



“You’ll know a ramship driver before they introduce themselves.” The press liaison for the vanguard force was being cautious, warning the journalist who was to be embedded with the soldiers what she should watch for. “It’s the guy bragging about smashing something, cutting off everyone else to one-up with their own anecdotes...the smelly one who’s around for the drinks but heads for the toilet when the bill’s due. They’re terrible people generally, but useful.”

“They feel the heat of their enemies burning. That’s what they say about them, right? Sounds noble.”

The liaison grimaced at that, “Less noble and more just someone who likes smashing things.”

“Why the ball-shaped wheels?”

“Tracked spheres, to seize the ground. Allows the vessel to move in any direction (even laterally) without a turn radius. Tanks loaded with programmable matter adjust densities on the fly depending on where impacts will occur. But the crown jewel of a ramship is its ion-charged front ram, white-hot at peak collision and comprised of indestructible neutronium.”

“Ooh rah!” A gravelly voice shouted from behind the journalist. She spun to see a short armored fellow in a beard sitting on his ramship and smiling widely like he’d eaten all the pudding. The ram on front was still glowing orange and ringed in smoke. He’d recently smashed something and was still feeling great about himself for it.

“Don’t touch those rams, ever. They don’t always change color when they’re hot.”

The journalist waved politely at the ramship driver, since he was staring at her.

The liaison smacked her hand, “Don’t engage with him. He’s relentless, that one. Thinks every woman that smiles at him is in love.”

“I can handle myself. Think he’d take me for a ride in that thing?”

The liaison just hung his head despairingly, “I know you’re trying to fit in, but seriously?”

She was off before he could finish, high-fiving the driver and climbing inside. And the two of them disappeared into a misty dust cloud.