

Destination Azahar

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CONTENT: oral MF ScFi

UNIVERSE: The Swarm Cycle

Chapter 32 - Sorting the Catch

Captain Cooper left most of the quartering assignments to Lieutenant Edward Murphy who had been promoted when he accepted a transfer to *Othello*. He had remained with Major Amanda Cooper when she left the *Asimov* and now had two officers and eight ratings to help him manage the logistical needs of the *Kilo*-class colony transport ship.

"Captain, the preliminary report from the AI scan of the arena crowd shows a disproportionate number of volunteers with naval experience among the rodeo spectators, and their CAP interview notes indicate that most of them are spoiling for a fight with the Sa'arm." Murphy slowly shook his head when he pointed out, "There's always been above average numbers of youngsters from the South that joined the Navy, but the ratio of naval officers and ratings in this crowd far exceeds the statistics."

Cooper was intrigued by the number of admirals and fleet officers at the top of Murphy's list and noted, "A very interesting observation, Mr. Murphy. Please schedule a special briefing with these individuals for tomorrow morning. I'd like to speak with these people myself."

"Aye, Captain," Murphy responded. "That brings us to another problem. We have more volunteers than we have accommodations. Several *Aurora*-class transports are due, but have not yet checked in. Do we tell Commander Porter to leave the excess at the stadium or shall I arrange something temporary for the overflow in our briefing rooms?"

"How many are we talking about?" Cooper asked somewhat rhetorically as she looked at her own display for the answer.

Murphy grimaced as he replied, "Three-hundred and twenty-one volunteers. Close to four times that counting concubines and kids." He did a quick calculation of floor space. "We may need more room than we have available in briefing rooms and mess halls, Captain. On the plus side, a lot of the volunteers are choosing concubines who have no children. We might be able to double up some of them or configure a few pods as temporary barracks."

Cooper didn't reveal anything with her expression when she told Murphy, "Get as many cots ordered from the replicators as we have space to comfortably accommodate and have Commander Porter report to me as soon as he gets the crowd sorted and settled into the mess halls. See what you can do about getting some replicator stations installed in

enough briefing rooms to handle the overflow. I may need to speak with some of the volunteers before tomorrow. Thank you, Lieutenant."

"Aye, ma'am," Murphy replied and withdrew to carry out her instructions.

The extraction had netted a lot more volunteers than even the massive *Othello* could typically accommodate. It was fortunate that three *Aurora*-class ships were due, but unfortunate that two didn't arrive until the next day. Quite a few had offered to bunk with a buddy for the trip out, but the Confederacy wanted each volunteer to have private space to bond with his or her concubines and dependents. However, some exceptions were allowed. This was especially true when close friends or families with more than one volunteer in the group were extracted at the same time.

After the typical initiation briefings that evening, Cooper interviewed several ranking volunteers in her conference room, volunteers who had retired from the US Navy. She then conferred with Murphy. "Some of the volunteers aren't a good fit for the current activity at Azahar. I think they'll be much happier managing or manning warships. See if you can identify the volunteers in this category and get them transferred to ships heading to Demeter or Haru."

"*Aeolus* has checked in empty, Ma'am." Murphy advised. "Perhaps we can move the first group of these eager beavers from temporary accommodations to *Aeolus* and tactfully ask them to head for Haru instead of Dargo. I don't think this group would make very good pioneers."

Cooper chuckled at Murphy's understatement. "Let me contact *Aeolus*. Not that you can't be tactful, but Captain Zothos is less likely to turn me down. He and I got to know each other when he and his crew rode to Azahar with us just before *Aeolus* was ready for her space trials."

Murphy got approval from Cooper within the hour. After some discussions with *Othello's* AI, he located scores of 20-year veterans who were ready for more action, and doubly ready to engage the Sa'arm. He had no trouble filling *Aeolus* before lights-out.

While searching the records of the volunteers collected from the rodeo arena, Murphy encountered several interesting, and somewhat colorful, individuals with skills that could enhance the training and research efforts at Azahar. He flagged several that he thought they should expedite out to Azahar and put them into the pool of volunteers that would not be assigned a pod on *Othello*. He knew that his ship would be stuck in an Earth orbit for several days, if not several weeks.

Othello contacted *Zephyrus* as soon as the *Aurora*-class vessel obtained clearance for Earth orbit. "*Zephyrus* this is Captain Cooper of *Othello*. Can you take some emigrants from Texas off our hands? We seem to have bit off more than we can chew."

A chuckling voice came back several seconds later. "That's what we're here for, *Othello*. Any you can send us is that many less that we'll have to extract ourselves. What have you got for us?"

Cooper double-checked the manifest display before responding. "It looks like we need homes for 129. Do you have that many unassigned habitat pods?"

There was another long wait, "Oh yeah, *Othello*, very funny. We have openings for 96."

"Give us a shout when you get within transporter range and have your transporter rooms manned and ready to receive passengers," Cooper requested. "We'll load you up long before you reach orbit."

Ensign Marvin Clark had Master Gunnery Sergeant Raymond Budzinski report forward with four marines as he headed to the forward transport room of *Zephyrus*. The ship had not yet descended to Earth orbit from the inbound jump zone, but their transporter room was about to be busy taking on immigrants to Azahar from *Othello*. Clark didn't want a full load streaming aboard fore and aft at the same time. It was too many for a single squad to safely handle all at once.

It seemed like they had been repeating their spiel for hours when the end was in sight, at least for the forward section of *Zephyrus*. As soon as this group was safely tucked in it was off to the aft transporter room to do it all over again. Sergeant Budzinski looked to be in a foul mood. Ensign Clark started laughing as the last of the 51 sponsors stepped out of the transporter stream and into the aft transporter room.

Sergeant Budzinski gave Clark a strange look as they herded the last group toward the mess hall. Clark attempted to lighten Budzinski's mood by observing, "It seems that even a *Kilo*-class can be overloaded. Captain Cooper must be very pleased with herself for netting so many volunteers." Clark looked over the manifest on his PDA. "It seems as though we're going to be doubling up some of our pods as well. There are a lot of dumbass sponsors who didn't pick anyone with kids."

"Idiot beginners," Budzinski mumbled. He had come to hate the little surprises that always managed to pop up during an extraction. He was pissed at himself that he couldn't anticipate them like he could a foe in combat. He was rarely surprised while carrying live ammunition and real weapons, but it occurred rather frequently while carrying these ridiculous stingers.

Out of the blue he asked Clark, "Do you really think we can stand a chance in hell of hitting the Sa'arm underground with foot soldiers, Lieutenant?"

Clark smiled. He figured Budzinski must really be distracted to use the old name for a butter-bar. He wasn't sure either and responded, "Maybe. If we could find out what they have underground, or at least know the layout well enough to avoid being ambushed."

"I don't know," Budzinski replied. "I've been down in their nests. Their hives are really deep and convoluted."

Clark detected the tension in Budzinski's voice and just nodded. Something was bothering the sergeant, but this was not the time to find out what it was.

Chester looked at Miguel who appeared to be focusing on his keg of beer. Both were close enough to overhear the two marines' discussion. "Do a seismic reflection survey," Chester suggested.

"What was that?" Clark asked, somewhat relieved that the tall, slender man had interrupted his conversation with Budzinski.

Chester smiled at what he considered to be greenhorns. "Connect a pattern of microphones to a recorder, set off a sequence of explosive charges, and map the results. In other words, do a seismic reflection survey. That'll tell you where most big things are underground."

Miguel looked up and asked, "How deep's the item y'all are lookin' for?"

"500 to 800 meters," Budzinski supplied, thinking that the depth would shut the dumb cowboys up. Several of the volunteers were carrying roping saddles! Budzinski had no idea what they expected to do with something so ridiculous out among the stars. Others, including the stocky dark-skinned man he was talking with, had a keg of beer on an anti-gravity sled!

Miguel looked puzzled, "Is that all? Hell, ground penetrating radar might be able to reach that far and give better detail. How big is it? What's it made of?"

Budzinski stopped and turned to face the small man, blocking the companionway and causing a ripple effect of near collisions as everyone except Clark came to a halt. Clark stopped a few steps away and turned to see what was going on when he realized that he was suddenly alone.

Clark stepped up behind Budzinski as he was grilling the two volunteers who had broken into their discussion. "What do you two know about this ground radar and reflection thing?" Budzinski demanded as his glaring eyes switched from one to the other.

Neither Chester nor Miguel knew what they had said that made this big guy so unfriendly all of a sudden, but Chester's annoyance was clear when he snapped, "It's what we do for a livin', Bozo. What's got your rope in a knot?"

Clark's laughter help to defuse the powder keg, especially when he asked, "When's the last time someone had the nerve to call you Bozo, Budzinski? Especially someone who's only inches away from your ugly face."

"He's not so ugly," Dorothy countered. "He's kind of cute for someone so big."

Everyone turned to the naked brunette with the big, rust-tipped headlights. She retreated half a step when she suddenly became the center of attention. Budzinski growled, "Marines aren't cute!"

He nodded his head as the young woman gathered her courage and stood straight, giving Budzinski a defiant stare. Budzinski remarked, "Backbone. I like that in people." Looking around he noticed that very few of the crowd averted their gaze when he focused on them. "There seems to be more than the average amount of backbone in this crowd. That or you're so damned ignorant that you don't know it when you're in deep shit."

"Did I hear you say that finding things underground is what you and your friend do for a living?" Clark asked. Before either could answer he added, "I know Budzinski shouted our names in the transporter room, but once again: I'm Ensign Clark and this is Sergeant Budzinski. We're both Confederacy Marines, and you are...?"

Miguel was closer to Clark and extended his hand, "I'm Miguel Diego and my nosey friend here is Chester Rawlings. Up until today we made our livin' lookin' for oil. We don't normally butt into other people's business, but thought we might be able to give y'all a hand."

Chester let out a whistle when he and Miguel stepped through the hatch that opened into their shared residential pod. He remarked to Miguel without stopping his scan of the pod, "This place sure beats the hell out of the cots we slept on last night."

Miguel had no dependent children and there were blood ties between his concubines and Chester. They were Chester's mother and sister! Chester's youngest concubine, Inez, was Miguel's little sister. Three of Chester's four concubines were strangers to the two sponsors, but two of them were friends with each other. The two men had been sharing quarters in primitive and hostile places for many years making compatibility issues between them very unlikely.

Judy took possession of Chester's right arm. She hugged it between her bare breasts and asked, "What was that you were talking about with those two marines?"

Chester couldn't think with the firm breast flesh burning his arm. "I... We can talk about that later. Let's check this place out, get the kids settled, and find a quiet place to... talk."

Judy laughed, "Right. I don't think we'll be having much in the way of deep intellectual intercourse until long after some very serious sexual intercourse. A man's IQ is inversely proportional to his testosterone level. Will it be just the two of us, or shall we go for a threesome with your sister, or will it take a frenzied group grope to scratch your itch?"

Chester moaned deep in his chest, "Whatever." It was the best he could come up with in his diminished capacity. Even the reference to his sister didn't register until much later. His brain pretty much stopped working when it heard the word "threesome", but "group grope" did manage to penetrate the testosterone haze.

It took about five minutes for the group to settle into their new quarters. Miguel took the large suite on the main floor to share with Martha and Veronica. Chester and his four concubines and four children took over the whole second floor.

Inez, who was a virgin, and Sonia, who'd had more sex in the last two days than she'd had in months, entertained the youngsters while Chester, Dorothy, and Judy got into a naked heap and learned all about each other's preferences and fantasies. Judy was eager and adventurous, and Dorothy was hot, bothered, and experienced.

Chester would have been happy to keep things simple and traditional out of respect for his lovely ladies, but neither Judy nor Dorothy were in a mood for limits and lobbied for good lighting and no holes barred. Dorothy thought she was expanding both of her partner's repertoires, but she did not, in fact, introduce Chester to anything that he hadn't done before. But he wasn't embarrassed on those previous occasions, so that part was new to him.

It was an even more awkward down in Miguel's stateroom. He had a fabulous looking but topless woman who was old enough to be his mother and a bronze-skinned goddess who was naked except for a pair of sheer pink panties and flip-flops.

Martha immediately recognized the problem and attempted to get things moving by suggesting, "It's been a long day for me and I'd love to clean up before we're dragged off to more lectures and such. I'm not used to sleeping in my clothes, even the little I have left," she added with a small laugh. "You need to get out of your clothes, Miguel, and help Veronica out of those silly things she's wearing. I shouldn't need more than 20 or 25 minutes to shower and shave my stubble."

Martha had not disappeared into the head before Veronica was unbuttoning Miguel's shirt. She dropped to her knees to loosen his jeans, but he sat on the bed and held up a boot. Veronica straddled Miguel's shin and pulled the boot tight against the damp gusset of her panties. She held the heel of the boot in both hands as Miguel planted the other boot on her satin clad butt and pushed. When they repeated the procedure with the other boot Veronica noticed that the second boot had a lot more moisture on the instep than the first one.

Veronica took a cuff in each hand and pulled the faded jeans down Miguel's legs. She shifted to the waistband when they were hanging off his ankles to keep the contents of the pockets from spilling onto the deck. Then she unceremoniously dropped the jeans on top of his shirt.

She would have gone straight to the uncut cock that sprang through the fly of his boxers, but he pushed her back and had her pull the loose material over his hips leaving him in his socks, which he removed as she turned and tossed the boxers onto the growing pile of clothes on the deck.

Miguel had her stand between his knees when she again approached him. He hooked his fingers in the waistband of her flimsy panties and slid them over her hips and down her thighs. He released them at her knees. The flimsy scrap of damp satin fell to the deck when Veronica shifted her weight a couple of times. The sexy shift of her hips caused her clit to wink at him through her moist and matted pubic hair when her thighs rubbed her swollen labia. She stepped out of her panties and her flip-flops, kicking both aside before she again dropped to her knees. This time Miguel let her peel his foreskin down the shaft and take the red knob into her hot, wet mouth.

Miguel sucked air through tightly clenched teeth as his best friend's teenaged sister gave him the best blowjob he had ever experienced. He didn't let her finish him in her mouth, though. He pulled the tall girl on top of him and relished the feel of her bare tits on his chest before rolling on top of her.

Veronica helped him find her opening and closed her eyes to savor the feeling of his thick cock as it pushed aside her clinging tunnel walls and forced its way deeper and deeper into her yielding body. She was accustomed to being the one in charge and had always dominated the boys she had fucked. There was no way that she could ever dominate Miguel, and that thought alone was making her hotter and wetter. She knew she was going to encourage this guy to fuck her any way he wanted, any time he wanted.

Martha stepped out of the bathroom wrapped in a towel. She stood rooted in awe as she watched her daughter thrash, moan and buck beneath the short Mexican-American man who was fucking her without mercy. Her own pussy clenched and her nipples ached when Veronica suddenly clung to Miguel and screamed as a massive orgasm shook her.

The towel slid from Martha's trim body as she approached the couple. Miguel wasn't finished, but Veronica could barely move. "I can't believe you managed to screw her unconscious! I've always thought she was the slut of the county who could pull a train of offensive linemen... from both teams."

The dark patch of fur covering Martha's sex got Miguel's attention and he waved her closer. She did a little pirouette when Miguel twirled his finger. "One day soon my cock will become lost between your lovely breasts, but not today. Please get on your knees next to Veronica. I always thought you had beautiful breasts, but your ass and legs are straight from my oldest of fantasies!"

Miguel put pressure between her shoulder blades until the tops of her breasts and her collar bones were solidly against the mattress. She turned her head toward her semi-comatose daughter and let Miguel do as he pleased with her naked body. This position put her ass high in the air, exposing her recently trimmed, but still hairy furburger below the smooth hemispheres of her butt cheeks and between her trim thighs. Miguel discovered that her hairy labia were soaking wet with more than shower water when he burrowed through the thick curls searching for her entrance with his modestly calloused fingers.

His fingers slid right into the slick hole eliciting a moan from him as well as her. The discovery of a wet pussy rejuvenated his flagging shaft and his fingers were quickly replaced by his thick pussy pleaser.

The bouncing mattress roused Veronica who turned to see her mother's slack face inches from her own. Martha grasped her daughter's hand in an attempt to remain passive and receptive. Miguel was teasing the hair that framed her asshole! "Oh, my! Is he going to...?" Her eyes rolled up before she completed the sentence. The rest of the noises she made were incoherent, but they were loud and filled with expressions of intense pleasure.

Martha's knees were lifted clear of the bedding when Miguel grunted in orgasm as he sent strong pulses of semen deep inside the older woman's slick vagina. "Ungh! Ungh! Ungh!"

Veronica reached for Miguel when he collapsed across Martha's upturned ass. She pulled his head onto her breasts as her mother sank down to lie prone with Miguel sprawled on her back and still lodged in her entrance.

Twenty-nine of the new volunteers had to spend three nights in temporary accommodations on *Othello*. Another *Aurora*-class showed up before Captain Cooper lost her patience with the dispatchers who were controlling Earth's space from one of the few Confederacy warships patrolling the Solar System. By the fourth night *Othello* had swapped pods with smaller transport ships and now had 67 empties.

The volunteers collected by *Othello* were either on other ships that were in route to existing colonies, both new and old, or were assigned their own or shared pods on *Othello*. Murphy managed to load one of the other ships with real ranchers, farmers and cowboys, and redirect it to Dargo to make up for sending *Aeolus* to Haru.

Murphy was certain that the current load aboard *Othello* would be of benefit to Azahar. The pods were occupied with artists and musicians as well as scientists and engineers. There was some discussion about what demographic should be targeted for the remaining pods. There were even some radical suggestions about embellishing Azahar with additional flora and a bit of fauna that wasn't *homo sapiens*.

Cooper vetoed the diversions along with Porter's plan to drop ten teams into various coffee shops and shopping mall food courts. She explained, "Let's not push too many limits of the AI on our maiden voyage."

"I know each team will only get five or six sponsors in typical pickup places, but we could get overloaded again, and I'd like to be ready to split when another *Kilo* pops out of hyperspace. Only six teams have a green light, Commander."

"Aye-aye, Captain," Porter responded. "Six it is."

Porter switched to his company's command channel and gave the go-ahead to six of the waiting teams. One of the waiting teams with a go was headed by Sergeant Waters. Several pets had been allowed aboard *Othello* during the dependent pickup phase of the arena extraction, but Cooper had decided not to push the AI too hard about evacuating large numbers of domestic animals. She submitted to her staff that collecting examples of the more colorful *human* subcultures of the planet could be just as interesting and more entertaining.

Waters was an ardent surfer and had studied the wind and wave reports that were buried in the meteorological data from Azahar. He had found a promising area along the east coast of Triton that looked like it would have some of the best surfing beaches in the known universe. His personal objective for the drop was to extract some fellow surfers and their equipment.

Waters and his team had been authorized to conduct a pickup in his hometown of Venice, California while *Othello* remained in Earth orbit pending the arrival of another *Kilo* transport. California was chosen primarily because of the low probability of armed violence during an extraction. Southern California liberals were ardent supporters of Earth First, but they shied away from violence other than the occasional riot during a protest demonstration. It was more luck than planning that Waters' team dropped into his friend's surf shop during the Miss Venice Beach beauty pageant.

His team happily discovered that the bronze bodied contestants were using the storage room of the surf shop as their dressing room, and the interdiction field wasn't noticed for quite a while when it isolated the shop. The shop was attached to a fishing pier and had a staircase in the rear that gave it direct access to the beach where the stage for the upcoming event had been erected.

Most of the crowd had their attention directed at the waves and surfers when the large retail store was invaded by a few marines. Waters' friends had plenty of time and adequate, willing candidates to test drive before gathering their spoils and leaving Earth behind.

Waters advised the others to avoid the high-maintenance models. His advice was, predictably, ignored by the volunteers who were caught while browsing the store. Waters

was shocked to discover that two of the beauty pageant contestants were qualified sponsors who had a fun time trying out both guys and gals before making their selections.

One in particular had sun-streaked hair, sparkling blue eyes, and a deep bronze tan that wasn't marred by tan lines or body hair below her neck. She tried out just about every mouth, muff and cock in the place before settling on two males and two females. It turned out that Commander Coleen McClusky was as good at riding herd on fighter pilots as she was at riding surfboards.

Surfers are generally thought to be bums. But this group included two accountants and three officers from the nearby navy yard, counting the buxom Coleen. Only a few of the bronze-bodied concubines taken from the surf shop needed a medical tube for cosmetic adjustments or medical treatment other than skin cancer screening.