I spent a few hours working in engineering before heading to my cabin. I had to utilize my old SLUMBER unit to get some sleep. No programs tonight, just natural REM sleep. Seeing Abby was fantastic even with her insistence to get me fit again. Sleeping two nights in a row was also a god send. So far there had been no emergencies in the Adana system. No contacts from the government. No issues selling my precious metals. My PerCom beeped with an urgent message. I must have jinxed myself and checked the message. My guess was one of my crew had gotten into trouble.

It was the auction for the two statues. They had finished their scans and assessment of the artifacts….that is what they called them…artifacts. They wanted to set the minimum bid for the pair at 50,000 Sol credits. Damn. But that was not all. They expected the pair to sell for five times that amount! I even had three offers for the statues already. 180,000. 184,000 and 190,000.

So, the auctioneer had published his data for the upcoming auction. Buyouts were not unusual according to him. I said to set the buyout at 300,000 Sol credits way more than I ever dreamed of getting. I was in no rush and didn’t need the funds immediately. Maybe I would get the SNAIL suite Andie wanted. Maybe I should call her Doc like Abby did when they met? She didn’t seem to mind…it seemed a term marines called a doctor no matter what their name was. I commed her. During the conversation I called her Doc and she didn’t seem to mind. She got really excited when I asked her to put together a purchase order for SNAIL suite.

I was then educated on SNAIL treatments by Doc. Each person needed a tailored treatment to their own physiology every six months. She needed a bio storage unit for the base components for to prepare these treatments and the SNAIL unit itself needed a 10m by 10m room. More space I just didn’t have on the ship. I spent two hours examining the schematics to try and fit this new unit next to Doc’s current medical suite to no avail. Just too many things to move. I decided to place it on deck 6 below the Doc’s med bay. I would need to move 4 common passenger cabins forward and eliminate the small theater here. It was not like a theater would get used much with VR available, right?

As I input the changes to the system Nero commed me and seemed irritated. After talking for a while I found that the changes I made to ship layout caused him quite a bit of work removing life support and installing life support. The changes were getting ridiculous in his opinion…every time we made port I switched that or moved that. I listened and let him vent. After he was finished I sent him a month bonus in pay and waited for it to hit his PerCom. He thanked me and before he could continue I said I was buying four more steward bots. It was a request from Suruchi. I said I think I changed my mind and I was going to get a fifth and would assign it to help him with all the irritating changes I was making to the ship. He was silent on the other end so I told him to send me the appearance specs he wanted on his personal steward bot before closing the link. That should boost his morale!

I checked in on Emon next. He was working hard getting ready for the upgrades to the VR system and finalizing Julie’s integration into the ship’s AI. I was excited about this as well. It was going to save me and Eve a lot of time having Julie monitor things and control the engineering bots. We had six high end holo emitters in the package I bought that would allow Julie to manifest. Emon wanted to know where I wanted them installed. Each needed to be installed in the floor and ceiling of the area and gave the projection a range of about 3 meters from the 1 meter discs in the ceiling and floor.

I told him two on the bridge. One next to the captain’s chair and the other in the center of operations. The one next to the captain’s chair was due to my favorite pirate vid. They frequently used holograms for deception and this would allow Julie to project in the captain’s seat. The third device would be in my quarters. The fourth in aft engineering. The fifth in the captain’s dining room on deck 7. And the final one would be in shuttle bay 1. This wouldn’t be the extent of Julie’s manifestation though. Emon was working on allowing her to puppet the steward bots as well.

As I was finishing with Emon I had planned to talk with Gabby as I had reviewed her progress on the dog bots and wanted to give her some feedback but Suruchi was on board and ready for the interviews with Bastille. I went to her office on deck 9 and found her talking amicably with Abby. How did Abby do that? We sat down and reviewed the candidates one by one. All of Suruchi’s research was from their Sapphire imprisonment files so I didn’t give it too much weight. Abby had thought of two others to include, staff sergeant Vicky Charity. She hadn’t seen Vicky in months because she moved to another terraforming facility but Vicky had been a battalion’s logistics officer. That was promising! The other person she had thought of was Edmund Asir. She wasn’t sure if he would be a good pick though. She thinks Edmund was a RECON RANGER. That was the special forces branch of the Union. Recon rangers inserted into enemy territory in teams of fifteen for covert missions. We would at least interview him.

Suruchi said she also had two candidates for the hospitality wing of the ship. She said hospitality with some inflection. Cori Deane and Razan Ramirez. Both came highly recommended and she was working on their background checks now through her own contacts. Anyone else? Not right now. Damn I hoped I wouldn’t have to increase the crew budget too much if everyone passed muster. We were going to start with Suruchi’s candidates first since there was no added cost. Apparently the high speed comm link to Bastille cost 5 Sol credits an hour!

The first interview was Razan. He had dark skin and brilliant blue eyes and a blinding white smile. He was 33 and had served as chief steward on the *Wayward Princess*, an inter system transport, for 7 years. I didn’t find anything wrong with him other than I was a little jealous of his good looks. Maybe I would look into some body modifications…no that was a stupid idea. I let Suruchi handle the preliminary contract negotiations and we hired Razan as an assistant steward.

Cori Deane took about twenty minutes to get ahold of. She was a master chef according to Suruchi and a little odd. According to Suruchi Cori was on the cutting edge of the culinary world. I didn’t know what that meant but ok. When Cori finally got in touch with us she was average in looks with short black hair and icy blue eyes. She talked very passionately about her food and seemed to have a strong case of OCD. Which on reflection mirrored my own passions. I don’t think she did very well in the interview and we ended the call to talk. Suruchi was still singing Cori’s high praises. Abby wasn’t convinced one way or the other. There was something about the way she talked and tuned us out while she did that struck a cord in me. I approved the hiring even though I thought the steward bots did a fantastic job and I still had meals from Gunther Prime.

Vicky Charity was our next interview. She was a little confused at being excused from work to answer a comm but we explained it to her in short order. She was in her 40s I think and had dirty blonde hair and brown eyes. She was short from her bio, just 1.6 meters. She spoke clearly and had two decades worth of experience in military logistics. Abby asked most of the questions and I think she would be a good fit. Suruchi seemed a little reluctant but she hadn’t found anyone on the planet yet. Suruchi assured me she would eventually find someone but I thought that freeing a Union prisoner would be good. The negotiations were different this time. Suruchi had wanted her to work off her debt but I quashed that. That would be a different form of imprisonment. Instead we would ask for a five year term of service with regular wages. Vicky had just over two years left on her sentence so jumped at the chance to be free.

Haily was our next interview. Haily was utterly flabbergasted to see me on the other side of the vid. Abby had to interrupt her questions and explain the situation. I knew Haily well enough, I was her sugar daddy at the academy and she was a good person back then. I knew she defended me verbally a few times to her friends and others when they ragged on me in private. After talking for a while we learned Haily wanted to return to the Union though. She had a large family that she missed. I told her I would pay for her release and she didn’t have to join my crew. She thought on it for a while and eventually said she would sign on for a two year stint. I didn’t tell her that I planned to head away from the Union. Those plans I was keeping close to the vest. Suruchi had been studying me intently during this interview and she nodded a little when I offered to free her without contract. Just what did Suruchi think of me? Before I could dwell on it Suruchi wanted to move onto the next interview. All this social interaction was draining to me and I was feeling the fatigue she I asked if we could take a break. Abby and Suruchi looked at each other in some sort of womanly understanding and agreed to break till tomorrow. Suruchi would handle getting everyone’s contracts firmed up and getting the release of the Union prisoners ready. She wanted to do them all as a group to save money so we would have to finish the interviews before transport. Fine!

I retreated to my cabin to find Emon working on installing the holo emitter for Julie there. I went to Eve’s monitoring station in engineering and watched two episodes of the pirate comedy. We only had 17 episodes left before the series ended.