

While standalone in repairman arc, this background of this specific story is based on a small minor event on [Ashuta arc] [4] [Fresh start] [9600].

## [Repairman arc] [4] [9601]

Rev 1.1 (Created January 24, 2016)

I was a repairman aboard LC Junkapollo. Not sure how the cruiser was given such a name but that's her name, Junkapollo. At least, it's unique.

I had long eventful years on this ship but I felt the time has come to take another chapter in my life. It all began with our liberty captain, Dieter, getting married. I suppose the marriage part wasn't a big deal. It was mostly his newly wed wife who caused troubles and created cracks amongst crews. I, among some others, have decided to step down from the ship.

So, how it began was...

Dieter, our liberty captain, stood right outside of his cruiser on a docking bay of Freedom colony. There were over fifty crews who were lined up to listen to their captain's speech. I was at the end of a line.

"Had good vacation, guys?" He casually inquired his crews.

Their responses were positive. And mine was the same. I hadn't had an off-ship break for years and it was welcome. But there was something unusual. Yes, there was a woman next to the captain.

I didn't know her, meaning she was not a crew. And she was something. I wasn't sure how to put it but she was quite a beauty. From her refined facial features along with her nice rack, almost everything about her felt perfect.

"Good, before we take off again, I'd like to introduce you to my wife," The captain casually declared his marriage to us.

Crews in front of me whispered to each other.

Well, I had nothing to say about his marriage. It was his own life. I wasn't jealous, either, despite of the fact the woman was a beauty.

"Grats, Captain," One of the crews said out loud and others followed.

"Grats."

"Good for you."

Being on a cruiser led by a liberty captain wasn't the same as being on a United Sol navy cruiser. Yeah, I did go through the formal training at Moon navy academy but the formality quickly wore off soon after I chose to be employed by our captain Dieter.

I served United Sol navy for about 7 years before having a chance to get abroad Capt. Dieter's cruiser. I was getting bored with Navy's formalities and so on and decided to take a chance to change the air a bit.

18 years passed since then. Drawing from my own experience, I daresay that this life is better than one at the navy. At least, life became more exciting, sometimes too exciting, I suppose. There were occasions where Capt. Dieter had to flee from groups of pirates and the cruiser came close to being destroyed more than a few times.

But we held on and we survived. There was a faint sense of accomplishment in that which was something that was missing from my navy life. I suppose I enjoyed that.

Once congratulations were thrown away, we got back to our usual business. Liberty captains had to make their own living since United Sol navy did not pay us enough, and the easiest and safest way of making a decent living was trading. A cruiser had ample cargo hold for trading and our captain, Dieter, took the advantage. Consequently, as far as I knew, most of liberty captains made their livings this way. Even the legendary Oraekyn did trading. And, because we did trading, pirates loved us. It also had to do with a fact that liberty captains roamed alone, thus becoming a far easier target. Still a cruiser was a capable combat ship.

Few crews, who remained at the ship, had already loaded cargo crates in while we were having a break. So, there was nothing for me or anyone else to do. Before taking off, however, regular routine check had to be performed and that was where I, along with other repairmen on the ship, came in.

A docking bay was zero gravity. We faked gravity by having electromagnetic boots. It would allow us to root ourselves to a designated floor. But, for a task I was about to do, the fake gravity was unnecessary.

Turning power off my boots, I contacted LC Junkapollo's main bridge.

"This is Unit 43. About to perform armor plate visual checkup."

I received a response right away.

"Roger that."

I had a thruster pack on my back which I would use to navigate my way around the cruiser in zero gravity.

Space may be vacuum but it is certainly not empty. As a spaceship sailed in space for a prolonged period, dusts and bigger debris would collide with the armor plating. And there was corrosion from cosmic rays from various sources. Normally, dust-sized debris and minor corrosion did no damage since USF Courage armor plating was somewhere between 3600mm to 5000mm. My job was just to visually inspect surface and armors and see if there were any deep scratches.

“Looking good so far. Just minor scratches,” I said while hovering over the ship.

Replacing an armor plate was a time-consuming task. Therefore, unless absolutely necessary, it wasn't performed. The cost wasn't actually high though since existing armor plate would become credit, and there was a discount for being a liberty cruiser.

When I touched down on the other side and was walking below the ship with a flash light on my hand, I noticed that one of the bottom plates had a rather deep scratch. I approached it with my thruster pack carefully.

“Unit 43 again, I see a deep scratch on armor plate # 21 and 22. 20 meters in length and about 50mm in depth.”

“Is it a single scratched that affected both plates?”

“Positive.”

There was a pause from the bridge. Presumably, the captain was called to discuss. It was about a minute later I received a response.

“No armor plate swap necessary. Captain says patch it up.”

That was my thought as well. The scratch wasn't deep enough to warrant armor plate replacement.

“Roger that. I will get to it.”

“Patching it up” was another way of saying make it look pretty and done with it. Quite frankly, a cruiser got hardly hit on bottom side. It was the broadside that mattered the most.

So, I prayed paint over the scratch and wrote down the date I worked it on the armor plate itself and my job was done. I promptly entered USF Junkapollo and informed the bridge.

My task for the day was done.

My days had been quiet, as usual. I did my job, again as usual, and spent my spare time playing games and stuff. The crew members had a co-op shooting game going on at the moment and it was a very good way of killing time. Most importantly, cheating didn't exist because we all knew each other and were in close proximity.

It was a fair game and we liked that way.

And one day, the first glimpse of what was going to happen on our ship occurred.

I was floating through a hallway and happened to run into the captain's missus. I glanced at her and then simply passed by her. And when I passed her, she raised her voice at me.

“Excuse me, but shouldn't you salute?”

Grabbing a hand rail on a wall in order to stop, I turned back and looked at her with confused eyes.

“Excuse me?”

“Shouldn’t you salute?”

Her voice sounded annoyed and I had no fucking idea why.

“Why should I salute to you?” Hell, I don’t even salute to the Captain.

“Because I am the captain’s wife? I outrank you, no?”

I was ... flabbergasted. Who does she think she is? But she was indeed the captain’s wife and I showed my respect in a way I could.

“Mrs, I don’t even salute to your husband.”

She glared at me with angry eyes and eventually crossed her arms. “Where is the discipline? Isn’t this a navy ship?” She wasn’t talking to me but rather to herself. She then turned back and angrily walked away.

Apparently, I wasn’t the only one who was confronted by her. However, none of us brought it up to the captain and tried to let it go by, hoping that it wouldn’t happen again.

How wrong we were.

At one point, she summoned all able crews to the cafeteria. She called us in the captain’s name. Therefore, we figured it was our captain who called us. But when we got there, there was only her and she demanded us to listen to her. She lectured us about discipline and stuff.

“Liberty captains belong to United Sol navy!” She exclaimed enthusiastically as she lectured us. Most of us were listening to her actually but it wasn’t out of respect or duty. They were amused and were looking at her bodyline rather. Yeah, she did have a very glamorous figure. In fact, I hadn’t seen anyone whose boobs were bigger than her yet and her waist was very narrow.

Aaaanyway, she'd go on about liberty captains belonging to USF navy and the navy rules should be kept. She wanted proper discipline among crews and wanted us to stop playing games in our spare time.

"Ma'am," A guy called out, "With all due respect, what we do in our spare time is none of your business. I've come from USF navy and I can tell you that no one tells you what to do in our spare time."

Indeed. Even when I was serving in the navy, I was completely free to do whatever I wanted in my spare time.

"That is wrong!" She exclaimed in response. "You can't build proper discipline like that."

I wondered if she knew what discipline was about even but didn't bother asking her. I was ready to duke out and just leave and it seemed many thought the same. Some few did actively argue with her however.

It took her, whatever her name was, a whole hour before she decided it was enough for the day. I along some others grumbled as we left the cafeteria.

"Shouldn't we inform the captain?" A guy near me said to someone.

"She's good looking though. And this is a change of pace," Another responded with a positive tone.

"Well, I wouldn't mind if she stripped," Another responded with a snicker.

"Right, hard to discuss about discipline when boobs dangle right in front of you."

Their rather perverted conversation reminded me that our uniforms weren't skin tight suits but the missus was wearing a black skin tight suit and donned a simple jacket over her upper body. Her outfit wasn't certainly norm and perhaps a little too bold. Yes, there were female crews aboard but they

weren't exactly charming types and they certainly did not wear skin tight suits that highlighted feminine features.

Regardless, I added no word of mine to their conversation and went back to my quarter. Still, the missus became the topic to talk about even during games as well. And eventually a guy managed to dig into her background and past.

"A Prostitute?!" I exclaimed in my virtual reality visor. I was in a game and there were about thirteen more on the game map. We were supposed to be shooting at each other. After all, it was a 7 versus 7 shooting game. However, we were standing in a circle on an open field and were conversing instead.

"Yeah, she was a prostitute back on Freedom colony. Apparently worked for Seaside retreat." The guy who claimed to have dug into her past explained.

"Isn't that a member only place?" Another asked.

"Expensive as hell from what I read," The guy answered.

"How did our captain end up with a whore?" I asked.

The guy shrugged. "Who knows? Maybe feminine charm?"

"How expensive are we talking about here?"

The conversation went on and on. And before I realized, words spread and everyone was talking about her.

"Discipline", she claimed to have wanted but disorder was what seemed to be occurring. Some crews went bold and wanted to a night with the missus.

A cruiser was a big ship but it was overall a small community of about a hundred people. On Junkapollo, male and female ratio was about 3 to 1. While officially no sexual relationship was allowed, people made out still.

And, despite of the fact that there were far more males, it didn't cause much of an issue because some of us were sexually inactive.

For a good example, I was a sexually inactive man. But having extraordinarily gorgeous woman changed the situation slightly and her provocative suit didn't help. While her feminine charm did not have a profound effect on me, it seemed some others had it different. This caused imbalance and guys started to fight over girls. Basically, more willing sexually active female crews were needed. The atmosphere aboard the ship became more toxic overall. I knew, for absolutely certain, that it was bad news. One of the most important aspects in a small isolated community like crews of a cruiser was keeping sexuality at bay.

At this point, I decided to pay our captain a visit.

“Really...”

With his arms crossed, Dieter, sighed deeply in his chair. I was in the captain's quarter and was standing in front of his desk. His reaction told me that he was aware of what was going on.

“So, I assume you know about what's going on right now,” I told him, gently.

“Only a fool would not know. I do play the game also, you know, although I do use an alias,” He added, “Although you are the first one to approach me.”

“Captain, I am not going to ask you about your personal life but her presence is disturbing us.”

Captain had his arms crossed and was still. He did groan few times but showed no further reaction. In the end, he told me that he was going to wait and see. I believed that he hoped the fire would die off eventually.

But that turned out to be a wishful thinking.

While the missus didn't show up anymore or even bothered to lecture us, like I said, the atmosphere became toxic. Working relationship was ruined and the overall air became just too stoic. To make the situation worse, the captain did not do anything.

There were small fights occurring several times a day and hardly anyone had casual and friendly conversations at the cafeteria. Even I, who I thought I had no enemies since I wasn't going after any female crews, had a hard time communicating with others without being threatened not to touch whatever girl they had in their mind.

The community was broken and I realized it was time to leave.

By time, the ship reached Uranus outpost, I decided to leave the vessel and wrote what I thought went wrong and sent it to the captain via e-mail. I wasn't the only one who was leaving. There were over twenty of us who decided to step down. The jobs were voluntary and we were free to walk away whenever we felt like it. And it wasn't uncommon for one or two crews to step down but this was more like mass exodus.

I was just a repairman but chief engineer as well as chef were leaving. What was really shocking was that even the first mate was leaving as well.

As the ship landed on Uranus docking bay, I along others waited for the exit to become accessible. I had a luggage with me which contained my clothes and tools that I owned. The luggage was floating lazily by my side. The first mate was right next to me and I inquired him casually.

"You leaving, too?"

His reply was rather stoic. "You shouldn't be surprised."

"No, but you? You are unit 2 which means you've been here the longest besides the captain."

“True, I am the captain’s close friend and I was his first crew when he started out as a liberty captain. But he’s changed. I suppose the missus has something to do with that but I didn’t like what I saw.”

Crossing my arms, I glanced backwards. There were people lined up behind us, waiting for the door to get a greenlight.

I understood the first mate’s statement. The captain should have stepped in instead of just watching from a distance. He did tell me that he was hoping for the fire to die off, so I wasn’t too surprised regarding his inactivity.

“Shouldn’t be too hard to start over,” The first mate said, “The Junkapollo, I mean. Yes, potential applicants will be suspicious about the mass exodus but given enough time, the captain should be able to replace us.”

Quitting the job wasn’t a financial blow to me because, when you work in a space ship that travels, you don’t get to spend your money. You also don’t get holidays, either. I’ve saved shit load of credit now and can afford to take few years of holidays. It should be the same for everyone else who decided to leave. They could afford to leave, so they were leaving. I reckon some might be staying because they were enjoying the fuck that was going on however...

The door panel on side finally turned green from red.

“Alright, good knowing you guys.” Having said so, the first mate pressed a button and the door slid open, revealing the docking bay of Uranus outpost.

He flew out of there and I followed him. So did everyone else.

**Fin**