

Ceda steps into the observation room onto a carpet of stars. Framed nicely at the far side of the room is an angry looking red, green and blue planet with it's single bright red moon peaking out from behind. He steps onto the solid floor of stars and begins walking towards Yen. A pale woman with dark hair. She is wearing black pants that cut off around her calves and a frilled white blouse. She is standing in such a way that it looks as though she is standing atop the planet itself next to a small, clear circular table.

She lifts a glass as he gets close. "To us."

"Decades in the making." Ceda notes the clear, bubbly liquid present in her glass and finds the one set out for him. He smiles, lifting it and tinkling her glass gently with his. "How are our soon-to-be newest subjects?"

"About to launch their first satellite. After that, everything we do is fair game." Yen tilts her head back, glugging half her glass in one go as Cedar looks on distastefully. He regains his neutral expression in time to meet her eyes.

"Everything we've done before now?" He asks in a low tone.

"Our secret. This race has great potential and no one can say it is unprecedented for a species to go from fighting with hunks of metal to space-travel in under a century."

"Our observers being present this whole time is just a happy coincidence."

"How can they say otherwise? Besides, it doesn't matter what the other houses say. We're going to be rich." Yen says proudly, finishing the rest of her glass. She holds up three fingers. "Just think of the three 'M's. Mining, Manpower, Might. With this race answering to our houses we'll have them all."

"Three 'M's?" Ceda asks skeptically. "You're just making things up. Aren't Manpower and Might Synonymous, anyway? But I understand what you're getting at." He stares down at the red stripes running through the blue and green landscape. Each one an entire continent's worth of alloys and minerals. "Without even taking into account the resources from the planet and that moon, is the race really that useful?"

Yen grins. "In the beginning we saw them as simple and easy to control savages. However, as they grew and responded to our interference I've seen their potential in combat. They are numerous and hardy." She points out the moon and the red stripes. "See that?"

Ceda explains. "The moon. My house's surveying suggests it is a stellar object that struck the planet and became coated in core material before separating."

Yen nods. "My house's close observation found that their ancestors lived before that event and survived it." Ceda's eyes widen. "That's right. Their bodies can survive in space, in low oxygen, in high heat, in very low heat. Name it, they could probably live through it. They're an entire planet full of determinators. If we equip them and drop them somewhere, they're probably going to take it." She eyes Ceda's glass. "Are you going to drink that or just stare at it?"

"I just like tasting and smelling it." He states uncomfortably, taking a whiff, followed by a very small sip. He sighs happily.

Yen gives him a look of disbelief. "Alright then." She pours herself another glass. "I sometimes forget your Genetic roots hold strong senses as a main feature. Along with..." She smirks, eyeing the tall man standing just across the table from her. Lithe with androgynous features and long lime-green hair.

"All of our senses are enhanced, which is slightly better than-" He stops himself. "Never mind."

"You can say it. We're partners and my house is not ashamed of our roots. Greed and ambition are good."

"We are partners because neither of us is in a position to judge the other. It is your wealth that has made this possible." Ceda compliments.

"Your house's surveying skills found this tiny planet, to begin with." Yen counters.

Ceda chuckles, setting his glass down. He offers Yen his arm. "Shall we retire, my dear?"

Yen takes his arm and leans on him. "I thought you'd never ask."

"How many generations do you think we will be awarded?" Ceda asks, beginning to leave the room as the stars-cape recedes into a dull metallic surface all around them. "I miss raising children."

"I do, too." Yen considers the question. "At least three for something this big." Ceda happily hums an angelic tune in response as they exit the observation room.

Yen steps onto the bridge of the ship, black circles under her eyes hastily concealed with makeup. She lowers her head, trying not to catch glimpses of any bright control-panel lights. She walks up to stand beside Ceda. "Did I miss it?"

"You didn't miss it." He says simply, watching the viewing screen.

"Okay, then did I say anything stupid last night?"

"Nothing I care to repeat."

Yen's pale face goes faintly red. "Are they ever going to launch that thing? Come on... I spent too much time uplifting these kids for them to be late."

Ceda smiles. "Cloud cover over the launch site. Probably the reason for the delay." He shrugs. "Pre-Type 1 problems. What can you do. It is probably going to be a little while before-"

"Reading heat through the clouds Sir, Madam." A uniformed man standing over a holographic map states.

"Oh my. They're just powering through?" Ceda comments.

“That's my boys.” Yen fist pumps. “There's no way weather would be an issue. Everyone at your stations? Good. Let's swipe that satellite and get first-contacting.”

With baited breath the crew watches as a crude rocket breaks through the clouds, then into the atmosphere. “Shouldn't it be slowing down?” Ceda asks nervously.

“It's changing direction and speeding up.” The man in front of the map announces.

Yen and Ceda watch speechlessly as the rocket begins arcing in another direction before careening into one of their vessels, completely destroying it. Yen blinks. “That was...”

The man gulps. “One of our observation satellites.”

Yen and Ceda look at each other, both individually connecting the dots in their head. “Did those bastards just attack us!?” She questions.

“Let's not jump to conclusions, my dear.” Ceda says, trying to remain cool.

“More heat signatures.” The man announces. As he says that, three additional rockets crash into two more unmanned satellites with the final missile colliding with their ship's shields.

“They are definitely attacking us!” Yen shouts angrily. “Those ungrateful children! bomb them back!”

“Don't do that.” Ceda cringes. “We have no idea what they are thinking, but we have to give them the benefit of the doubt, or everything we have been working on will be in vain and... We will likely become laughing stocks.” He smiles weakly. “This is good, is it not? This means they know we are here. The attack gives us license to talk to them, more so than we ever would have had before. It will seem more and more to outsiders that we are observers.” He pauses for, letting out a disappointed sigh. “After all... Who would believe that any of what is transpiring is actually the result of careful planning?” As he says that, three more missiles collide harmlessly with the ship's shields. He scratches his cheek. “They certainly are lively... And well armed.”

Yen takes a deep breath. “You know exactly what to say to cheer me up. You are correct! This has gone better than planned, actually.” The bridge crew gulps collectively. “Right?” They all quickly begin to nod and agree.

“Y-yes.” Ceda nods. “We should go down and greet our potential vassals. Diplomatically.”

“What if they shoot at us?” Yen looks at Ceda skeptically.

He motions towards the fireworks going on in front of them. “They are shooting at us now. What good is it doing them?”

Yen perks up, cackling. “Oh! Yeah! That's right, we're better than them. Let's go awe these savages!”

“Diplomatically.” Ceda reminds her.

Their dropship lands in the midst of heavy anti-air fire from the surface on top of dodging several missiles on the way down. Though the pilot only seems to be dodging out of convenience as the small ship's shields absorb all of the flak harmlessly. "Ready?" Ceda asks Yen. They are both standing rather easily in the cargo bay of the dropship while it performs intense aerial maneuvers and descends at supersonic speeds.

"I'm looking forward to the looks on their green faces." She says giddily.

"We are just going to protect ourselves and make contact for the purpose of sorting out this dispute. If they are awed in the process, what can we do?" Ceda utters calmly, his hands folded comfortably behind his back.

The ship touches down at the launch site. A large base with what they now know to hold huge underground facilities. "A bit of an oversight. Not noticing that they have extensive underground structures." Ceda comments as the ship's doors drop, revealing a flat, cemented landscape with tall buildings dotting the horizon.

"Yes. Too bad the SURVEYERS missed it. Easy to spot with a simple subsurface scan." Yen adds to make it an argument, walking down the ramp with Ceda. They both face a wall of large green men holding heavy weapons that are pointed at them.

"Greetings-" Ceda begins before the muzzles all light up at once. Despite the massive sound of primitive guns firing, everything goes perfectly quiet for the two of them. Yen's black eyes become solid and Cedar's begin to glow green. Large caliber rounds stop in front of the duo, explosive rounds explode harmlessly and a few heavy-duty rockets curve upwards before going off harmlessly several meters above their heads. The shooting stops. Ceda nods at Yen and they both let all the ordinance fired at them drop to the ground, creating a small metal shower in a semi-circle around them. "-Friends." Ceda continues. They both begin walking forward. The bulky green men lower their weapons.

Yen huffs. "Seems like we can finally get started with the diplomacy."