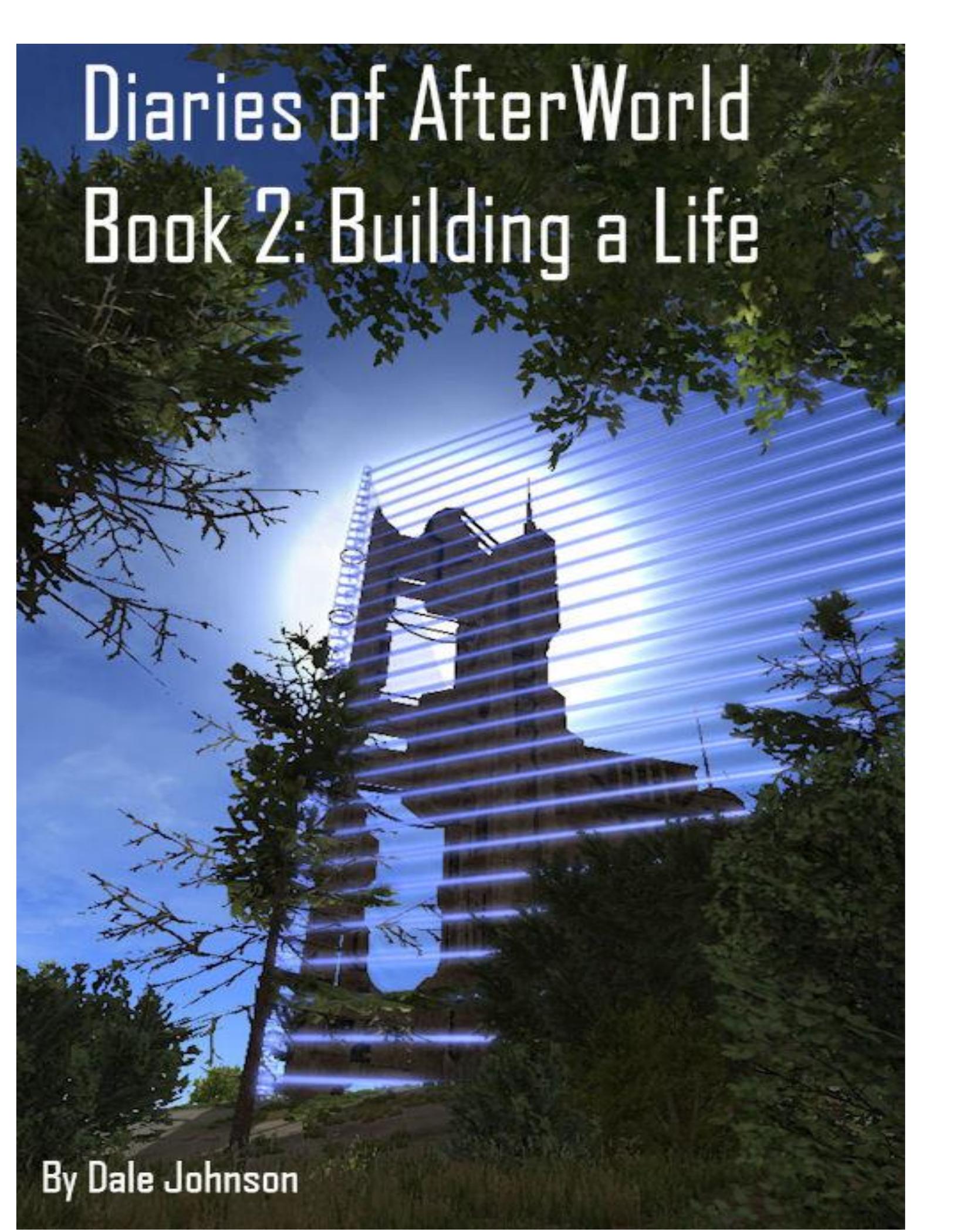


# Diaries of AfterWorld Book 2: Building a Life



By Dale Johnson

## **Diaries of Afterworld**

### **Book 2: Building a Life**

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**Johnson Consulting, Inc.**

**[www.jconsult.com](http://www.jconsult.com)**



**21 Parliament Lane**

**Woburn MA 01801**

**877-228-8595**

**[info@jconsult.com](mailto:info@jconsult.com)**

## **Dalewj: 17 of August, 2068: Part 1, We found Saransk**

So I left off yesterday telling you about our trip here to Saransk. First let me say everything is going good here in Saransk and both me and Daria are fine. Now back to my story.

We left Saransk through the southern gate and we walked out onto the main road to Saransk. To the left of us was a long chain of hills. To the right of us was a dense forest with what we think is a swamp. We tried to stay away from both as we did not know what animals might be living in there.

The first thing we saw was a small deer on the hills to the left. They must be scared if citizens because as soon as he saw us he ran away. He wasn't very big, so I doubt he had enough meat to make it worth chasing him down. Plus he looked must faster than I was cause I was carrying lots of items to Saransk. We did see lots and lots of deer on our trip, and every one of them ran away from us. I wonder if they know we are citizens and not newcomers?

A little way down the road south and quickly had seen what we now know as a rudoed. We were told it is actually a robot, but that does not make any sense at all. Robots are big and breathe fire or bullets or lightning. This rudoed was small, barely up to my knees. It had four legs to walk on like an animal. It was faster than me, but never attacked us, and we did get close by accident.

Daria was trying to draw a deer on her paper about thirty minutes into our walk. She said she wanted it for her diary, which she still hasn't let me look at. While she was drawing the deer I had my pack open getting out a snack to eat. We were hungry even though we ate a full lunch a few hours earlier. I guess we used up a lot of food on our walk today to new places.

So as she draws her deer and I look for food I turn to the left and see one of these rudoed next to us. Only about one meter away. I slowly put down the food in my hand and put my hand on my gun when all of a sudden it looked a different direction and started running away. I did not want to shoot it because I did not know if it would come back and kill us. We have not put our DNA into the Saransk translukation machine and if we die now we will have to go back to NU to regenerate.

It was funny how it moved. It got up to full speed right away and ran for about three seconds and stopped. It then waited about two seconds, changed direction again and ran for another three seconds. Maybe it is blind and did not see us. If it was blind it would make sense why it is not going in any direction, just in circles. It does not seem to eat anything and if it saw me it did not want to eat me.

After he ran away, I told Daria to put the drawing away and we had to move quick. She did and we moved down the road away from the rudoed. I told her what I saw and she did not believe it was a robot either. She thought it was some ones pet and it was seeing if we were its master. I could not ignore the idea and will think about it. Why would you want a robot as a pet. We had a pet dog on the farm when I was young, but he worked hard at protecting our land for us. This rudoed did not look it could do very much to help us, except run in circles.

So we had a quick bite of food as we stopped south of the rudoed and re-packed and continued walking. It was starting to get late and we knew we had another forty five minute walk ahead of us. No more drawings for Daria or food for me.

As we continued walking we met three citizens on the road going to NU. They all stopped to talk to us. They knew who we were because the other three graduates had already gotten to Saransk. They all asked if we needed help or wanted protection. After we made sure we had enough time in the day to get to Saransk they agreed we did not need protection. The road is safe they all said. It is nice seeing so many helpful people outside of NU.

At one point we both stopped when we saw a new animal on the hills. It looked like a snake standing up. Daria had seen snakes stand up in movies and thought it was something called a cobra. We did not get close enough to look because Daria said that a cobra's bite will kill you. Again I did not want to die or have to make Daria carry my bags to Saransk for me.

I did notice as we walked by it from a distance that it was shining in the light of the sun. Most animals do not shine very much cause they need to hide from other animals, and citizens I think. So I just found it a bit weird, new word I learned on the road to Saransk. Daria agreed when I told her. It was weird.

After about an hour we got to the left hand road we were supposed to take to Saransk. The map Yuna gave us said that Saransk West was straight south, but the town of Saransk is east. We did not know the difference between the two but everyone has told us to go to Saransk, so we go that way.

This road is a bit smaller, but most importantly the trees are right up against the road on both sides. We were no longer walking safely down the road. We both stopped and put on our armor from our backpacks. It is a pain to walk in armor because it makes my skin red in many places I do not wish for color. If I walk with it for more than an hour it starts to hurt those places also. I rather not get hurt and walk in my shirt and pants. But again I would rather not die either, so I wear my armor.

My armor is mostly yellow with blue on my chest and down my legs. It is a bit loose, and I was told to get a set that was loose on me because once I became a citizen I would grow into it. Not exactly sure why I will grow, maybe my muscles get bigger because of my new title of citizen. Daria's armor is mostly white with lots of yellow marks on it. My favorite yellow mark is on her soft parts. I could look at them all day, but I will tell you from checking, those parts are not soft with armor on.

As we walked down this road we saw a few small animals on the ground. There was not much to see of them and they never came close to us. I expect they were having dinner before the sunset.

About ten minutes down the road we did stop because we saw something tall in the woods. It matched the trees so was hard to see, but it walked funny so we could see its head moving. Every once in a while we saw a something shine in its hands so we worried that it might be a citizen or robot.

We finally got the nerve up to move down the road when it saw us and started running for us. Both me and Daria both were in shock and took us too long to get to our guns. Daria did first and started shooting whatever this was. I was about five seconds behind her but finally got shooting just as it got to

us. It hit me first a few times in the chest and then looked at Daria, I think it liked her soft parts area too, and started hitting her in the soft parts. Maybe it just liked to hit us both in the chest. Maybe I am just being a man. I do not know.

But this animal kept hitting us and we kept shooting it. I had to load my gun five times before we finally killed it. When we were done we both fell to the ground and needed to sleep. But we knew we had to get to Saransk before we found more of these things.

Daria wanted to use her knife and get parts off of it, I just wanted to move. After looking at me and thinking about it she agreed, but we needed to heal our wounds first. She had a brand new heal kit, opened it and bandaged the areas where the animal got through my armor. Most of the spots were on my hands and neck. She said I was more hurt than I thought, but I did not feel any pain. Her broken spots were on her back and legs and I got them all bandaged up quickly. I have gotten used to the slight of blood since I came to the Afterworld. Something I would not have thought before.

So the sun was now even lower, maybe twenty minutes from going down, so we hurried as we could down the road to the east. We did see more of these animals but did our best to stay away from them and I thought did a good job. Nothing attacked us the rest of the trip.

After another 10 minutes we came on the next road where we had to go right and south to Saransk. This road was again covered with trees, but since we had not seen an animal for a few minutes we hurried quickly without looking for more animals. This was probably not a smart thing to do, but we really needed to get to Saransk.

This road took a large right hand turn and another left hand turn before we saw in front of us a big bridge over a set of railroad tracks. Like the one we took to Mugen a long time ago. We were now looking around at everything and I was no longer tired of walking.

I followed Daria because I did not know where to go on my own. She did not follow the road, she went down the hill in front of us to the railroad tracks. We walked over to this very long train that was parked in front of us. I could tell it was not being used because all the windows were broken like they were in NU. Someone must really hate windows.



She stopped as we got there and said “This is the train... The train we took to Mugen.”

I looked at her for a moment wondering how she knew and then up at the train. It was very long and had green cars, like the one we took. “The one we took had a car without windows at the back and an Engine at the front.” I said.

“Yes it did, maybe they used those parts for something else, but this is the train.”

“How do you know?” I asked.

“Because before we got on I stood here with Yuna for about ten minutes. There was nobody watching so I put our initials on the train with a rock on the ground. See?” She point to the side of the train and written on it I could see, but very hard to read, Y + D. It was not well written, but it was her initials.

“You were being a bad girl were you not?” I asked her with a finger out pointing to her chest.

She stood straight up at attention and answered “Yes I was sir, and you may punish me later tonight.” And giggled. It was a new thing she said she liked me to pretend to be, an ASB man.

She turned around and started walking to the back of the train and I followed. It was weird seeing the same train we were on so long ago together. Even if we did not know each other then.

We go to the end of the train and she turned to me and said. “This must be Saransk because this is the end of the railroad tracks.”

I agreed but I looked around and saw a bunch more tracks going to the East and pointed to them. “Yes but I see lots more.”

“Ya, but tracks only end at big towns so trains can stop and park there silly.”

“Oh I see.” I said. I knew she was almost always right about things so I did not bother to argue. “Lets go see Saransk then shall we?”

“We shall my dear.” She said as she walked around the train and onto the next set of tracks.

She continued to walk down the tracks along the other side of the train and under the bridge as I thought of something. “Is this safe?”

“There are no trains running here, look the tracks are all dark brown.”

“Oh well that is more what I was thinking of, should we be walking on the sides of the track?”

“I do not understand.” She said

“Well the tracks might not be the right color because people went to the bathroom on the train?” She stopped, turned and looked at me. I could see her think a second and then quickly she jumped to her side off of the track.

“Ewwwwwww” She said looking down at her feet. “Why would people do that?”

“I will explain later but for now just walk to the side of the tracks.”

She looked at me again, turned and started walking. “OK if you say so.”

As we passed under the bridge this very very large building appeared in front of us. It was the tallest building I had ever seen and had what looked like four other buildings attached to that were the same height. It was very impressive.

To the left of us I could see lots of other buildings but much smaller than the big building. Daria led the way as I followed and just looked around. We had left the big train behind and found a bunch of other small trains on different tracks when Daria came upon a platform in front of us. There were a bunch of people on it talking she decided we needed to go up there also.

There was a staircase at the end and we climbed it to get on the platform. As soon as we did I remembered this was the place the train stopped and the guys on the other side of the train were looking out the windows and making noises. Now I can see what they see and I understand those noises they made.

Daria stopped at the first group of Citizens on the platform and started talking to them. I did not listen, I just looked at the city in front of me. When she was done talking she told me. "The place from new citizens is over there." Pointing across the tracks near the big building. "And we need to check in at the main outpost and they will tell us which box is ours."

"Box?"

"That is what they called it, yes a box."

"Sounds interesting. Which way to the outpost?"

Daria replied. "This way." And walked back to the end of the platform. I quickly followed her. When we got back down the stairs we crossed the railroad tracks. Daria did cross both sets of these tracks carefully.

"These ones are used." She said "You can tell because they are brighter. But I do not think they have been used often as they are a bit dark still."

I agreed looking at them that they were brighter, but still walked very carefully over them looking not to step in anything. We went straight into the city from here, past a first row of buildings that must have been stores in the past. They were not as tall as the other buildings and had small stores out in front of them on the road. The road itself was made of stones, but grass was growing up between the stones and some of the grass was very high.

We walked between two small fences and out into what Daria called the 'Courtyard'. I understand it might be a yard, but do not understand why you need to go to court to use it. I have to ask her about his later. Inside there was what looked to be like a lot of overgrown grass, some rocks to play on, if I played on rocks anymore, and some buildings in the middle.

There were lots of people in this area, some sitting and talking, while others were standing or walking around. To our left I could see a bunch of citizens coming out of the building next to us. They all had some kind of food in their hands and were happy and laughing. I also noticed that none of these citizens were wearing their armor. This is the first time I have seen citizens without armor.

I hit Daria in the shoulder and she looked at me. "No armor." I whispered.

“Yes they are home now, no risk of being attacked by animals.” She said, which I had not thought of. There must be turrets around the town to make sure no animals come in to hurt anyone. Then again I can not imagine an animal would be stupid enough to come here with this many citizens.



Daria proceeded to walk to the middle of the courtyard as I followed her and watch all the clothes of the Citizens. This was not NU for sure. In NU all the clothes were green with stripes. Here I saw blue, black, white, red, and a bunch of colors I did not know like something that was half red. This is something I will have to learn about..... colors.

Daria stopped in front of me and said this was the outpost and entered in the door. Inside it was a like a long hallway. It was pretty dirty and could use a good cleaning. I think someone could make good AWD if they could get someone to pay them to clean up these places.

Down the hallway we walked to the middle of the building. On one side of the hallway was a computer with all kinds of lights and beeping going on. I wondered as I passed if this was computer my wiki ran on. I had no idea how I would tell.

In the middle of the building I saw a bunch of storages like the ones we had in NU. We will have to sign up to use those and get one for Hunters Unlimited. There were a few carriages with boxes laying around, and in the opposite corner an officers desk. There were some other people standing around the room, but nobody was talking to the officer.

Daria walked over and introduced herself, the officer stood up and bowed to her. That was the first time an officer had ever bowed to her besides what happened at the event. He sat down and for the first time I noticed his desk. It was like every officers desk, besides the Doctors, I had seen in Afterworld. Empty bottles, and food laying all around a bunch of small books with pictures on them. I swear I saw something crawl across the desk as we waiting. He opened a draw in the desk and took out a folder and handed it to Daria.

I looked as she opened it and inside there were two folders. One had her name and one had my name on them. She handed me my folder and turned to talk to the officer. I listened this time and she called him Sergeant Zacharyan and asked him “Is there anything else we need?”

He replied. “Everything about being a citizen is in there, including your rules of the city, storage information, map of Saransk and our canteen schedule dear. You will also need a place to stay tonight? Yes?”

“Yes sir we do, and a meal if that is possible.”

The Sergeant picked up a paper from his desk and circled a spot on it. “This is a map to the boxes in Saransk. I circled the one assigned to you. This will stay assigned to you until you find your own place to

stay. When you do find a place to stay we ask that you tell us so we can give this box back to a new set of citizens. “

“That is fine. We are in box G-4 then?” Daria asks as she keeps moving the paper around to figure out where to go.

“Yes dear, it’s a bit west of here, should be easy to find. Your friends that arrived earlier today are in the box next to you.”

“Great I am sure we will find it. How about food?”

The Sergeant looks at his watch and back to Daira. “I fear you will not have time to get food.” He stops talking and looks around at the others in the room. “Kumi come here a second will ya?”

A tall figure walks over, he is wearing red pants and a black backpack. I guess he did not need shoes or a shirt because he had neither. He also had what looked like an apple in his hand. “How can I help ya Zach?”

The Sergeant grabs a piece of paper, writes something quickly on it and hands it to the new guy. “Do these nice folk a favor, can you run this over to Stirits over in the canteen real quick and bring back what he gives ya? “

“You got it.” This Kumi turns and runs out of the door that we came in.

“He will try and get you some food from the canteen, they are closing in two minutes. Ok back to things to do. You both have your packages and the box map. Ah you need to go behind me to the transportation room and talk with Sergeant Alesi and let him put your DNA into the system.”

“Ok we can do that.” Daria answers.

The Sergeant continues. “Also Sergeant Bondarenko should be in there too. He can give you both your Real Estate and Citizen certificates. You may want to wait for later to do that so you don’t lose them over night. No rush on those items.”

“OK so see the other guy tomorrow then. Anything else?”

“Oh yes I almost forgot. Comdiv has asked for you Daria to meet him....” The sergeant is looking around the piles of paper work on his desk for something. Maybe if he cleaned it on occasion it might help finding things. “Ah here it is. At ten hundred tomorrow morning in his office. His office is labeled on the map I gave you already.”

He hands the paper to Daria and she puts it into her folder. “Ok got it thanks.”

“And that is all. Head on to see my buddy Alesi and I will send the food in when it arrives.” He stands and shakes Daria’s hand and came over to shake mine. “It is nice to meet both of you and I hope you are safe and happy in Saransk. If there is every anything I can do for you please come and ask.” He walks to the door behind him and opens it to the next room”

“Thank you sir it has been a pleasure.” Daria says as she walks in.

“Thank you sir.” I say as I finally take his hand and shake it. Least amount of words thing I suppose.

Inside Daria is already sitting by the desk of the next Sergeant and is removing her armor so he can take a DNA sample. But really what caught my eye was the big blue circle just like the one I saw before the event right in the middle of the room and a travelbot appearing right in front of it.