

The two Night City skyscrapers had officially begun their above-ground construction, with their foundations now poured and complete. Despite the fact that the building had barely started, I couldn't help but look up and smirk, just imagining what they would look like. Both of the towers were going to be massive, the [area of their foundations easily dwarfing the megabuilding](#) design, nearly doubling their space in total. They were also noticeably larger than the base of Arasaka Tower, a fact Noah and I both steadfastly agreed was a hundred percent necessary.

While the towers would ultimately look quite different from each other, the first step for both was to create their foundations. This involved a thirty-foot-thick slab of concrete, reinforced with the best technology and materials I could come up with. Under the slab were hundreds of two-meter-wide pilings, each digging down nearly a hundred meters, anchoring the foundation deep to the firm bedrock far below. The MRVNs made quick progress with all of their custom construction equipment, which was designed and built by Samwise and myself, utilizing plans for standard construction equipment that we then enhanced and improved upon.

Unfortunately, not everything about the towers was what I had envisioned. Noah and I had both wanted a mirroring vault system under each tower, and we tried multiple design ideas to make that work. Sadly, in the end, we decided it was better to have a stronger foundation, even if it was overkill with our advanced alloys and shock absorption methods. Instead, there would be a small vault under the mall area, and a second one would be built under the other land we owned, since the buildings there would be much reasonable to support. It would be a minor vault compared to the one we lived in, or the second one that was already under construction, but it would be comparable in capacity to the residential tower.

Despite the fact that we had officially started above-ground construction, the towers did not look like much, even if completing the foundation in less than a week was an impressive feat. We were beginning to attract a lot of attention, with infiltration and breaching attempts becoming a daily occurrence. Sable was fielding a lot of questions about where we got our resources, so much so that I assigned Riggs to be her bodyguard whenever she was going anywhere, even remotely questionable.

Thankfully, with our meeting hall complete, she was inviting people to come to her more and more, rather than the other way around. Apparently, being able to show off how quickly and successfully we were building up was a bragging point to the sorts of people she was talking to about our future products.

The skyscrapers and Rocky Ridge weren't the only places showing progress, either. The dock area was finally dry, the concrete wall in place and reinforced, while the docks themselves had been stripped clean and [demolished. The foundations being](#) poured there were significantly less impressive than those for the skyscrapers, since they wouldn't have nearly as massive buildings on them. That said, a lot of work was being done to dredge and carve into the sea floor, getting rid of the nearly dozen feet of trash and poison that had been resting at the bottom.

Back at the ridge, the Murtaugh's new [security building](#) was well on its way to being complete. It was clearly more robust and reinforced than our meeting hall, even though the meeting hall was made from seriously reinforced materials. A good amount of the building was dedicated to an armory and a massive contingent of shades and heavies, which could deploy rapidly from an elevator or several other entrances.

When the building was finally finished, Murtaugh insisted that while the transfer was being performed, everyone be safely relocated to the bunker, as a good chunk of his security would have to shut down. While the shades or heavies wouldn't turn off, our sensor net and the turrets around the wall would. I completely agreed with his request, but rather than spend the day huddled inside the bunker, we specifically pitched it as a day together, enjoying some time off and celebrating our success.

Together as a group, we spent a whole day exploring the vault, enjoying one of the underground gardens that was slowly growing, as well as several of the many entertainment options. Jackie and David loved the massive laser tag arena and axe-throwing, and while everyone enjoyed the bowling and [indoor Go-Kart track](#).

Personally, I couldn't help but think what a disaster the axe-throwing lanes or Go-Karting would be if normal Night City natives tried it, but everyone else just liked hurling axes. Misty was scarily good at it, and Jackie loved every second of cheering her on as she trounced Rebecca and Sable, the second and third place holders.

We finished the day with a large roast, which I swear rivaled some of the best food I had ever eaten, even before being sent to the Cyberpunk world. Jackie did an outstanding job, and it was well worth everyone winding down early so we could keep him company while he, Amelia, and a pair of robots cooked.

As the week continued to pass, I worked on a few more projects, building infrastructure and redesigning elements for our construction project. For example, I wanted all of our major residential areas to have access to free, clean water, which I could easily provide by pumping it out of the ocean. I also wanted to clean any waste before putting it back into the sea, even if it was already ruined. Technically, I could simply pour the incoming and outgoing water into a pair of protomatter generators, with both ends spitting out clean water. However, for obvious reasons, protomatter was one of our most closely guarded secrets.

So, rather than risk exposing that, I designed a massive centrifugal clarification plant, utilizing the same technology I had cracked during my Fallout tree, which I later expanded on. The plant would take in vast amounts of water from the ocean, clean it, store a significant amount, and then pump it to wherever it was needed. Once it was used, it would be filtered again, before being sent back out to the ocean. Any and all solid waste separated from the water, on both ends, was dried and pressed into bricks and sent to "generators" as "fuel."

In reality, these generators would teleport the waste away to use as protomatter material, while fusion generators made up the difference. This would not only decrease the cost of power

needed by our residents, but also provide a source of materials for production, even if it was a biohazard.

Technically, I already solved the clean water issues with my electrocondenser, but unless you had a significant amount of space, it was hard to make one big enough to shower or wash with. This way, every drop my tenants used would be free, clean, and ready on demand.

I also created the first draft of plans for key components of my projects, including the building's air filtration system, backup generators, and several other critical pieces of infrastructure. They were robust and most definitely overkill, but by the time the building was done, its occupants would be able to survive all sorts of horrible conditions, including the very lethal weather Night City experienced.

Unfortunately, with the materials I had on hand, there was no reasonable way I could guarantee they would survive a nuclear strike. They would survive the fallout from one, and they might survive a nuke going off a decent distance away, but beyond that, I couldn't really predict the outcome.

Unless, of course, I pulled out all the stops and gave the building energy shields.

Noah and I discussed the idea at length, debating if we could somehow manage to cover both buildings with secret particle shield emitters. They would have to be almost entirely based on the Titanfall version, since the Fallout version was sensitive to electromagnetic fields and would therefore pop from a nuke before the shockwave hit.

Unfortunately, Titanfall particle shields require photon sand, which was specific to that universe, meaning I couldn't just mass-produce it with the protomatter generators. I would need to make a massive photon sand generator, as it was critical to making the particle shields without their inherent electromagnetic weakness.

I tried several different shield emitter designs, but so far, none of what I made was convincing enough to stay hidden for long. I was tempted to install them anyway and take the risk, but in the end, I couldn't. Instead, Noah left specific gaps in the construction, places where I could put shield tech without major reconstruction. They weren't literal gaps, just spaces that could be carved out and converted.

After I unfortunately shelved the idea of making my buildings an above-ground, nuclear-proof bunker, I got to work on one of the more essential steps to making these towers, my large-scale Alien Alloy production. Thankfully, the AA production process was not the most intensive process, unlike things like photon sand or the gravity crystal from the [Gravity Star](#). I was able to create a large foundry that would prepare everything necessary, at which point I would come through and flip a giant lever and dump in a pre-prepared amount of ingredients. This would count as me making the metal, since it was essentially the same thing I did for our existing forges, just on a multi-ton scale.

The molly makers could then work directly with the resulting ingots of metal, meaning my direct intervention was no longer necessary.

Time passed, and we continued to build and work on our projects. Eventually, as time began to wind down for my break, I switched from my projects to preparing for my next tech tree. I spent a lot of time working with my smaller mass assembler, and as time ran down, Samwise eventually completed the large-scale assembler.

By now, I was skilled enough when using the small-scale assembler that, if I was concentrating, it cut my assembly time down by at least fifty to sixty percent, depending on what I was building. It became a little mentally exhausting to continually use it at full concentration, but even when I was only casually building with it, there was still a thirty percent increase.

The large-scale assembler was built into an actual workshop space, which itself had been doubled in size, at least. Hundreds of factory arms, ranging from dainty little tweezers to several arms thicker than *my torso*, dotted the room. Some descended from the ceiling, while others were attached to the walls. Even more were on tracks, anchored to the floor but with enough mobility to reach almost anywhere in the room. At the center of the immense space, which must have been forty meters wide and nearly twice that long, was a dais. In fact, there were several, built in concentric rings around each other, allowing me to raise or lower things on the ground, ranging in size from a MRVN to a Cargo VTOL, and even beyond.

A little experimentation revealed that the various racks of tools, designed to fit the many different robotic arms, were stored in the floor, each toolbox capable of sinking down flush to the floor to keep it out of the way of larger projects.

There were even two dozen MRVNs, all turned off and lined up against the wall, plugged in to charge. At first, I assumed that they were just a bit of extra help, then I noticed they were painted differently and labeled explicitly as belonging in the large assembly room.

"What's so special about them?" I asked Samwise during his original tour.

"They have been stripped down of most of their functions," He explained. "Their automatic functions work, they walk, move, and adjust as the original was designed. However, they lack the individual ability to direct or follow orders. Instead, they are connected to the assembly room, allowing you a final level of flexibility if necessary."

"Huh... this is all amazing work, Sam," I said, turning to look around the room. "It's more than I had hoped for, and I'm a bit worried I won't be able to work it to its full potential."

"Maybe, but I believe you can adapt with practice," He assured me. "Plus, many of these arms are here to stabilize and work together to move larger parts. You specified being able to lift several tons at once."

"Yeah, I did," I said with a nod. "Well done, buddy."

"Do you wish to test it?" Samwise asked. "It is fully operational."

"Absolutely," I said with a grin. "I've been dying to tackle larger projects. I'm going to practice with this room until I never have to worry about missing out on something cool again."

Samwise nodded, and after a bit of discussion, he ordered the production facility for the labs to begin printing parts for a cargo VTOL, in the order of construction. I had just enough time to teleport to the surface to grab some food and a drink before the parts started rolling in, and I got to work.

I carefully sat off to the side, where Samwise had created a safe, raised platform, protected with thick reinforced windows and walls, for me or anyone observing to sit. The response program that was running in the background of the assembly process, smoothing out my motions and keeping things organized, was explicitly programmed to protect that area, meaning I couldn't accidentally swing something through my own head.

A terrifying thought I hadn't even considered until Sam pointed out the possibility.

Thankfully, although the angle gave me a good view of the entire room, the more I became accustomed to the control systems, the less I found myself relying on my own eyes to watch it. The process was already challenging enough without confusing my flow by essentially flipping the control scheme and POV every few minutes, so I stuck to the much more stable cameras that were built into the room.

At first, I did pretty much as I had expected. The process was slow, cumbersome, and difficult to maintain. My familiarity with the smaller version did help, especially in controlling multiple limbs at once. Thankfully, just as he had with the smaller machine, Wamwise included the ability for the many arms to feel, or at least have the illusion of feeling things. This made moving them instinctual, shifting them around the room without focusing on every single inch I moved them.

As more parts began to roll in from the production facility, I slowly pieced together the cargo shuttle, starting with the framework and gradually building upon it, using a pair of the much larger arms attached to the ceiling to manipulate and twist the frame. Once the main body was mostly finished, I moved on to the thrusters. By the time that I was done, around six hours had passed, considerably longer than I would have liked, but I knew I could get so much better.

Even by the end of my first attempt, I could feel myself getting faster, the process feeling more and more instinctual and intuitive.

As the VTOL was taken away with a teleport tag, I moved right on to another, second project, putting together one of our "mech" robots. The large-scale production facility had already produced a dozen of them, leaving them ready to deploy if we needed them. I had yet to sit down and play with one directly, and we were still designing several different control systems, including a fully manual chair. Despite that, constructing one of my own would be a great way to test the mass assembly room.

This time, the project took five hours and resulted in a ten-meter-tall robot "mech" lying across the floor of the room. Seeing the mech up close for the first time was eye-opening, and I loved it. They were massive, and I could only imagine how utterly terrifying it would be to see them charging at you, nimble and agile despite dwarfing some buildings.

Once again, my project was taken away with a teleport tag. I was *very* tempted to try connecting to the large robot, but despite the room's size, a thirty-foot-tall mech would break *something*, especially since I had no idea how to control it.

I was tempted to try another design, but at that point, it was getting late. I did, however, return immediately the next day to continue my practice. I was determined to get the system down to a fine point, cutting time down even further. The projects I worked on in the large assembly room would always likely lean toward the longer side, since they were going to be considerably larger projects. That said, the better I got with the system, the shorter I could make those longer projects. The small assemblers were more of a speed upgrade, and so far, that had gone brilliantly.

"I assume you like it?" Samwsie asked as I disconnected and climbed down from the raised and protected platform during my first testing day.

"Of course, it's exactly what I needed," I assured him, looking up and around the large room. "I'll likely be here for the next few days, until the next tech tree arrives, practicing and getting used to it."

"And you think it will work?"

"There is honestly no way to be sure, but considering the smaller assembler did, I can't imagine this one will be any different. We will just have to wait until the next tree gets here. Assuming it has anything big enough to require it."

As usual, as I prepared for the next tech tree, both mentally and physically, my companions could tell what was happening. Gloria and David were a bit confused as to why everyone was double-checking that I had everything I needed, as this was their first time witnessing a tech tree shift.

"My inspiration comes and goes," I explained, leaning back in my chair. Jackie had invited us all to his room for dinner, including Sable, Missy, Rebecca, and Vik. "It's more or less a weekly thing, or a bi-weekly thing, I suppose. Sometimes it's big, in which case I'll have to dedicate a significant portion of my time, if not all of it."

"You've never been that busy around us before," David pointed out.

"Last inspiration wave was all about biology, specifically what we were working on, David, and beyond," I explained, tapping on the table. "The one before that? What we accomplished over two weeks was what I would have had to do in a day, maybe two, to ensure I covered everything I wanted. On top of that, it included a lot of, well... a lot of seemingly silly bits, innocuous-looking things that actually contained plenty of near-miracle technology and materials. Imagine building a toaster, a stand mixer, a dishwasher, and a camera only to realize there is a near-frictionless material..."

I trailed off, suddenly aware I was revealing a bit more than I intended to. I still wasn't sure about revealing where my tech was coming from, as I had no way to predict how they would react. I also didn't think it mattered all that much in the greater scheme of things.

"Anyways, it essentially comes and goes, and I don't really have a way to predict it," I continued after trailing off. "I need to prepare for something that may take a lot of my time. If that turns out not to be necessary, then all I've done is a little extra work."

David seemed to accept my explanation, and Gloria didn't seem to really care where anything we had came from, as long as I kept my word of doing my best by her and her son.

Once dinner was done, most of the group stayed around to hang out. I shared a few stories about my family and growing up, as did the other older members of the team. It was mostly for my benefit, killing time so that I wasn't stuck pacing around by myself, waiting for midnight, which I was incredibly grateful for. Unfortunately, they couldn't hang around forever, and while Sable seemed to want to, she also sensed that I would like to be alone for the actual final switch. Most people had split and gone their way to their own rooms, and Sable eventually made her way to hers at around eleven thirty.

With just Samwise as company, I made my way down to my workshop, plopping down into one of the chairs along a row of computers. I spun around, looking at the entire space, just waiting for whatever branch of tech I got access to to arrive.

"You know, it's funny... I should be excited," I said, Samwise standing just to my right. "And obviously I am, it would be impossible not to be. But every time the end of my break comes around, I get this feeling of vague melancholy. Like how you feel when something you've been a part of for a while has come to an end."

"I apologize, I cannot relate," Samwise admitted. "I find myself excited at what comes next."

I let out a long breath, nodding in understanding as I leaned forward in my chair until my elbows were on my knees. I scanned my eyes over the workshop, mentally checking the timer.

"We've come a long way from working in my Megabuilding apartment," I said with a smirk. "Buying parts from shops and desperately trying to avoid getting noticed by anyone."

"It was certainly more difficult to produce anything," Samwise responded. "Our production scale was abysmal compared to now."

"Everyone's production scale is abysmal compared to us now," I pointed out with a snort. "But I know what you meant. What I wouldn't *give* to have access to Titanfall now. I didn't scrape the surface of that setting. There were so many advancements I had to pass over to get to what I needed. I could have... I still regret not getting access to the more advanced AI systems for you guys."

I shook my head and pushed off my legs, standing and walking further into the workshop. I usually tried my best not to think about what could have been for my tech, because,

as far as I knew, there were no repeats. Titanfall would never pop up again, so holding onto my regrets would only serve to hurt my blood pressure and my mental state.

"Whatever, it doesn't really matter," I forced myself to say. "We got enough from that setting to fully utilize the next three tech trees. Now we are ready to take full advantage of this one. We just need to get lucky."

Samwise followed after me for a moment, stopping to watch when I just started to pace around.

"Still feeling melancholy?" Sam asked, in what I was pretty sure was an attempt at humor.

"No, I've graduated to anxious," I responded, shaking my head with a small smile. "Next time we do this, I'm going to sleep early and wake up a minute before the new tech tree arrives. I should have done it this time, but I got distracted by everyone being around for dinner."

Despite my anxiety making time slow to a crawl, time did pass, and eventually it was eleven fifty-nine. I had settled back down into my chair and closed my eyes, waiting for the timer to disconnect and for my new tech tree to settle into place.

Finally, the moment arrived, and I could feel the new tech tree settle. Flashes of advanced technology brushed through my mind, a vast database, something with hundreds of branches. I dove in eagerly, figuratively pulling myself through the fog, looking for something, anything that would show me what I had gotten.

Finally, I arrived at a branch I was familiar with, one filled with small arms and more. Most of the branch was already uncovered, my previous knowledge of firearms revealing a lot of what this tree had to offer.

And I recognized it all immediately.

A battle rifle that fired a three-round burst, a pistol that doubled as a pocket sniper rifle, and a machine gun so iconic it was practically a meme.

"Holy shit. It's Halo," I said, my eyes snapping open. "It's fucking Halo!"

"And what does that mean?" Sam asked patiently

"It means another advanced tree! Not quite up to Titanfall standards, but still about five hundred years ahead of this one..." I said, trailing off as I scanned the low end of the tech tree, where the fog was light, and whole swaths were already uncovered. "It means power armor, military vehicles, civilian tech for days and..."

I laughed, the edge almost turning manic as I spotted the start of so many incredible branches of tech. The power armor tree was visible, with a clear prototype marking the start, one that had more in common with a [T-60](#) than [MJOLNIR](#). I could also see the outlines of various vehicles, both civilian and military, although I couldn't see any details.

What stopped me cold, however, was the sight of a starship line.

"FTL," I said softly, turning to look at Samwise. "They have honest to god faster than light travel."

"Do we have the facilities to create the necessary vessels?" Samwise asked, his own voice sounding careful, like he might be pointing out something horrible.

"Yes! It's not just big warships like in Titanfall," I explained, resisting the urge to bounce and cheer like a lunatic. "It's civilian tech! They have ships of every size! Hell, if I remember correctly, some of the military units are self-contained, meaning we could probably make a drive big enough to move a massive warship right here!"

I gestured to the room, nearly dancing in excitement.

"They even have a few different styles of AI that I might be able to learn from," I said, looking back to my first intelligent creation and friend. "I might be able to expand your and your siblings' parameters with them, allowing you a bit more processing power and freedom."

The many possibilities danced in my mind, opportunities and ideas passing by almost faster than I could follow.

"This is huge, Samwise. Maybe not as big as if we got something like Star Trek, or maybe even Star Wars," I admitted, shaking my head, gesturing a bit wildly. "But this is still huge! Massive even! This is another turning point, something we will look back on! I mean, we could *leave* Sam. We could build an FTL ship, hire anyone worth knowing, and just fuck off to the cosmos!"

I was breathing heavily, ideas and plans spinning in my head. As the fervor and clamor of the initial connection calmed, I turned back to look at Samwise, who was still standing by the computers.

"This is going to be a big one, Sam," I said, a large smile on my face. "You ready to get to work?"

The AI straightened and gave me a single nod.

"I believe you built me ready, Jackson."