

# Chapter 179: Adapting to Circumstances

*Did my plan get Polina and all those other people killed?*

I knew one of the reasons I assisted them was to test out Nova Tech's security. Revealing their hidden fleet had satisfied that objective. Still, it left a bad aftertaste.

The hidden fleet was likely there waiting to ambush my potential rescuers, so their revealing of themselves was another trump card off the table. Other corporations would catch wind of it and would take them into consideration when coming up with a plan. Strategically, I still won.

However, it didn't make me happy.

Just as I sorting out my feelings, the door to my room slid open. I turned to find the familiar power armor belonging to Commander Poltrix. He wasn't alone and was accompanied by two other guards in slim tactical suits.

The commander stepped in without warning and only stopped when he stood directly above me.

"Commander? What's up?"

He didn't reply and maintained his glare. After a few moments, he nodded toward his subordinates. Immediately, they split up and began ransacking my room, searching for something. There wasn't much, so they would soon complete their search.

"Commander, what are you guys looking for all of a sudden?" I complained.

"Please cooperate. There's been a security incident, and we need to thoroughly search the premises."

"Okay..."

I knew the commander was suspicious of me this entire time, and his reaction to this incident showed it. It was a dead giveaway when he personally escorted me every day.

The two guards took several minutes, turning the entire room over before reporting to their superior. This caused the commander to direct his attention back to me.

"Come with us. We're going somewhere safer."

I knew this may happen, but it was quite fast. They would naturally prioritize securing me after finding a security breach. However, I didn't think they'd be able to find a place to relocate me so soon. It wasn't easy to find another location that had the same level of security. After all, they

had to keep me away from some major corporations. The best way to do that was through secrecy, so every time they moved me, more vulnerabilities popped up.

“Is it dangerous here?” I asked as I glanced around nervously.

“Just follow me. We don’t have time.”

I was quickly escorted out of my room. I was familiar enough with the layout of the facility to soon figure out we were heading toward the main security room.

However, before we made it halfway there, something unexpected came into view of the external cameras outside the base.

The ship Polina and the other test subjects were on was surrounded and being boarded. With four warships around them, I thought their chances of escape were over.

That was only until I saw several flashes of light on the screen. The attacking ships had energy shields that withstood it, but it visibly dimmed. A brief moment after that, another volley came, then another one.

*They’re being attacked by a third party? But who? A rival corp? Or is it my protector?*

*The last time I snuck out, they didn’t say anything about recusing me any time soon...No, but I did tell them about this escape plan, so did they come to reinforce me? I made sure to tell them that I’d be staying captive, though...*

I mindlessly continued walking as I processed the numerous possibilities in my mind. It only lasted until I bumped into the cold, hard metal in front of me.

I looked up to find Commander Poltrix frozen as well. It was a given he had the highest clearance on this base. That meant whatever I was seeing, he could too.

*If he took this as a rescue attempt, did that mean he may finish me off to be safe? My plans are falling apart...*

Just as the harrowing thought crossed my mind, I immediately acted. I executed the same program I had used to sneak away from my room. As I turned on my active camouflage, a holographic projection replaced me.

I didn’t have any nanomachines set up around here, though, so it would only last briefly while I was in range. That was why I didn’t waste a second and immediately sprinted away.

I had been exploring this facility, so I knew my way around. I quickly dashed toward the hangar. That was because I knew the moment I vanished, they would try to lockdown the facility.

While I had backdoor access, it may not last forever once they discovered me. They could manually reset everything, so I had to make use of my opportunity.

I needed to get away from here. And fast.

I barely made it halfway down the hallway before I heard Commander Poltrix's subordinates scream out in panic at my disappearance. I had just gotten out of range to keep up the holographic projection.

"He's gone!"

"What in the world?"

I turned back in time to see the commander doing a one-eighty at supersonic speed.

"Deploy your active scans, you fools! And alert security to lock down this entire base!"

I didn't bother staying to listen further as I raced toward the hangar.

While running, I kept a close eye on their systems. It was time to make use of my access. I watched as the command to close down the entire facility came in. Blast doors that were spaced every twenty feet were coming down in every corridor.

Without their knowledge of me in their system, it was easy to alter their commands. I disabled all the defenses on my way and opened up a path.

It was time for me to take my leave from this base. It no longer mattered if they knew I had accessed their system later, as it was now or never. I could only gamble the invaders were my allies. Otherwise, I risk being executed.

If it turned out to be some other party, then my company would just have to handle the heat from Nova Tech. There wasn't much else I could do.

I slipped into the hangar unhindered, making use of my head start. The place was still a mess, with the control center demolished thanks to Polina's group, but the other vessels were unharmed.

I found one of the smallest spacecraft and breached into it, but then faced my biggest challenge. I didn't know how to pilot the thing.

Once I had access, I began examining the code of its operating system.

*There must be something here. I just need to hurry.*

As I felt the pressure of the clock, an explosion suddenly rocked the facility, nearly throwing me to the ground.

I directed my attention back to the cameras pointing outside and saw the lone ship cruising straight toward us. Behind it were the four warships idly drifting around.

*Ok...never mind. New plan. Get in contact with them first to assess their intentions.*

As much as I wanted to think it was my allies coming, I couldn't be sure. I needed to make contact with them and consider my next steps from that. Otherwise, even if I could fly this ship, they may just shoot me down.

---

## **Thorne - Halls Corporation**

Thorne listened intently on his comms as various people celebrated their victory over the four frigates. While they may not have gained total control of them, it was undeniable that they were no longer a threat.

With their boarding parties successfully diminishing the four ships' combatworthiness, their main ship was now heading toward the suspected Nova Tech facility, which reassured all the men around him.

They were currently already sailing through the harshness of space, discreetly sneaking up to the facility in question. They had planned to make use of the commotion of the fighting to infiltrate, but the fighting ended much sooner than they had thought.

It wasn't that the opposition was weak, but that they were caught with their pants down. The well-trained space marines easily overpowered the ships they boarded, or at least disabled them from functioning. This allowed their main ship to cruise on through.

Thorne didn't bask in the relief of his fleet's victory and redirected his focus back on the screens. It showed the base getting closer and closer.

"Ready up, boys. Our new mission is to disable any defenses this base has so our fine lady can safely approach," the platoon leader declared.

After the infiltration team affirmed their new commands, they were soon launched out of the carrier they were in.

They rode a pod that was shot straight at the base. However, as they got closer, the pod expelled gas to slow them down. It was able to perfectly stop right on the exterior of the facility.

Next, the space marines got to work. Thorne watched them exit the pod with well-practiced movements, and one of them took out a small apple-shaped device. They placed it down against the exterior walls and activated it.

It didn't take long for Thorne to recognize that it was a jammer of some sort before his allies started cutting a path into the base.

With several hands working in unity, they soon cut their way into a maintenance shaft of some sort. Immediately, the people who were decked out in heavy power armor strode in first. The rest followed closely behind.

They found that their connection with the outside world was cut off the moment they set foot inside, and Thorne was reminded of an old rival corporation he once infiltrated with Rollo. Nonetheless, the team was prepared, and they soon found their way into the facility proper.

Despite their attempts at being discreet, it was inevitable that they were soon discovered by the sensors of the facility. They simply had too many people with heavy equipment, and the base had numerous active scanners.

The team only found out they were detected when they noticed several patrols heading their way.

*These allies of ours...They don't have much in the way of stealth at all!*

A firefight quickly took place as the two parties spotted each other. Heavy railgun fire filled in the gunmetal corridors of the base as the power armors fought.

It was only during this firefight that Thorne got to appreciate how powerful his allies were. While they didn't have much in the way of stealth, their pure combat power more than made up for it.

His allies took cover behind the heavy power armors and immediately threw out grenades at their enemy. They weren't just any old grenades though, they were specially designed against power armor.

Normally, one may think it would just be an EMP, but that was too predictable. Whoever equipped these people made use of oscillation grenades, and they weren't the cheap kind. The sound waves these devices produced may not have much pure destructive power, but they were able to permeate through the solid defenses of the power armor, reaching the delicate internals.

Various sensitive parts vital to the function of their enemies' power armor were swiftly destroyed and began to malfunction. The most important of them all being the energy shields.

The Nova Tech security team's nightmare didn't end there. While they struggled with the sudden issues of their equipment, several other members of the infiltration team darted out towards them.

They wore a much slimmer power armor and moved at lightning-fast speeds. Thorne knew he would have trouble keeping up with them, and was thankful they were on his side.

These fast-moving infiltrators rapidly closed the distance and finished off their opponents with the bayonets of their weapons. From their display, it was easy to conclude that even their

bayonets were high-tech weapons that allowed them to pierce their enemy's power armor like butter.

"Let's go! Quickly find their defensive control room and disable all their armaments!" platoon leader Loo shouted.

He was just about to lead his team at the forefront when he was pulled back by Thorne.

"Wait, we should prioritize finding Rollo! What if they execute him now that they know we're here?"

"You told the captain that your man can survive fine by himself, so we took that into account. We need to disable the defenses to allow more men to come join us in sweeping this place!"

"...That's too risky!"

The two stared at each other for a brief moment.

They wanted to contact their superiors to clear up the dispute, but without the signal cut off, they both knew it would be difficult to convince the other party.

Just as they both frowned at each other's stubbornness, their comms abruptly came back online. A moment later, they received new instructions from the command center.

"Platoon Leader Loo, you have new orders. Go extract the VIP immediately! He has holed up in their comms room. I am forwarding the layout of their facility now!"

The two men exchanged glances and nodded to each other at the same time. Both of them knew exactly what they had to do.