

Small World

Chapter 13: Unlocking the Truth

Inside the Las Vegas Space Con Convention Center...

A short time later, David and Jack soon came to a large room filled with rows upon rows of rectangular tables, many of which occupied by costumed humans and various gaming paraphernalia. After scanning his eyes over the array of tables for a moment, Jack pointed a paw in the direction of one of them, and whispered with a lopsided smirk, "Bingo!"

"Jack, I thought you said were coming here to decode that data storage device, not participate in the local gaming activities..." David reminded, raising a puzzled eyebrow.

"No, I mean... Never mind, just follow me," Jack dismissed, before grabbing onto David's paw, and dragging him on into the midst of the gaming area.

Upon coming to an abrupt stop before one of the gaming tables, and seeing on it a black, flat, rectangular shaped device with a hinge at the back which appeared to allow it to be flipped open, David inquired, "Well, we found a laptop. So how do you suggest we hack into it?"

"You're the brainiac, aren't you, kid? I just assumed you could figure something out," Jack simply responded with a casual shrug.

"I'll see what I can do..." David conceded, letting out a small sigh, before flipping open the laptop screen. Just as the Ferren scientist was about to depress the power button, however, he paused as another thought occurred to him. "Jack, hold on... what if those government agents find a way to trace down this computer through your planet's internet system?"

"I wouldn't worry about it," Jack assured nonchalantly, "These conventions have so much background radio noise bouncing around inside them from all the media equipment that they're basically dead zones for mobile devices. Besides, I don't think this place even has free Wi-Fi, anyway. Kind of a rip-off, if you ask me."

After a brief moment of hesitation, David reluctantly pressed the power button on the laptop, and began typing commands into the keyboard.

Meanwhile, just outside the building...

The blond, suit-wearing woman from the news van was standing in the Las Vegas Convention Center parking lot; the building itself clearly visible in the distance behind her; as a man wearing a baseball cap, jeans and T-shirt stood a couple meters in front of her with what appeared to be a small, hand-held digital video camera. After taking a moment to adjust a few settings on his recording device, the baseball cap-wearing man began counting down, "On in five... four... three..." However, just as he motioned to give the silent gesture of 'action', the man paused as something caught his eye. "Uh... Ma'am...? We appear to have some unexpected company..."

"Excuse me, but can't you see we're-" the woman began to irately growl as she whipped around on the spot, only to freeze in stunned silence upon being met with a shield-shaped golden badge labelled 'C.I.A' held centimeters from her face.

"Where did they go?" the owner of the badge, a dark-haired man clad in a black suit and red tie, asked coldly as he re-pocketed the piece of identification.

"Where did who go?" the woman demanded, bitterness still evident in her tone.

"The two culprits who stole some of your equipment," a second suit-wearing man, this one with reddish-blond hair, elaborated. "Be aware, madam, these are not just some ordinary delinquents. The subjects we are after are highly dangerous fugitives, and are not to be taken lightly."

"We asked the local security here, and they said those kids used our equipment to get a free pass inside the convention," the woman replied disdainfully, "But that was almost an hour ago! They could be anywhere by now!"

"Thank you for your cooperation, ma'am," the dark-haired agent then said. "Now, why don't you and the rest of your team pack up and go home for the day? There's no more news to be reported here."

“Go home?! Just who the hell do you think you a-” the woman began to protest, only to gasp in shock with widened eyes as she heard a soft ‘click’ sound, and felt something cold and metal being pressed up against the bottom of her chin.

“I’m going to ask you nicely, one more time...” the dark-haired man said coldly, “Pack up your gear, and go home.”

“Um... okay... sure...!” the woman agreed, chuckling nervously.

“I’m glad we have an understanding, Miss,” the agent responded, re-holstering his firearm. “Remember, straight home.” With that, the two C.I.A. agents turned around, and began making their way towards the entrance of the convention center.

As soon as the agents were out of sight, the baseball cap-wearing cameraman spoke up slightly awkwardly, “So... I suppose we should start packing up the van now, huh?”

“Are you kidding?!” the blond woman hissed, “This could be the story of the decade!”

“B-but ma’am... that guy from the government said-” the cameraman began to stammer nervously in objection, only to be cut off by his female employer.

“I don’t care what that ‘guy from the government’ said!” she snapped, “Do you really think I’m about to just stand by and let the feds keep hiding secrets from the public like this? The people have a right to know the truth! And I swear by my career that I, Veronica Wells, am going to give it to them!”

Meanwhile, back inside the convention center...

After a couple more minutes of typing on the laptop keyboard, David proclaimed quietly, “I’m in.”

In response to this, Jack discreetly handed him the black flash stick. Accepting the device, David promptly inserted it into a port on the side of the computer, and began typing into the keyboard once again. As they were preoccupied with this task, the two rodent-like fugitives failed to notice a figure observing them from a short distance away.

"I've accessed the data storage device," David whispered after a moment, "I'm attempting to decrypt the encoded files now."

Another few moments later, as a series of various images and documents began flashing across the laptop screen; a soft, female voice was heard from close by, "Having fun on my computer?"

Hearing this, Jack whipped around to face the source of the voice, to see a peach-skinned human girl who was barely over five feet tall and appeared to be in her late teens. The girl had long brown hair, and was clad in a hair band with a pair of black, furry, triangle-shaped ears on it, a white T-shirt, and a pink miniskirt with a furry black tail that hung down to her feet attached to the back. After a brief moment of tense silence, Jack stammered nervously, "This... isn't what it looks like, Miss... I can explain. You see-"

"Oh, don't worry about it. You can use it if you like. I don't keep anything private on there, anyway," the girl dismissed reassuringly with a lighthearted giggle, cutting the former commando's sentence short.

As the two natives of Planet Earth conversed, one of the images that flashed by on the screen caught David's eye; a detailed schematic outline of a large craft consisting of a long shaft connected to a pinwheel-shaped structure at the center.

"I really wish we had more time to chat," the human girl spoke quietly at that moment, subtly gesturing with a slight tilt of her head behind her, where two men in government issue suits were pushing their way through the crowd towards the trio, "but it looks like I'm not the only one who's taken an interest to you two..."

After waiting a few seconds for the loading bar on the screen to reach the '100%' mark, David quickly removed the flash drive from the computer port, and whispered urgently, "Okay let's go!"

With that, the two furry creatures scurried off back into the bustling crowds of costumed people in the convention center.