

Tech System 671

Chapter 671 Loophole Hunting

Aron had been spending more and more time with his family since he had decided to go to Proxima Centauri at the Proximians tree folks' request, and that decision was further reinforced after the two-star systems were connected.

An hour before, the Emperor addressed the Proxima Centauri exploration fleet.

While the fleet admiral was sending out an emergency call order for the meeting Aron had requested and scheduled for an hour later, Ayaka was seen leaving the mothership and heading back to the planet, having been assigned another mission.

Upon landing at the designated zone, Ayaka wasted no time. She stepped off the ship with a suitcase in hand and walked purposefully toward a lone tree.

When she was about a hundred meters away, the lone tree began to shake and transform. Branches and leaves twisted and rearranged until a humanoid figure emerged, facing Ayaka with an uncanny valley smile.

"Welcome, Ayaka," the humanoid tree said. Her tone and manner of speaking seemed to have evolved, as expected. She and her fellow root senses were spread all over the planet, allowing them to see and hear everything happening on the surface.

As a result, the exploration fleet scientists classified the planet itself as a bona fide body of theirs, with anything on the surface akin to bacteria living on human skin.

With those extensive senses comes information, with information comes data, with data comes experience, and with experience comes change.

These changes were constant since a majority of the fleet had moved to the planet, using it as their operational base allowing for a large amount of data to be gathered by them constantly.

This was one of the many reasons crucial briefings and meetings took place in orbit, far from the planet itself.

"Thank you. How are your days going?" Ayaka responded as she placed the suitcase down. She missed the previous daimyo's castle built by Birch during their first meeting, which had disappeared after a few months—a change that resulted from their gathering of information.

"Nothing but the usual," Birch replied, as she made chairs for both of them to sit facing each other. "Your people are quite diverse in their thoughts and provide ample entertainment. You would wonder what we even called the time before all this activity. We didn't even have a name for that feeling, as it was always the same—boredom. Personally, I don't want to go back to that."

"Does that mean there are those who want it to return to the previous silence?" Ayaka asked, her friendly smile maintaining a casual tone. While it seemed like

she was simply continuing the conversation based on Birch's previous comment, she was actually doing two things: strengthening their rapport and subtly gathering more information to build a comprehensive profile on them reflecting the empire's "Trust but Verify" philosophy, which she embodied in her role.

"Reiterating from our previous meetings, we are distinct individuals with our own consciousness and thoughts," Birch replied smoothly. "I can't speak for the others' inner feelings unless they choose to share them, much like you can't know mine unless I reveal them. Although it may seem that we are all enjoying the current state, I can't fully grasp what's on the minds of others, something we learned from your interactions and from Lee Joon ho."

"One of our worse traits," Ayaka said with a smile. "But that liveliness is bound to increase when your children wake up one E-month from now. You personally might even come to dislike it," she added, smoothly steering the conversation back to the previous topic. She knew that pushing further could risk overstepping boundaries, and she preferred to maintain the rapport they had without testing limits as currently there was no need for that.

"It's always a pleasure to hear that," Birch said with a warm tone. "However, I sense you have a specific reason for visiting today. You typically come by when there's something important to discuss or when you seek answers. Given the chatter about the emergency meeting, I assume your visit is related to that."

She said it with such a nonchalant tone that one might think it was a skill humans could also master. Birch was currently listening to every bit of sound from the planet, isolating each one and understanding different contexts and topics simultaneously—a feat that would be impossible for humans, if we were able to hear the sounds of bacteria within our own bodies. For Birch, however, it was a routine process, carried out on a planetary scale.

"I'm here because of this," she said, tapping the suitcase. "A communication network has been completed between our two star systems, allowing for instant communication. The emperor wanted to see if we could use this new capability to meet your criteria or not." She finally got to the heart of her visit.

"Ooh, congratulations," Birch said, pausing thoughtfully.

Ayaka recognized that Birch's pause indicated she was consulting with the other treefolks. As their representative, Birch's official statements required consensus from the entire group. To Ayaka, this was just part of the usual process.

After a brief pause, Birch resumed, "While our criteria do include having a conversation with him, which your new communication network can facilitate, meeting him in person is also a requirement. As for the rest of the criteria, those details are still confidential since we have yet to reach a consensus on all of them. However, achieving those criteria will necessitate a face-to-face meeting."

Birch's response provided not only an answer to Ayaka's question but also an insight into the tree folk's internal dynamics. It became clear that they were not as unified as might have been assumed, revealing a level of internal complexity that could either simplify or complicate their children's integration into the empire.

“But that doesn't mean we can't start communicating now, as our criteria are based on humanity as a whole, and this meeting might help us refine them,” Birch added.

Ayaka paused, considering the implications of Birch's statement. The outcome of this preliminary meeting could either make the official meeting easier for the emperor or set more challenging criteria. She didn't deliberate for long before responding, “In that case, let me arrange the meeting. Will your fellow tree folk be joining us now, or will you be the sole representative for this discussion?”

“For now, I will represent them, but for the official visit, all of us will be present,” Birch replied.

Chapter 672 The Meeting

Ayaka wasted no time and immediately logged into the VR, reporting the results of her discussion with Birch to the emperor. After logging off, she opened the suitcase, which immediately materialized a physical copy of the emperor thanks to the nanomachines inside it.

The physical copy's eyes had been closed since its creation, but they shortly opened, revealing golden irises as the body looked around, adjusting to its new environment.

He extended his hand and closed it into a fist, testing the responsiveness and sensation through the nanomachine body. Feeling the smooth movement and the sensory feedback, he nodded with a satisfied expression.

But that didn't last long. ‘I don't like this stuffy feeling,’ he thought to himself.

Currently, he could be considered to have his consciousness transferred into this body, and as a result, he could only sense what this body was sensing. With it being a purely technology-based nanomachine, he wasn't sensing a single bit of mana or experiencing the monstrously expanded senses his actual body had developed thanks to the system and his body's development. As a result, he now felt stuffy, confined, and as if he were missing a few senses.

After enduring the stuffy feeling for a short while, he closed his eyes and accessed the satellites orbiting the planet. This time, he focused solely on those equipped with Henry's Eyes system, which monitored mana movements in his location. He immediately took that real-time mana data from these satellites and translated it into sensory information for his nanomachine body, simulating the experience as if his body were sensing the mana in its surroundings.

‘This feels much better,’ he thought to himself, now that a bit of ease had returned. He could sense the mana in his surroundings, though not as clearly as with his actual body. Still, a blurry view was far better than having no eyes at all.

This whole ordeal happened within just five seconds after he connected to the body, so to outsiders, it appeared as if he was simply getting used to the new form.

Aron turned to Ayaka, who stood saluting him and nodded in acknowledgment. He then shifted his gaze to Birch, who observed the scene in silence, her curiosity evident.

“Excuse my delay; it’s quite a surreal feeling,” Aron said, extending his hand to Birch. “Aron Michael, Emperor of the Terran Empire.”

“Birch, representative of what you call Tree folks,” Birch replied, her smile visible through her humanoid form.

As they shook hands, a root emerged beside Ayaka, forming another chair. It was clear this chair was intended for Aron, allowing him to be seated for their conversation.

Aron's conversation with Birch began with the usual formalities. Birch, now well-experienced in such protocols, understood both the reasoning behind them and how to effectively replicate them herself.

Since he had already received an answer to his attempted loophole, Aron chose not to pursue it further. Instead, he focused on addressing questions that the fleet had previously asked but hadn't received answers to or those that they were unable to ask due to their limited knowledge.

He needed these answers to prepare for the official meeting, making this encounter a strategic probing session for both sides. Aron saw no issue with this approach, understanding that to gain valuable insights, one must be prepared to offer something in return.

After exchanging a few formalities, Aron asked, “What is the extent of your sensory range?”

Birch responded without hesitation, “As long as an area has sufficient mana and we have a direct, uninterrupted mana connection to that place, we can perceive everything within it.”

This outcome stemmed from the random questions asked at every previous meeting, which both helped build rapport and made such inquiries seem routine rather than probing.

“Does that mean you can sense and interact with everything within the Proxima star system?” Aron asked, surprised by the extent of their sensory capabilities.

“Other than a few blind spots, yes, we can sense everything if we choose to. However, maintaining that level of awareness requires significant amounts of what you call nutrition,” Birch explained. “As for interaction, it depends on the type of interaction desired. Some interactions are feasible while others are not, based on the mana required for the task.”

She offered no additional details on the specifics of their blind spots or the criteria for interactions, leaving it clear that such information was not to be divulged. Her tone indicated that further elaboration was not forthcoming, and with little visible emotion to read from her humanoid form, only her voice remained as a guide.

Satisfied with the answers he'd received, Aron shifted to his next question: “What will happen to you once they wake up and join the empire?”

“As we mentioned in one of our previous meetings with Ayaka, there isn't a conclusive answer to that question yet. We can't determine what will happen until

after our face-to-face meeting, where we will decide based on the outcomes and agreements made,” she responded with the same confidence as before.

Since the previous report mentioned that a face-to-face meeting was required, Aron wanted to verify if this nanomachine body meeting would meet the criteria for questions requiring direct conversation with the emperor. It appeared that it did not, so he promptly removed those questions from his list. This list had been prepared with the assistance of Nova and Gaia, alongside the data gathered by the fleet through their diligent efforts and rapport-building.

The conversation continued for the next forty minutes, evolving into a tit-for-tat exchange. After every few questions Aron asked, Birch would reciprocate with her own inquiries. Her questions varied widely, from directly mirroring those he had asked to other random or meticulously considered queries.

“It has been quite a fruitful meeting. I hope our face-to-face meeting will be just as productive,” Aron said, rising from his chair. He extended his hand for a final handshake to bid farewell, as he had a fleet to address and give a holiday to.

“I hope the same, and I will be eagerly awaiting your arrival,” Birch replied, returning the sentiment.

“Good job,” Aron said to Ayaka, giving her a reassuring pat on the shoulder. Her usual calm demeanor softened, reflecting a sense of pride.

Moments later, the nanomachine body’s golden eyes dimmed, signaling that Aron had ended the connection. The body entered automatic mode, walking toward the suitcase and returning the nanomachines to its storage compartment.

“See you, Birch,” Ayaka said, finally breaking her silence. She picked up the suitcase and made her way back to the ship that awaited at the landing spot.

Chapter 673 Easy Solution to a Complex Situation

Two weeks later.

The fleet members had wrapped up their vacation and returned to their duties, brimming with excitement and enthusiasm—at least the majority of them. The fleet's exploratory mission was now in full swing once again.

As usual, a meeting was taking place somewhere within the fleet, but this one was special because of one of its attendees – the emperor.

Although the mission had shifted from a no-direct-contact protocol to an active-contact protocol, its core procedures remained unchanged. The only notable difference was that fleet members could now stay in touch with their families after their shifts.

This meant the fleet continued to operate as a self-governing entity, with no interference from anyone other than the emperor. His oversight remained the only exception, and it would only extend beyond his usual limits if he explicitly stated otherwise.

This rule, combined with the fleet's unique circumstances, led to the emperor's personal attendance at the meeting he had called.

The other attendees were the same individuals who had been present when the connection with the star system was established: Ayaka and Fleet Admiral Bianchi.

“Let them keep everything they’ve earned during their training period,” Aron declared decisively, addressing what had appeared to be a significant and challenging issue.

“Why?” Ayaka inquired. “Won’t injecting such a large sum of money into the economy all at once have a negative impact?”

Aron’s decision prompted a logical question from Ayaka, who was not hesitant to seek clarification from the emperor. Known for his openness in explaining his decisions, Aron welcomed such inquiries.

“Based on our simulations, this won’t be an issue,” he explained.

Noticing their curiosity about the specifics, he continued, “There are several reasons for this. First, the six-month travel time between the solar system and here effectively isolates the two locations. This significant distance prevents any immediate economic impact from the sudden influx of money, as there’s no immediate physical exchange that will be happening over such a long span for a few years.

Second, even though they will be connected to the empire, whether they join as citizens or allies, physical meetings will be prohibited for the first few years. This restriction will allow them to establish and stabilize their own economy independently. As a result, the currency that started as a virtual currency will have real-world backing and value, ensuring it’s not merely an artificial creation, allowing for it to have a peaceful transition.

Third, inflation typically occurs when the amount of money in circulation increases without a corresponding rise in the availability of goods. However, in this case, while the money supply will indeed grow, the number of people in the economy will also increase proportionally. Although it might seem that doubling the population could lead to shortages and price hikes, the initial isolation period allows the Proximians to develop their economy independently. This separation ensures that both economies can adjust and stabilize before they are physically and openly integrated.

Fourth, even if the scenarios I outlined do occur, I can address any potential economic issues using my personal wealth. This means the empire won’t need to make any immediate adjustments to its current economic policies.

These are just a few of the key reasons, but I believe they should suffice to illustrate why the concerns about economic disruption are manageable,” he concluded, wrapping up his explanation.

‘This is the power and influence that comes with absolute authority and wealth,’ both Ayaka and Bianchi thought. They were well aware of how previous governments had to deliberate extensively—discussing, debating, and voting—before reaching any decisions. Such processes often involved compromises that could dilute important aspects of a proposal, potentially benefiting a few while harming the whole and

allowing room for exploitation. In stark contrast, Aron's decision-making was swift and decisive.

While such concentration of power could be dangerous if misused, Aron had yet to show any self-serving tendencies. Instead, he had established transparent countermeasures, and the public was well aware of them.

As for the use of his wealth, while it was unprecedented and had never been seen before, they recognized that he truly had the capability to address economic issues with his personal resources. He could do so effortlessly, without even invoking his authority as emperor.

"Then, is there anything else that requires my decision?" Aron asked, having resolved the issues that were within his purview.

"There are none at the moment," Bianchi replied. "However, the topic of leadership will be up for discussion following your meeting with them."

"True, it will be handled afterward," Aron said. "From the report, it seems the leadership structure and government positions were selected according to imperial protocol. If they join the empire, their only requirement will be to swear allegiance. If they become allies, we'll just need to sign the alliance agreement as agreed. It's not a major issue."

"Looks like there are no more questions," Aron said. "Then I'll excuse myself as I need to make final preparations for a journey." As he spoke, his body began to disintegrate, gradually disappearing from the meeting room.

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Aron and Rina were seated in the cheering stand of a school football field, dressed in casual clothes. They watched with interest as children played football on the field, enjoying the lively atmosphere.

Aron was there to support his brother at his request before his departure, making the most of the time with his family before his and Rina's long journey ahead. It was a nice break from his usual duties and a chance to connect with his loved ones.

"Goal!!!!!" Aron and Rina jumped in excitement as his brother scored, their cheers nearly startling those around them. The crowd, normally composed due to their presence, seemed momentarily taken aback, especially since his fabled security team was not visible in the stadium.

"That's my brother!" Aron exclaimed with unrestrained joy, his enthusiasm undiminished by the startled looks of those around him. He continued cheering loudly, his eyes following his younger brother as he celebrated, his smile beaming with pride and happiness.

After a moment of exuberant cheering, Aron and Rina settled back into their seats, turning their attention to the restarted match.

This was one of the final activities on their list before their departure, and Aron felt a deep sense of satisfaction for having chosen to be part of it.

Chapter 674 The First Step

Two weeks later.

It had now been a month since the two sides had been connected, and the empire had spent that time efficiently setting up the necessary infrastructure to live stream throughout the star system.

However, due to it coinciding with the Proximians finally awakening from their VR pods, the live stream was momentarily restricted to viewing areas of the star system other than the planet. This was to respect the privacy of those awakening, who would be in a vulnerable state. Despite this limitation, the live stream still attracted a few million viewers, eagerly watching different locations of the star system as the exploration fleet continued its work.

Generally, such events would have attracted even more viewers, but a significant portion of the usual audience for this type of livestream was currently focused on something else.

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High Earth Orbit.

Outside Earth, a fleet of about a thousand military-style spaceships could be seen, their sheer number a testament to the empire's might but also the importance of their mission. Among them, a single, magnificent spaceship stood out, its sleek design and imposing presence inspiring awe to anyone seeing it.

Although it looked like a thousand ships were there to protect it, the central spaceship didn't appear vulnerable. Created with the latest technology in the hands of the empire, it could stand its ground against any enemies of a tier one civilization and last for quite a while against a tier two civilization.

The same level of sophistication applied to the accompanying military ships, which were meticulously crafted and customized for the sole purpose of safeguarding the central vessel during its mission.

"Your Majesty, all checks are complete, and we are ready to depart at your command," Dimitri, the highest-ranking Aegis member within the escort fleet, reported.

"Then let's commence the journey. The sooner we start, the sooner we arrive," Aron replied, addressing Dimitri's hologram.

"Understood," Dimitri acknowledged before his hologram vanished, leaving the room to revert to its previous state.

"Hey, play your cards. He's already left, and you're just stalling because you've got a bad hand," Felix said to Aron, who was pretending to think about something after his call.

“I was considering if I might have forgotten something important. If we leave now and I remember later, there’s no turning back,” Aron said, diverting his gaze from Felix's curious eyes.

“I was considering if I might have forgotten something important. If we leave now and I remember later, there’s no turning back,” Aron said, diverting his gaze from Felix's curious eyes.

“How many times does the string 50108 appear in the first two hundred million digits of Pi?” Sarah asked promptly after Aron’s response.

“Two thousand fifty-seven times. Why?” he answered without hesitation, curious about her inquiry.

“So, are you telling me that someone with your monstrous memory, developed after awakening, forgot something important?” Sarah said sarcastically, revealing her intent to challenge his previous statement.

“Even though I remember everything, retrieving specific information requires an active search. Think of it as long-term storage, not a quick-access type. As a CEO of a tech company, you should understand that,” Aron replied.

“What about Nova? Does she have that problem too?” Felix asked, joining the conversation.

“She wouldn’t know unless I tell her about it,” Aron said, pointing at Nova as he threw his card onto the table, mixing it with the already-played cards.

“There’s no escaping here, Nova. Highlight his cards,” Rina said, amid the looks of disbelief from Felix and Sarah at Aron’s shameless attempt to end the game prematurely to avoid playing his poor hand and losing the game.

Unfortunately for Aron, he was on an advanced ship equipped with the latest AI technology, allowing Nova to demonstrate her full capabilities. With Rina’s orders, Nova immediately highlighted Aron’s cards, ensuring that the rest of the players couldn’t see them. She then activated a small tractor beam to retrieve the cards and bring them in front of Aron. Aron looked at Nova’s nanomachine body managing the cards in her hands, sitting silently beside him, while its other instance of her was handing him his cards returning him to the game despite his attempts to end it.

{Sir, it's your turn,} Nova said nonchalantly, unfazed by the death glare from her creator, which only fueled the laughter in the room.

“I’ll have my moment for revenge,” Aron said with a tone of resigned defeat as he picked up his cards and continued the game, fully aware that his earlier attempt to end it prematurely had failed.

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While the emperor was engaged in his losing card game, the fleet, having received the order to commence their journey, sprang into action. The mother AI of the ships began coordinating seamlessly, ensuring that the fleet moved in perfect unison according to the meticulously designed plans.

Each military ship in the fleet housed a substantial contingent, with crews ranging from a minimum of one hundred to a maximum of one thousand personnel per ship.

Consequently, the entire fleet comprised approximately eight hundred thousand individuals. The majority of these personnel were tasked with ensuring the security of the emperor and the accompanying members throughout the journey.

Silently and steadily, the fleet began to break free from Earth's gravitational influence. By accelerating steadily, they gained speed with each passing second.

Although the solar system had an imperial government-imposed spaceship speed limit, the path ahead was already cleared, permitting the escort fleet to reach the maximum velocity of their ships without entering faster-than-light travel.

Throughout this entire ordeal, the journey was being broadcasted through imperial channels, attracting hundreds of millions of viewers. Many who would have been watching the Proxima live feeds were now either bidding farewell or admiring the new classes of ships in the fleet. The fleet featured many never-before-seen designs, sparking curiosity among spaceship enthusiasts who discussed the ships' purposes and specifications in the chat section. Meanwhile, others used the chat feed to express their feelings, whether it was love or hate for the empire, the emperor, or anyone else they felt compelled to address.

This marked the beginning of the emperor's journey—a voyage that, if it proceeded without any issues, had the potential to transform the empire in previously unforeseen ways.

Chapter 675 "Arise"

About an hour after the emperor's journey had commenced, the activity in Proxima A reached a dramatic crescendo.

Ptssss, A soft hiss echoed as air escaped from a pod that began to open. The lid slowly rose, revealing a stunning dark elf woman lying peacefully inside.

She remained still for a moment longer before her closed eyes began to flutter and then slowly open, revealing striking green eyes that gradually came into focus.

"Mh..." she groaned slightly as she grasped the edge of the VR pod, using it for support as she shifted from a reclining position to a seated one.

"Although I believed it was real, I still had a slight suspicion that we were merely part of a simulation undergoing a test," she said, her voice initially crackling. As she spoke, her vocal cords gradually adjusted, growing clearer with each word, signaling their first true use after being constantly stimulated by the pod to prepare for movement when the time for their awakening came.

“It’s good to be skeptical and question things, but what makes you believe that you’re not in another simulation now?” a voice from outside the pod asked, prompting her to turn toward the source of the sound.

“Ayaka,” she called out, her voice warm with emotion and her face lighting up with happiness at the sight of her.

“Before I even opened my eyes, I felt a welcoming connection. Although I can’t quite explain it, my subconscious knew this was the real world and was welcoming me,” she continued, quickly gathering her thoughts and responding after her initial emotional reaction.

“We’ll sort that out later, but for now, you need to get dressed, Rayyan,” Ayaka said, handing her the clothes.

“Whaaa!” Rayyan exclaimed in surprise as she realized she was naked, quickly covering herself and blushing from embarrassment.

“Turn around,” Rayyan instructed, grabbing the clothes from Ayaka’s hands with lightning speed.

“I’ve already seen everything anyway; you have to remember I raised you,” Ayaka said with a smile. Despite her teasing, she turned around to respect Rayyan’s request and waited for her to get dressed.

“Alright, please give me an update on the awakening process,” Rayyan requested, her playful tone now replaced by a serious and bureaucratic demeanor.

“I keep reminding you that I’m not your secretary, but given these special circumstances, I’ll indulge you this time,” Ayaka said, handing over the glasses. Rayyan accepted them and immediately put them on.

“We are proceeding according to the plan,” Ayaka reported. “We’ve begun awakening the Category One individuals, and you’re among the first. A few thousand are currently in the process, with Category Two individuals to follow. We should remain on schedule and have everyone awakened and everything ready within a month.”

Rayyan listened intently as Ayaka spoke, but her eyes were focused on the data displayed through her glasses. Despite Ayaka's reassurance that nothing had changed, Rayyan adhered to the "Trust but Verify" principle she had been taught during her training, scrutinizing the plan to confirm its accuracy herself.

The plan highlighted the ongoing awakening process, showing that category one individuals—those in leadership positions across all agencies—were being prioritized. Following them, category two individuals, primarily government personnel, would be awakened next. The focus would be on police and military personnel, who would play a crucial role during the month of integration. They

were responsible for aiding the newly awakened individuals in settling into their homes and ensuring a smooth transition into the real world before resuming their official duties.

“Thanks, we will be taking it from here,” Rayyan said, having reviewed the plan and confirmed its accuracy. She took charge of the process, signaling her readiness to proceed.

“I’m looking forward to meeting you after everything is over,” Ayaka replied with a smile, extending her hand to Rayyan. She had watched Rayyan grow from childhood to becoming the head of Proxima’s government.

Ayaka looked forward to their future meeting, whether Rayyan would be part of an allied government or as a representative of the imperial government. This meant that their next face-to-face encounter would only happen after the emperor’s arrival and his meeting with the tree folks, which would be after six months.

As a result, they would not meet in person for the next six months to allow for a smooth integration process without interference. All bases and infrastructure that were to support the exploration fleet personnel on the planet had been deconstructed, and everyone had evacuated back to their respective ships within the exploration fleet.

“Thank you for everything you’ve done for us. Regardless of the decisions that are made, I and everyone else will never forget the grace you’ve shown us. We will do everything in our power to return this favor to the empire, the imperial family, the exploration fleet who cared for us, and to you and Lee, who raised us as your own children,” Rayyan said as she shook Ayaka’s extended hand. Her face conveyed the sincerity of her words, showing that she meant every bit of it.

“I appreciate your sincerity and hope we can meet again under the circumstances we both hope for,” Ayaka said with a smile.

“But where is he?” Rayyan asked, looking around as spaceships maneuvered, finalizing everything before handing control over to the awakened military personnel from among the Proximians.

“The admiral called him back to the fleet quite some time ago. I don’t know the exact reason. Why are you asking? Did you miss him already?” Ayaka responded, gently teasing Rayyan.

“I wanted to see if there would be any sort of connection feeling, since he played a significant role in our creation,” Rayyan explained, blushing slightly from Ayaka’s teasing.

“Good idea, but it seems your hypothesis will have to wait until our next meeting,” Ayaka said, glancing at the lander approaching to pick her up. “It doesn’t look like he’ll be returning anytime soon.” She added as she looked at the glasses that

informed her being the last person remaining on the planet, with the rest of the personnel having already evacuated.

Chapter 676 To Leave or to Remain

Task Force Teegarden.

It had been more than a year since their arrival, and they had discovered two planets in the Goldilocks zone, both shrouded in nuclear winter as a result of a devastating war. This discovery marked the beginning of their exploration.

Inside a private office, Fleet Admiral Jason Ryfczinski could be seen going through the final pieces of collected data from the entire star system. The majority of important data had been collected from the two habitable planets within the star system, Teegarden B and Teegarden C, both currently experiencing nuclear winter.

Despite the primary goal of the exploration fleets being discovery, the selection of specific star systems hinted at the empire's fervent hope to find intelligent life. Each of these star systems boasted planets within the Goldilocks zone.

However, after meticulously searching every nook and cranny within the two habitable planets within the star system, they were certain there was no intelligent life remaining. All had perished either during the war or in the years following due to various factors such as hunger, conflict, suicide, and other causes.

As a result, a major reason for this exploration fleet's mission went out the window. However, this didn't mean they stopped exploring. There was still valuable data to be collected, and now all the data that could be gathered was finally complete.

Now, he found himself in a dilemma: should he continue the exploration mission until their expected time to return, or should he end the mission early and order the fleet to return ahead of schedule?

"How long will it take to complete the collection of materials?" he asked, speaking to the void.

{From the creation of cargo ships to everything being loaded, it will take anywhere between three to six months,} the fleet's AI responded shortly after calculating.

"Call all of the commanders for a meeting as soon as possible. We need to come up with a plan," he said, dismissing the hologram and taking a moment to rest while waiting for the summoned commanders to arrive.

{At once,} the AI responded, immediately setting to work.

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A few hours later.

Seen from above the two planets, a vast stream of ships carried container-like structures, delivering them to the main exploration bases on both planets. The orders to start collecting everything worth researching further back on Earth had been issued only a few hours ago, and the fleet was already in full motion, mobilizing to transport the collected materials. These efforts aimed to bring back

valuable samples and have them analyzed by more advanced machines for further analysis and development.

Although they appeared to be ordinary containers from the outside, their sizes ranging from hundreds of meters to over a kilometer, they were far from ordinary. These were intelligent containers equipped with nuclear batteries and advanced virtual intelligence systems. These systems activated and maintained stasis throughout the journey back to Earth, ensuring the safety and integrity of their contents. Additionally, the virtual intelligence could report any issues during the voyage, allowing immediate intervention if needed.

People on the ground wasted no time, immediately getting to work with renewed vigor. Knowing they were packing up to return home, they worked faster and more efficiently, aware that the quicker they completed their tasks with minimal issues, the sooner they could head back to Earth.

On the two planets, everything was being collected either in its entirety or in select samples, depending on the nature of the material. In some cases, only a few thousand samples were taken.

Things such as servers on the planet were collected in their entirety, while the bodies of the previous inhabitants were limited to a thousand samples per species. The remaining bodies were buried in designated civilization burial grounds on each of the two planets, where a memorial tomb would be constructed. These memorials would include inscriptions in the inhabitants' language, detailing how they died.

As for the water on these two planets, a million tons were being collected from each distinct water source, including rivers, ponds, and oceans.

The stellar forge of this fleet was now operating at its maximum safe operational output, churning out containers and building a cargo ship specifically designed to store them. This new cargo ship was essential, as the current fleet configuration was not suited for this particular mission.

"Now I'm wondering if we are the lucky or the unlucky ones to have found life outside the solar system at all," Yassin said, observing the mayhem at the Teegarden B main planetary base. Containers were arriving, being packed, and moved to a waiting line for loading onto cargo ships once they were completed.

"I'm pretty sure the rest either find life at its infancy or nothing at all. If my guess is right, then we are lucky to be the first to discover intelligent life outside the solar system. And even if not, there's no need to dwell on it since finding intelligent life, even a dead one, is incredibly rare. Our discovery is like winning the lottery," Mpilingu responded.

"Mpkhhhh," Yassin laughed at Mpilingu's opinion. "Based on my calculations, there should be less than a one percent chance of finding life within our hundred-light-year distance. Since we are the ones who found it, albeit a dead one, that percentage has been used up. This means the chances of others finding something similar are even worse than the already small one percent."

"I just wanted us to find a living version," Mpilingu said, revealing his hopes for the discovery of new life. "I wanted to see if any of our artists who created extraterrestrial life forms had hit the mark or if we weren't even close to it."

"Anyway, it doesn't really matter now. We need to focus on safe collection and evacuation without any casualties. I don't want our first death to occur just months before we return. I don't want to deal with the bureaucracy or tarnish our safety record," Yassin said, his eyes fixed on the hovering

holograms displaying footage of the ongoing mission. The holograms highlighted the areas with the most chaos, allowing him to intervene through the virtual intelligence if the monitoring AI missed anything, no matter how unlikely that was. He wasn't leaving anything to chance.

Chapter 677 Daily Briefings

{Why not just kill them?} Athena interjected, offering her suggestion amidst the discussion.

Although Aron was in transit on his journey, he wasn't exempt from working. He was currently undergoing his daily morning briefing, which was being provided by the head of agencies AI.

Currently, they were discussing how to deal with the people who had been exiled by the empire. These individuals were considered irreconcilable opponents of the empire, always on the verge of causing trouble whenever they had the chance.

The reason they were discussing these exiled individuals now, despite their banishment a few years ago, was due to recent simulations. These simulations indicated that, given the empire's rapid expansion and the sudden addition of ten billion people, all in their prime and of childbearing age, their population would increase exponentially. If there were no technologically superior civilizations to threaten the empire's existence or expansion, by the time the exiles arrived at their intended new world, the empire would have already encompassed that area, rendering the exiles' plans to rule themselves moot.

"Although killing is the most efficient way to deal with these issues, it should be our last resort. If we resort to killing every time we encounter a problem, it will set a dangerous precedent." Aron said, shutting out that suggestion at once.

{How about we opt for a secret open prison approach until all of the first generation dies out?} Niyx, the AI responsible for the intelligence aspect of the empire, suggested with a smirk, as if she had already pre-thought and planned this idea. {We could then gradually influence the changes in the people of that generation and the subsequent ones before making it seem as if the empire has discovered and annexed them.}

Upon hearing her suggestion, Aron paused for a moment, considering it. Noticing her smile, he said, "I know you have a more detailed plan. Give me more details about it."

{As you wish,} Niyx replied, materializing a detailed map of the star systems where the exiled people would be arriving and starting their new lives at the center of the room. Everyone gathered around, focused with anticipation, eager to see where she was going with her plan.

{All we need to do,} Niyx continued, {is send advanced ships equipped with self-replicating nanomachines to take over one inhabited planet within each of these star systems. The nanomachines will start their replication process in advance, preparing for the exiles' arrival.

Once the exiles arrive, our nanomachine agents will integrate into the society and work in various ways—misleading, blocking, or otherwise preventing them from advancing their space and weapons technology beyond a certain level. Simultaneously, we will influence and modify their beliefs over the next few generations, eradicating ultranationalistic ideologies and other undesirable elements. Our goal is to ensure that, eventually, they are on an equal footing with the empire. After all, no matter who they are, they are still humans and were part of the empire's inception.}

There was a brief silence in the room as everyone took a few seconds to process the information, their advanced processing powers quickly digesting the details.

{As previously suggested, killing them would be the easiest solution compared to doing this,} Athena said, being the first to speak.

When the room fell silent, she added, {Either that or we could just brainwash them if killing them isn't an option.} She continued playing her role as the extremist during these meetings, reserving her more serious approach for military-related topics.

"I will think about it for now," Aron said, pausing briefly before continuing, "but you can all send me your suggestions on what we should do about them." He then looked directly at Athena and added, "That doesn't include killing or brainwashing them."

{Okay, next topic,} Gaia, acting as secretary, announced. {The new extremist awakeners are showing signs that they plan to use your absence as an opportunity. Several groups are engaged in various activities. For more detailed information, I believe Niyx is better suited to provide that.}

Gaia immediately handed the stage over to Niyx, recognizing that she was the expert in this field and best suited to provide a more detailed briefing.

{Different groups have attempted to reach out to Miss Rina's brother in prison, her father, and various members of both of your families.} Niyx began, providing a detailed briefing. {It appears they are trying to build connections in case something happens to you and the throne becomes open for contention.

Although your brother is the current next in line as mandated by the constitution, a regent will be needed due to his age. These groups believe that one of those family members might be selected as one of the regents. Since more than one regent is typically appointed to prevent abuse of power and to safeguard the heir, they are positioning themselves to benefit from this arrangement."

That situation pertains to the non-active groups, which doesn't require any immediate action from our side.

Then, there are other groups attempting to use this opportunity to seize control of the empire. We are actively monitoring them with our AI and agents, and we will soon have a case prepared against them.

Additionally, we are keeping watch to see if any other groups join their ranks before deciding on the best course of action.}

"Keep monitoring them, but don't take action just yet. We should use this opportunity to let all of them gather and reveal themselves fully. This will provide us with a believable justification and evidence to address them effectively with the imperial government."

Although they had brain scanners and other data-gathering tools on their hands, they couldn't use that information as evidence because it would require revealing the source. This sometimes necessitated making anonymous reports to uncover already known evidence.

Additionally, some people with ulterior motives suspected the devices' capabilities to read brains and memories, so they took steps to avoid detection. Now that they were taking action, there was no need to rely on that potentially compromised knowledge, as their agents could gather the necessary information from within.

{I will do so,} Niyx said, then fell silent, allowing Gaia to proceed.

With that matter addressed, Gaia moved on to the next topic in the briefing. Given the vast size of the empire and the nearly endless list of topics, not all of which were negative, the situation was manageable for Aron.

His well-established system for selecting agency heads ensured that these briefings primarily informed him of ongoing issues and allowed him to decide whether to add anything or leave the matters to be handled by the agency leaders.

Chapter 678 Arrival

Six Months Later.

Throughout the journey, Aron dedicated as little time as possible to his official duties. Instead, he chose to spend the majority of his time with his wife and his friends, cherishing his friend's rare physical presence together in the past several years. He also enjoyed playing games with his younger brother and occasionally had a talk with his parents, who were still reveling in their renewed vigor like every old person following the empire-wide rejuvenation program. "I will do so,"

Unfortunately, no matter how enjoyable a semi-vacation might be, it eventually has to come to an end. No matter how powerful he was, Aron wasn't exempt from this rule. His fleet arrived outside Proxima Centauri's heliosphere, emerging from FTL travel and releasing whatever they dragged throughout the journey to be dealt with by the heliosphere.

The fleet was currently at a full stop, as per Aron's order. He wanted to test something.

"Mhh...." Aron mused with his eyes closed before opening them and stating, "With this, I can say that the amount of mana in space outside star systems is constant." He had been testing this theory more than ten times throughout the journey, beginning outside the solar system's heliosphere and continuing randomly at various points, with the final test conducted outside Proxima Centauri's heliosphere, leading him to this conclusion.

As he hovered outside the spaceship, Aron turned his body using his spacesuit until he was facing the Proxima star system, which appeared like any other star in the sky if viewed from Earth. He then turned to face the opposite direction, towards the solar system, which looked equally insignificant. "We really are nothing in the grand scheme of things," he said slowly before he started moving back toward his spaceship, which immediately activated its tractor beam to catch and pull him in.

After undergoing the decontamination process—necessary because, without a heliosphere to protect him, he had been directly exposed to everything the galaxy had to offer, with only his shield and spacesuit for protection—Aron ordered, "Move out," as he removed his suit.

"I can't wait to meet them," Rina said with excitement.

Although the Proximians had been fully revived and communication with their star system had been established, allowing for interaction between the two groups, the imperial family had yet to have an official meeting with their leadership.

They were planning to hold this meeting after their meeting with the tree folk, as the outcome of the discussion with the tree folk would influence the environment of their official encounter with the Proximian leadership.

Her excitement was understandable, given that almost everyone on Earth had interacted with the Proximians through VR and had found them quite likable. Despite knowing the essential aspects of being human, the Proximians possessed a uniqueness and purity that most of humanity had lost over time. This made them a respected and admired group.

“Don’t worry, you will soon,” Aron said as he entered the room, his hair tousled from his spacesuit, earning a chuckle from Rina.

“Don’t you know, the closer something gets, the longer the wait becomes?” she said, running her hand through his hair to smooth it into a more presentable fashion.

As they continued their pleasant conversation, the fleet began moving again, making its way toward the star system.

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For the past six months, Lee Joon-ho had been feeling quite bored since their evacuation from the planet. With little to do but monitor mundane tasks in the control room, he had often felt sleepy. But all of that was now forgotten as both he and everyone in the control room had their mouths open in surprise at what they were currently seeing.

“Holy mother,” Lee exclaimed from the control room, finally breaking the silence. His reaction echoed the feelings of everyone in the room as they gazed at the breathtaking visualization of the star system.

Although they had been tracking the emperor's journey, the tracking data had only shown the fleet as a blob while in FTL, and most had been too busy working overtime on the planet’s evacuation to follow the live broadcast at the start of his journey.

Therefore, it came as quite a surprise to them to see that the emperor was arriving with a thousand ships as escorts—essentially moving an entire country’s worth of protection for fewer than ten people.

“He isn’t messing around at all,” someone in the room remarked as they watched the fleet move steadily within the star system, drawing closer to the planet with each passing moment.

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At the same moment:

“Looks like they are finally here,” Birch said from within the timeless meadow as the fleet entered the star system, passing through the heliosphere.

“He has quite an aura with him. Is this what they call the aura of leadership?” Oak spoke, his voice deep and serious, a stark contrast to Birch’s softer tone.

His words were met with agreement from everyone. Although they couldn't perfectly visualize Aron due to his relative size and distance, he appeared to be glowing compared to the other humans on the approaching fleet.

"I don't think it has to do with his leadership or anything," Crabapple said, rubbing his invisible beard—a trait he had adopted from the dwarves he had selected and created. "Rayyan doesn't have anything close to resembling that."

As the three were conversing, Mangrove and Cypress remained silent, simply listening to the discussion. The three had grown accustomed to this dynamic, as it was a recurring occurrence within their space.

"We should start preparing for his arrival since we promised to meet him personally," Birch said, immediately setting about constructing a massive palace for their meeting.

Since the guest was special, Birch knew she couldn't construct a palace during the meeting itself as she had done with Ayaka. She understood human etiquette better now and knew that preparing a grand setting in advance was the appropriate approach.

The others didn't interfere with her efforts but sent a root each, which swiftly grew into a tree next to Birch's, ready to be converted into their humanoid forms for the meeting.

These massive movements didn't go unnoticed by those watching the live stream, which had been showcasing different scenes of the star system, including the planet.

The changes attracted a great deal of attention, as this particular scene had previously only shown a humble tree. They made it clear to everyone that the meeting was approaching with each passing second.

Chapter 679 Eve of the Meeting

The moment the fleet entered the Proxima star system, the escort fleet divided itself into four groups of 250 ships each. Three of the groups moved ahead, leaving the emperor and one group behind.

These three groups rushed to cover the four sides of the star system, positioning the planet where the meeting would take place at the center. This strategic move was to ensure that they were always ready to deal with any potential threats to the emperor's safety.

At the same time, command of all the military forces that accompanied the exploration fleet was transferred to the Emperor's Aegis leader, who also served as the Admiral of his escort fleet. This measure ensured a unified chain of command and prevented any misunderstandings, allowing for coordinated and efficient movements of the entire military force in the star system should any situation arise that required a unified response.

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"Sir, we will arrive in orbit in five hours," reported Admiral Dimitris, his hologram appearing briefly before the emperor.

"Thank you," Aron responded, and the hologram disappeared.

Aron rose from his reclining chair, putting down the book he had been reading, and started heading to his room.

Although he could experience everything in VR in a realistic manner—where the book could come to life as a world or even as a movie—he still enjoyed reading physical books in the real world sometimes.

“Time to start preparing ourselves,” Aron said as he gently woke Rina, who was still sleeping.

“Already?” she asked, still drowsy.

“There are still a few hours, but we need to be ready ahead of time so that when we arrive, we are in top condition for the meeting,” Aron replied as he carried and took her to the bathroom to begin their preparations.

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“They will be here in five hours and would like to immediately proceed to the meeting. Depending on how it ends, it could take much longer to handle the bureaucratic matters before they can start their return journey. So, I need all of you to be ready an hour before they arrive. Understood?” Admiral Bianchi said, addressing the two people with him in the meeting room.

“Yes, sir,” Ayaka and Lee responded in unison.

Although they were already prepared, Ayaka and Lee went with the flow, understanding that everyone on the fleet was on full alert at this point. The admiral simply wanted to ensure that everything was going according to plan and that nothing was being overlooked.

“Okay then, you are dismissed,” the admiral said, signaling that they could leave. He needed to attend to a few other matters to ensure everything was in order and put his mind at ease.

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“Mam, they should arrive in a few hours,” a secretary for the leader of the Proximians informed her as she was going through paperwork.

“What about their accommodations?” Rayyan asked, raising her head from the paperwork.

“Those were prepared two months ago, and we did a second pass on them a week ago, so they are as ready as they could be,” the secretary responded immediately.

“The same goes for the ceremony after their meeting. But are you sure you’re not going to attend the meeting?” she added promptly after the answer.

“Although I’m the leader of our species and can make decisions regarding our people, that only applies to matters pertaining to us. Anything related to the elders requires their permission. I can’t force them to do anything, nor can I even entertain the thought of doing so,” Rayyan said with a sigh of defeat.

She recalled the powerlessness she felt when she went to meet them about a month after they had logged out of the training pods, when everything was already in motion.

They had immediately used her as a test for a few things before any substantive discussions could even begin. The experience was quite unpleasant, but it was enough to make her understand that resisting them was futile. They seemed to be able to access her mind directly, sometimes responding to her questions before she could even articulate them, making it clear that their abilities far surpassed her own.

“Okay, keep me updated on their journey—” Before she could finish her order, the words “You will also be attending the meeting” echoed directly in her mind, causing her to pause abruptly.

“Yes, I will start preparing for that, elder,” she responded immediately, speaking to the void.

“Change of plans, I will also be attending the meeting as per the elders' orders. Start making the preparations for it,” Rayyan instructed her secretary, adapting quickly to the new situation.

“Yes, ma'am,” her secretary immediately responded, understanding the urgency in Rayyan's tone. She had only witnessed Rayyan receiving orders from the elders once before, an experience that had thoroughly confused her at the time.

Without wasting any time, she left the office to start the preparations for Rayyan's attendance at the meeting.

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Five hours later.

“Welcome, Your Majesty,” Ayaka greeted the emperor, extending her hand for a handshake. Aron took her hand with a firm grip.

“Nice to meet you,” Aron said as he shook hands with Lee immediately after his handshake with Ayaka.

“Okay, let’s not waste our time or theirs. I’m sure they’ve been waiting for us for more than a year,” Aron said, immediately getting to the point as usual.

“Yes, sir. Please follow me,” Ayaka responded, moving aside and extending her hand to indicate the direction for the emperor to pass. They headed towards the hangar in

the imperial vessel that housed the landing vehicle they would use to head to the planet.

Aron immediately started moving, with Rina on his right and Ayaka on his left. They conversed, making small talk while walking towards the hangar.

Behind them, a small entourage followed, including some of Aron's security detail. The group was moving with a sense of anticipation and readiness, aware of the significance of the upcoming meeting.

Upon arriving at the hangar, they were greeted by a beautiful ship already active and fully staffed, just waiting for them to board before getting to work. Without wasting any time, they all boarded the ship.

The moment the doors closed, the massive gates leading to the outside began to open. As the opening widened, a blue shimmer appeared, holding back the air from being expelled into the vacuum.

The ship slowly started hovering, then moved through the opening, passing through the shield seamlessly. Once outside, the gates immediately began to close behind them.

Chapter 680 The Grand Welcome

After a few minutes of flying in space, they finally reached the upper layers of the planet's atmosphere. The ship absorbed the impact seamlessly, its occupants not feeling a thing as they descended. The transition from the cold vacuum of space to the warmth of the planet below was smooth, silent, and peaceful.

"The planet is truly massive and beautiful in its own way," Rina remarked, gazing out of the ship's window. Despite having seen it in VR, experiencing it in reality evoked a different sensation. The abundance of mana was a major factor in this feeling; both she and Aron were exhilarated, their bodies responding to the mana in a way that Earth's mana was yet to match.

"This amount of mana feels like a dream," Aron added, extending his hand forward and then closing it into a fist. The mana's influence was particularly profound on him, as his golden blood contained a high percentage of mana.

As a result, at the moment, he was feeling constantly invigorated and in peak condition, a sensation he could previously only experience within mana-dense artificial environments back on Earth, like in his now decommissioned first ever quantum server.

As they discussed their experience with the mana, the ship continued its steady course, and soon, the palace became visible in the distance, unveiling its grandeur.

"Looks like they really went all out for the meeting," Aron remarked, taking in the sight.

“It’s incredible,” Rina said, observing the palace’s design. “The level of control they have over their roots is astonishing. Despite everything looking like a traditional palace with various colors and contrasts, it’s all created from a single root.”

“Is it alright if I ask them about how they’re doing it?” Rina turned to Ayaka, seeking guidance on whether it was appropriate to inquire about their techniques. She wanted to be respectful of their unique characteristics and differences, knowing that the tree folk couldn’t be judged by human standards. Ayaka, being one of the few knowledgeable about the tree folk, was the perfect person to ask.

“You can ask them anything without worrying about offending them,” Ayaka promptly answered. “The only issue is whether they consider the question worth answering. From our previous meetings, we’ve learned that they might choose to answer or not, without explaining why.”

“Looks like I’ll need to gauge their mood before deciding what to ask, Thanks,” Rina said, appreciating the advice.

The ship descended steadily, drawing nearer to the designated landing zone. With a smooth touch, it landed gently on the surface, marking their arrival.

“Please prepare yourselves for the increased gravity when we leave the ship. It’s 17% heavier than on Earth, so if you have any difficulty, Lee will assist you without the need for spacesuits,” Ayaka reminded everyone. This was to ensure they wouldn’t repeat OC Parker’s blunder—he had famously stumbled during his first landing, a mistake the current team wanted to avoid, especially given their high-profile status and the fact that their disembarking location was one of the key sites for the still ongoing star system-wide live broadcast.

Immediately, the disembarking process began. Ayaka and Lee were the first to step out, followed by the rest of their escorts, and finally, Aron and Rina.

‘Looks like they practiced in the simulation,’ Ayaka thought to herself as she observed Aron and Rina. They moved effortlessly, as though the heavier gravity was no challenge at all, maintaining the same ease they had in the ship with gravity drivers active.

They began walking towards the palace, which had been meticulously prepared by the Proximians. The moment the palace construction was completed, several Proximians, sent by Rayyan, had been stationed to manage crucial sectors such as cleaning, food services, security, and other essential operations.

The massive palace doors were wide open, revealing Rayyan along with the five tree folk—Birch, Oak, Crabapple, Mangrove, and Cypress—waiting on the other side to welcome them.

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As Aron, Rina, Ayaka and Lee, exchanged greetings with Rayyan and the tree folk, the massive palace doors closed behind them with the rest of the group securing the perimeter.

As for the live stream feed, it was already in a frenzy of activity and noise as millions expressed themselves on it.

@Maali91: ["Wow!!!!!! Where's the person who claimed this was all a simulation and that the emperor was using it as a cover-up for the exploration fleet's disappearance?"]

@Curtis1122: [I doubt he'll show up now. I checked his account, and it looks like he was bullied so much that he ended up deleting it to escape the harassment.]

@ahmed_94: ["LOL!! Did anyone else notice the emperor's expression when he shook hands with the giant tree folk? It was only for a short span, but something seemed a bit strange!"]

@Eldwood_Kaumehei: [@ahmed_94, What do you mean by that? I saw nothing about what you are talking about at all. Are you also one of those conspiracy theorists?]

@ahmed_94: [@Eldwood_Kaumehei, I saw it because I had my stream zoomed and focused on his face, and it happened for a few milliseconds. It is one of the you blink, and you miss it type of action, but it happened.]

@Nerdrage001: [@ahmed_94, Are you one of those perverts who simps for the emperor?]

@ahmed_94: [Stop slandering me. I can and will sue you for that. If you don't believe me, go and take a look for yourself]

@Fkuffy_Dog_Hugger: [@ahmed_94, Based on your reaction, it looks like it is true.]

@ahmed_94: [Meet me in VR, and let our bodies do the talk like men. I sent you an invite and location. It is a fight to the death, and If you don't come, you are a Pu**y]

@Ertenal_Crusader: [@ahmed_94, Make the link public. I want to watch people kill each other for honor]

@Thawk7678: [@Fkuffy_Dog_Hugger, You better accept it, or you won't live past it.]

@Demonic_entity: [This is why I like the VR. Thank you, emperor, for the tech.]

@Lenrad: [Hey @Nerdrage001, I found the man you were looking for here]

Such discussions were rampant throughout the livestream. Even though the emperor and the empress had already entered the palace and were no longer visible on the stream, people continued watching it, eagerly awaiting for the results of the meeting.

A few viewers briefly left the stream to catch a fight of honor, but they, too, were quick to return after a few minutes, eager to see what would unfold next.