generals along with Chrysanthemum stood facing them in the center. Behind the instructors were eight separate boxes of similar size.

“So you’ve all got the basics down on weaponry from the war. Good.” Savvi continued. “But anyone who can read information can put together a weapon. These are things we have to relearn. The Discretes never forgot them. They’ve archived the technology of the past for centuries. Not only that, but it only takes them one glance to know everything about a weapon: its range, its trigger speed, its refuel time. If you’re not an expert in everything there is to know about technology, you will already be at a disadvantage.”

The students remained anxious yet quiet as Savvi continued.

“There are different ways to deal with this. With plenty of time and study, you could also become an expert. But Green is short on time. Another way is that while Discretes are experts on what humanity has done, they’re not so flawless at knowing what we are capable of. So rather than examine what you know, I want to see what you can do with what you know. Behind us are various boxes full of standard pieces for weaponry and technology. Your task for the next three hours is to build a weapon.”

Savvi was about to continue, but before he could say another word, Zordo interrupted him.

“You may begin.”

Realizing what that meant, Savvi stepped to the side, along with Zordo and Chrysanthemum as the team of teenagers came across to choose their boxes. Before any of the others could decide, Tsudo and Carol had already reached the box directly across from them. They carried it back to a corner while Napp slowly made his way toward them.

“Napp, why are we carrying this, you’re the strongest?” Carol hissed.

“I’m also the slowest.” He said, still walking. “You really want me slowing you guys down?”

“Focus team.” Tsudo said, placing the box on the floor. She opened the box and began to examine the pieces. “Nozzle, body and scope are all too long for this to be anything other than a sniper model.”

“Hey look!” Carol reached in the box. “A Display!”

“Does it work?”

Carol flicked a switch to activate it.

“Ow!”

“What happened?”

“The stupid thing shocked me.”

Napp let out a heavy laugh that flowed on every half beat.

“That’s not funny!” Carol complained.

“Here, let me see.” Tsudo said. The Display was indeed working, but that was no longer the main concern. Tsudo flicked the switch turning the device on and off. After a third try, she grabbed the edge of the box, and then tried it several more times.

“It shocked me every single time. That’s not static residue. The sync energy is leaking somewhere.”

“Not a big deal, we don’t really need a Display to make a sniper.” Napp grabbed the malfunctioning device and tossed it back in the box.

“No we don’t.” Tsudo said. She left the edges of her mouth turn up. “But I just thought of how we could use it anyway.”

Three boys found themselves to be the second to get their box. It was the center box of the ones lined up. Rather than bring it anywhere, however, the three simply opened it right there.

The blond was the first to act. He pushed his glasses back to his face as he stared at the strange devices inside. “Zayle.” He said to his bald friend. “What do you think?”

“Well, judging by the shape and fragility of the piece, I can without a doubt conclude that it is a box. Ralph?”

Ralph ran his fingers through his brown hair. He had much more than Thomas, but it wasn’t nearly as kept. The top stuck up almost like flames.

“I must agree. It is certainly a box.”

Thomas grabbed his teammates by the neck and began sobbing. “You guys are the smartest teammates a fellow could ask for.” Suddenly shifting his tone, he let them fall.

“Seriously, I’m drawing a blank.”

“Technology is not my best subject.” Ralph sighed.

“You have a best subject?” Zayle smiled.

“Nope.”

“I got it!” Thomas shouted.

“What, Ralph’s best subject?”

“Nope! I know what we’re gonna build!” The Green stood up tall with one leg higher than the other and his hands on his hips, grinning in the distance.

After a few seconds of seeing this, the other two began to ponder.

“Okay, so you want to tell us?” Zayle asked.

“Of course, you sillies.” Thomas got back down to kneeling. “I figure, a lot of these things can connect together, right?”

“Yeah.” Both his teammates said simultaneously.

“And Savvi just said to make a weapon. He never said it had to be a gun.”

“Oh I get it!” Ralph smiled.

“I don’t, but I’ll grab stuff and pretend like I do anyways!” Zayle replied.

“Come on. Right here.” Gia ordered.

“Have I mentioned how much I loath physical activity?” Cynthia murmered. She placed the box on the floor.

“You were carrying the box for less than a minute. You can life over 50 pounds easy, but you struggle with a box?”

“It’s all in the mindset.” Samatha said, staring into space. “Cyndy doesn’t want to do any physical work and so she believes them to be difficult, even when her body could go further.

“And why am I carrying this, you’re the one who wanted to move this box, Gia.”

“I’d rather suffer through a little manual labor than be near Thomas’s group.”

“Understandable, but you’re not the one suffering.”

“Hush now and let’s get started.”

Cynthia rolled her eyes. She opened the flaps to the box, expecting to see several of numerous components. What she didn’t expect to see, however, was the first thing all three girls saw first.

“An elec-shield?” Gia questioned. She reached down and grabbed the two. “Hardly seems sufficient. Does it function?”

“We’ll see.” Cynthia began reaching back in. She pulled out the disk that was slightly bigger than her hand. Grabbing the strap on the back of it, she pushed the button located in between the strap and the disk. A white light surrounded the disk, as though expanding the size. A glowing blue disk, several times larger than the one Cynthia held, hovered out of the trinket of metal.

The three girls stared at the shield, as though waiting for it to do something spectacular, but it did what any elec-shield was known to do. Nothing.

“It seems to be functioning properly.” Gia stated. “Why would they give us an intact shield when the purpose is to construct a weapon?”

Samatha scanned the components. She then began to look around at the rest of the boxes given out.

“Perhaps it was meant to be a distraction, a diversion, or an inside test.” Cynthia suggested. “We could easily turn this in and call it a weapon.”

“No other teams have elec-shields.” Samatha spoke. As usual, her voice was low. Even with their training, most of the students had a hard time hearing Samatha without focusing on what she was saying. Most students were outside her group. Gia and Cynthia, however, were used to this volume and easily made out every word.

“Are you sure?” Cynthia asked.

Samantha nodded slowly. “I’ve scanned every box and heard their conversations. We’re the only group with one. Big O’s team has a Display, and another group has grenades, and...”

“That’ll do, Sam. They let us choose our boxes because each box had different items. But because we were all eager to start, we never considered that. Still, that doesn’t explain why the shield works perfectly fine.”

“That’s because this isn’t simply a test to build weapons.” Gia said. “Remember what General Savvi said. The way to defeat Discretes in technology is to be unpredictable with it. He wants to see how creative we can be.”

“Makes sense.” Cynthia said. “Zordo’s always trying to get us to be innovative. He and Savvi are both Seconds. Discrete D taught both of them what it takes to defeat Discretes.”

“Girls, this is our chance. We know what the general desires. Our opportunity to impress him and secure our position in the Department of Technology and Weaponry is now.” Gia pulled out her Display from her side pocket. Everyone in Green carried one but no one used theirs more than she did. After turning it on, she began pressing buttons that appeared on the screen of the small rectangular device.

“Pull up the schematics of elec-shields I just sent you. If Savvi wants creative, we’ll give him creative.”

“Okay Ryan, right here.” Henry said “Got the last corner of the room.”

Ryan placed the box on the floor, taking a breath as he did.

“Okay.” Portia said. She rubbed her hands together, excited for what was about to happen. “Let’s see what goodies we have.”

She bent down and quickly opened the box. Her eyes scanned various parts, analyzing what could possibly be made from these.

“What do we got, Port?” Henry asked.

“I’m seeing all the components for a standard handheld. In fact, we could make multiple handhelds if we wanted.”

“Anything else?” Ryan asked.

“No. We could try to make something else, but it’s much too great of a risk if we want to finish within three hours.”

“Okay, so easy. Lets just make a handheld and we pass.”

“We just finished taking apart and putting back together a handheld.” Ryan said. “I highly doubt that’s what General Savvi or Zordo want.”

“You’re always looking for some secret lesson. He said ‘make a weapon.’ Let’s not complicate it.”

Ryan ignored Henry. “Port, is there anything else we could do?”

“No.” Portia continued to scan the contents of the box. “Only a genius could make anything other than a handheld out of this. But…” She reached in and picked up some components. “While we may not be able to make anything other than a handheld, we can certainly make a handheld like no one’s ever seen.”

“Okay Port.” Ryan kneeled down. “This is your area. Tell us what to do.”

Chapter 11 End