

"Ess, where do you want me to drop the pod?" Virgil asked.

"Thunderbird Two from Thunderbird Five. Vee, the stadium at Ust'-Uls is ready for you. Downloading coordinates now." Callie's voice cut in from the orbiting space station.

"F-A-B, Thunderbird Five and thanks!" Virgil replied.

"Thunderbird One from Thunderbird Two. Ess, I'm going to drop the pod, unload it, and come back. We'll need the grabs in the base of the pod and I'll have more power to hold on or pull up if the pod is empty. Besides, it will get Seven and the auxiliary equipment out faster if we do it this way."

"Sounds like a plan, Vee. Just get a move on," Scott called.

"F-A-B." Virgil turned to speak over his shoulder. "CJ, you and Kay are with me. Aye, take Bee back. Have you been showing him the ropes on the recovery vehicle?"

"Yes, Vee. I think he's got the hang of it," Alan responded as he rose with Brandon to head back to the pod.

"Doc... oh, she's already gone, and Dee and En with her." Virgil shook his head. "She doesn't waste any time."

Back in Thunderbird Seven, Dianne was giving Dom a crash course in powering up procedure.

"You've got flight experience, so you should be able to do this pretty easily. Just remember that it's a hovercraft and needs something to push against. It doesn't do too well in open sky," she explained.

"I remember some of these procedures from the last rescue. Brains went over them with us after we cleaned and disinfected," Dom told her. Dianne nodded.

"That's good. And the two of you did a great job in cleaning things up after the last rescue. Thank you for your efforts there."

"You're welcome," Nikki responded.

Dianne turned to her. "We're going to get you into the simulator as soon as we can, Nikki, and give you flight training as well. It's imperative that all of our operatives know how to fly. But for now, let's get strapped in. I think this is our stop."

The three could feel the vibration of Thunderbird Two stop as the chassis was lifted from the pod. The door opened and daylight flooded the garage-like compartment.

"Looks like Alan and Brandon have point for the moment. We'll pull out and follow but once they start to work, we can go ahead and see if there's a place to land in the Danger Zone. One good thing about having a hovercraft: there aren't too many obstacles we can't get over," Dianne said with a smile.

"Thunderbird Seven to Thunderbird Two. Ready to move out," Dom said, his voice steady despite a bit of nervousness. After all, he was flying a Thunderbird today.

"F-A-B, Dee. Good luck," Virgil's voice returned. They could hear the smile behind it.

Carefully, Dom guided the Thunderbird out of the pod and between the hydraulic legs of the massive green machine. He kept his eyes on the retreating auxiliary vehicles and followed them as, behind him, the engines and cockpit of Thunderbird Two settled down over the pod once again and took off, headed for the Danger Zone.

Post by Tikatu on 14/10/2004

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