

CHAPTER 2 RUMINATIONS

Doctor Richard Weil was thinking about a subject far from his chosen field. He was thinking about sociology. He was thinking about the social structure upon which he was about to unleash a human being with a diamasteel body.

The United Earth Confederation was not in the habit of interfering in the peaceful conduct of a member nation's business. It did however have the power, indeed the mandate, to protect the human rights and dignity of any PERSON on the face of the earth and most of the colonies in space. Those colonies were even now in the process of negotiating with both the colonies on Mars and the Moon to become member states. There would probably not be any big problem since membership would guarantee their political independence if not their economic. They would negotiate for the best position they could get, but ultimately they would join and thus cease being colonies of various political divisions on Earth.

His negotiations with the moon colony had progressed rather well to this point. They were eager to accept a colonist that would require little in the way of sustenance and yet was potentially a trained space pilot.

He had already determined that she would not have a chance at any meaningful life here on Earth. Both the U.E.C. and the United States were viewing her as a scientific curiosity to be exploited to the fullest. If allowed to live and remain on Earth, she would spend her entire life as a laboratory rat running mental and physical mazes. Therefore he was attempting to obtain a full citizenship on one of the independent Extra Terrestrial Nation States.

There remained the problem of getting her to the E.T.N.S without being convicted of a capital crime against either the U.E.C or the U.S. Seems they took a dim view of people who accepted their funding and then removed the subject of that funding from their control.

He had not yet informed the United States or the U.E.C. of the mostly successful integration of the subjects mind. There were still many unanswered questions about their patient that the first year had not given time to examine.

They had ended up with a very tough minded female personality. One that could have the command presence of the lieutenant commander or the seductive qualities and tough mindedness of a self assured female. They had taken her out of the experimental suite to mingle with the hospital population on several occasions and no one had suspected that she wore an android body.

The biggest question they faced was the telekinetic powers. How they had developed there was no clue, but the fact of their existence was undeniable. They seemed to cover the entire range of possibilities with the exception of those other extra-sensory powers such as precognition, clairvoyance, and of course the telepathic. Even in this latter area, there were exceptions. His son and Andrea, as she was calling herself, seemed to be developing a very limited telepathic link.

Did this mean that in time she would have broad telepathic abilities or was she capable of establishing only nebulous links with people she knew rather well? Was there an emotional component? Was her ability reserved only for those she felt an emotional attachment? If so, how strong did that emotional attachment have to be to initiate the link? If the basis was emotional was it reserved for only the positive emotions or could she establish the link with someone she disliked. (Just how strong an emotional bond was forming between his son and "Andrea"?)

Richard was somewhat concerned about the developing "friendship" between his son and Andrea. He recalled that Jim had expressed the thought that his law-bonding to the cyborg would give them a good case for citizenship and recognition as a person for Andrea. Jim had expressed an interest in a one-year contract so apparently his commitment was something less than complete as yet.

His thought processes were interrupted by a comp call from the Federal Board of Public Safety. It seems they had just removed one android from his hospital. They were sending a car and two officers to his home if he wouldn't mind accompanying them to the Board's offices? All very polite.

Seems I'm under arrest. Wonder if they've picked up Jim? Should I call? No the comp is probably tapped by now. DAMN!! He heard the soft chime of his door annunciator.

CHAPTER 3 LUNAR SKULLDUGGERY

Bill sat looking at the nameplate on his desk. 'Dr. William G. Morgan Executive Coordinator'

He had never had any trouble with the first part. It was a good name. Perhaps it wasn't a name that conveyed emotional impact, but it worked for him. It was the last part that was troubling him now.

There were three separate districts or "towns" in Luna. Not on but in. There were no buildings on the moon. Just as there was no picturesque "Domes" protruding above the warrens. They had no atmosphere to break the fall of the meteors that still

fell and no construction compounds strong enough to resist their impact since they would be traveling at several thousand miles per hour, they would hit with the energy of an fair sized nuclear bomb. Every office, business and living quarter was dug deep into the moon. A direct hit by a fairly sizable meteor (or atomic bomb) would not breach the atmospheric integrity of the towns.

Bill was one of three coordinators recently elected by a plebiscite, to manage the affairs of each of the districts and he had been elected by another to be the chief executive of the emerging nation state to be known as simply "Luna". He was not a politician. He had not sought this office and did not want it. He was; however, a conscientious man. The citizens had said "You're it!" so he would do his best. His cabinet consisted of Judith Lonnegin of Tranquility Base and Karen Bestor of New Europe. The other two elected coordinators. He also made judicious use of other, less formal, advisers.

Here he was in this office less than six weeks and facing this damned problem of the android person from Earth, this Andrea. His first "State Secret" with capitals and all. He had screened both Karen and Judy to ask that they bring their advisors and come over for a face to face. He had some ideas on the subject and wanted to hear theirs.

He was well aware that his Deist beliefs were coming into play. He couldn't help that. He believed in a supreme being. The originator of this confusing and yet so beautifully organized universe. He certainly didn't understand the nature of this being, but he did believe that the big bang, if such a thing actually happened, had been created by an omniscient being who knew the consequences of his action. Maybe not the ramifications, but definitely the consequences. This brought up the moral question of his right to consider Andrea a person. He really didn't believe that this omniscient presence concerned himself with the day to day actions of those beings that His laws brought into existence as long as ones overall life was one that adhered to a sort of golden rule philosophy. The biggest related problem he had faced since beginning to call himself a Deist (believer in a supreme being) was defining just what that meant.

The flashing of his private line interrupted his thought and that number was in the hands of only one person, his executive assistant.

Kat was an amazing female. She stood an even six feet tall with a siren scream for a body, shining red hair framing a handsome chiseled face that avoided looking gaunt and set with intelligent emerald green eyes. She came complete with a perfect sense of make-up and an unerring one for fashion. Even when she was in what she called her

'grungies' she looked good. She was proud of being female and would brook no ungentlemanly comments or advances. One of the most intelligent people he had ever met, she had degrees from three different earth side universities. She had come to him and asked to be his secretary. Secretary! She actually believed that she could do more for the Lunar state working for him than she could running the water mining and distillation plant. She didn't have an egotistical bone in her body. She worked from either her home warren or came into the office, whichever suited her mood of the day and was at the top of the pecking order in his unofficial cabinet. She still called herself his secretary in public. He didn't have the guts. He called her his Executive Assistant. He activated his Vidfon to take the call.

"Boss, I'd like to talk with you in person. How's about you take me to dinner tonight at that new cafe that opened on the concourse arboretum, Level Seven. I think it's called Renee's."

She knew he didn't like to be called 'Boss', which, of course, was why she did it. "Sure, Ms. Cozenko (a name she disliked as he disliked Boss) what time would you like me to pick you up?"

"Pick me up?? Boss, you are such an anachronism. I'll meet you there at 1730. OK?"

"Why so early?"

"Indulge me."

Are you going to tell me what this is about?"

"Nope."

"HMMMM Kat, speaking of anachronisms, I think you are becoming something of a bitch."

"A bitch? What's a bitch?"

"Look it up. Twentieth century American derogatory slang."

"Derogatory, huh. OK, I will and if it IS derogatory, you'll pay!"

"See you tonight."

"Bye"

So, Kat wants to talk to me before the meeting tomorrow, and it is enough outside my own views that she wants us face to face. This could be interesting. Wonder what the hell she has up her sleeve, besides that pretty arm, which leads to that marvelous

shoulder, which leads to those ... Now stop that! You don't have a chance with a woman like that. She has made that perfectly clear on numerous occasions.

The office intercom from Kat's warren spoke telling him that he had an incoming from Earth. He switched on the vid only to discover that it was a voice only call. One of the people that acted as news stringers on Earth to keep Luna as well informed as possible. Well-trained, investigative reporters that cost a fortune to maintain and worth every penny.

"Hello" and wait for the seemingly interminable time lag while the word reached Earth and the reply came back. Bill switched on the recorder, as these people were to give their report once and hang up. Calls were expensive.

"This is U.S.P.S. 1. The Feds have just picked up Dr. J. and Dr. R. and some female that was with Dr. J. They have apparently been flown to Langley, Virginia. My contact there tells me that they are in the old C.I.A. offices. I keep telling people that it was never really disbanded. If you need follow up just say so. Over."

"Follow up closely. Over."

That last line meant that he wanted the most detailed report on this situation he could get. Money no object.

U.S.P.S. 1 meant that this was a man that was to keep track of the United States Political Scene. He was also assigned to keep track of the Drs. Weil since Richard Weil had first contacted him about Andrea.

If that was Andrea that had been taken into custody with Jim Weil, this could become sticky. He wanted that android on Luna! Particularly since the younger Weil had hinted he might come along. They could use the medical expertise.

2:30 in the afternoon. He just couldn't get used to thinking in twenty-four hour terms. Let's see, if it is after noon then take the time and add twelve so it was now 1430 hours. That gave him three hours until the dinner. He still had a few hours of paper work to get caught up on before his dinner with Kat. Such a wondrous shade of green eyes she had.

1737 hrs and still no Kat! This was not like her. She had learned that he had a bachelor's penchant for punctuality and had ever since contrived to be every place before him. Except his office of course. He lived there and she had never stayed later than office hours nor arrived prior to them.

He gazed around the new restaurant with curiosity. His head had been so full of the day's events and his meeting with Kat that he had not really paid any attention to his

surroundings. What he saw reminded him of old pictures of earth type restaurants of the early twentieth century. Lots of wood. Not really wood of course, but construction grade plastics formed and grained to look and feel like wood. All of the lighting was indirect with the exception of the floor lighting for the grass carpet to provide oxygen. Of course they still had to buy a certain amount from Luna. This was good. It paid his salary. It was constitutionally impossible for the Lunar state to tax its people; however, there were no laws against running businesses. Still, it was a custom that was never broken to have green plants wherever possible in the warrens of Luna.

The bare gray rock walls were all covered with plastics in the wood motif and there were the privacy booths scattered about. The main thrust; however, seemed to be open expanse. There were open booths and tables arranged to give the maximum occupancy with the illusion of space achieved in the arrangement.

He saw Kat walking toward him. She was dressed in a provocative dress of black trimmed with a green that seemed to match her eyes and called attention to her red hair. She walked with a dancer's grace. She was not given to overpowering the effect with jewelry. She wore only her wrist comp, done again in that green with just a smattering of jeweled accents. The effect took his breath away. He smiled up at her six foot height as he rose to greet her. It was funny that although he stood a full three inches taller than her she always managed to make him feel that they were of equal height.

"Hi Boss"

"If you keep that up I will call you Ms. Cozenko all night and introduce you to everybody that way."

"OK, Bill. Truce. Just for tonight. I apologize for being late. As I was leaving the warren a call came in for you from Earth. Here's the disc. It's voice only."

Bill plugged the disc into his wrist comp and activated his ear piece. The call was from U.S.P.S. 1 informing him that the female was apparently just an android. They were being held on an open charge and that was all he could learn. Seems some sort of security lid had clamped down tight on this one. His contact had been detained just for asking questions. He was turned loose in a couple of hours with some very forceful instructions not to say a word to anyone.

"Why the frown, Bill."

"The Weils have been arrested along with Andrea. I'm afraid that we might be forced into some rather drastic unilateral action. I want to let my subconscious work on it for a

while. I must say that you look very fetching tonight. Since you wanted this dinner so early I can only assume that you have some lucky fellow to use all that bait on later this evening."

"Yep, and that's all you need to know about that.

I asked you to take me to dinner for two reasons: First, I was hungry; and second, I have some facts for you to digest along with the news you just got off that disc. You received a scribe from Earth early today from Dr. Jim. If this can be believed, Andrea's learning curve puts her in the genius range. Seems that the combination of the two major portions of her brain along with the minor transplants have resulted in something much greater than the sum of the parts. Dr. Jim seems to feel that she is now completely socialized and fanatically loyal to him and his father. He also states that she can be trained very rapidly. There is still a lot of work to be done with the telekinetic aspects of her abilities, but other than that he feels that she is ready to take her place as, and here I quote, 'A functioning citizen of Luna and the *human* race', end quote. The emphasis on the word human is his. He continues that her loyalty to him seems to indicate that he will have to follow her to whichever state accepts her and he seems quite willing to do this."

"This just turned into a working dinner. While I get us a privacy booth, you get onto the shuttle service and see if we have any shuttles at L2 or LEO capable of atmospheric maneuvering. If we do get on to the pilot and tell him or her to make that ship available to Lunar governmental command, effective immediately." She activated her wrist comp and he signaled the server.

There was a privacy booth made available and swept for bugs at his request. None were found of course, but he felt better being sure. The U.E.C. was getting very nosy lately. Kat was waiting for a call back from the shuttle service as they sat down. The attention light began blinking informing them that the first course was ready. He had requested a robot waiter with the privacy booth to insure their conversation would not fall on human ears even by accident.

He was in the process of establishing a three-way link up with Tranquility Base and New Europe. Judy came on first and they exchange greetings and banalities while they waited for Karen to be located. When she finally came on-line she was still buttoning her blouse and her hair was a mess so Bill asked her to establish total privacy at her end. Judy looked startled and told them she would have to do the same. Bill plugged his

wrist comp into the booth's vid so he would have a better view of his two cabinet members.

Bill was bringing his fellow coordinators up to date preparatory to asking them to convene in emergency session when Kat signaled that her call to the shuttle service was coming in. They couldn't have a shuttle for at least six hours.

"Damn!" Which startled all three of his listeners. "I can't keep talking in this alphabet soup we use for code so let's get together as soon as possible. I would like to have you two get a hopper over here in the next two hours instead of tomorrow as planned. Can do?"

They both agreed that they could and they both hinted at the dire consequences in store for him for breaking up their respective evenings. The only problem with the comment as far as Bill was concerned ... they meant it with the greatest of sincerity. He would have to watch his back and one look at Kat told him that he was facing a triple threat. She was already making her excuses to someone named 'Charliekins' for Chaos' sake.

Bill called two of the security deputies so that the Coordinators would be properly met and escorted to his office. Wish I had cleaned up the living quarters a little bit before I left. Have to get Eddy's to send over some coffee and snacks.

When they arrived at his office cum apartment he found that Sheila, the lady that cleaned for him on occasion had the place looking shined and polished. The conference table was raised out of its floor receptacle and she informed him that Eddy's had been alerted and would have someone standing by to be of service throughout the night if necessary. He thanked her profusely and raised his eyebrow at Kat by way of thanks for the ever-perfect assistant. Sheila said that was quite all right and that would be ten dollars Luna or fifty American. Kat gave a very unladylike chuckle.

Sheila left with a smile and Bill brought Kat up to date on the situation and began to explain what he wanted to do about it.

"Bill, you can't just send a shuttle down to Earth and grab an American citizen, particularly one that has been detained by that government. Even at the request of that citizen. We desperately need to become a nation state recognized by the U.E.C. You know that. You also know that New Europe was founded by the Europeans and still flies their flag just as we were founded by the North American Alliance, which, in case you've forgotten, includes the United States. The U.E.C. is still an EARTH government. Our negotiating position is tenuous at best; however, we must maintain that position and

I don't think a raid on one of the member states would constitute an advance for our side.”

How could you contact these people? You can't just dial them up on your wrist comp. Those have been taken away from them by now.”

“Actually, that is exactly what I intend to do, just as soon as the other Coordinators arrive and have all of the facts.”

“You're nuts. What do you want with this android in the first place?”

“This android is, first and foremost, a most intelligent being. Second, there seems to be accompanying that intelligence, a few mental tricks that could be of use to the human race as a whole. Third, one of the best neurosurgeons in the system will escort her.

“Now I want you to think about those for a minute and about the type of people that are wont to colonize space and the type of people that don't. Why do you suppose there is so little crime here in the moon? Why do we always have volunteers to inspect the airlock seals and the air recycling plants? No, I'm not going to give you the answer right now. You listen to the discussion that takes place here tonight.

“I am quite sure that each of the Coordinators is very aware of the answer to those questions or this subject would not have received such immediate support from them. I will give you one big hint. We coordinators have never put this fact into words, but even more important than our attracting this cybernetic personality to the moon is getting her out of the clutches of the grounders. That is of paramount importance!”

Kat sat with a frown of concentration on her face. “I think I begin to understand part of it. In space we depend on each other. We need each person to be dependable. If we can't count on each person doing his or her job well then the person that can't be depended upon gets left out. If we can't rely someone for one thing we can't take a chance on anything they may do. Any such person invariably leaves space or ends up being spaced. Thus little or no crime. The few thieves that have come into the moon have all been spaced. They learned and just stopped coming. I still don't understand why it is 'of paramount importance' that Andrea be brought to the moon!”

“I don't think the important part is whether she comes to the moon. Any of the space states would be better than leaving her on the Earth. For now I would settle for just getting her to Geneva”

Kat had brought them each a cup of coffee. This was the one item that they couldn't seem to grow to the perfection of earth. They had finally bought a few pounds of dirt

from a coffee grower in Sumatra and one in Jamaica to analyze completely. And they had insisted that it come from the very ground that grew some of the finest of earth's coffees. They had actually drilled three holes sixteen feet deep and four inches in diameter and kept the core samples intact so that each inch could go under the microscope or whatever, to obtain the chemical and biological constituents so that the same soil could be produced here. Bill couldn't wait. It was the only thing that he truly missed of the earth. He had emigrated from there at the age of twenty-three, unlike Kat who was a third generation 'Loony'.

They worked on some more mundane matters awaiting Judy and Karen. They arrived just as Eddy's was delivering more coffee and some rolls and other deserts. Since neither of the ladies had eaten Judy ordered a Chef's salad while Karen opted for delivery of a turkey-soy steak with all of the trimmings. Since Karen had arrived in a pair of leotards while Judy was more conventionally attired and since Karen's physical attributes were considerable and since Bill was a bachelor easily distracted, he requested that she wear one of his shirts for the meeting. The girls all thought this was hilarious, but Karen complied with only a few comments about Bill's apparently lackluster sex life.

Bill quickly brought everybody up to date on the events surrounding Andrea. "I am becoming convinced that the only answer may be to send one of our shuttles down and rescue them. I realize that is a dangerous course and I am open to alternative plans. Before we take any action; however, I suggest that we contact Andrea via voice only com-link and see what her desires are at this point. She has a com-link built into her android body that they cannot get to without turning her off and virtually dismantling her. I want to know what she and her fellow prisoners think of this situation and what they would like us to do, if anything. Any objections?"

Since both of the other two coordinators wanted the same information he placed the call. Nothing happened. Bill played a hunch. "Andrea, this is Bill Morgan in Luna City. Can you hear me?"

"Yes, Mr. Morgan I was unwilling to complete the link for fear that it might be one of our jailers attempting to see if this com-link was still working. I told them I had deactivated it. What can I do for you?"

"We called to ask you that question. What may we do that might be of help? We have a shuttle standing by and are prepared to come and collect you forcefully if necessary."

"I don't think that would be either wise or necessary. We are ready to escape from here now and won't need assistance on that part. We have not done so because we have no place to escape to. Do you have any suggestions? Hold on for just one sec. Jim wants to know if you have any agents already on earth that might be of assistance in relocating us."

"Is Dr. Weil listening to this conversation?"

"Not listening really but he knows everything that we discuss. Please wait for your explanations until a better time. What about your agents?"

"Are you safe for now and could I call you back while I check on their locations and a possible safe relocation area for you?"

We are fine and will await your call. I should tell you that we are running out of time. I think that we will have to make our move in the next hour."

Karen passed a note to Bill that she had just received from Judy. Bill read the note and gave the suggestion to Andrea. "Andrea, could we safely keep this link open while we do this checking. That way you and Dr. Weil could assist us in our deliberations."

"I think that would be safe. Dr. Richard says to tell you that he has friends in Zürich that would help if we could get to them."

Kat spoke up from the computer console to inform them that they had three Lunar residents in Washington at this time. Two of them would be of little help since they were having difficulty adjusting to Earth's gravity. The other was a seventeen-year-old boy who had been born on Earth and had emigrated with his parents only three years ago. He had been on the Earth for about a month and reported that he was doing fine. His father was on the moon living in Tranquility. His mother, who preferred the social life of Earth, lived in DC. The boy, Kevin, was strongly in favor of Luna becoming an independent nation state and had worked hard to get Judith elected. Did Bill want her to get hold of the boy's father?

"A seventeen year old? Gad, isn't there anybody else?"

"Not close enough to help in the next hour."

Judy interjected, "I think I know this Kevin. He came over to interview me after the election. Seems he is attending college and writes for the school news. He impressed me as being very intelligent and quite resourceful. I say call the father if he can be trusted to keep his mouth shut. Kat?"

I'm looking him up now. Hey, Boss, he's a member of the security force in Tranquility and he is supposed to be on duty now. It says here that he was a member of the U.S. police force called the F.B.I., whatever that is. His immigration request stated that he just couldn't agree with 'the bureau's constant straining of the laws of the country and common decency'. Sounds like he might be the one we should have on Earth instead of his son."

"Get him on the vid. I want to see him when we talk. See if his office has a holo-link so that we can get his entire body language. And where is the coffee."

"On the credenza and get your own coffee, I'm busy."

The discussion continued for another twenty minutes with Andrea listening on Earth. Kevin's father, one Captain Gregory O'Malley, had agreed to allow his son to pick them up in an autoflyer and take them to a private field outside of Langley where a pilot was hired to take the fugitives to Zürich in a stratojet cargo plane on that plane's regular run at 2330 hrs Luna time. That was calling things very close. Andrea refused to explain how they were going to escape from what was obviously a maximum-security holding area. It was not until many weeks later that they were to learn that this entire conversation took place while Dr. James Weil was being 'questioned' by one of their captors. That sadist was the first to die that night. Kevin did his part well and without incident. His father remarked that really he was a good boy.