Chapter Syvlan Alliance?

Desdemona was on a shuttle heading to the Fateweaver to meet with me. The Sylvan had told her that I had arrived back in the system days ago, but she did not contact me. I assumed it was because she did not want me to play a role in the negotiations. The shuttle was one of ours and was piloted by Desdemona. She landed in our bay and was immediately taken into custody.

She was brought to medical and underwent a lengthy series of tests to make sure she had not been compromised. It was ironic as Desdemona was our leading expert on the Sylvan psionic power. She had been our test subject and also helped develop the material that blocked the powers of the Sylvan.

Still, after Rae’Ver had subverted her husband, nothing was certain. I watched as she underwent a battery of tests against her baseline. Every discrepancy was gone over while Desdemona waited patiently for the results. Her lack of concern told me that the Sylvan had not compromised her. She was definitely smug about the tests.

It took two days before she was cleared, and I met her on the bridge of the Fateweaver. We were in the asteroid dry dock for servicing, so it was just the two of us with the ship AI Julian observing and Edmund on a secure video feed. The Sylvan city ships had not moved and were waiting for the response. We had told them straight forward that we had been examining Desdemona for outside influence.

I opened the conversation by saying she had been busy. I indicated her attack on five quadruped systems. She nodded, and we discussed her successes on that front. An estimated ten percent reduction in the enemy fighting strength was immense. Also, the outline of their entire sphere of controlled space was monumental in understanding their infrastructure.

It was like we were ignoring the entire issue of her subtle statements attacking me for abandoning the Bradbury system. We spent hours on the data and estimated that the quadrupeds were fighting on at least three or four fronts. That meant either more potential allies out there or more enemies.

I finally asked about the two Sylvan city ships floating out in space. They were patiently waiting for an answer from Desdemona. Desdemona showed agitation, so I knew whatever she was going to say was an act. She had too good control of herself to let emotions play a role. She told me what happened from the very beginning.

After she demonstrated the armageddon missile, the Sylvan realized they were in danger. She used this as a bargaining chip. She would come aboard for negotiation if they docked all their War Chariots. That took a day, but it eventually happened. She was led to a meeting with the First Citizens of both city ships. The city ships were named the Ponffir and Shaffir. The Ponffir was the city ship that destroyed Anderson Research Station.

I sat up taller at that. That Sylvan city ship was wanted in all of human space. The reward was immense, and Admiral LaRoche had been tasked with forcing the ship out of human space. The city ship was commanded by Jae’Tir. He admitted that Rae’Ver was responsible for Anderson Research Station, but Desdemona did not believe him. Still, the Sylvan were prepared to offer Rae’Ver up as the perpetrator of the act. It came back to the negotiations of forming a loose alliance to fight the Malevalents.

While she was on board, they shared even more of the atrocities the Malevolents inflicted on sentient species across the universe. Yes, the universe, they were in every galaxy, according to the Sylvan. Their planet-sized ships traveled the cosmos, eliminating species with advanced technology.

The Sylvan had been captured by one of the creatures and made to work as slave labor inside the city ships with other races. They were bred like an experiment and developed their powers over dozens of generations. The power was manifested by reaching into subspace, pulling the energy there to manipulate and influence real space.

Over tens of thousands of years, the Sylvan as a people changed. They successfully revolted and sent the Mavelovent planet-ship into a sun with its defenses destroyed. The Sylvan were in this galaxy when they gained their freedom. Now, they search for their true homeworld on their city ships. But they now think it is not in the Milky Way Galaxy but elsewhere.

I asked how they would know where their true homeworld was. Desdemona shook her head. They said they would just know when they found it, she answered. I finally asked what agreement were the Sylvan asking for between the people of Arcadian and themselves.

It had taken her days to negotiate, but the end result was they were willing to fight alongside us against the Malevolents. I asked in exchange for what? She admitted the technology to travel in the higher bands in subspace. I immediately said no. Desdemona frowned, which looked fake. She said the deal was already completed, and we just had to hand over the technology. All seventy-nine city ships would respond when the Malevolents came.

I started to get angry and said she did not have the right to negotiate on behalf of the Bradbury system. She was just on parole herself. I calmed down extremely quickly, though. Desdemona was cunning, and maybe she was showing her true colors, and she expected me to react this way. If I angered the Sylvan when she had got them into an alliance for a piece of technology—very important technology but just technology in the end, then some of my captains would not be happy.

I turned away from Desdemona and opened a communication with the Sylvan. It took a few minutes before two separate images appeared, the First Citizen of each city ship. I greeted them and kept Desdemona off-screen. I could tell she was waiting for me to mess this up.

I introduced myself as Grand Fleet Admiral Deven Wellspring of the Arcadian Conclave. The Sylvan on the left bristled at my name. I just smiled, nodded at him, and said yes, that same Deven Wellspring who captained the Void Phoenix. I said unequivocaly I was the one in charge of all operations in the system and controlled the technology. I had not approved the transaction of giving away our subspace technology.

Both space elves had anger forming in their eyes. I said I would be willing to give them the technology, but they had to prove themselves allies first. That only calmed them slightly, and the one on the right introduced himself as Kel’Fer. He asked how they were supposed to do that. I smiled and said eliminate a threat to all the species in this region of space, the quadruped, who called themselves the Anointed.

The other First Citizen, who I assumed was Jae’Tir, announced that Sylvan did not become involved in the wars of the lesser species. I let out a smirk at that, as they were known as the bullies space. I entered into my argument by telling how the quadrupeds were doing the same thing as the Malevolents, erasing species by genocide.

Kel’Fer and Jae’Tir entered into an argument in their language. The translation software told me they knew of the quadruped species and had encountered them before. They left the Sylvan city ships alone but had tried their hand at attacking them in the past. It appeared Kel’Fer had more status than Jae’Tir as he decided the argument. After the argument ended, Kel’Fer asked what would constitute the completion of this task.

I smiled, thinking I had won. I said complete destruction of the infrastructure of the quadrupeds. Desdemona wanted to speak, but I tapped my station and had Julian keep her silenced. I sent them the data we obtained from Desdemona’s capture of the Mobile Space Yard. The task was monumental.

Kel’Fer said they would need the technology to expedite this task. I told them no, but I would send two Fateweavers with them and four support ships. Sensing my end game, Desdemona offered the Cloud Jumper and New Horizon as prospects. I told her she would be going on the Excalibur and taking the Indomitable with her.

We argued in front of the Sylvan before I froze comms. Desdemona said her best utility was defending the Bradbury system from the Brotherhood and other threats. Not being sent on a multi-year campaign. I told her it was my decision, and she could either abide by it or return to her confinement. Her release was always predicated on her doing what was best for the system.

I could tell she was fuming and even thought she might try to influence me with her power, but she restrained herself. We had very basic sensors that could detect when the power was in use since it subtly tapped into subspace. She nodded but asked for a three Fateweaver and two additional support transports. I gave in to the demand, noting the Valkyrie was almost complete and had one-third of its crew assigned already.

We opened comms with the Sylvan and told them they would be working with Desdemona and have three Fateweavers with them. Kel’Fer said it was acceptable. He would send out a call for support and expected at least ten city ships would respond. I swallowed a little uncomfortably. Ten city ships? Kel’Fer nodded. The promise of the technology would bring First Citizens from hundreds of light years away. It would take a year or two to assemble them, but they would come.

My timeline for sidelining Desdemona had just decreased from over a decade to a few years. The firepower on a single city ship was equal to a dozen Fateweavers minus the Armageddon missiles. Still, I was having the Sylvan handle a major headache and violent species for us. It would give the Human Federation and Arcadian Collective time to grow.

Desdemona was not happy, and after she left to prepare for the campaign, I talked with Edmund. Edmund thought I did the right thing. He just suggested that I give Desdemona more resources. Maybe two or three of the Leopard-class spy ships. I looked at the queues; Leopard III and Leopard IV were still four months from completion. Leopard II had been sent out by Edmund in my absence. I agreed and sent Desdemona the specs on the new spyship.

I just hoped my actions had not made an enemy of Desdemona.