



Act II  
Scene 3

# Holding Hands

Author: Caity McGregor

The shields go down. You and Tif race through, fully clad in armoured exoskeletons to help you fight through the force of the sandstorm.

“Shields back up,” says Wentworth over the communicator. “Good luck.”

“Thanks, Wentworth. Stay out of trouble.” A chittering noise reaches your ears.

“Seeya, scorpion,” comes Tif’s voice. Your nickname had caught on.

The display on your visor keeps you on your plotted route to Volmo, a shell of an old Moler city just past the horizon. Apparently, a crew of workers had made the trek several months ago, but had been forced to leave one of their precious exoskeletons behind when it was pinned under a falling pylon. The death of the pilot had led the outpost owners to forbid any more expeditions... but they didn’t own you.

“This risk seems a little unnecessary, Captain,” says Tif.

You grit your teeth instinctively as a particularly violent burst of sand peppers the external cameras. “We’re not just here for water, Tif. The Clergy exiled a thief from Tavir, and I’ve traced his movements to Orrimer. He’s somewhere in the workers’ camp, and Wentworth and I are hoping to bait him into trying to steal from us.”

She sighs. “Why don’t you ever share your plans with me before they’re in action?”

You shrug, which of course no one can see, and laugh. “You’ve been with me for two years. Make it to five, like Wentworth, and we’ll see about sharing more.”

The rest of the journey passes uneventfully, and soon, the two of you are standing in front of a colossal green stone wall. The only way through is to dig underneath, but fortunately, the passageway dug by the last crew of Molers is still open.

“Captain. Look at this.” You pan yourself toward Tif, and zoom in on some strange markings at the base of the towering wall...



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