Chapter 9

“Next time, Henry, don’t panic!”

“Geeze, Port, do you have to be so loud? Look at Ryan here, calm and quiet.”

“I only get loud when you refuse to insist you did something wrong. Just own up to your mistakes.”

“But it wasn’t a mistake, Port. I keep telling you that if you were in my position, you would’ve used the aces too. Right, Ryan?”

“Uh, no. I would’ve waited to see what happened.”

“What good are you if I can’t use your sync-ball knowledge to outsmart Port. Today’s second day, so she’s going to be getting all the answers anyway. ‘Technology this. Technology that.’ Man, I hate technology.”

“We can tell.” Ryan grinned. “Your Display has once again mysteriously vanished.”

“It’s in the same place as your good looks.”

“And in the same place as your brai...”

Before Portia could finish her sentence, her eyes caught the figure standing at the front of the room they were entering.

“Ryan!” she whispered. “Do you know who that is?”

Ryan looked up. Of course he knew who that was, everyone did. But what was he doing here? The Education Department was for teachers and future soldiers. Rarely did it get a visitor like General…

“Savvi!” Henry screamed. He ran to greet the man standing at the front with their usual technology teacher. Savvi turned from his conversation with Chrysanthemum and smiled upon seeing his young friend.

“Henry!” Good to see you. How is everything?”

“Oh you know.” Henry pulled his pants and flattened his lips. “Just showing these Greens how someone who’s actually been to the surface runs things.”

“You say that like being a Green is an insult. Last I checked, your band was green too.”

Ryan hoped to join in their conversation, but before he could move forward, he felt his arm being held onto tightly.

“Ryan! Do you know who that is?!” Portia whispered yet again.

“Yes Port, it’s...”

“Shh! Don’t say his name, he might hear you!”

Walking as though she were hoping no one could see her, Portia hurried her desk using Ryan as a shield from eyes.

“I can’t believe it!” Portia whispered to herself. “I can’t believe the head of Technology and Weaponry is actually here!” She turned to Ryan. “Do you know how many of our gadgets and tech he’s responsible for?”

“Uh… all of them?”

“ALL OF THEM! She whispered intensely. “He knew more than anyone else about tech when he was our age!”

“You mean, other than the Discretes.”

Portia ignored Ryan and continued mumbling. “Oh no no no no no. Ryan, no body said he’d be coming here today. I’m not ready. I haven’t read up on any of his notes on armor or power grids. What if I…”

“Relax?” Ryan raised an eyebrow. “Yeah, I think that’s a good idea too. Why don’t you just go up and talk to him. He’s in charge of the department you want to be in, maybe it’ll help.”

“Easy for you to say! I don’t remember you asking General Vatti for an invitation to Security.”

“I didn’t say ask him for an invitation, I said go up and talk to him. This might be your only chance before we get assigned.”

Portia took several breaths faster than she normally did. “You’re right, Ryan.” She stood up slowly from her chair and began to make her way to the front of the room.

“I just... need to relax... conquer my worries… He’s just another Green... another Green who reinvented sync weapons... and establish the energy we use to power our buildings... and is the ranking expert in…”

“Hey, that reminds me. Let me introduce you to someone.” Henry said.

What!?! No! What was Henry doing?

“She’s over here. She’s love technology.”

No no no no no! Portia closed her eyes. She wasn’t ready for this. She wasn’t ready to meet him. She was supposed to use the time it took to walk to the front to prepare!

“She’s the best techie in the class.”

Henry stop it! He was building her up! No way would she be able to live up to that expectation.

“Here she is, Gia.”

…Gia?

Portia opened her eyes to see that Henry and the guest weren’t standing in front of her. She turned around, distraught at the site of the two standing in front of another desk. It belonged to a brunette, pale skinned girl. Her hair was wild and her glasses were much bigger than Portia’s. Next to her sat her partners, who were much more kept: Cynthia who looked almost like a miniature version of Captain Magatha, and Samantha whose short hair was only an inch long because she wanted to make sure she stood out.

“Well hey there, Gia. It’s nice to meet you.”

No. No! No! No! No! Not them of all people.

“Sir.” The pale skinned brunette flustered. “I’m honored to be meeting you. You’re the inspiration to my whole existence.”

“I try.” Savvi said, obviously joking.

“Ah hem!” Cynthia grunted, pleading to her teammate with her eyes.

“Oh, right. These are my teammates. Cynd…”

“Cynthia.” The blonde smiled

Gia raised an eyebrow. “Cynthia. And the one sitting next to her is… Samantha.”

The short haired girl waved her fingers at the man, but she couldn’t get herself to make eye contact for more than a second.

“Their entire group is based on technology.” Henry grinned. “Nobody can compete with them in that department.”

“Well, my department would certainly appreciate a team of dedicated techs. Give it your best today, and maybe I’ll snatch you guys up before your ascension.”

Portia couldn’t believe what she was hearing. The best techs in the class? Snatch them up before ascension? That was supposed to be her being tempted.

A voice in the background caused Savvi to turn his head.

“Sounds like Zordo’s coming. Better get ready.”

Savvi made his way back to the front of the room. As he passed by Portia, she hoped some magical moment would happen to make him notice her. It didn’t. The footsteps he made got further and further behind her. She couldn’t think of any way to rectify the situation. She could only hold her head down and return to her seat.

“Man, if the black-bands could see Savvi now.” Henry gleamed, sitting in his seat. “Back home, he pretended to be a scared wimp so he wouldn’t have to leave our base. No one would believe he was a General for Green.”

“Well, technically, he wasn’t a general until he got back.” Ryan corrected. “Green didn’t have generals before Discrete D became the Official and changed everything.”

“Bah, you know nothing in Green mattered before I showed up.”

“Typical Henry. Always thinking about himself.” Portia said in a low tone.

Ryan and Henry looked at each other. This wasn’t good. Portia was clearly upset about something, and when Portia wasn’t happy, the team wasn’t happy.

“Uh Portia...” Ryan began. But before he could ask, Zordo spoke, gathering the attention of the class.

“Attention.” He said simply. Everyone in the room immediately silenced and faced the front. “Greetings. Today is the Second day of the week. As per usual, you will be given instructions based on the technological side of war. Along side Miss Chrysanthemum, General Savvi will be instructing you as well. I will be assisting. This is an opportunity to learn from an experienced general, so those of you seeking an entrance to the Department of Technology and Weaponry I suggest you take this opportunity to pay attention. And now...”

Zordo stepped aside, allowing Savvi to take the center next to Chrys.

“Uh... right, well... I am general Savvi, head of the Technology and Weaponry department. To those of you who don’t know what that is, you’ve been hanging out with Zordo here way too long and you really need to get out more.”

A small laugh ran through the audience.

“Over the past year and a half, you’ve been taught the basics of technology in order to help you survive in the war. What you know about technology is more than what all the people on the surface know. Up there you would be rulers. But you’re not up there. You’re down here. And I assure you I can program circles around anyone in this room.”

“That’s an interesting challenge.” Chrysanthemum interrupted.

“Indeed.” Zordo said. “Perhaps we should test that theory.”

Again, laughter hinted through the audience.

“I was talking to the future soldiers, thank you.” Savvi shifted his stance, and stood up straight.

“Now, as I was saying, even though you guys are considered geniuses, the Discretes won’t think anything of you. The most advanced thing you know, was common sense to them when they were younger than you are.”

Savvi reached behind the desk that was in the corner of the room behind Zordo. Chrs and I…”

“Miss Chrysanthemum.” Chrys corrected.

“Chrys and I were talking and we figured out that the best way to understand if you’re completely knowledgable about technology… “ He began grunting, as he came out with a big pile of papers. “Was to… give you… an intense exam.”

Groans could be heard in the class. Henry hit his head on his desk.

“I... hate... technology.”

“Attention!” Zordo demanded. Once again, the pupils immediately quieted and faced forward.

“Wow, Zordo, you really have them trained.” Savvi snickered. “From that reaction, I take it you all don’t approve of this test idea. Well, neither did I.”

Savvi slid the papers off the desk, scattering them on the floor.

“Tests are boring, stressful and they’re not going to prove what I want to see. No, what we’re going to do, is going to be much more fun.”

Chapter 9 End