

Chapter 100: Presentation

“We should be starting on schedule in two hours. Are you ready?”

I drew my attention away from the web I had pulled up on my optics and looked up to find Claire.

I glanced around and found everything had already been set up by our employees. “Yeah, it should be fine.”

After last night’s dinner, I had been researching the so-called “The Gamer” that I saw on a plaque talking about how they had destroyed the first iteration of the space elevator. There wasn’t much information about them at all on the web, only briefly alluded to their existence in the articles talking about the history of the space elevator.

It didn’t make too much sense to me that there was so little information about the terrorist that managed to strike such a huge blow to the corporate symbol of the world. It didn’t even happen that long ago, just fifty years. There should be plenty of people still alive from that time period. Anyone moderately wealthy person who could afford proper healthcare and life-prolonging treatments could easily live a century and a half.

My suspicion that the corporations had covered up the incident only grew more the less I found. Though if that were true, I had no business uncovering what the high-level players want to keep hidden for now or it would just be suicide.

“Hello, Rollo?” Claire called out. “Stop daydreaming and let’s go grab something to eat before our panel starts.”

Shelving the unimportant thoughts, I followed Claire and Thorne out of the room we were assigned for the cybernetic expo that was taking place today. The room we were assigned was on the smaller side for this event and could barely fit a hundred people. The stage was at the center and people sat slightly elevated around it, so it was pretty small compared to some of the ones we had visited for the other expos.

As we ordered our food at one of the fancy restaurants in the spaceport, I reviewed my presentation.

From what I saw at the wood crafts expo yesterday, I began incorporating the topic of dungeons into the marketability of the Argus. Our original plan was focused on the entire mercenary market in general without targeting anything more specific because we believed the Argus to be useful in all types of situations.

The wood crafts expo yesterday opened our eyes to how lucrative some of the markets were. The rich corpos were willing to pay huge sums of credit for old wooden antiques, more than I had imagined. My time in the upper echelon of corpo society was still too short for me to learn

all about them. This was a difference between purebred corpo who grew up in such an environment and newcomers like us.

The market for dungeon delving was gigantic enough for me to rethink how we approached the market. I believe it was worth designing various variants of the Argus that catered to specific segments of the mercenary market.

While a general all-purpose model was nice and the simplest to execute, having variants that specialized allowed us to further build our brand, and allowed us to step foot into the premium cybernetics market. It would build up demand for our product and have our customers look for us instead of the other way around where we pushed out our products onto retailers who, in turn, pushed them onto their customers.

However, the dungeon delving segment of the market was the only attractive one that I believed we had the best chance of establishing ourselves in, as the Argus just catered to their needs much more.

After a quick breakfast, we made our way back into our presentation room and completed our final checks before our panel opened. On the way there, even though there were only other presenters in the hall, I could spot a variety of interesting cybernetics that weren't common at all.

Some had an extra limb, while others had flashy replacements that were simply weapons like blades or cannons that didn't even retain their function as hands. It reminded me of the flashy fashion shows I had seen that were more for proof of concept than for the practicality of everyday use.

Out of curiosity, I looked up the list of other ongoing panels and found the names didn't really give me a precise description of what they were about. I mean "The Mantis", was probably the one with the blade arms, but what in the world was "Project Alery Vortex Infinite"?

How can they even leave their description entirely blank?!

I let out a sigh of relief as I read over our own name, "Sensory Cybernetic - Argus". We were part of the saner groups that listed our product category and had a brief bio in our description.

Our presentation hall slowly filled up with various visitors as I went over the other panels that took place at the same time. Nova Tech was included with one of the many panels they had scheduled for this event, but there wasn't anything to worry about, as our hall had limited space anyway.

I could easily spot the people who came here for fun as we had done and the representatives from various corporations taking their seats. They wordlessly grouped themselves, with the people from the bigger corporations taking the better seats up front.

When we reached the scheduled time, the doors closed and the lights dimmed. I stood up and walked into the circular stage where the literal spotlight was.

“Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming to our Halls Corporation panel. Some of you may not have heard of us before as we are new to the industry, but I assure you our latest product will be worth your time today. Without further ado, let me introduce to you the Argus.”

I gestured toward the middle of the room where a hologram was projected. It showcased the Argus implant slowly spinning around for everyone to get a good look at. It zoomed out and a featureless person stood beside it to give a comparison in size. It was a thin and sleek device, a size smaller than the old smartphone I had used.

“The Argus is our latest detection implant designed for robust and demanding combat usage. Compared to the existing marketing alternatives, the Argus has a higher range, and precise filter capabilities tailored to isolate specific search criteria. This, in turn, means it can also identify known models of cybernetics the target has.”

A projection of the technical specifications popped up. Sounds of my guests murmuring to each other and gasps of surprise could be heard.

While the scanning technology presented wasn't revolutionary, the ability to fit such a powerful scanner into a cybernetic implant was another story. With ten points in cybernetic engineering, my ability to create a workable implant rivaled that of the greatest corporations. The only parties I foresaw surpassing me in how well I could safely integrate complicated technology into implants would be the top corporations that specialized in such cybernetics, with a lab full of experts.

Even the downgraded commercial version of the Argus was comparable to what most medium-sized corporations used for their spec-ops teams.

“That's...Are you sure those specifications are correct?” Someone at the front of the crowd asked.

I glanced over to find a representative from an E-Class corporation that developed specialty parts for cybernetics.

“They are correct. We plan to have a more premium variant as well, that is catered toward the dungeon environment.”

Another round of whispers began and this time, I could hear some of them murmuring about how they doubted such a small company like ours developed this or how we were so desperate for money that we were selling our trump cards.

“And you are sure they are safe to use? The amount of energy, radiation, and electromagnetic interference such a powerful sensor produces could easily fry the user and their cybernetics.” The same person couldn't help but continue.

What he said were some of the major challenges that prevented others from developing a similar implant before now. However, my hours holed up in my workshop were not in vain, and with the knowledge provided by the system, I would be embarrassed if I couldn't solve it.

“Yes, they are perfectly safe to use and within industry standards.”

“...That's... Be honest with us here. This isn't some stolen tech you wanted to make a quick profit from, is it? It would be a waste of time for us if the original corporation that made this stepped in, and things would surely not turn out well for you.”

I glanced around the venue and found various expressions, some suspect, some amused, and some eager.

“I assure you the Argus was developed by our company. Anyway, allow me to demonstrate our latest product in action.”

I signaled to one of our employees to take out a copy of the Argus to showcase to our guests, while Yuki prepared herself for our live demonstration.

“Our employee here already has an Argus installed inside of her. To showcase to you the precision capabilities of the Argus, we will be disabling her optics and auditory implants, and then have her scan a volunteer. Do I have any takers?”

A few hands immediately shot up, mostly from the people who came here for fun.

“Okay, how about you with the red glasses?” I pointed to a woman with auburn-colored hair.

She walked onto the stage and I guided her to stand off to a corner. I just needed her to be away from anyone else.

“I have instructed my employee here to scan the area where our volunteer is in exactly 24 seconds from now. Please bear with me.”

The short wait felt a lot longer than expected, but I soon detected Yuki's invasive scans, followed by her voice.

“I detect a Nova Tech Epsilon Mk.2, Zenitech Benny Mk. 7, SocialCorp—”

I watched our volunteer's shocked expression and swiftly sent a message to Yuki that it was enough.

The Argus wasn't perfect and it couldn't identify every cybernetic in existence or the unlisted ones that corporations kept to themselves. That didn't mean we should expose every implant our volunteer had, even though I'm sure various scanners she had to go through received similar information.

I should start working on a new project that can scramble and fake all these scans. It will have to be perfect to not reveal any traces to any corporation, though.

“Ma’am, was my employee correct?”

She slowly nodded.

My presentation soon ended after the demonstrations and I received multiple requests from various representatives for a meeting. This was a common occurrence at these expos, and appropriate rooms for our meetings were easily found.

I entered the room where a tall woman waited and immediately approached to shake her hand.

“Thank you for your invitation. I am Rollo Halls from Halls corporations.”

“Likewise, thank you for coming in such short order. I am Mei from Qilin Corporation.”

A quick search told me it was a company based in Lion City that was in the trade and distribution industry. Their reach stretched across Eurasia and into some parts of Europa.

“A pleasure to meet you. What would you like to discuss today?” I asked.

“I won’t waste your time and get straight to the point, sir. Our company is interested in distributing your products to the cybernetics market in Asia and Europa. We have connections with various retailers there.” She quickly sent over a tentative proposal.

I knew the states in those regions differed immensely, ranging from corporate puppet states to powerful authoritarian reigns. It would be costly in both material resources and time to get our foot into their doors ourselves.

“Just for those markets, correct? With those rates, you are asking of us, is that all you can offer us?”

“Yes, just those markets. You can retain the rights to the other markets. What we can also assist you with is marketing. We know you’re a relatively new company, and may not have your own dungeon team contracted to you yet. We can lend you ours to help showcase your Argus to the other companies and make inroads in the dungeon-delving mercenary population.”

A company contracted dungeon teams. This is starting to sound like corporate-owned sports teams...