

# Chapter 175: Contact

## Titus Adiar - AeroDynamic

“Are you sure you’re too busy to join me tonight?” Titus spoke into the terminal attached to his wrist.

“Yes. Enjoy with Polly without me. I’d rather tough it out another night than get chewed out by you and the other shareholders if I don’t deal with this properly.”

“Haha, the woes of a CEO never cease. If you think like that, you won’t have a chance to do anything but work!”

“...Talk to you tomorrow. Good night Titus.”

Ending the call, Titus glanced back over at the golf course before him. Within the steel walls of his compound, he had a specialized golf course made. It employed advanced modular platforms that could form any desired terrain.

If he felt like it, he could change the settings and the entire course would transform at his command. He could erect mountains or fill lakes. Almost any terrain suitable for golf was possible.

For now, he was satisfied with the current settings and walked over to take a swing.

He ensured any cybernetics or tech on him that may assist him was turned off before he took the shot.

Like that, Titus played to his heart’s content until he received a call from someone on his priority list.

“My love, I was just about to come pick you up.”

“Oh, Titus, are you really going to try that on me? You’d think to learn that it doesn’t work on your wife even after four decades.”

“Haha. Alright, Alright. I’m on my way.”

Titus swiftly left the course, leaving the bots to clean up after him. He briskly walked outside where a small convoy of VTOLs was awaiting him. Several guards in power armor patrolled the area and one of them respectfully guided Titus to a luxuriously decorated airframe.

When the door opened, the face of a middle-aged lady popped out and Titus couldn’t help but smile upon seeing his beloved.

“My dear, I always fall in love with you again every time I see you.”

“Oh, hurry up and get in, old man. I’d rather not be late.”

Listening to his wife, Titus quickly boarded the aircraft, and they were soon on their way out of the compound. Outside, another dozen ground vehicles could be seen guarding their flight path from any potential nefarious parties.

As a founder of AeroDynamic, Titus preferred to believe in the sound design of his products for his safety, but his security team had other thoughts. It was much safer to have the ground route secured first to prevent any sudden ambushes.

Like this, Titus’ movement easily caused a huge commotion and traffic jams within Ganymede station. However, no one dared to speak out or do anything about it. This was simply how life was when a corporate bigshot from one of the major corporations went out.

Titus’s convoy of VTOLs soon arrived and landed on the roof of their destination building.

Following their escorts, they finally arrived at one of their usual haunts. The restaurant manager greeted them with a smile and personally guided them to their private room.

No other patrons were allowed to sit anywhere near the path Titus and his wife took, so they managed to reach their room without being exposed to any prying eyes.

As they arrived at the private room, their bodyguards quickly inspected the room and dispersed around the perimeter without a word. They knew their patron didn’t like to be bothered, so they swiftly made themselves scarce.

“We’ll have the usual,” Titus turned to the manager and ordered as they entered the room.

“Of course, they’ll be here within a minute. Let me get madam’s favorite White Peony tea ready while we wait.”

The manager left the room, and Titus wrapped a hand around his wife.

“My dear, how about we go to Europa Station tomorrow to do some shopping together?”

“Didn’t you schedule a golf match with Albert from Amazing Corp? We can go the day after tomorrow.”

“I...Thank you, Polly. I don’t want to imagine how disorganized I would be without you.”

“That’s just you slacking off ever since you retired,” his wife quipped.

“I—”

Before Titus could respond, his advanced warning system of his SAID warned him of large amounts of heat detected nearby.

He quickly shielded his wife and glanced over in the indicated direction. He found it coming from one of the empty chairs beside them. A tiny stream of molten particles was sent flying from a tiny section of the chair. It was as if a mosquito was doing some welding.

The sparks ceased quickly and were replaced by a holographic projection.

The figure of a slim cyborg man came into view.

“Hi Titus, I’ll make it short. My name is Thorne, from the Halls Corporation. I want to tell you we are ready. When the time has come, please allow us to join your team. We are irreplaceable assets that have communication lines with your target. Please contact us using the details below.”

A text box quickly materialized with the contact information.

Despite Thorne not having mentioned any specifics, Titus knew exactly what he was referring to.

That didn’t stop him from being alarmed that someone had been able to sneak something right next to him. He frowned when he thought of the possibility of it being a bomb instead.

The projection swiftly disappeared, and the tiny objects that had projected it burned up and disintegrated.

Titus didn’t waste any time and called in his head of security.

Unfortunately for that man, he would be receiving a long lecture today. Titus was not happy with him. He had reassured his boss that it wouldn’t have been possible for any explosives or poisons to reach him, but then this happened.

---

“Today, we will be debugging the prototype assigned to us, as best we can. We only have a day until we’ll be testing them out on our subjects, so make it quick,” Cora declared to her fellow researchers.

I contained myself at having heard the news. I knew it was coming, but it was another thing to get confirmation only a day before the next round of human experiments. We didn’t have enough time to put together a thorough plan yet. If these tests go as planned, we may lose someone vital for our plan, so I had to do something.

“Actually, I have a recommendation that I would like the Senior Researcher to consider. Should I submit it through the company portal or speak with you directly?”

“...If you want Dr. Gab’s attention, then let’s hear it. I doubt they would notice your suggestions on the app. I’ll talk to them directly if I think it is feasible.”

“Sure. So I went over the electrical circuits last night and I believe there is a new architecture we can use to lessen the rapid buildup of heat within the bio-coprocessor. However, I fear the feedback from the bio-coprocessor taking damage would be...messy. Do you think you can propose to test on mutants instead first? I'd rather not waste subjects or scare them so much that they'd stop cooperating.”

“Hmm...Send me the details. I do see merit in using cheaper alternatives like mutants, but will the data from using them really be relevant?” Cora asked as she skimmed through the file I had sent her.

“Yes, I just need to test it out in practice. I'm confident I'll be able to tune it so it is ready for human subjects.”

“Very well, I'll see what Dr. Gab says. We should have a few mutants in containment, so it shouldn't be an issue if your proposal is accepted.”

The day passed quickly as I tried to consider how to proceed in the event my proposal was rejected. There were a lot of holes to fill up in our plan, but thankfully my worries were needless.

Before the next day arrived, while I was on my way out of the lab, I was informed that my proposal was accepted. Dr. Gab even asked me to stay behind to fabricate the prototype models using my new architecture.

While I had to work overtime, I was happy things went my way.

The next day, I arrived at our team's spacious cubicle testing room and was greeted with the sight of mutants crammed into a cage. They looked like scorpions, except much more deadly with six stingers.

Our assistant soon set up the installation process and at their command, the door to the cage opened. Just as one of them exited out of the cage, a shimmering energy shield appeared and blocked any other scorpions from escaping.

As for the one who escaped, the nearby bots shot it full of tranquilizers.

This allowed us to begin installing the bio-coprocessor into the mutant's nervous system. Apparently, the neural link worked just as fine with its nervous system as it would with the human brain.

Once everything was set, we soon began our first round of tests.

I had written the program for controlling this new architecture, so I naturally added all the functions I needed to put on a show. It was a nice feeling seeing the other researcher find nothing amiss when examining my work.

The test consisted of having two scorpions, react to the same scenarios produced by holographic projections. One of them would have our new prototype installed, and one would be an unaltered mutant for comparison.

While everyone in my lab carefully watched the mutant lunge at the projection of a human, I kept a close watch on how the other tests went. Several other testing rooms were working in tandem with different prototypes.

In order to delay them from human testing, I had to put on a show that made them feel we were making rapid progress. And how better to do it than to start from the very bottom?

Thirty minutes after the start of tests, I activated my hidden backdoor code to overload the new prototypes.

Immediately, the mutant thrashed in pain before it suddenly exploded into goo and pieces.

*Hmm? I didn't get any experience points?*

"Hmm, so it does violently explode when we overload the heat sink too rapidly. We'll have to fine-tune how the energy is distributed, but I think it'll decrease how hot the cybernetic runs by several degrees when we get it right!"

Cora gave me a silent glance at my explanation and returned her gaze back to the screens. We had bots going to dissect the aftermath and gather additional intel. Elsewhere on the other testing grounds, similar screens were taking place.

Seeing everything was going as planned, I relaxed and began pondering why I hadn't gotten any experience points earlier. I had inputted the command to overload the bio-coprocessor, and usually, that would mean I would be credited with the kill.

As I subconsciously frowned, Cora's voice resounded.

"Is something wrong?"

"...Oh no. I was just wondering...Do we have any other types of mutants to test on? Maybe one that has brain matter similar to ours?"

Cora ruefully shook her head.

"No, they'll have to order some and then set up a new cloning line for it, so I don't think it'll be anytime soon. It's not easy cloning these monsters."

*What? Clones? Is that maybe why I didn't get any experience points...? So clones don't work, huh...*

As we conversed, the first day of testing soon concluded, and we compiled our reports. Before I left, the Senior Researcher, Dr. Gab, and a few other researchers once again pulled me aside to talk. After clarifying some points to them and setting our direction, they finally let me go.

We all left with satisfied expressions.

*Now I just had to feed them the correct 'improvements' and it should keep them busy for a few days...Still, the schedule is looking tight.*

That was why that night I snuck out on the next ship to Ceres Station.

It was time I kept my allies in the loop of my plans.