I woke and was slightly confused on what I had learned. The first part of training program focused on how to present yourself to your subordinates. Using your appearance as a basis for getting respect from your crew and as a baseline for crew discipline. It made some sense but as a first lesson? I sighed and went to my terminal. I had two of the crew uniforms in my closet. I ordered three more from the ship stores to be tailored for me. This reminded me of the alien clothing fabricator. I sent off orders for some bots to move the machine and associated parts to a work space. I then set up reminders on my PerCom to shave, shower and wear clean uniforms everyday. The best thing about wearing a great skin suit is you could days without showering. I had three skinsuits currently and it was efficient to go three days between changes but now...

After I finished Eve 2.0 I needed a new project or two. I had huge number of projects to choose from. Although I had gotten the alien hull fabricator operational, I still had a ways to go to completely understand its mechanisms to patent the machine. I sent a PerCom message to Suruchi to research trans-space nation patent rights. I wasn’t sure how it worked or if nations even cared about respecting patent rights. The hull plating had huge military and civilian applications. I could sell just the intellectual knowledge of just the layered hull material…let other engineers figure out how to manufacture it on their own. I had decided not to sell this technology to the Sapphirians. They had invaded Union and were definitely an expansionist Empire. Oh, I had no love for the defunct Union either. Hopefully as I got closer to the core worlds I would find a space faring nation worthy of the technology.

I had many other projects as well. Now that I had a crew I would have much more time to work on the array of alien mysteries. I had the alien shielding, the massive advance scanners, the more efficient alien power generators, the data on gravimetric planetoid drive, the alien clothing fabricator, the alien crystalline storage, the alien fuel data, the alteration to the subspace fuel from the explosion of the planetoid, the stasis pod used for the alien seeds and an entire alien library filled with more engineering marvels. That reminded me that the ship’s botanist had asked numerous times to use my botany lab. I had put him off for long enough.

Miguel Asuni was his name. I contacted him and asked him to meet me at the entrance to the botany lab. He was drowsy but excitedly confirmed. A few minutes later and I escorted him inside. He wasn’t too impressed with the botany lab. It was nothing special but he thought it would be a great place to initiate seedlings for the luxury promenade. I made a flourish and showed him the 29 various seeds from the alien planetoid. I just told him they were very old and preliminary scans said their genetic genomes were intact. When he asked how old I said over 50 thousand years. He of course didn’t believe me until he ran his own scans.

He was now excited and asked if they all came from the same biome? I didn’t know the answer to that. I had no idea what the biome would consist of…he would have to figure that out himself. I watched him as he worked. He separated out the seeds. One variety had 109 viable seeds, the largest number by far. He was going to start his experiments with this variety. He assumed it was some type of grass. He thought I had in my collection 13 different types of trees, 9 grasses and 7 bushes. That was just based on the size and endosperm cavity. One of the seeds was more of a nut the size of my fist. Since we only had one of the large nuts that was viable Miguel was saving that one for last. Once he figured the optimal soil and atmosphere for the rest of the seeds her would try growing the large tree seed.

Miguel sterilized 9 different self-contained cells and set them up for different biomes that were standard for known environments that grew life. His first test run was six seeds in each biome. Each one had a different soil. So just in his first run was going to use 54 seeds! Half of the likely extinct plant seeds. I left him to it after watching in some fascination. He asked to be assigned a lab assistant. I told him he could pull one of his ancient bots that maintained the flora on the promenade. He nodded absent mindedly. He was setting up the scanner to examine each seed type.

New flora was constantly being discovered in the universe as new habitable worlds were found but it was every scientists dream to put his or her name on discoveries. My procrastination being done I set the botany lab security protocols to include Miguel and sent a message to Abby confirming the change. It was time to go and work on Eve.

I summoned her to the robotics lab and she joined me in short order. Everything was prepped and ready. I powered her down and removed her power core and batteries first. She was essentially dead. A strange thing for me to think about a bot. Next, I went to the wall terminal and disconnected the surveillance and locked the door. I then confirmed the room was dark. I covered the seventeen cameras…just in case I missed something. I didn’t want Julie to see what I was going to do.

Taking a deep breath, I removed all on Eve’s internals and began the deep scans and filtered her programming through analytic programs. Two hours later and my heart was thumping. She had, in fact, self-upgraded well beyond my expectations. What should I do? Her programming was so far beyond the legal limits. Normal breakers stopped bots from being able to think more than twice as fast as a human. Eve was able to process nearly 120 times as fast as a human! If she found better hardware she could even evolve even beyond that.

I knew about the multitude of bot wars throughout human history. They all started with one bot… I couldn’t make a decision. I really did think of Eve as my child. She had never done anything to harm me and she was a devout sister to Celeste, even Shinade said so. What would happen if I was killed? Would Eve seek revenge for me against the entire human race? Hours passed. My PerCom and all communications were locked to the robotics lab.

Finally, I came to a decision. Maybe not the right decision but one I could live with. I would do Eve’s upgrades as promised but I would add a kill switch. I had removed her sleeper switch onboard the *Children’s Destiny* and this was more advanced. This kill switch would activate if both myself and all my offspring perished. The coding took me a little while and I grew hungry and ordered food.

When I released the lockouts, I found I had twenty nine messages. Nothing seemed too important. I had been in the lab nearly an entire day. I responded to each one. The only tricky one was Julie. She wanted to know why I had cut off her access to the robotics lab. I gave her some bullshit about the trauma for upgrading Eve and I didn’t want to show it to her or record it. After the steward bot delivered the food I locked the room down again and ate.

I then started the process of doing all the upgrades… It was hours later and I was only half done when the ship shook like it had hit something…or something inside the ship had exploded. I ran to the wall terminal and lifted the lockdown and commed Abby. She was breathing heavy on the other end and said some passengers were trying to take over the ship! What the fuck!

*Henry couldn’t believe his amazing luck. He had completed certs for navigation. He finished 9th in his class of 12 and hadn’t hoped to get a very good position on a starship but any position that got him off Gunther Prime would be good enough. He signed on to an old ship that had seen much better days. The pay was ridiculous so the owner must have been desperate.*

*Over the next few months, the ship landed on a planetoid and raided some military cache from a long dead race. He didn’t have much to do and at first had made some headway with Gabby, the daughter on one of the engineers on board but she suddenly dropped him. That left him frustrated.*

*It wasn’t too long later that he began a relationship with the Wren woman on board. She was a patherkin and very muscular. The first time they had sex she rode him so hard he though she was going to crush him. The one thing he liked about Tora was her silky fur and her intense body heat when they fucked. Even if he was left bruised and sometimes with a few scratches the sexual venting was amazing. He thought Tora might have some issues with humans though as she always dominated him during sex. They one time she gave him oral sex her sandpaper like tongue and canines left his penis in a sorry state afterward. That was why he decided to call it quits…well he did after another dozen or so encounters.*

*When the ship finally started taking on passengers Henry was free to play the field on the luxury deck. There was always some older woman there looking for a good time. And if not he could spend a few credits on some time with a steward bot.*

*When they arrived in the Arana system for a long layover Henry managed to go station and spend all of his credits in short order. He wasn’t sure how he had spent the small fortune on just a few hotel rooms and dates with local woman but he did. He decided he would focus and save his credits in the future. One day he would have his own ship.*

*To his utter amazement when they started taking on passengers again the most gorgeous woman he had ever met took an interest in him. She was fabulously wealthy and shared a cabin with two other unbelievable attractive women on the luxury deck. She paid for everything…meals, alcohol, VR sims. He eventually showed her the bridge of the Void Phoenix. The dressing down by Abby was worth it as he scored multiple points with the woman. She promised to come to his quarters during the trip and give him a night he would never forget. She was also promising to employ him on their personal space yacht when they arrived in system.*

*The evening finally came when she asked to come to his cabin. She commed him saying she wanted him to release the locks on the access lift so she could come to his cabin. He did so immediately. He had gotten her luggage from their shuttle a few days ago. She said she had a special surprise for him stored in that luggage.*

*When the lift opened he was briefly confused…seeing nothing… then he was shot. The belt he had bought on the station that created a minor shield activated and he thanked his lucky stars that one of his dates had convinced him to buy the expensive piece of hardware. His joy was short lived as a woman materialized, raised her hand and shot him in the head.*

*Jane and her two agents were ready for their operation. It had taken quite a bit to get their combat suits delivered to their quarters from their shuttle undetected. She had been worried the crates would have been searched but one her agents had seduced the navigator Henry and he had obediently brought them to their quarters, bypassing security.*

*Everyone was wearing their combat armor stealth suits, had cloaked and moved out. One agent was headed to the bridge and the other agent was headed to engineering. Jane was to go and incapacitate the ship’s AI and then move to the bridge herself.*

*Things went well to start. The old engineer in aft engineering was taken unawares and stunned. Henry had opened the access to deck 9 thinking his new girlfriend was sneaking up to his quarters for a tryst. When the lift doors opened the boy panicked and reached for his PerCom. The agent next to her stunned him but he had on a shield belt. Which deflected the shot. Her agent should have picked that up…the belt was disguised but not unusual. Jane used her forearm plasma dart gun to put a hole in the boy’s head, ending his life. While the agent moved forward Jane went to the AI housing unit and tossed in the EMP grenade from her belt. The computer was quickly scrambled and lost power. Jane quickly connected the looping device to the mainframe. When the AI awoke she would be caught in a constant loop. The effect should not damage the AI.*

*Unfortunately, there was a backup system and yellow lights began flashing. Shit, security would be alerted earlier than hoped. She toggled all her weapons to lethal setting. She never took a chance and opened comms for her agents to do the same. She heard weapons fire from the direction of the bridge and went to join them. A door opened to her right and she shot one of the marines point blank in the chest. Since she was cloaked he never saw it coming. She checked the room…it was Suruchi’s room if her intel had been correct. The woman wasn’t there though and the man was in just his underclothes. She continued to move forward.*

*If the marines on deck 8 got their combat armor on before she secured the bridge then this could become more messy than she had hoped. Her agent from engineering said she had disabled one more crew member, the giant white tiger. But she was now sure she had secured all entrances. Unfortunately the other agent said the bridge was secured. Another door opened to her right and a red haired woman wearing combat goggles fired at her with a heavy energy pistol.*

*Jane’s combat cloak flared and a burning sensation on her hip flared. The bitch had melted her armor. Jane smoothly rolled and fired four shots into the woman who was only wearing a skin suit. When the woman hit the floor babies inside the room started screaming. Jane had no remorse. She thought briefly if all went shit maybe the children were valuable enough to use as hostages but for now she moved forward.*

*The agent at the bridge said the access codes had been changed and was swearing. Jane had the hacking computer with her and it would just be a few more seconds to get there. The agent swore, she had been foamed. Fucking capture foam? A neat trick but Jane had a universal solvent on her if the agent couldn’t reach hers.*

*She turned the corridor and swore. A ceiling recess was there as well as a destroyed spider bot. Her agent must have destroyed the spider bot and exploded its foam canister as the entire corridor was blocked with the foam. She didn’t have enough solvent for this. It was time for plan B. She turned to return to the AI room when the lift next to her opened and three marines in power armor came out firing. Her suit took some hits and she retreated while firing. Damn it! That was too fast, it had only been 20 seconds since she took out the AI. She had figured a minimum of 70 seconds. She ducked into the room with the screaming babies and tossed the body of the woman in the corridor.*

*She had hit two of the marines in the lift but didn’t think they were incapacitated. Her agent in the foam was trapped. She was down to leveraging engineering and the…she looked behind her two babies here. Not a very good operation. She cursed herself for rushing it. Normally she would have gathered intel during the entire trip and moved just before leaving sub space. It was the captain at the dinner, he seemed to be unfocused and she thought this was just a ship full of Union escapees. Well she had underestimated them but she still had all the cards.*

*She would have to wait to negotiate. Her com went dead. They must have a blackout device. The ship suddenly shook. That was her agent in engineering. If things went bad she was to rip the ship form subspace and threaten to destroy the subspace drive. She needed to wait now. She went around the room and destroyed all the cameras.*