

Monday
September 5th, 2028
09:27 hours (PST)

Lt. Commander Nik Martin sat on the bridge of the Astro Omega Ship, leaning back in the chair and watching as stars seemed to streak by on the main view screen. He could have sworn he could feel the vibrations from the transwarp drive as they traveled; it was an odd sensation.

Shes right, this chair is comfortable, he thought to himself.

He was unfamiliar with this team, but he had read personnel files and mission reports associated with the team, and while he was hesitant to admit it, he was impressed by them. There was only one Xybrian and one Anurian in Space Patrol Delta, and it amazed him that they were able to coexist, much less as a team, but they did. It was interesting to him.

"Lt. Garr, is it?" he asked.

Garr stood behind him at his post, monitoring ship's sensors and keeping an eye on everything. Garr took his position seriously, but there wasn't much to do.

"Sir?" he replied.

"You're an Anurian, correct?"

"Yes. Garr warrior," he said proudly.

"Don't your people have issues with the Xybrians? What do your people call them?"

"Meat," he said in a disappointing tone.

"Lt. Pascal, are you okay with that?" Nik asked.

Although he didn't say it, Ella could tell the question made both Garr and Pascal uneasy.

"No, sir. I am not," he replied.

"How do you serve together?"

Pascal turned around in his seat to face him. "Do the circumstances surrounding my friendship Lt. Garr have any bearing on this mission, sir?" Pascal inquired.

"I suppose not."

"Then I prefer not to discuss it, sir," he said dryly.

"Pascal not meat. Pascal friend," Garr added.

Pascal cracked a smile. "Thanks, buddy."

While Lt. Commander Martin wouldn't dare admit it, he was impressed with the loyalty between the two of them. It was rare to find that level of commitment between officers, especially between two races who shared such an interesting dynamic.

"As you wish, Lieutenants," he answered.

"Must be disappointing for you, sir," Ella said in a snide tone, hoping he heard it.

"What do you mean, ensign?"

"I mean you walk in here with your big boy pants on and no one here takes you seriously. For you to be the leader of a team and then get demoted to *second in command* must really bother you," she pointed out. "Doesn't help that Serenity is girl. You got showed up by a girl."

Both Garr and Pascal did their best not to laugh, but a few snickers escapes before they got it under control.

"That's enough, Ensign Enrile," Serenity said as she stepped back onto the bridge. "Lt. Commander Martin is my first officer and you will give him the respect his rank deserves, or there is no place for you on this ship or on this team. Do i make myself clear?" she asked.

"Perfectly, sir."

"Lt. Commander, can I see you for a moment?" Serenity asked.

"Of course," he stood up. "Pascal, the bridge is yours."

Pascal perked up. "Can i sit in the chair?"

"No," they said in unison.

Lt. Commanders Martin and Serenity stepped into the lift together.

"Halt," she said, preventing the lift from moving. "I think you and I got off on the wrong foot. If this mission is going to succeed, we need to be on the same page. You're second in command,

that sucks for you, but it's one mission and you'll be back to the C-Squad before you know it," she explained.

"Did you transfer to Earth branch from a different sector?" he asked.

"No. Why?"

"Then how the hell are you a Lt. Commander? What *favor* did you do to earn this rank? I've been in SPD for three years and *earned* my rank. I don't see why I should take orders from you," he pointed out.

"Look, I'm trying here but you're not making this easy. Like it or not I am in command of this team and this mission. You have an issue with that I will make a note of it in my report and you can be assigned crew quarters until this mission is over. Or you can suck it up and do your job," she said.

"I have every intention of doing my job, sir. But i promise you when this is over, you won't be in command of anything. I'll see to it myself," he assured her.

Just then, the entire ship shook. It wasn't strong enough to be an impact of any kind, but it was enough to get their attention.

"Open," she called out.

The lift doors opened and they stepped out into the bridge.

"Report," Lt. Commander Martin said.

"We appear to be locked in some sort of tractor beam, sir. Configuration of the ship suggest it is a CaAn ship," Pascal said.

"Ensign Enrile, why didn't you see this coming?"

"The ship appeared from out of nowhere. By the time we saw them, they were on top of us," she said.

"Shields," Serenity called out.

"Shields up," Garr responded.

"Can we open a channel to their ship?" she asked.

“On it,” Ella turned to her controls, and there was a beeping sound. “CaAn vessel, I am Lt. Commander Serenity of SPD. Disengage your tractor beam or we will be forced to open fire,” she announced.

There was no response.

“Is the channel open?” Lt. Commander Martin asked.

“I know how to open a channel, sir,” Ella scoffed.

“Close it. What can you tell me about that ship?” Serenity asked.

“It’s small, about a 4th the size of the Omega Ship. Limited weapons. We can take them,” she said.

Serenity returned to her seat. “Ei, lock on to their tractor beam emitter and prepare to fire a phase beam, low yield. I don’t want to destroy them, just get their attention.”

“Aye, sir.”

“I recommend against that. The CaAn don’t have very good weapons, but what they lack in firepower they make up for in sheer numbers,” Lt. Commander Martin said.

“He right. Garr see 20 more ships on way,” Garr added.

“So what do you suggest?”

“Rotate the shields to break the beam, then punch it up to transwarp 9. Their drives are limited and won’t be able to keep up,” he said.

“Sounds good. Pascal, can you do that?”

“Yes, but I will need more power.”

Serenity pressed a button on her armrest. “Chief, transfer all available power to the shields,” she said.

“*You got it,*” Nathaniel answered.

“Rotating shield frequencies, now,” the ship jerked slightly. “The beam is broken,” Pascal said.

“Transwarp 9. Punch it, Lt. Lieutenant.”

“Here we go,” he said, activating the drive.

The entire ship jerked forward violently, enough to knock Lt. Commander Martin off his feet. He stumbled forward, hitting his head pretty bad.

He immediately got back to his feet.

“The CaAn ship is not following. We got away,” Ella said.

“Very good. Ensign Enrile, go over any data you can from that CaAn ship and adjust the sensors to be able to pick them up on long range scans. I don't want them sneaking up on us like that again,” Serenity said.

“Aye, sir.”

“That was good thinking Lt Comman...” she stopped. “You're hurt.”

“Its nothing. I'll be fine.”

“Head to the infirmary and let the doc have a look at you just to be sure. Don't worry, if we get destroyed I'll call you,” she said with a smile.

“Yes, sir,” he responded, making his way to the lift.

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The lift doors opened at the infirmary, and Lt. Commander Martin stepped out, glancing around. It wasn't his first time in a med bay of a starship, but nothing this big. The Astro Omega Ship was the finest ship in the fleet, and he found himself a little overwhelmed with it all.

It was Lt. James who walked over to him. “You must be the first officer for this mission,” she said cheerfully, but then noticed there was a cut above his eye. “You're hurt, let me take a look at that.”

She approached him with a scanning device, taking a good look at it. “You don't have a concussion, so that's good. I'll patch you up and send you back,” she told him.

“And you are?”

“My apologies, sir. I’m Lt. Asia James. I’m usually the first officer, but for this mission Dr. Manx felt it necessary to have someone in the infirmary full time. Good thing I was here, otherwise your head would just be bleeding all over the place,” she said.

She didn’t realize it at first, but she was much closer to him than she needed to be. Once she did realize it, she backed away slightly.

“Pleasure. Once this mission is over, you can take your position back, but just a heads up; I intend to take command of the Omega Ship when we get back. I have already submitted a formal request to Admiral Cruger,” he told her.

“I see,” she picked up another device, running it across his wound, healing it for him. “Well, we’ll see how that works out,” she said.

Just then, there was another jolt, and it knocked the two of them over. Lt. Commander Martin fell on top of Asia, and the power in the infirmary began to flicker off and on.

“Bridge to infirmary. Can you patch up my first officer and send him back? He is needed on the bridge,” Serenity said over the comsystem.

“Sorry,” he said, standing up, then extending his hand to help her up.

“Thank you,” she hurried over to the companel. “Yes, sir. I’ll send him to you in a moment,” she said.

“Am I good to go?”

“Yes, you’re fine. Try not to hurt yourself again.”

“I’ll do my best.”

The lights in the ship immediately went from light to dark red, and an alarm began to sound. *“Red alert. We have an intruder alert. Repeat, intruder alert,”* Serenity announced.

“I should get up there,” he said, heading for the lift.

Before he could make it, the lift doors open and three soldiers poured into the infirmary with weapons in hand. At first glance they were from the CaAn Empire; a humanoid species but they had enlarged heads and a third eye in the middle of their foreheads. Their skin was pale, not that much of it was exposed as they each had on heavy armor.

“Stay where you are, human!” one of them snarled.

Lt. James and Lt. Commander Martin stood back to back to ensure they weren't overwhelmed from behind. One of them charged at Asia, but she ducked, then raised up quickly. The back of her head collided with the phaser rifle in his hand, but that sent the rifle directly under his chin, knocking him off guard. As he stumbled back, she grabbed his weapon and swung around, ready to fire, only to see Lt. Commander Martin staring down the barrel of two phaser rifles.

"Stand down, Lieutenant," he said calmly.

Asia dropped her weapon, raising her hands in the air.

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Ensign Estella Enrile opened her eyes slowly, only to find that her vision was a bit blurry. As her eyes tried to come into focus, she found herself in a small room of some kind. There were three white walls, and the fourth wall seemed to be a force field of some kind.

She walked over to it, touching it slightly, receiving a slight jolt for her troubles.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you, kid," a voice said, obviously coming from another room.

She immediately recognized the voice. "KJ? Is that you?"

"Yep. If I had known you were coming, I would have baked you a cake. But the room service in this place sucks," he said.

"Where are we?"

"We're in a CaAn detention center. I've been here for..." he paused. "I'm not really sure. They intercepted my shuttle in route to J'Sarri space and I've been here ever since. I take it the big blue dog sent you guys to find me?" he brought up.

"Yeah, so much for our rescue efforts."

"Are the others here, too?"

"Yes, we're all here. All the good it did us," Ella sighed.

"I've been studying the patterns of the guards, and I think that..." he was interrupted as a CaAn soldier walked in, stopping at one of the rooms that Ella assumed KJ was in.

"Silence human!" he snapped.

"I woke up this morning and there was no mint on my pillow. Who do I talk to about that?" KJ asked, mocking the guard.

"You will be silent, or I will silence you," the guard warned.

"You and I both know the only reason I haven't snapped your neck yet is because I'm on the other side of this force field," he said.

While Ella couldn't see what was happening, she heard what sounded like a force field deactivate, a struggle of some kind, and then a thud from the wall opposite here. A few seconds later, the guard stepped back out, the force field went back up.

"You will be next if you run your mouth," he told Ella, then continued down the long, slender passageway.

"My face sure showed the barrel of his gun a thing or two," KJ groaned.

"We're going to get out of here. We just need to find the others."

"They took some prisoners to another level of the detention center. I don't know where," he said.

"We'll figure it out."

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Lt. Commander Serenity paced back and forth. Well, as much as she could in the cell she was being held in. Her attempts to get through the barrier had been met with nothing short of mild electrocution, so she knew brute force wasn't going to get it done. Directly across from her was Nathaniel, being held in another cell.

She'd been calling to him for the last 20 minutes or so, but he was still unconscious. It all happened so fast; she was having a hard time recalling the events that led to her imprisonment. One moment she was on the bridge of the Omega Ship, and the next is was swarming with CaAn soldiers. Dozens of them stormed the bridge; they tried to fight them off, but obviously, they had been less than successful.

She sat in the far corner of the cell, going over options in her mind to get them out of this mess. But at the moment, she wasn't coming up with much.

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Lt. James opened her eyes, finding herself in a cell directly across from Lt. Pascal, who was running his hands along the side of the inside of the cell, hoping to find a weakness of some kind.

“Any luck?” she asked him, standing as close to the force field as she could.

“Nothing. This place is sealed up pretty good. Where are we?”

“It’s a CaAn prison, it looks like. Lt. Commander Martin and I were in the infirmary, we were overrun. There wasn’t anything I could do,” she said.

“No one is to blame for this. We have to find the others and get out of here. Did you see where the others were taken?” he asked.

“No clue.”

“Well one thing at a time. We have to get out and search for our people. Is your ocular implant picking anything up?” he inquired.

She glanced around, using where setting of her ocular implant she could, but so far there was nothing.

But then...

“This force field is on a modulating frequency. It keeps changing so no one can figure out the correct modulation and escape. But my ocular implant can do the calculations. I should be able to...” Pascal looked away as Asia reached into her eye socket, completely removing her left eye, then placed it up against the force field. When he glanced back up, Asia was in the main passageway. She held her eye up to his force field, freeing him.

They headed down the hall, eventually coming to Lt. Garr, who was unconscious in his cell. Asia placed her implant on the field, dropping it instantly, and Pascal hurried in, slapping Garr around.

“Wake up, buddy. We need you,” he said.

Garr opened his eyes slowly.

“Where Garr?”

“No time to talk about it, buddy. We have to find the others and get out of here,” Pascal told him.

Garr made it back to his feet, but was still weak. Partially from the phaser blast, and partially from his leg still being injured. Asia and Pascal stood on either side of them, helping him down the passageway.

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Lt. Commander Martin laid face down in his containment cell, completely unconscious. Asia placed her eye against his force field, lowering it, and they rushed in, helping him up.

“He’s out of it. They must have done something to him,” Pascal said, lifting him up and putting him over his shoulder. “Can you handle Garr?” he asked.

“I’ve got him,” Asia said.

They hurried down the passageway, eventually coming to Ella and KJ’s cells.

“Hey guys. Ready to check out?” Pascal asked.

“Not before I write a really angry letter to management. I’m never staying in this place again,” Ella said.

She hurried over into KJ’s cell, helping him up.

“Where is Serenity?”

“We need to figure a way off this level. She has to be here somewhere,” Asia said.

The team hurried down the passageway as quickly as they could, finally coming to Serenity and Nathaniel’s cells. Asia took Garr’s arm from around her shoulder, forcing him to stand on his own long enough to use her implant to open Serenity and Nathaniel’s cells.

Pascal hurried into the cell, lifting Nathaniel up on his other shoulder, and together they kept moving. At the end of the passageway was what appeared to be an elevator.

“Wow, this is going to be easier than I thought,” Pascal said.

At that moment, the lights in the center changed from white to solid red, and an alarm glared.

“*Containment breach! Containment breach!*” a voice announced.

“You just *had* to say something, didn’t you?” Ella groaned.