

Saturday
September 2nd, 2028
12:03 hours (PST)

Nathaniel sat in front of a console in main engineering, going over calculations in an attempt to get the transwarp drive operational. He'd done all he could with the parts and equipment he had, so he had instead turned his attention to other systems. The gentle humming pulsating sound of the transwarp drive operating, even at low levels, was soothing to him.

When he was younger, while his other friends were begging their parents to buy them replica megazord toys to play with, Nathaniel was studying the intricacies of plasma manifolds and how they related to the functionality of transwarp coils. He'd gone over the original designs for the Astro MegaShip from the KO-35 archived database, and in comparison to the Omega Ship, was amazed at the differences.

"Sir, may I be of assistance?" Lt. Jordan asked, breaking his train of thought.

Originally, he informed Commander Tate that it may be useful to have someone else with some engineering experience along on this mission, but they'd been at high transwarp for over two hours, and she had yet to produce anything useful. *Not that I'd given her the chance*, he thought to himself. Since arriving in engineering, he couldn't have said more than four words to her. With that in mind, he turned away from the console, giving her his attention.

"There isn't much to do until we get the relay we need," he said.

"Well, we have at least three more hours before we reach Temerian Prime, so I took the liberty of looking at some of the other systems to pass the time," she said, handing him a small pad to take a look at.

He begrudgingly took the pad from her, examining her work. As he scrolled through it, he found that he was almost impressed by her calculations.

"Paragraph 17 here says that you think we could increase transwarp efficiency if we rerouted the secondary processors to normally the flow of energy between the primary and secondary conduits, but did you account for the radiation build up? If we tried this equation, you'd give everyone on board radiation burns," he pointed out.

"Not if you adjust the flow to the specifications I list in the paragraph before... sir," she mentioned.

Nathaniel quickly went back up, glancing over it, almost immediately realizing she was right. “You *did* account for that, and if these calculations are true,” he put her tablet down, turning back to the console and bringing up information, pointing it out to her. “You would increase the transwarp drive by almost 150%. This would change the way SPD travels through space. How long have you been working on this?” he asked.

“Since we left the base, sir,” she said shyly.

“Are you serious? This is great work, Lt. Jordan,” he admitted.

“Thank you, sir. And please, call me Micah.”

The chain of command was a bit muffled in this area. By all accounts, she was the higher ranked officer, meaning he should be calling her sir, but because he was named Chief of Engineering, he was the highest ranking officer in that department.

“I’ll call you Micah if you call me Nathaniel,” he compromised.

“Yes, sir,” she giggled slightly. “I mean, Nathaniel.”

“I’ve been toying with the idea of adding two additional transwarp coils to the drive, which should give us increased power, but it will burn out our power reserves almost three times as fast,” he said.

“So we could go further faster, but not as long,” Micah added, making sure she understood his meaning.

“Exactly.”

“What if we rerouted the new coils into the primary coil? Since they are designed to recharge over time, while the first two coils are operating all the major systems, the other two could be recharging, and when those coils are exhausted, the other two...”

“... the other two would automatically initiate, giving power to the ship while the first two went into their recharge cycle. You’re talking about a perpetual transwarp drive,” he said.

“It’s just a theory.”

“I’d have to go over your data more, but from what I see it looks like you’re right. This could be a breakthrough from SPD. Imagine a ship that can power itself and maintain transwarp

12 indefinitely. There isn't anywhere in the galaxy we couldn't go, no place we couldn't travel," he thought, taking in all the information.

"Do you want to give it a try?"

"You mean... *now*?"

Micah noticed the apprehension in his voice, and even if she didn't mean to, she instinctively pulled back a bit. "If you think it's a good idea, sir," she said.

"It's a great idea, but we'd need to run this by Lt. Commander Serenity," Nathaniel mentioned.

"May I ask, what's her deal? She just started in SPD and she's our superior officer? I was a third year cadet before SPD made the changes. I'm not saying I want to be in command, but certainly there are other people more qualified for the job. Garr, for example," she brought up.

"There's nothing wrong with having questions, but you shouldn't question your orders. Commander Tate put her in command, so she's in command. That's it," he said.

"But you're smarter than she is."

"Serenity may not be able to put a transwarp drive together blindfolded, but she is a good leader. She has taken care of us, and put our safety over her own every time we go out on a mission. I trust her, and I trust in our superiors to make the right call. But just as much, I trust that if I bring concerns to them, they will hear me and make the changes needed," he explained.

"If you say so."

"I do say so," he turned to a panel on his left, pushing a button. "Engineering to the bridge," he announced.

"*Go ahead engineering,*" a voice answered.

He immediately recognized Asia's voice. "Lt. Jordan and I are going to have to take the transwarp drive offline for about..." he turned to her, looking for a rough estimate.

"I dunno. 20 minutes, maybe 30?" she said with a hint of uncertainty in her voice.

“... about a half hour. We’re working on something down here,” Nathaniel said, realizing that going into detail wouldn’t necessarily help anyone on the bridge understand what they were doing.

“Understood, chief. Let us know when we can proceed.”

“Yes, sir. Engineering out,” he turned.

Micah cracked a smile. “Alright then, let’s get to work.”

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“What do you think they’re working on down there?” Pascal asked as they brought the Omega Ship out of transwarp. Everyone on the bridge could physically feel the difference in motion as it slowed down.

“Probably something above my pay grade. I don’t know a microchip from a potato chip,” Asia confessed.

It was Ella who spun around in her seat from the helm position. “You eat potato chips. Well, you could probably eat a microchip too, but it wouldn’t taste very good,” she said.

It was Serenity who interrupted them. “If the Chief says we need to slow down, we need to slow down. I trust him to know what’s he’s doing down there,” she turned to Ella. “And for the last time, stop swiveling in your seat or I’ll have the Chief come down here and weld it in place.”

Ella scoffed. “Fine.”

“About how far are we from Temerian Prime?” she asked.

Pascal turned to the readings on the panel in front of him. “At our current speed, about 12 hours. We need the transwarp drive to go any faster than this,” he pointed out.

“I’m sure they’ll have it up and running in no time.”

“Do we know anything about this Lt. Jordan that’s down there working with him?” Serenity asked.

“Garr know Micah. Micah pretty,” Garr admitted, chiming into the conversation.

“Oh really?”

Ella didn't have to turn around, or even have any special ability to hear the almost jealous tone in Serenity's voice.

“She's apparently really smart, too. She won the Stanton Award for her miniature model of a long range probe. She managed to decrease the size of the standard probe by 50% and increase its range of transmission by almost double. She's a smart cookie,” Asia said.

“Again with the cookies,” Ella sighed.

It's a shame, Serenity thought. She's so smart, but in the future she was killed in the first wave of attacks. We could have used someone like her in the war, she thought to herself.

“Maybe I should go down there and check on their progress,” she brought up.

Ella smiled. “Yeah, maybe you *should*.”

“What are you implying, ensign?” she asked.

“I'm not implying anything, sir. Everyone here knows you have the hots for my brother. You're the only one in denial,” she said.

“Wh-what... you're crazy. I don't...” she was interrupted.

“Garr knows,” Garr brought up.

Serenity turned to Asia, who nodded in agreement. “It's kind of obvious,” she paused. “Sir.”

“Come on you guys, I do not have the hots from Nate. It would be...” she paused, considering that in her timeline, Nathaniel was already in his 40s. “Weird. I'm so much...” she paused. “I mean, there's an age difference.”

“Don't try to use the excuse that he's 5. That's really only on Earth calendars. He's just as old as the rest of us,” Ella told her.

“Its not that, it's just...” she was interrupted as the entire ship jolted forward. Asia fell from her seat as the power seemed to flicker on and off, eventually shutting down completely. “Pascal... report.”

“There was an explosion of some kind in engineering,” he looked over his panel. “It looks like we were struck by a gravimetric distortion wave,” he said.

“What the heck does that even mean?” Asia asked, regaining her composure.

“I can only report what I see in front of me, sir.”

Serenity hit a button on her armrest. “Bridge to Engineering. You guys okay down there?” she asked.

“We’re fine. It looks like the ship passed through a gravimetric wave of some kind. It blew out primary propulsion and a lot of our systems.” a voice responded.

Serenity immediately noticed that the voice responding was not Ensign Carson, and even if she didn’t want to admit it to herself... she felt a wave of... *no, its not jealousy. Thats stupid,* she thought.

“What is your assessment, Chief?” she asked.

“We’re only running on reserve power, and that is going to run out before we can repair it. We need to land the ship and make the necessary repairs before we can continue,” he told them.

“Does this have anything to do with what you guys are working on down there?”

“No, sir. In fact, if the transwarp drive had been online, coming in contact with a distortion wave of that size would have destroyed the ship.”

“So what do you need?”

“We need to land so we can make repairs. With just the two of us, it could take hours... if not longer,” he said.

Serenity turned to Ella. “Ensign, scan for any planets in this area of space with a breathable atmosphere so we can land and give the Chief the time he needs to make repairs,” she ordered.

“On it,” Ella went over the readings on her panel. “There's nothing,” she glanced over the readings again, amazed that she didn’t see it the first time. “Wait, there appears to be a planet only 2 lightyears from here. The composition of the atmosphere is 74% nitrogen,

20% oxygen and 2% argon. That's a little higher than we'd like, but it's our best option," she said.

"I'm no math expert but that doesn't add up to 100%. What else is down there?" Asia asked.

Ella reexamined her readings. "I'm picking up trace amounts of sodium thiopental in the air," she said.

"Will it kill us?"

"No, but staying up here will," Ella said.

"Pascal, set a course for that planet and get us there as fast as you can."

"Aye, sir. Setting course."

"Chief, we're heading for a planet now. Do what you can," Serenity said.

"Yes, *sir*."

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The Omega Ship touched down on the planet with relatively no problems. Pascal turned to his panel, going over the reading.

"We're down. The temperature on the planet seems to be pretty comparable to Earth, but the gravity is slightly increased. You'll find it harder to walk, but we should be fine. In fact, it's more like Xybria than Earth in that regard," Pascal told her.

"Well, I don't see a need for us to step off the ship. Lt. Jordan and the Chief can finish their repairs, and we can just sit here and wait," Serenity said.

It was Asia who turned to her. "Sir, we're in an uncharted section of space. Don't we owe it to ourselves to at least have a look around?" she asked.

"I'm not an explorer, I'm a soldier. I don't have the same scientific curiosity that you have. But if you want to go out there, by all means," she said.

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"We have a radiation leak," Lt. Jordan told him.

Nathaniel rushed over to her panel, getting a good look at the readings. "Seems that distortion wave knocked one of the transwarp coils out of sync. It will self repair in a matter of hours, but until it does the entire ship will be flooded with radiation," he paused. "We have to get off the ship," he said.

"We don't know if we can survive in the air out there," she pointed out.

"According to the readings it's pretty close to an Xybrian atmosphere. We'll be fine for a few hours, but staying on the ship while this coil is out of sync is not an option," he turned to the com panel. "Engineering to bridge. We need to get off the ship. We have a radiation leak, and it needs a few hours to correct itself," he told them.

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"Looks like we're going to *have* to go take a look around," Asia said with a smile on her face.

Serenity responded to Nathaniel's transmission. "Chief, how long before the radiation clears up?" she asked.

"About an hour, give or take. Once it does, Micah and I can begin repairs." he told her.

Micah, he calls her Micah now? How informal, she thought to herself. "Understood, Chief. Thank you," she said. "Alright guys, everyone off the ship," Serenity announced.

Ella spun around in her chair. "Yay... field trip!" she said eagerly.