

The Pampshifter: Chapter 4

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KNOCK KNOCK!

“Meg! Stop fucking around and get out here! I’d preferably like to get this done before we suffocate!” shouted Donnie as he stood outside one of the private changing rooms looking positively annoyed. It was bad enough that he was gonna be stuck doing mind-numbing manual labor for the next hour or so. He didn’t want to let this process take longer than it was already going to be.

Exiting the changing room with a fresh diaper around her hips, Meg ignored Donnie’s presence, instead making a beeline for the loading bay. All the while, she forced herself to keep from thinking about the dull itch that came from a light diaper rash.

“Finally, there you two are,” said Mason, who was standing outside of the airlock that was adjacent to the docking area, “Do you need a tutorial on what to do? Please say no.”

Unamused by Roland’s attempt at dry humor, Meg rolled her eyes, doing little to hide her disdain for the ship’s young engineer. “We know what we’re doing. You just have to wait by the airlock for us to be done like a good boy. Think you can manage that?” she said, making sure to exaggerate her condescension, “Also, where’s Roland? We need to get our suits on.”

“He’s already inside helping Vickers,” said Mason casually, refusing to allow Meg to goat him into a foul attitude.

Groaning simultaneously, neither Donnie nor Meg were excited to hear this news. “Why the hell is she getting suited up? It’s already overkill for two of us to do this job. We don’t need a tourist,” said Donnie, his impatience growing by the second.

“Apparently Miss Looney Tunes has some specimens stored in the loading bay that she needs to check on. I’m sure she won’t be too much of a bother,” said Mason, taking a moment to soak in the dejected expressions on Meg and Donnie’s faces before leading to opening the airlock for his two grumpy crewmates, “Have fun in there! Don’t do anything I wouldn’t do.” As Meg and Donnie crossed the threshold of the airlock, he immediately shuttered the secondary door, ensuring the entire ship wouldn’t get blown into space.

“As I’m sure you understand, preserving the endangered flora from LV-425 is of the utmost importance. If life support in those containers drops below 50%, we could start seeing decay in the overall root systems that could put this entire mission at risk,” said Dr. Luna Vickers, a brilliant, yet pedantic biologist and currently the ship’s only guest. It was a bit out of the ordinary to allow financial backers to accompany the crew on an interstellar job but with how much Luna was paying to smuggle these plants back to Earth, it was no wonder she would be obsessive over each and every detail, “So, I demand you open that door...R. Finkle...or else your captain will hear about your gross insubordination.” She pressed her finger against the name on Roland’s suit.

“I’m sorry, Dr. Vickers but we aren’t going to want to reopen this airlock until the ship is patched, so you’ll need to wait for Meg and Donnie to suit up as well. Please excuse me,” said Roland, quickly removing himself from his conversation with Luna now that his other two crewmates had arrived. As much as it pained him to have to be amicable to someone as stuck up as Luna was, he was under explicit orders to keep her happy, as were the rest of the crew, “Alright, let’s make this quick before she decides to try to open the airlock on her own.”

Tossing on their spacesuits, Roland hastily got Meg and Donnie zipped up and ready to go, sealing them inside their respective suits as he twisted their helmets into place. “Mic check. 1, 2, 3. You two hear me?” he said, earning a thumbs-up from both of his crewmates.

Elbowing Meg, Donnie clicked his mic on and said, “Okay, Meg, while you patch the hole, I’ll search the area and find any debris. Let’s try to be done in under an hour if possible.”

“Excuse you. Why am I stuck doing the crap job while you get to fuck around?” said Meg, who was hoping that Donnie would spearhead working with the patch gun, a heavy device that shot out liquid carbon, which was designed to freeze almost instantly thanks to the sub-zero temperatures of space.

“Because Ellis may be awake but I’m still second in command. Shit rolls downhill, Meg,” said Donnie, never being shy to use and abuse his position of power to shove the hard work onto others.

Sadly for Meg, there was no real way to argue against the established hierarchy. If Donnie wanted to sit back and supervise, there was nothing she could do about it. “Fine, whatever. Let’s just get this over with. Are we good, Roland?”

“Should be. Mason, open the airlock. I’m coming in,” said Roland, promptly joining Mason on the other side of the secondary door and leaving the three suited-up astronauts behind.

“Finally! It’s about time,” said Luna into her suit’s microphone, ensuring everyone in range would be forced to listen to her whinging. Watching as Donnie began to enter the passcode to open the outer airlock doors, she began bouncing up and down on her feet, unable to mask her anxiety over doing her first space walk, “You know, this is all kind of exciting.”

Scoffing over how naive, yet annoying Luna was, Donnie let out a long sigh before clicking his mic on. “I’m sure it is. Just try not to wander off where we can’t see you,” he said, issuing a brief warning as he grabbed onto the airlock’s release handle, “Alright, ladies, brace yourselves.”

TO BE CONTINUED...