

# GELITECH

SEASON 2 - EPISODE 6

**DESTINY**

BY SHETIRA ANWAE

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## DESTINY

The Destiny Omega soared through the night sky, heading westward over the city of Mashiva with all the subtlety and grace of an angrily thrown brick. Even at the best of times, it would have been quite a long stretch to call the brutally angular ship elegant. It was never intended to be elegant. It was intended to be purely utilitarian in nature. Exactly what that meant was a mystery to all save a very select few.

Up until now, Chyka had no clue what the Destiny Omega's particular utilitarian purpose was. To her, it had always been just a test ship for the whole starship biogel lifestyle thing. A mobile demonstration facility to help bring the wonders of biogel to the masses. Or something along those lines. But the way the discussion had been going, it was starting to seem that there was something

else going on. Something darker. Something very revealing about why the military was so involved with Vixanti.

The little snow leopardess had no idea what their destination was. All she knew is that they had to head west, away from the city and the dangers that seemed to lurk around every corner. There would be no more ambushes. No more playing bait to try and get various elements of the ‘cult’ to show themselves. But if they thought themselves powerful enough to take on Admiral Sarva on the ground, was the sky really any safer?

“Let me get this straight,” Chyka sighed as she sat at a table in the Destiny Omega’s officer’s lounge. With her were Ki’su, Dr. Alluwa, Dr. Kidan, Commander Nax, and, much to her surprise, Gorin. The briefing had begun the moment the ship had taken off. So far, however, what she’d been told didn’t seem to have much bearing on current events. “These Sovarri pilgrims set out across the galaxy to use their bodies as

vessels to collect the ‘seed of the maker’s many peoples’ for some religious purpose that no one really seems to know anything about?”

“Yes,” Nax replied with a disgruntled expression that seemed to have become permanently etched onto his face. If ever there was a sign that nothing was going according to plan, if they even had a plan, that was it.

“And that means traveling from place to place, and getting that seed from as many races as possible before moving on,” Chyka inquired. “But Director Shi decided to settle down in Mashiva for the long haul because... why?”

“According to Nanya’s exhaustive research on the subject,” Dr. Alluwa noted, “Nuva Exi Shi has been looking for a way to overthrow her people’s Queen High Priestess for quite some time. Long before she ever showed up here in the Fey’li Empire’s outer regions.”

“Nenya’s research?” Chyka questioned. “You realize that she’s...”

“Unique?” Dr. Alluwa chuckled.

“More like crazy,” Chyka harrumphed.

“Well, she did spend a few very long months working as a biogel-computer interface within Vixanti’s experimental library system before I decided that she’d make a perfect companion for General Riyalli’s librarian granddaughter,” Dr. Alluwa mused. “It seems that’s gotten her seeing the whole universe like it’s a vast collection of parameters, constants, and variables. She’s not entirely wrong. It’s just another way to see things. An approximate model which can be comprehended more readily by the average mind, though typically at the expense of being able to really see the world in any other way. I’d call it a successful experiment, and one that is turning out to be particularly useful in the current moment.”

“Why is that?” Chyka inquired, rolling her eyes sarcastically. It was easy enough for Dr. Alluwa to call it successful, but she wasn’t the one permanently stuck with the crazy lurking around in her own mind. And it was an experiment? That meant that *she* was an experiment too, didn’t it?

“Because she can directly interface purely technological systems without having to use the intermediary of a biogel core,” Dr. Alluwa replied. “With intimate knowledge of obfuscation methods, she’s been able to access vast quantities of information without the sources knowing where the inquiries are actually coming from. That is essential, since we have to presume that the Old Three core is again connected to CoreNet, and can monitor inquiries about information regarding the ‘cult’s’ historical activities.”

“Okay,” Chyka replied. “And?”

“At some point prior to her involvement with Vixanti, Shi came into contact with a bunch of

key'vin'ta fetishists who were trying to find a way to bring Xinta Temple back to life," Nax stated quite flatly. "Together, they formed what we know as the 'Key'vin'ta Society', and used it to research various means towards that goal. Means that Shi could use to overthrow her Queen. And if you want to know who one of her favorite consultants was..."

"Dr. Lae!" Chyka growled as the picture suddenly became clear in her mind. "I should have known it!"

"Bastard was obsessed with gobzite and its transdimensional properties," Nax explained. "He wanted to find a way to turn it into a powerful new way to fuel interstellar travel, at the obvious expense of sapient beings' existence within the mortal realm. Or plane. Or whatever you want to call it. But his thinking was far too hidebound for him to make any real headway."



“There was a bit o success in activatin purple slime usin conventional radiation,” Gorin added, “but without any practical means te exploit it, it all came fer naught.”

“It was Dr. Lae that connected Shi with what was then the new private-military cooperative venture known as Vixanti,” Dr. Alluwa continued. “Her extensive knowledge of interstellar cultures seemed a perfect fit for someone tasked with the development of one of their prospective new interstellar lifestyles. A lifestyle who’s fundamental substance was hoped to be some ‘tamed’ form of gobzite. She was hired to direct Vixanti Facility Three, which was supposed to be focused on the purple slime variety.”

“And we all know how that turned out,” Dr. Kidan noted, shaking his head.

“It just didn’t work,” Dr. Alluwa replied. “I could get it energized in small quantities by inserting capsules into a conventionally powered t-

d field coil, but hardly enough to have any affect on anyone actually coming into contact with the stuff. Well... except for a few mishaps when I decided to try for larger volumes using multiple capsules and coils, injecting the resulting mass into a test chamber. But nothing practical ever came of it.”

“What happened then?” Chyka asked. She’d heard more than one story about how Vixanti and biogel came to be, and they all seemed to be very different when it came to key details.

“I decided to ignore my directives and do my own thing,” Dr. Alluwa replied. “And, well, here we are, all covered in shiny blackness. Shame, really. Glowing purple slime was so much prettier!”

“Fer the best, f’ya ask me,” Gorin commented. “Gettin glistened is one thing. Ahm willin te hazard that. But risk gettin flushed to the Heavenly Hells? Not a chance!”

“Fortunately, given the troubles all the other Vixanti facilities were having with their own assigned tasks, when my subterfuge was discovered, Admiral Sarva took my side,” Dr. Alluwa explained. “Old Three was directed to work on the promising combination of natural substances that I’d discovered. The combination of these in carefully controlled proportions resulted in the synthetic living substance that we call biogel. Purely by coincidence, biogel all the properties that Shi had hoped to get out of purple slime, with almost none of the inherent hazards. So long as she could become the controlling soul within the primary core, eventually, the new mono-organism would spread to consume everything, including that Queen High Priestess she wanted to be rid of.”

“And how did that go wrong?” Chyka asked.

“Well... I... uh... I kind of had the same idea myself,” Dr. Alluwa admitted.

“Good thing, eh?” Gorin mused.

“In the end, I suppose,” Dr. Alluwa replied with a shrug. “Shi didn’t know I’d made all the four initial cores from completely isolated batches of biogel. She also didn’t know that the whole biogel system in Vixanti Three was itself isolated and completely computer controlled. And she also didn’t know that the biogel everyone was wearing came exclusively from the Omega core batch. That was the ‘alpha core’ that I’d intended to take control of. So when the shit hit the fan, and she flushed herself into Old Three, she found herself completely isolated.”

“Which must have been quite the surprise,” Dr. Kidan observed. “She’d been planning to use Lady Anwae as a personal avatar under her total control.”

“Without anything else to do, she promptly made herself a new body of biogel and made a run for it,” Dr. Alluwa continued.

“An ah helped er escape,” Gorin noted. “Cuz... reasons.”

“Which didn’t matter in the end, because once the Old Three core was deactivated, she was more or less left just as ‘mortal’ and powerless as anyone else,” Dr. Alluwa stated. “But... she had enough backing from her various key’vin’ta focused allies to find herself a convenient hiding place within Xinta Temple, where she could go back to her purple slime plotting.”

“Which we strongly suspected would be the case,” Commander Nax observed. “So we began going back through Shi’s records, and identified several lines of research that could actually prove dangerous.”

“Such as certain types of intact key’vin’ta artifacts with easy access,” Dr. Alluwa explained. “What no one could have imagined was where that line of inquiry would lead. Thankfully, it seems, the person who actually retrieved the critical artifact was more than up to the task.”

“Ka’tu’ma’tē,” Ki’su murmured. “If I had known what you would do to me...”

“Oh, I think you knew,” Dr. Alluwa responded with a smirk. “How could you not? Your captivity within the transdimensional vortex let you see visions of times both past and future.”

“Ta’na’do!” Ki’su quipped.

“Isn’t it ironic that despite your best efforts to the contrary, the very act that you were trying to prevent led you to achieve as much of your goal as was realistically possible, isn’t it?” Dr. Alluwa mused. “You have control of all known key’vin’ta resources. Control that cannot be broken now that

we know that you, well... Chyka, is the fully legitimate Empress of Ma'ri'ah."

"Wait... the way you said that..." Chyka began.

"It was quite an interesting turn of events, wasn't it?" Dr. Alluwa remarked. "But not entirely unanticipated, given the ease with which you took control of Xinta."

"But whatsit mean?" Gorin asked. "Dun tell me it means we're obligated te some purple slime goddess er somethin!"

"Certainly not," Dr. Alluwa replied. "But what it does mean is that we have control of the tools that we'll need to stop Shi. If..."

"If... what?" Chyka inquired with a raised eyebrow.

"It depends," Dr. Alluwa answered. "We need to know a bit more about what's actually

happening down under Dari. Thus far, we can fairly well presume that they're using a combination of purple slime and the natural reactor's emissions to keep the Old Three core energized. Exactly how... that's the big question, and the one that will dictate how we deal with it."

"And what are the options for dealing with it?" Dr. Kidan inquired with visible skepticism.

"There are two," Dr. Alluwa replied. "We can use Chyka's powers to de-energize the purple slime, freezing the Old Three core long enough for the engineers to fully poison the natural reactor and render it non-fissile. Or, we can forcibly inject a significant mass of the Omega core biogel into the mass and bring it under Lady Anwae's control. The former option is entirely conventional and would, perhaps, be preferable. The second... well, that's more of an extremely risky last resort option, so we shall have to see about that."



“How do we plan on determining the state of things down there?” Dr. Kidan asked.

“That’s where things get... complicated,” Dr. Alluwa responded with a deep frown. “The modern shaft is completely blocked now. We’re hoping that Dr. Lae will tell us how they got into the mine without tripping any of the alarms, but he’s being excessively recalcitrant.”

“The only way we’re going to be getting in is through the mine itself,” Nax observed. “A mine full of flooded pockets, collapses, fungus, slime, and more radiation than even biogel can shield someone from.”

“An no workin shaft equipment left te lower ye down to the levels where its all goin on, either,” Gorin said as the train began to curve back to the south. “Everythin’s been sittin so long in there that its all rotted out or rusted te pieces.”

“We are *not* going into that place,” Chyka growled. “It’s just another ambush waiting to happen, and I’m more than tired of all these ambushes!”

“I know, I know,” Dr. Alluwa replied with a shrug. “It’s getting more than annoying for all of us, but we can’t just go in and preemptively dispose of our opposition like we’re above the law. Even with good reason, it would still be a public relations nightmare if they didn’t give us a clearly justified cause. If that meant placing resources in a risky position so they felt comfortable going on the offensive, then that was what we had to do. That doesn’t mean we haven’t been very careful to protect you, and through you, your companions.”

Chyka rolled her eyes. She found it very hard to believe even one word of it. Not with what was at stake. Surely, Admiral Sarva could have just swept in and dealt with it all, and no one would have raised a voice to question it.

“Back to the mine,” Nax said. “Any ideas?”

“I’m sure we’ll think of something,” Dr. Kidan stated. “For a mine that big, there must be some back ways in, right?”

“There’s only one of note,” Dr. Alluwa responded with a glance at Chyka. “And that is the old shaft in the ancient Dari temple. It led right into the heart of the molten natural reactor before it migrated beneath modern Dari. Assuming we can find a way into the ancient staircase, that is.”

“Which is exactly how they would have gotten in, if they did,” Chyka noted. “Which means you’re sending me right into another ambush.”

“Correct,” Dr. Alluwa replied. “Which is why we’re going to start poking around there as a distraction, while we send you at it from a different angle.”

Chyka shook her head and sighed. “Different angle? As in?”

“There’s a couple o real old gold mines up the Dari River valley,” Gorin explained. “Up past the ol temple site, where the strata stick out at an angle. Big quartz veins up there.”

“Mmm,” Dr. Alluwa hummed. “And directly opposite the upper workings at Brightstone, which started its days off as a gold mine, before the discovery of the deep uranium deposits.”

“The mine maps suggest there are some interconnections,” Nax noted. “And close enough to one of Brightstone’s big internal declines that it just might be possible to get all the way down to natural reactor area without serious issues.”

“Buuuuut...” Gorin sighed. “No one’s been up te those ol mines in centuries. They could all be caved in by now.”

“So why not send someone up to check?” Chyka asked.

“We are,” Dr. Alluwa smirked.

“Why?” Chyka huffed. “Why me? I don’t know anything about mines!”

“Because if you do find a way in, you need to do something about the purple slime before anyone can react to your presence,” Dr. Alluwa replied. “If we send someone else, then they have time to close off access, and then we have to move to the much riskier plan B.”

“But I still don’t know anything about mines!” Chyka said, crossing her arms. “How am I supposed to go in there if I don’t know where to go? Or what to do?”

“You won’t be going alone,” Nax said. “Tachi Niya will be going with you. She’s a geologist with a secondary education in both physics and

mining. She's been heading up the efforts to determine just what's been going on down there, and probably knows more than anyone else at this point."

"And how do we know we can trust her?" Chyka questioned. "She was probably working with Dr. Lae, wasn't she?"

"She was the one who identified Dr. Lae as a problem," Nax replied. "And worked with us to get him back to the city to meet with you, so that we could try and catch him fudging the results of the purple slime activation experiment. Which... didn't really go to plan, but the end result was the same."

Chyka sighed. "Fine. How long do we have until we get to Dari?"

"We're going to withdraw for the night so everyone can get some rest," Dr. Alluwa said. "Once we arrive in the Dari valley, things will

likely proceed rather quickly, so we all need to be as ready as we can be. Are there any more questions?”

Everyone in the room shook their head.

“Alright,” Dr. Alluwa said. “We’ll give you a wake up call two hours before mission start. Go get some rest.”

*TO BE CONTINUED...*