Chapter 2

“Water with the \*mumble\* flip the switch \*mumble\* hydraulic properties. See? Nothing about repulsion.” Savvi slapped the book and placed it on the table.

“Congratulations. That doesn’t exactly prove your point.” Decson didn’t even look at Savvi while she was speaking. Truth be told, she had lost interest in the conversation before he had even began scanning the book. The signature bored look of her arm supporting her head matched how she felt exactly.

“And how does that not prove that the Discretes never thought of repulsion for the magna-boots? This is the best source material we have.”

Decson was tired of this conversation. She looked up with affirmation.

“Because, Savvi. The best source material we have does not necessarily mean it’s the best source material. All the data-screens haven’t been found. For all we know, the Discretes have one that talks about your supposed original theory, and even if none of them ever wrote it down, that does not definitively mean that they never thought of them.”

Eve put her head down on the table.

“Is this conversation even relevant to my existence?”

“Savvi.” D spoke. “Despite whether or not you thought of it first, can you do it?”

“Well, theoretically…”

“That’s a ‘no.’” Eve and Decson said simultaneously.

“You know what, fine, I just won’t speak anymore.”

“Oh thank goodess.” Eve sat up from her chair. “And look, right on time.”

At that moment, Zordo and Vatti entered the room. The site was as it usually was, but Zordo couldn’t help but analyze as he entered. A dark room with no light but the one that hung above the round table in the center. Surrounding the table were the six chairs. Closest to the door was Zordo’s seat. Going around the table was Eve, Vatti’s empty chair, Savvi, Decson and back around to Discrete D.

Upon seeing the two, Decson got out of her seat and headed towards Vatti.

“Decson, do we have to...”

“Shut up and stand still.” The Green said quickly.

Vatti kept herself still. The inspection was a waste of time, but every time she tried to fight Decson on matters like these, she always wound up losing. As the inspection continued, different parts of Vatti’s body were pushed out of the way.

“Here. And here. And here…”

“Ow!”

“Don’t move.”

“Kind of hard not to when you’r-OW!”

“Is this… glass in your hair?”

“And in my skin too.”

“Vatti, is it really so hard to act like a general and not to pick fights with Discretes?”

“I didn’t pick that fight, he...”

“Yeah, whatever. You’ve got a few bruises, but nothing serious. Get a good nights sleep, take the time to clean the glass out of your system and you’ll be fine. That goes for you too Zordo.”

Zordo sat in his chair.

“There’s no glass in my skin, Decson. I didn’t crash through a window.”

Decson went back to her seat on the left side of Discrete D.

“I was talking about the sleeping.” After a second of thinking, Decson turned to Vatti across the table. “You crashed through a window?”

Vatti sat down firmly, rolling her eyes and grinning. The attention turned to Discrete D who sat in his chair with his arms folded. If he was asleep, none could tell. Even though his head was present for all to see, his mask completely encompassed it. Vatti could remember when a skull used to exist on that mask. Everything else about him since they had first met had stayed the same. Of course, now she dressed almost exactly like he did. All Greens did. All black: black jackets, black vests, black t-shirts, black pants... Any other color would give away their location. It didn’t help if a Discrete was right in front of you, but blending with the shadows was an important aspect of their way of life. And of course, all Greens carried their straps full of weapons. The standard was a synctech Grip, a handheld pistol, with two sync-grenades. Mostly everyone carried a synctech shield as well. When activated, a small shield made of sync energy appeared out of the rod. Vatti was one of the few Greens who still used a traditional shield. In fact, she was the only Green to do so.

Discrete D unfolded his arms to lean forward and fold his hands.

“Now that everyone’s here, it’s time to get started. Report.”

Vatti knew how this went. The first part of the meeting was always the same. Everyone reported their individual sections in order of The Discrete’s favorite. Zordo, of course, would be first. It was no contest of who The Discrete liked more. Zordo was a mere copy of their supreme general in every way, from what they believed in, right down to how they looked. If Zordo wore a mask, Vatti knew she wouldn’t be able to tell the difference. There was also the matter of Zordo being the absolute best fighter in all of Green. That was also no contest. Some even think he was capable of defeating The Discrete. It didn’t matter that Vatti had killed more Discretes than him, she knew he could still defeat her.

Zordo had the most important job of the generals, he oversaw the children. General of Future Development, though according to what Vatti read about the old war, General in itself was a suitable name. Of people to lead the future fighters to, he probably wasn’t the best, but he wasn’t the worst either. Atleast Magatha was there to keep him under raps… then again, Vatti wasn’t sure that was so great either.

“The training is going well. The students are progressing at the predicted rate. Of course, there are the anomalies that progress faster and more efficiently than others, but we’ve decided not to prematurely advance any of them. Within half a year, the first generation will be finished. The students will choose their captains, and be ready for assignments.”

Next was Decson, General of the Medicine. Since Vatti had joined Green, she had found Decson the most tolerable. Even though Decson had deceived her back on the surface, Vatti knew she was just following orders. Of all the ones at the table, Decson had the biggest heart.

“The situation on medicine has not changed. While we can easily hold off on injuries for the moment, if the Discretes start attacking again, we won’t be able to last. Other than that, there have been minimum casualties. Whatever is causing the Discretes to cease fire is really in our favor. This is the third month in a row without a death. The food situation hasn’t changed either. We are overstocked. INSERT NAMES HERE have everything under control. Heh, we could outlast this if it were a matter of surviving off of food and water alone.”

Third would be Eve. Vatti didn’t know why Discrete D preferred her over Savvi, but that didn’t matter. Eve’s company wasn’t too bad but she never seemed to care about anything. That didn’t stop the witty insults that constantly flowed from her mouth. It was no wonder she was made General over Scavenging. Even though her department had the most people, they ran like clockwork. Rarely did she have to personally talk to anyone.

“The supplies here are almost limitless. We’ll be reaching our next checkpoint soon and we’ll be about one thirtieth of the way done with all of the Source, I think. Though I just made up that number so it could be inaccurate.”

Savvi is, without a doubt, the most annoying of the Seconds. He never knew when to shut up and he was always talking about tech this and tech that. Rightfully enough, Discrete D made him General of Techonlogy and Weaponry. He had the darkest skin tone and was the youngest of the seconds, clearly looking the part, but being even younger than him, Vatti had no room to judge his age. As long as he did his job, she could stomach the rest.

“Well, as I said before, we may be onto something new with the magni-boots in making them adjust the body so that it is able to leap great bounds. See, if we can figure out a way to reverse the effects on...”

“Savvi.” Zordo interrupted. Normally everyone waited until the end of the reports before speaking out of turn, but Savvi always needed someone to tell him he was saying to much.

After realizing his mistake, Savvi continued.

“The Sync panels are fine. Better than fine. We’ve got plenty of them to keep all of the Source lit for along time, as well as power all our weapons. If we could find the right materials, we might even be able to make Purge Visors of our own and power them.”

And if it meant going from the Discretes’ favorite to his least favorite, that meant Vatti was undoubtedly always last. She was General of Security. She had the one job she cared about. Anyone under her was responsible for killing Discretes. She was also the only General who wasn’t a Second.

“Still not many sightings of Discretes. As per your intel, they do patrol everyone once in a while looking for any individual they might kill. It seems they’ve really gotten so cocky that they don’t see us as a threat anymore. Though we are killing them, the rate is slow compared to the days of battle. There are still more than half from when this war first started.”

Vatti stopped talking after that. She felt she had made her point. All this waiting around for more soldiers was going way too slow.

The reports were just the first part. Most of this were things everyone already knew, some even the students knew. When Vatti complained about it being a waste of time, Zordo had convinced her it wasn’t worth making a fuss over.

“As you all know, two year ago Green officially went to war with the Discretes. During the initial six months of fighting, we lost many of our fighters. The Silence of the Discretes since has aloud us time to recuperate, as well as decrease our enemy’s numbers, but we’re still severely outmatched. In the meantime, we will continue to build our forces. The advancement of the first generation is very important. Before our next meeting three months from now, I would like each of you to personally visit the department of Future Development to analyze the teams. When we next meet, you’ll discuss which of the twelve you would like to receive in your department.”

“Wait a second.” Savvi interrupted. “I thought the whole point of having Zordo train the new recruits would be so that we’d have a miniature army ready to kill Discretes. Shouldn’t they all just be put with Vatti?”

“When the Silence ends, everyone will be called to fight the Discretes, no matter what their department is.” Zordo said. “Until then, the recruits must be allowed to develop in the field they are best suited for. You, Savvi, are one of Greens top Discrete killers and yet you lead a team of scientists. Shifting you to help Vatti would be a poor decision on D’s part.”

Savvi nodded. He understood exactly what Zordo meant.

“In the meantime…” D continued. “We must keep in mind our primary goals. Discrete A is the source of our troubles. We are all aware of what she looks like. Discrete B is their general. We’ve learned that he has brown hair, light skin and appears to be in his early adult years, somewhere around Vatti’s age. Eliminating either of these two would not only release us of one of our biggest threats, but also severely cripple the Discretes mentally. You are unlikely to get a chance at executing those goals, but should you see one, it is essential that you take it. Until then, we will continue with this strategy. Zordo, how would you rate Magatha’s performance?”

Zordo took a second to gather his thoughts.

“Her fighting skills are difficult to judge. Ever since the Silence began, she’s done more demonstrational fighting than actual combat. However, if I had to guess, I would believe she’s kept them high, knowing her personality.”

“And of her teaching skills? How do the students see her?”

“The students take to her well, perhaps more so than they do to me. Her instructions are certainly influential and highly successful. The students and other teachers treat her word as though it were coming from myself.”

“Could she uphold your responsibilities and run the department herself?”

That question made Vatti raise an eyebrow, however Zordo didn’t flinch.

“Indeed. Everyone in the department has nothing but respect for her... and perhaps fear. They will listen with full knowledge that she is the expert with the skills to back up her points.”

“Very well.” Discrete D pulled out a rectangle with a glowing center. He was about to make an announcement to all of Green. As his fingers stroked across the screen, his mouth spoke to tell those present what he was announcing to those who weren’t. “In six months time, Magatha will be promoted General. She’ll be leading the department of Future Development. ”

“Well, can’t say I saw that coming.” Savvi said

“I say it’s way past due.” Decson folded her arms, almost as though she were upset at something. “That woman can fight and think with the best of us, she should’ve been promoted ages ago.”

“I have a question.” D was just about the only person Eve spoke seriously to… most of the time. “You said that the point of their being one general per section would be to reduce disagreements, and that we’d have total command over our sections so long as it didn’t go against your commands. How will that work with both Zordo and Magatha as generals in the same location?”

“There will still be only one general there. As of now, it does not exist, but come six months there will be an Announcement on the Display System.”

Vatti just about hated the Display System. Everyone in Green carried a small, holographic screen with them known as a Display. Green communicated all throughout it, ensured by both Savvi and D that the Discretes were not listening in. Vatti supposed it was useful in some way, but to her, it was just another way for The Discrete to give her orders.

“Zordo, you will take charge of a new section. It won’t be official until the ascension of the first generation, but I’ll need you to start working on it immediately. Your new position will require you to report to the main headquarters, will you be able to travel between there and your current department?”

“It’s doable. I’ll let you know if any complications come up.”

“Furthermore, I want Magatha fully aware of her promotion. Savvi, did you bring what I asked?”

Savvi reached under the table and pulled out a coat. He tossed it to D who caught it without flinching.

“Inform her personally and have her attend the next meeting. She can access the classified announcements in her Display.”

D handed Zordo the coat with the collar radio. It was something only the generals of Green wore.

“Make sure that she fully understands the situation. While she may have the responsibilities of a general, her rank does not officially come until the ascension of the first generation of recruits. Until then, she is to take orders from you as she previously has.”

“Understood.”

“Wait a minute. Wait a minute!” Vatti knew better than to raise her voice, but that didn’t stop her from letting her anger out.

“Here we go.” Savvi groaned.

“Really?” Eve added. “Does it have to be every single meeting?”

Vatti heard the words of her comrades, but she didn’t care.

“How can you do this!? You know the Clone and Magatha want to be together! They love each other! Why are you separating them!?”

D faced Vatti. If he was angry, his gesture and tone showed no signs of it. “Zordo is the only person qualified for this task. Magatha is his best replacement in teaching the next generation. If you know someone who could replace either of them, I will take your recommendations into consideration.”

“It’s not about consideration or what’s best! You’re separating them! You know full well they don’t want to be separated and yet you’re doing it anyway! Try to stop being so heartless for once and think about how other people feel!”

“Vatti.” Zordo voice vame.

Vatti suddenly felt his hand on her shoulder. In her anger, she failed to notice he had worked her way over to her.

“Outside.” The Green said.

A year ago, Vatti would’ve argued with ZordoA year ago, she hadn’t had the respect for her companion that she does now. That was a year ago. She knew if she argued, he’d find some way to manipulate her into going, if not for anything else, to atleast hear what he had to say.

The two made their way into the ally. Zordo closed the door behind him but before he could start speaking, Vatti made her thoughts known.

“No. No. No. You cannot defend him this time. He’s not even taking your feelings into consideration!”

“Vatti, before you say anything else, start from the beginning. Why are you upset?”

“I’m upset because the Discrete thinks he owns us.”

“You know what I mean, Vatti. What made you upset about this situation?”

“He’s not even trying, Clone. You and Magatha love each other and he’s not even pretending to take that into consideration.”

“Vatti, why are you upset?”

“I’m upset because... because it’s not fair to you and Magatha. You have to be separated because of his orders.”

“Then of all people, shouldn’t I be the one whose upset about this? It’s me he’s separating from someone.”

“You’re not going to get upset, Clone. No matter what he does, you NEVER get upset at it.”

“Then why should you? You’re angry because he ordered something that will upset me. But I’m not upset. Therefore, there’s no point in you getting upset.”

“I bet Magatha won’t react so calmly once she hears the news.”

“Magatha will handle her own emotions. You must deal with yours.”

“You just... you don’t get it. He’s going to keep doing these things. All he cares about are his goals. He doesn’t care how he does them or who gets hurt.”

“Maybe you’re right. But I’ve told you before, you’ll never get anywhere going off on him like that. You’re a general of Green. If you want to discuss issues, this is the time to do it, but we do so properly. Hey, look at me.”

Zordo put his hand on her chin and lifted her head until her eyes met his.

“You’re better than this.”

Vatti yanked her chin from his grasp. He didn’t get it. None of them did and they probably never would. The Discrete had raised them and they weren’t going to go against that. Still, the Clone was right about one thing. She no longer saw the point in getting mad for him. If Zordo wasn’t going to stick up for himself, then she wasn’t going to waste her energy either.

Zordo walked back inside the building knowing Vatti would follow close behind her. He knew he hadn’t convinced her of much, but his goal had been accomplished. Vatti was calm enough now that there wouldn’t be anymore unnecessary arguing.

“You’re just being stubborn that’s all!”

“You know, I could resort to name calling too, but it wouldn’t prove my point… still, it is fun so let me think of something...”

Perhaps the arguing was still an issue.

“Eve, I keep telling you it’s not a matter of want, I need more medical supplies!”

“And I keep telling you, Decson, I don’t care. I’m not sending my people to the opposite side of the Source unless ordered. Are you ordering me to do that, D?”

“No.” The Discrete did not look at her when he spoke. He simply continued to work on his Display.

“Well there you have it.”

“You’re acting like it’ll set you back years. I don’t even need half your people. Just send enough to clear one building.”

“Clearly something is keeping you from receiving my answer so I will try to explain it again. We need to get as many buildings closest to the Line cleared of supplies before the fighting restarts AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. It isn’t my fault the Discretes of the past decided to build their major medical facility on the other side of the source. Even moving at full speed, it would take weeks if not months to get just one building done. If you want the supplies so badly, send your own people.”

“You know full well I can’t do that. The Medical Department doesn’t have nearly enough people as you do, not to mention, mine are scattered all across the Source helping out the other Departments. I can’t just ask them to stop doing their jobs.”

“Well, you seem to have no problem asking my people to stop doing theirs.”

“If I can’t get enough supplies before the attacking restarts, your people most likely won’t be able to do those jobs.”

“Well, that’s a risk we’re willing to take.”

“Ugh! Zordo, help me out here.”

Zordo raised an eyebrow. Suddenly, he had been brought into a conversation he had wanted to stay out of.

“I can’t take your side Decson, but I’m not against it either. You both have good enough arguments.”

Decson’s arms folded as she sat back to pout. “What good are you, anyway?”

“Speaking of asking for help.” Savvi said, glad the last conversation was over. “Zordo, you think you can come down to the Tech Department and check out a few things?”

“Savvi, weren’t you paying attention?” Vatti groaned. “D just said Zordo’s going to be juggling two tasks. He can’t take time out just for you.”

“I know, but we’ve gotten stuck on some really promising projects. Zordo’s the best person in Green when it comes to technology…”

“Yeah, he’s also the best sniper, fighter, tactical...”

“Not to mention the best scavenger.” Eve added.

“And the best doctor.” Decson groaned, hating to admit that. “The point is, we all could use help from the great Zordo, but he’s got his own responsibilities.”

“Okay.” Discrete D said. He folded his pad and placed it somewhere on himself. “Is there anyone else with any more business?”

The room went silent.

“Then this meeting is closed.”

Vatti stood up but almost fell over. In the midst of the excitement and anger, she had forgotten how much her body had been through.

“Come on.” Decson said. “I’ll get you to one of your guards.”

“I don’t need...”

“Please, the last thing we need is you falling off a building because you were in too much pain to activate your boots.”

Vatti knew arguing was pointless. She let Decson help her out the door. Once she was sure no one could hear them, she spoke softly to Decson.

“I thought for sure you’d be the one to throw a fit with Magatha. It seems that you want her to come.”

“There’s no point in being jealous.” Decson said. “Zordo made his decision.”

“Well.” Savvi said. “I think I’m gonna go ahead and head your department now, Zordo. We’re closer to it than my department and I don’t wanna travel all the way there and all the way back. See you guys later.” He left the room with Eve following who departed without saying anything.

“So.” Zordo said. “This new department... what’s it called?”

“I told you, it’s new.”

“In your world, nothing is new. If didn’t you plan for it, you atleast knew it was a possibility. You probably had this entire conversation planned two months ago.”

Discrete D lifted his head slightly.

“The Department of Intelligence Gathering.”

Zordo grinned slightly.

“Well, that explains a lot. Seems like we’re finally taking the offensive.”

“Only slightly. We’re still not anywhere near ready go full out on the Discretes, but we can atleast keep tabs on them.”

“I thought we were already keeping tabs on them.”

“Not in the terms I want. How do you feel about your new position? Vatti’s right. I am taking you away from Magatha regardless of how you feel about each other.”

“Vatti’s right about a lot of things, but she’s wrong about a lot of them too. And you… you keep trying to explain yourself to her. If you act like her complaints are valid, she’s going keep questioning you.”

“I keep enough secrets. I won’t tell just anybody anything, but my generals should be able to understand what is happening. There’s a time when questions need not be asked, but these meetings are for those questions.”

“Doesn’t mean you have to be so nice about it. Whenever I talked to you like that, you let it be known which one of us was the better fighter.”

“You weren’t a general. You were some kid who thought he knew everything.”

“Being one does not mean you’re not the other.”

“You never answered my question. How do you feel about your new assignment?”

“Do you really have to ask?”

“No, I would just like to know.”

Zordo grew quiet for a moment pondering his thoughts together.

“I don’t like discussing my emotions, so I won’t go into me and Magatha. But I can say I’m pleased to see plans for the war moving forward. I feel whatever you have in store for me, will help us get closer to defeating the Discretes. And I don’t think there’s anyone more qualified to replace me than Magatha. All in all, I approve of the actions.”

“Always trying to avoid being EC.”

“Can’t really blame me, my teacher practically engraved it in me.”

Zordo and Discrete D stood up simultaneously. Once they left the building, they would have to head in separate directions, but Discrete D had one more thing to ask.

“How is he?”

“There are many he’s in the world, D.”

“Indeed. But there’s only one who I’d ask you about.”

Chapter 2 End