

# Chapter 105: Power Armor

Although I said we'd be creating our own power armor, that didn't mean we would be doing so from scratch. There just wasn't enough time to do so, as we would save a lot of time by tweaking one of the ones our allies had sent us. However, we would first have to settle on the design and select the most appropriate one to use as our base.

We had received a total of six different types of power arms from our allies, and a total of two units for each type. There were a lot of corporations in our alliance, but there weren't that many mid-class corporations who could afford to develop them. They weren't only expensive to create, their upkeep cost was no joke as well.

The first power armor I examined came from Authentic Corp, Joey's company. It was the model I had seen in the aftermath of my infiltration into QuickLink's headquarters. With all the other models standing beside it, it was apparent that it belonged in the medium build category. It was equipped with a hefty but powerful railgun with impressive penetration power at the cost of the rate of fire.

While you could adjust it by changing the power settings, its strength was definitely its ability to continually dish out high-penetration rounds thanks to its robust heat management system and ample power reactor.

Upon disassembling parts of it, its impressive architecture immediately told a story of how reliable it was. However, the thing that stood out the most was its high degree of EMP resistance. It was no doubt a vital problem to overcome because most people's first reaction to power armor was to use EMPs to knock out its mobility.

The second power armor I inspected came from Arcom Corp, the one that the old speaker hailed from. They were famous for their hotels, so it wasn't surprising their power armor was more suited for defense.

Their power armor was visibly the largest among all the others, standing a good three meters tall, and had a wide frame. It also boasted the most firepower, with four small anti-personnel missiles mounted on its back, along with heavy machine guns on each shoulder. It tickled the itch of wanting to have the biggest guns and strongest defense. It was particularly imposing as there was only one other power armor in the heavy build category along with it.

The next three armors I inspected were much less interesting. There were another two with a medium build that appeared to be a lesser version of Authentic Corp's and the other heavy build one that was mainly used as a mobile cover to support other troops.

The last one, however, was the one that held most of my interest. It was from a shipping corporation called West Seas Corp. Their power armor was the smallest among the six, being of a light build. It was only slightly larger than most combat suits I've seen. That meant its

firepower and durability were almost the lowest among my small collection, but its major advantage was its mobility.

All power armors were designed to be all-terrain and CBRN-rated, meaning they had protection against chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats. Seeing how West Seas Corp mainly operated on the ocean, it would make sense that their power armor was not only lightweight and maneuverable, but was able to take the skies as well thanks to its jetpack.

The jetpack itself was a treasure trove of information for me. It didn't make use of any traditional chemical fuel to function, but made use of its ample electric power from the nuclear reactor. It generated thrust through the controlled emission of electrically charged particles, expelling positively charged gravitons to create the repulsive force against the generated magnetic field.

It really reminded me that technology worked best when combined with several disciplines of science. I would have never come up with this design as my knowledge of physics and gravitational fields was abysmal compared to my electrical engineering knowledge. The hard work of several brilliant specialists working together could not be underestimated.

As I finished my preliminary examination of all three power armors, I found out that they all had two things in common.

Their power sources all used a mini-nuclear reaction and shared similar principles. It was highly likely they were designed using the same technology, differing only from the design choices of materials and layout.

*Was nuclear technology shared among medium-class corporations and higher?*

The other thing that was the same was the neural technology that allowed the user to control the power armor with ease. It used the same technology as the VR games I had previously played, without the use of a pod to fully immerse myself into the virtual world. That meant the power armor could be used like your own body, allowing anyone to quickly learn how to operate it.

Now that I had examined all the power armors in detail, it was obvious to me that none of them were designed to be operated in space. The city of Aegis, located at the summit of the space elevator, may have artificial gravity, but these power armors were not designed to maneuver in any zero-g environments.

It would be negligent of me not to account for dealing with any zero-g situation when I was heading up into space. I swiftly pulled out the design software and began working on a new design.

The work itself wasn't as hard as I expected for now because I was mainly using existing modules from these power armors.

The base I used was Authentic Corps', after all. It was just superior engineering and was the platform that allotted me the most power to draw from. I took the jetpack from West Seas' armor and began tuning it to work with the heavier armor.

I had to adjust the jetpack to allow for more delicate settings, to allow myself to navigate in zero-g. It needed to be able to produce powerful and intermittent thrusts in various directions, as opposed to a stable one, to maintain flight in the atmosphere. These changes may have removed its ability to maintain a stable flight, but it gave the power armor a new option to perform powerful jumps instead. It wasn't like it would've retained its function to sustain flight because I was moving it into a medium-build armor that was much heavier than it could support.

I replaced some of the armor platings with the one from Arcom Corp, as it proved to be a defensive powerhouse despite increasing the weight further. However, I would be replacing the heavy railgun rifle, making it a balanced tradeoff. The railgun was honestly overkill when operating in space. I doubt I'd be allowed to bring it anyway when it could heavily damage the space station.

I equipped it with more conventional firearms and a vibro blade, much like the ones I had seen Benjamin Links' powerful bodyguard wield.

When my design was complete, the next step was to create the program the new power armor would use while my nanites began implementing some of the smaller structural changes. The program was vital for managing the new jetpack and how the power armor distributed its power to the various modules I had cobbled together.

Two days later, I finally completed the first prototype. I immediately placed a call to my trusty partner.

"Hey Thorne, come over to my workshop. I have something for you to test."

I let out a sigh as I stared at my latest creation, which was the accumulation of all my hard work for the past two days.

*I'll have to start making another one soon...*

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Five days after the meeting with the rest of the West Coast Agroindustry Alliance, we had finally collected enough information about the corporation that had been in talks with the High Gate group.

“After amassing our intelligence capabilities together, we have found out that the corporation supporting those High Gate bunch is the Virtue Corp. They are an A-Class corporation specializing in neural and virtuality technology, being one of the major players in the gaming industry.” The old speaker from Arcom Corp announced.

Several sighs of relief rang out in our virtual meeting as people relaxed, hearing that it was an A-Class corp and not an S class or above.

“What is the reason they support the High Gate Group, then?” someone asked.

“It appears they took quite a bit of damage to their assets during the previous war between Europa station and Enceladus station. Their food production was hit hard, but they wanted to focus their resources on repairing other things, so they wanted to take control of a lot of food and biological resources. It just so happens that one of the sons of their owner married a daughter that hails from one of the High Gate Group.”

“They could’ve just inquired to do business with us...” another voice muttered.

“It’s too late for that. These spacer corps don’t really care about those of us on Earth until they need more manpower or resources that they can’t easily obtain in space. We should be glad their whimsical decision only amounted to financial support and not taking action directly,” Joey interjected.

The meeting soon went onto the topic of how the several rival corporations of Virtue Corp until they finally settled on one called Ferrumus Corp.

“They are a bit on the eccentric side, but they should agree to the terms we have discussed. Mr. Halls, we’ll leave it in your capable hands to strike a deal with them. Remember, we just need to secure their assistance in holding off Virtue Corp in the case they plan to take direction action, and that is sufficient.”

“...Of course.”

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“Sir, it is an honor to accompany you to space! I’ve always wanted to go there once in my life!” The security personnel, who I recalled to be called Brian, excitedly exclaimed as we made our way across the ocean toward the space elevator.

“Calm yourself! You’re here as a guard. We’re not here to have fun and be tourists, we’re expecting trouble so stay on alert!” Andrew reprimanded from beside him.

As we were selected to be the envoys for the alliance, they allowed us to recall the elites that we sent to the strike force.

“Now, now. You can lighten up a little, Andrew. It’s not every day that we suddenly get to head up into space. The tickets we have for the shuttle up the space elevator are easily hundreds of thousands of credits,” Mark said, defending his friend.

I listened to the lively team converse with each other, as we soon arrived at the spaceport after passing through several checkpoints. It took longer than usual as they scrutinized the power armors that we had in the back. It was in storage mode; with it all folded down nicely into a block of metal that resembled a suitcase.

Thankfully, the check-in process was much simpler as bringing these weapons wasn’t rare, as rich corpos comprised the majority of the clientele that used the space elevator. The important people from high-class corporations typically had bodyguards that used power armor. Though most of the time, the bodyguard version was mostly light builds, with smaller frames that were more inconspicuous.

After we checked in our luggage and weapons, we made our way into the waiting area before the boarding gate. We passed the familiar corridor where the miniature model of the space elevator was and I read over the text once more that described the terrorist known as “The Gamer”.

*In a sense, my system was very much a game-like system. Was there someone who had the same system before? Were there more out there somewhere right now?*

As I pondered those questions, Thorne snapped me out of it as he practically slapped me with a milkshake.

“It’s almost time. Let’s go line up.”

I gave him a glare to show my dissatisfaction until I took a sip of the milkshake. It was one of the premium kinds that went for several hundred credits!

I then followed our group to board the shuttle that would be taking us up into orbit. From the line, I could clearly see the shuttle that seemed more like a typical train to me, except it was angled to go straight up into the sky.

The shuttle may not be anything special appearance-wise, but the thought of heading into space for the first time made me giddy like a child excited to go to the amusement park.

*I am so going to the zero-g sections once I get up into Aegis and free float around!*