Rock Raiders
The Next Generation

Written by RockmoddeR

Prologue

Date: 10/23/09
Time: 0900 hours
Location: the Landing platform at LEGO Research center

Chapter 1

We had just returned from our long voyage from a galaxy afar. Due to careful planning and resource management we managed to get home safely. After landing on the garrison supports, the entire crew disembarked down the 7 gangplanks, which were really more like giant I-beams than planks. It was still morning, so some of the crew were still groggy, and some even demanded coffee. Not me. I hate coffee. but I digress. So after we were all off the ship and getting ready to register in with the active crew system, we were informed by several messengers that the Commander-In-Chief Cyrem was going to give a debriefing. Cyrem then stood up on a Chrome Crusher that had been placed in front of the Explorer.

"Raiders,"

he stated in a commanding voice.

"You have done your job well, and I am sure you are very weary. But there is an important announcement from the base here that I just received upon our entrance into the atmosphere."
A murmur arose among the crew. He then spoke in a loud, commanding voice:
"Raiders, we have been asked to return to planet U!".

That was met with a plethora of responses. among them were

"no way",
"ok..." ,
"YES SIR!" and
"tell me more before I decide if I want to go" . Cyrem yelled for quiet.
"This is an optional choice!" he said.

"You may stay here, or return with the few faithful. we are however, recruiting new members, and for those of you that do stay, they will need a brief orientation. That is all. Just make sure you enter your decision and name into our systems here so I know who we have."

I personally was surprised. Why go back after such a struggle to return? But something about that planet intrigued me, was pulling me...I already decided that was going to go with Cyrem, our captain, wherever he decided to lead us. I couldn't leave the explorer, my friends or all my technological work, and I wouldn't. So I went to the main base and signed into the systems as a staying crew member.

Chapter 2

The next morning I got PERSONAL MESSAGE from Cyrem thanking me for staying with him and the explorer, along with our launch date and some of the new recruits I was going to train. We were launching on November 29th, the day after thanksgiving, which gave us time to sort out matters here on earth. I also got a list of trainees, they included the codenames of : .:Warguy:., TheDoctor and someone named Zephyr. below Zephyr's name was a note that said:

"Zephyr isn't a newbie, so don't treat her like one. She is part of the new special ops team that I have created myself, and they will be divided, one member to each of my selected leaders, as a helper. Yes, RockmoddeR, you are now a primary engineer."

I was dumbfounded. I hadn't done much to earn that title, and I certainly wasn't the best engineer either. I kept reading:

" I have chosen you, along with Anonymouse and addictgamer, to be part of an elite crew, who will lead some of the most top secret missions into the 5th sector and core of the planet"

"5th sector?" I wondered to myself.
" I will explain the 5th sector to you and your co-engineers personally, as it is too dangerous to reveal over public bandwidth"
"wow". I thought. Just then, I got a knock on my door. I opened it and saw Anonymouse, or Anon, standing there with something in his hand.
"Oh, hi, Anon!" I said.
"Hey Rock" he said.
"Did you get the message about you, me and Addict?"
"Ya."
"Too bad Fengo quit. He was one of our more elite crewmembers."
"I didn't know him that well" I explained"
"Well I did." he replied. "You got some pretty big boots to fill! Maybe this will help you a little though."

He handed me what looked like a phone, except it wasn't a phone. It was a teleportation

commander.

"Use it wisely!" he said. "Accidentally overusing our Crystals is not an option, but then again, if Cyrem trusts you with this, you must be mature enough to handle it. Well, see you at the "faithful and new" crew debriefing later!"

"Bye!" I replied (I didn't even know about the briefing until just then)

I then proceeded to sent emails to the rest of my engineering group, attempting to get a general overview of the commanding position. After hitting 'send' I got dressed into more formal clothes for the briefing.

Chapter 3

Later that day, I walked down the main lab hall (next to where my quarters were) to the briefing room. Cyrem was at the podium. After everyone had taken seats, he began his speech.

"Well, good morning everyone!"

This was greeted by a similar response.

"I'm glad you guys are staying with the explorer, I really am. But you veterans aren't the only ones joining us on our return."

He then brought about 50 or so new members up to the podium, and gave a surprisingly brief intro to each person. He then said:

"And here are the trainee and assistant Raiders that will accompany the leaders of my crew on their missions."

He then gave a trainee list and assistant list, and I heard the same names that I got in the email called with my name.

"As you can see, we have refreshments and tables available for some time for the trainees, assistants and leaders to get to know each other."

That was the end of his speech. Everyone got up and started congregating around the refreshment tables. I wasn't hungry, so I only grabbed a Gatorade for a drink. I then sat down at one of the vacant tables, waiting for my trainees (and assistant) to join me. Someone came and sat down in the chair next to mine. He said:

"The name's, or actually my codename's, TheDoctor. I'm a geologist."
"Good to meet you" was my reply
"Same here. I hear you're one of the top engineers"
"Only starting today. I'm uh...well...Fengo's substitute."
"Fengo?"
"He was one of our top engineers back in the old mission. He won't be joining us in the return mission, sadly."
"Yeah. I heard a bunch of the old crew left."
"Yup. Some of them were my good friends"

All of a sudden this young guy with a fuse hanging out of his pocket pulled up a chair and announced in a loud voice:

"I'm Warguy!"
"So I see..."

Me and TheDoctor laughed.

"I'm and explosives expert." he said.
"So that fuse isn't a prop?"

We laughed again. All of a sudden Warguy, being younger, put his hands to his mouth and started making some farting sounds. TheDoctor laughed, but I gave him a look that made him stop. Warguy just kept on being immature. I looked away so as not to encourage it. All of a sudden I heard a loud slap, accompanied with "OW! geez, what was that for?!" I turned around and a girl was standing next to Warguy, who had a big, red hand-shaped mark on his face.

"I'm Zephyr." She said.
"And I'm gonna slap this kid again if he doesn't stop."

Warguy then shouted "Oh geez, please don't let her..."
"THEN DON'T BE SUCH AN IMMATURE LITTLE KID." TheDoctor and Zephyr said at the same time.
I laughed.
"Well, then, I'm glad we know each other so well now"

Zephyr looked at me weird and said:
"You Engineers are all the same...so down-to-earth and terse."

She then sat down next to TheDoctor, (or Doc) and they started having a conversation about jobs and positions. I looked over at Warguy and told him:

"This is a tough job. We have no place for immaturity at that high of a level, especially when you

have a job such as yours. You gotta be careful with that stuff man. We had countless injuries during the old mission from careless explosives management. Let Zephyr's slap serve as a warning to you. Ok?"

He nodded, and got up to go get something to eat.

"He better not be like this during our missions" I thought to myself. Zephyr then turned to me and asked:
"So what exactly do YOU do?"
"I'm a technological developer and weapons designer, and I sometimes get to work on vehicles."
"Well I guess I'm with the right person then"
"How so?"
"I've been trained as an Air and Ground Special Defense Operative."
"So you're in base defense?"
"No, I'm from a whole new class of Rock Raiders. You see, I defend the vehicles as they mine. That leaves people like Lord Zakida over there (he's a head mining coordinator) with the peace of mind to do their jobs"
"I see. I suppose you'll want to use some of my more advanced weapons and vehicle modifications."
"Only if they're better than the elite corps. standard issue."
"HEY! I made the elite corps. weapon class! I literally, along with Anonymouse and Cirevam INVENTED those guns!"
"Ok, then."

I was about to explain what our mission field would be when I was interrupted by a tap on the shoulder. It was addictgamer, he told me to come with him, and only bring Zephyr; Cyrem was going to do a private elite corps. briefing. Just then, Warguy got back. He asked me:

"Hey, where'ya going?"
"Business stuff. For the leaders and elite corps. only."

addict pulled on my shoulder and said:
"You can talk later. Cyrem is waiting in the Lab."

addict and Zephyr and I walked back down the hall into the experiment lab. There we saw Cyrem, but he wasn't in uniform, he was wearing what looked like a grey Jedi robe with a hood. LZ must've been wondering the same thing I was, Because he commented rather perplexedly:

"What's with the Jedi outfit?"

Cyrem looked at him, and explained:

"These aren't Jedi robes. neither are they costumes. These are the new uniform. You see, they are made with fibers extracted from energy crystals, which have unique properties related to

erm...Cloaking, no pun intended. You see, this is a TOP LEVEL mission group, you must be EXTREMELY secretive about it. The other crew must not know about it. You see, the 5th sector is where we lost over 15 Raiders, they just disappeared. Couldn't even get a radar visual. We are going to investigate this matter, and attempt to extract some of the strange rock from that region, to do an analysis on it. You will also do normal mining, but this is your main mission."

Cyrem then handed everyone there one of the robes. Each one had a separate emblem on it, on the left sleeve. Mine was a blue falcon, with a technologist symbol under it. Anon got (WHAT ELSE) a mouse, with the engineer standard symbol under it. addictgamer's emblem was a computer, with the advanced communications designation below. Zephyr's emblem was rather unique. It was black dragon, with what looked like a purple necklace around its neck. Under it was the advanced weapons and defense operative logo.

"Be careful with these!" Cyrem said, as he showed us his own, with a picture of a White Star on the sleeve. Under his emblem were the words: Commander in Chief of the Rock Raiders mining crew. He then gave us the rest of the day to relax. So I walked back to the briefing room for a snack with Anon, addict, their assistant ops, and Zephyr. There sure would be a lot to talk about.

Chapter 4

The next month sure passed a lot quicker than I expected it to. Before I knew it I was walking up the gangplank on November 29th at 9:00PM, back into the L.M.S. Explorer, which I had come to know so well. Anon ran up to me, and handed me the teleportation commander.

"You almost forgot this."
"Sorry...I've never used one...It's gonna take a while for me to get used to being in charge..."
"Don't worry...Cyrem and I have confidence in your abilities"
"Thanks"
"Sure. And a bit of advice: Don't show your rank around people too much. Use authority when necessary, but pretty much only then. Treat them like friends, not subjects or mere workers"
"Wow. I see why they respect you now..."
"Hey, you learn a little after being in this job for 7 years..."
"Has it really been that long?"
"Ya."

And with that he ran up the gangplank, leaving me alone with the teleportation commander. I walked up the gangplank, down the main deployment zone, up the living quarters area and to my little "cabin" in 0572-C. I then proceeded to unpack all my personal belongings, and set up my room. After doing all the menial sorting and moving (you get a medium sized cabin when you're an engineer, so you have space to move stuff around in), I sat down on a chair by my desk, and sorted

through some of the mission objectives and tasks that were assigned to me. All of a sudden I felt a slight upward jolt. I knew that that was the ship taking off. Now, some people don't like heights, flying, scary carnival rides or even the thought of that stuff. Not me. See, I had wanted to be a pilot, but I was much better in the engineering a tech field. but, I digress again. About 2 minutes after the takeoff, I got a knock at my door. It was Warguy. I asked him what he wanted. He explained how he hated everything I just explained about heights and flying. I told him he would get used to it soon enough..but also that he had to toughen up about it because we had to go into the wormhole to get back to Planet U, after all. With that he pretty much lost it. He ran off to the bathroom...for I can probably guess what. I then felt a slight lift, and then a jolt as if I was dropped again.

"that must be us activating the grav again..."

I got bored just sorting though missions stuff, so I left my room and walked down to the casuals. Addict and LZ were there, and I gotta say I feel just a teeny bit sorry for LZ, special ops helper-wise. LZ really is more of a mature guy, and he got paired with Shadow322, who wasn't immature as much as he was such a contrast of LZ. I frequently heard Zak telling him to "shut up", "grow up" and "can you go do <such and such> for me, I'm talking to <someone> here." I was greeted by addict, who gave me a brief explanation of our job, and the authority that comes with it. I'm glad he did, because I was pretty unprepared as a leader. After chatting with two of the other top engineers, Acmex (who I've known since the 'old days') and Cirevam (My old engineering partner), I sat down on one of only 4 couches. (which really isn't surprising, considering there's only a handful of Cyrem's elite forces members and their operative assistants). Then Zephyr walked in with Shadow...they were arguing about something.
"betcha he ends up getting slapped..." I thought to myself. I was really tired, so I pretty much started falling asleep. The last thing I remember a few minutes before drifting off was Shadow calling Zephyr "Dragy" or something, but in a sarcastic tone, which ended up in him getting a red hand mark on his neck.

"Heh..." I laughed to myself...And then the arguing started even hotter. I tried to ignore it, but couldn't.

Addict finally had to yell for quiet to get them to stop.

"And Rockmodder here is kinda tired, so take it somewhere else or shut up completely"
"Thanks." I mumbled in a sleepy voice.
"Sure". addict replied.
"Sorry Rock...didn't know you were trying to sleep" said Zephyr.

I tried to say something like "it's ok, you didn't know" but was too tired to respond. Then I fell asleep.

Chapter 5

I awoke the next (well, not morning, more like 8 hours or so later) and the casuals were empty. There was a pot of (coffee?) on the counter with a note attached from Anon:

"Cleared everyone out last night, left this for you at 7:45. Cyrem also wants you in the teleportation bay by 9:00 (it was 8:00 according to my watch)"

I know he meant well, but I hate coffee...oh well. I drank some anyway, but it didn't taste like coffee...it tasted like caffeinated Gatorade.

"P.S., Cyrem made this stuff. I don't know what it is, but it sure gets you up in the morning!"

I suddenly felt a jolt that I've only felt twice: when I get cold water dumped on me, and the first and only time I drank coffee. I got up, went to my quarters, showered, got into my engineering standard suit and donned my cloak. as I walked down the hall, I was hit head on by Retsnom Kcor, who I didn't know was there...he was wearing his cloak too.

"Ow...what...who..." he stammered.
"Rets?"
"Yar...who's there...is this a cruel joke?"
"No..." I said as I flipped back my hood.
"Woah...Cyrem wasn't joking...these really do er...cloak!"

We laughed, and as we saw Eagle98 turn the corner we flipped our hoods back up. As he was walking by, Rets and I grabbed him invisibly, which scared the heck out of him.

"WHAAAAAA!" he yelled.

We put him back down.

"Flip up your hood and you can't be seen either." Rets informed him.

He did, and disappeared. I didn't see him again until about 5 days later during a mission. Rets then explained how he was going to the teleporter, to get ready upon our arrival in planet U's orbit, which would be in exactly 1 hour and 3 minutes. I followed him into the zone. Also there were Anon, addict, LZ, Zephyr, Acmex, Shadow322, Cirevam and Sonic (Shadow's brother), who was Cire's ops assistant. The breifing screen came down, and Cyrem appeared on it.

"Ok, Raiders, you know the...er...drill. Please line up on the glowing green tiles on the floor"

We all did. And even though some people here hate teleportation, I personally like it, and the gut rush you get from it. I looked over at Sonic, Shadow and Zephyr.

"First time teleporting?" They all nodded.
"Well don't worry about it. It's pretty much the same feeling as a loop on a rollercoaster, except longer."

With that remark Shadow's face paled a little. Cyrem came up on the screen again.

"Even though you won't be teleporting for another hour, you must stay in this room. When we enter the wormhole, your cloaks will experience a dramatic change due to time-space relationships." I wondered where the other elite crew were.

"Due to a careful survey of your RR applications, I have determined that you select few of the crew are the only ones capable of handling this experience." And with that last remark, he entered the teleportation zone, wearing his own cloak.

"We enter the wormhole in 9 minutes. During the time in the wormhole you will be free to move around, but whatever you do DO NOT activate any teleportation commanders, communication devices, cell phones, or anything that is capable of broadcasting a signal. This could dematerialize you or someone else here. It's too complicated to explain here, but let me just say it's similar to putting a marshmallow in the microwave."

After he said that everyone (including me) deactivated every electronic thing they had with them. Cyrem then pointed out one of the larger viewing windows, to a small point of orange light in the distance.

"There it is. We enter in minus 2 minutes"

Chapter 6

We continued to approach the wormhole at a constant speed. I wondered what Cyrem meant about our cloaks changing...

"Entry minus one minute"

I wondered if we would turn invisible, or glow...

"Entry minus 0.5 minutes"

I watched as the wormhole grew closer, and the brightness intensified. I suddenly felt strangely hot, and growing warmer the closer we got...

"Entry in 5...4...3...2...1..."

At 0 time I felt (and I'm pretty sure everyone else did too) like I had just been dropped on a 240 degree hot tub, and could barely move...

We passed through the end of the wormhole and the whole sensation ended. Temperature returned to normal, and I felt ease of motion again, except it felt slightly easier...

"We are still about an hour away from the planet, so feel free to move around...but first...I have to show you what I meant by our cloaks..." said Cyrem, in a slightly, but only very slightly hoarse voice.

With that, he donned his hood...and a strange phenomenal change came over him...He started glowing; extremely bright, so it was almost blinding, and he transformed to someone similar in form to the "human torch", he was like a star...and then it hit me. The very emblem that was on the cloak was the Raider's second form...I donned my hood to see if it was true: I felt almost the same sensation as in the wormhole, but much shorter. When I looked down, I saw not my feet and hands, but talons and wings...I was a falcon, just like on my cloak. Cyrem then spoke again:

"What rockmodder here has done, you all can do...to reverse the effects, simply reach for where your hood would be, and push it back...be warned though; you will feel extremely fatigued upon returning to human form the first many times you change forms."

Then everyone began experimenting with their new forms: addict transformed into what appeared to be some sort of Cyborg, Anon was a small(ish) auburn colored mouse about the size of a small dog. Zephyr had turned into a black dragon with purple markings , roughly 18 feet tall, 20 feet from nose to tail and with a wingspan of about 22 feet. Retsnom had transformed into a rock monster, but with blue eyes and streaks running through his appendages...

It was all very real, yet somehow unbelievable. I pushed my (wings?) back over my head and transformed back into myself, but was suddenly extremely tired, even though it was only 9:23AM. After everyone had transformed to their alternate identity and back to human form, Cyrem gave another briefing:

"These cloaks are the only way to see anything in the 5th sector. I have just received a scan of the area from our old radar system we left there. it appears to be made of something similar to recharge seams, but without charged properties. You will literally be bending light with your new identities, which should give you a clear perception of this strange area. Also, I don't want any word of your secret identities leaked out, or anyone going to the 5th sector until I deem you ready. Clear?"

This was met with a unanimous "yes".

We were now about 20 minutes away from the Planet. Cyrem then passed around the same drink I had been left by Anon that morning. This returned my energy. After, finally getting in the planet's orbit, we were instructed by Cyrem to stand again on the glowing green squares.

"Team ready?"
"Yes sir!"
"Power levels up?"
"Affirmative."
"Activate teleporter."

And with that, the room was filled with that familiar whitish green light, and I felt that gut rush once again as I was lifted off the floor, and into the dimension between dimensions.

Chapter 7

We ended up in a large cavern, about the same size as the one from our old mission here, "Back to Basics". The maximum of crew besides us had already been teleported. I noticed my trainees among them. Cyrem then told us that we must ABSOLUTELY NOT change to our alternate forms during a mission with the standard crew.

"Who knows how they will react? And nobody but you select need to know about the 5th sector..." With that he teleported back up, almost as if by willpower.

"Well..." I said.
"Lets get to work!"

We all started walking towards the small base, which already had a Support Station and Super Teleport. As soon as we got there, Acmex disabled power to the Teleport Pad and Upgrade Station so there would be crystals free to teleport a Chrome Crusher. How did I guess he would do something like that...

"Hey rock!" he yelled at me.
"Do ya still got that one sweet targeting system for the lasers?" I pointed at the odd-looking device attached to the front of the main box on the CC's laser.

"Oh yeah..." he said to himself, as he climbed in and rumbled off, over to an area of hard rock.
"Yup." I said to no one in particular.
"That's Acmex."

Anon laughed.

"So now we have to wait 'till he gets back with some crystals before we can build my favorite vehicle?" he said.

"Well ya, if u wanna keep breathing..."
"Anyone else here starving?" asked Rets.

We all stared at him.

"Must be the you-know-what-that-happened." Addict said laughingly. We all gave him a look that said "You better shut up before someone hears" All of a sudden Warguy walked up and asked: "What do I know that happened?" I did a mental facepalm.

"Nothing." Said Zephyr.

"He just gets hungry every time he teleports." I wanted to thank her right then and there, but didn't want it to look like something really was up by making a big deal of it. We all then had to fake laugh...

"Well fine." said Warguy.
"I can take being left out of an inside joke." With that he grabbed a dynamite cluster, stomped away to a hard rock wall, and placed it down. He set the timer and stepped away.

"I'll show you guys..." he mumbled to himself. We all were yelling at him to get back farther. "Pff...why? You guys just like to yell at m-" The cluster blew, and sent shards of rock flying everywhere; one hit Warguy in the head, and another hit him in the right leg.

We all rushed over to him, to see if he was ok. All of a sudden the lights flickered, and went out. I turned on my light and walked over to the base. Some random raider was standing there with a teleportation commander...he had attempted to get a granite grinder...with only 4 crystals in inventory: 3 of which were being used.

"Oh...no..." I said to him.

"Divert all power to the support station" I yelled to addict, who did.
"We'll have to go without lights until we can get more crystals" said Anon. Acmex drove up in the CC.

"Its gonna be a while. my radar has detected the closest cluster as being at least 500 feet into the hard rock." With the teleporter gone and our air staying at mid level, we couldn't do an emergency power diversion. Not with 30 people down here, all breathing at once...

"Uh oh." I heard from the other side of the cavern. Cirevam was standing over Warguy.

"His right leg has a compound fracture, and I think his skull may be broken." Anon was looking at a geological scan.

"There's another cavern about a mile down the other passage. They have power. I asked them if they can take an injured raider for teleport. We have a go for that." He then called for me, Zephyr, Shadow and Acmex. He whispered to us:

"You guys have to take him to that base. Ya, u gotta fly. Cyrem will understand. the lights are out anyway...when you see the lights of that base, get within hearing range and then transform back. DON'T let them see you..." Since Shadow was a bat in alternate form, and Acmex was an arctic owl, they would hold Warguy steady on Zephyr's back as she flew him to the base. I would attempt to find the fastest route there, going a little ways ahead.

"Alright, now go over in that smaller tunnel and transform, I'll get a stretcher." said Anon quietly. Which we did. Anon and addict brought him over and Shadow and Acmex put him on Zephyr's back. "Wow...he's kinda heavy..." she said.

"Take the explosives out of his uniform." Acmex whispered. Shadow then proceeded to rid him of everything that went 'boom'.

"Ok, now get going" said Anon. "You gotta get there before he goes into shock." We all flew off in the general direction of the base. About 2 minutes into the flight I noticed that I could see almost as if it was night with a full moon.

"You guys see ok?"

"Ya." Said Zephyr. "Its really not that hard...must be another um...side effect?" She sorta laughed...but it didn't sound like a laugh...it was more like a cough. Soon I felt it. We were obviously in some sort of gas pocket. I tried to speed up to get through it...and then something very strange happened. I felt the burning sensation that I got when transformed for the first time. All of a sudden I looked at my wings...they appeared to be on fire...it didn't hurt though.

"You ok?" asked Acmex
"I think so"
"He appears to be a phoenix of some kind" said Zephyr.
"Phoenix?!"

"I'll explain later". I then noticed that she seemed to be glowing...and her markings turned iridescent...Acmex then asked what all the orange and red areas were...and Shadow told everyone to stop yelling so loud.

"We all seem to have a certain amplification of our forms..." I said sorta lamely, not knowing what else to say.

"No time to talk now!" yelled Acmex. "There's the base..."

We all quickly landed and transformed back. Acmex and Shadow picked up warguy on the stretcher. Zephyr and I ran ahead to the base to get a small transport truck (considering it's impossible to run with a stretcher), and came back to Shadow, Acmex and Warguy about a minute later. They held him steady, while the driver went as fast as he could back to the teleportation zone. As we put Warguy down on the Pad, the transport truck driver looked at him and said:

"The names EPIC. Hope your friend here comes out ok..."

Chapter 8

I awoke on the bridge of the LMS...tired...very tired...I noticed that Shadow, Zephyr and Acmex were there too. Cyrem was standing nearby with a grim look on his face. He waited for everyone else to wake up, then he spoke. He said:

"Raiders...I don't know whether to praise you or chew you out so hard you cry...what you did was necessary, but it has endangered the more important aspect of our mission here. for this reason I have taken care of the necessary paperwork and discharged you from the special ops force, and published your obituaries on the ship's main briefing site. Only the other Special ops members know you're still alive...to the rest of them you're dead, along with Warguy and TheEPICTrainRider."

I looked around, Shadow looked like he was gonna cry.

"Also, you have been permanently banned from all of the common facilities. I have individual listings here if you need them. I'm really sorry this had to happen, I really am..."

Cyrem then walked away, and didn't look back. I glanced at the general list of places we were banned from, and almost cried when I saw the teleporting lab and defense tech room on the list: the two places I had worked the hardest to improve. I didn't know what we would do now...until I saw the fine print at the bottom of the page:

"To RM only: This is only a temporary measure of security. I have it worked out so that the rest of the force will "die" as well and be discharged. effectively, I'm erasing any records of what we have done, and will do relating to the 5th sector. See me in the aft engine room at 1800 hours tomorrow. DO NOT breathe a word of this to anyone, not even the other team members. I'm counting on you for this..."

I put it in my pocket and sat in the chair next to the bridge window, staring out at the planet that

had once been a veritable hell and source of misery to all of the LMS crew. I wanted to say something to my crewmates, but decided against it in favor of not bringing any more pain than I'm sure they already felt. 6:00 tomorrow couldn't come soon enough...

Chapter 9

I sat there, just staring...I knew that there really wasn't anything to be sad about, considering I knew what was really going to happen. Somehow though, I had a feeling that this wasn't going to work out as simply as Cyrem said it would. It was close to 2300 hours, and I was tired, so I decided to go back to bed. I remembered the sheet with all the restricted areas and saw my cabin area on the list. There were directions to my new quarters next to it.

"Too bad it's so close to the engine room...Gonna be hard to get used to"

As I walked back to the aft section section of the ship along the maintinence corridor, I couldn't help but think about all of the time I had spent walking this same path back to the engineering lab. I found my cabin without trouble, all my stuff was already there. I tried falling asleep, but I couldn't...so I got on my computer and looked over the old log to reminisce on old times...before this mess. I read over the missions...our successes...our failures...one of the last things I saw before turning my machine off startled me... it said:

LOG 55055: KeyPass: see mission 05443. For Appointed users only.

"Funny...none of the old logs ever had a password or lock before..."
I checked mission 05443, and almost died:

LOG 05443: SECTOR: 5 QUADRANT: 1 ZONE: 0002

17 Raiders teleported in
1 Raider Teleported out

unable to resume transmission, last transmission from remaining raiders

"it's getting.....fuzzy.....man, where's the.....frfrfrchhhhhhh.....can you get us a Chrome Crusher...lots of hard rock...man...take me out soon, I need a break...hey wait...what's...I see something on this wall...what is it man...it's not English...forget it...I must be seeing things...ah well, I'll be up sho-
TRANSMISSION END

LOCKING LOG() AdminPass for future viewing: 00550012

I then slowly put the password into the future log...

Chapter 10

Things only got more and more strange after that...Log 55055 was just a description of the local area and terrain of the fifth sector, nothing special, except for the fact that it was sandy, unlike the other main terrains. Nothing special, until I re-read it.

The sandy terrain of this area is so peaceful, it almost seems like a secret hideaway, hidden from the rest of the planet, without and monsters at all. It is a volcanic zone though, and is prone to landslides. Therefore, we put up reinforced walls in all the caverns. It is completely devoid of life, however, there is an abundance of all of the resources discovered on planet U so far. The lava in some parts of the cavern produces an almost sunlike light, but the shadows are even more strange, producing depth and figure seen never before.

I copied the text into a file and saved it...I really didn't know what else to do with it then, so I turned the PC off, and dropped onto the bed for a rest.

After I woke up I realized that it was 1700 hours...I was supposed to meet Cyrem soon. I got up, showered, put on my Engineering suit and started off towards the engine room. I walked in, and nobody was there, I only heard the nearly subsonic hum of the main drive. There was nothing to do now but wait...

Chapter 11

I waited for roughly another hour. Right near the end of it, I got up to stretch my legs. I looked out one of the reinforced portholes, and gazed yet again at the planet...it seemed so calm from up here...my thoughts were suddenly interrupted by a loud tong, and an "ahem" from the other side of the engine cell. I almost hit my head into a medium-sized sword that had impaled itself into the inner hull of the L.M.S. next to me.

"Take it." Said the person, who I recognized as Cyrem.

I did, the blade was warm, and the hilt was inlaid with the same symbol as my former cloak. I used more force than was necessary to remove the weapon, it slid out like a greased wedge.

"Kneel."

I slowly got down on one knee.

"RockmoddeR, you have performed well above the call of standard duty, and have shown dignity under court-marshalling. For this reason, and others, I name you the first Captain of the Guards of the New Service. You will find that your blade is zirconium carbonite, the hardest still-flexible alloy known. That is not all you will be given though..."

He reached into a large (duffel?) bag he was carrying, and pulled out not a uniform, but a suit of battle armor, with my crest on the right shoulder. It was made of the same elements as my new sword.

"I name you now, RockmoddeR, knight of the Falcon. You must keep this as much of a secret as everything else I have told you. you will find that your new armor wears easily under your normal suit, and will not hinder normal motion, but rather, enhance it. you will see what I mean soon enough. I will be sending the others involved with you in the incident here shortly. You will distribute to them these swords and armor. I must go now, and arrange for the discharge of the rest of the force."

He then left as suddenly as he had come. I sat down and admired the blade. It was extremely lightweight, but could carve right through a ship's hull... I then looked at the armor. It was made of many fine plates, and had a similar appearance to Mandalorian bounty hunter armor from star wars... the only thing that it didn't have was a helmet. I tried it on, and it fit extremely well, and was very comfortable. I felt lighter as I used it...almost like gravity was no longer totally grasping me. I put engineering suit over my armor and sheathed the sword in my drill case. I looked down the causeway and saw the other members trudging down it...except...the causeway was on the *other side* of the cell I was in. They walked into the engine room and all came up to me, without saying a word. Zephyr wouldn't even look at me, and Acmex kept staring out the portholes. I didn't know exactly how to tell them what was happening, but I came up with something like this:

"Now look, we did what we did, and there's nothing to be done about it now. Cyrem has told me something that he wants you to know though. The special force is being destroyed, and all record of us is disappearing. Cyrem isn't giving up on us though, he's created another system. He calls it the New Service, and has made me the captain of it's guards."

"And where does that leave us?" Shadow yelled.
"You get made a captain, and we get court marshalled."
"Just wait, I haven't finished. You see, we're all going to be made members of the New Service. That's where all the Special Ops are going. Cyrem wanted me to give you these."

I dropped the swords into the floor and each member's respective armor next to it. They just sat

there, staring at it...finally Acmex pulled out a sword and tried it out. He also found that it was lightweight, and that his respective armor was emblazoned with his old emblem. I told the others to put on their armor, and take their swords, and then to kneel.

"Acmex, for your faithful service and undying loyalty, you have been now knighted. Rise Acmex, knight of the Arctic Owl, and predator of the sky."

"Shadow, for your trust even in expellation, and trustworthiness in all circumstances, you have been knighted as now Shadow, the Bat."

"Zephyr, for your valor in time of need, and calm under pressure, you have been knighted Zephyr, Dragoness and Warrior of the Second Service"

I then got up and said:

"Arise, warriors of the Service, today is a new chapter in history, one that will mark only the beginning of the unraveling of the mystery before us."'