

Lt. Pascal opened his eyes slowly, immediately being overwhelmed with a wave of disorientation. It was enough to obscure his vision, and his head seemed to be throbbing. He tried to sit up, but was forced to lay back down.

“Whoa, hold on a moment, Lieutenant. You’re going to need to rest, to let the effects of the machine wear off,” a voice said.

He glanced up to see Gabbi standing over him, but noted that she was wearing a military uniform of some kind. Usually, Gabbi’s attire was more business casual than anything, so seeing her in a uniform of any kind was off putting.

“Gabbi, I...” he glanced over, realizing that the other rangers were also lying on tables with machines attached to their foreheads. He leaped up, despite the disorientation. “Whats going on here, Gabbi?” he asked, standing ready.

“I admire your spirit, Pascal, but you’re in no condition to fight. Please, you’re fine. Your friends are fine. We just... I mean... there was a mix up,” she said.

Hearing the sincerity in her voice, and noticing that she was visibly shaken up, Pascal sat down on his examining table. “What is it, Gabbi? Whats going on?”

“I’d better let my CO explain,” she said, stepping aside.

Just then, a gentleman wearing deeply tinted sunglasses entered the room. Pascal noted he had on the same uniform as Gabbi did, but something about his uniform indicated he was the leader.

“Lt. Pascal, on behave of Time Force, we offer our sincerest apologies,” he said, extending his hand to Pascal.

On instinct alone, Pascal obliged him. “What seems to be the problem?” he inquired.

“Of course, how rude of me. My name is Alex, I oversee this branch of Time Force. Time Force is an intergalactic, multi-dimensional peacekeeping force, responsible for the ensuring the natural flow of time, and in some cases, restoration,” he explained.

“I’d heard rumors, but nothing solid. What does that have to do with me or my friends?” Pascal replied.

“We are currently in the process of recruiting new agents into Time Force. You’ll forgive me for being vague, but there is a crisis we need assistance with, a crisis that your team has willingly volunteered to help us with, you included. However, as we began to procedure for you, we realized that you were Xybrian,” he explained.

“Yes, I am.”

Alex paused. “In light of recent events at your temporal coordinates, Time Force has labeled the Xybrian people a threat. Altering the genetic structure of any species is expressly forbidden by the Taxalian Protocols. While you have served SPD with distinction, I’m afraid that your heritage disqualifies you from serving in Time Force,” he told him.

“What?”

“Don’t worry, Lieutenant, hearing loss and disorientation is one of the side effects of the procedure, it will all return to you in time. I said that because of your heritage, you are...” he was interrupted.

“No, I heard you just fine. I just can’t believe that in the future, people are still bigots,” he said, rubbing his head slightly, trying to shake away the confusion.

“Excuse me?”

“SPD has welcomed countless races into the Interplanetary treaty, and the entire galaxy lives in peace because of it. Sure, there are a few races who don’t play nice, but they are sorely outnumbered. I understand what my people did was wrong, but I am not to blame for the actions of my species. I actively fought against them during the armada,” he brought up.

“Did you really? Interesting that during the armada, even when your friend was sacrificing her life to save you, you didn’t morph into the Omega ranger, did you?” he asked.

“I... I was on the ship. I was at the helm. I assisted with the torpedo that destroyed one of the ships, and I designed the shuttle that Serenity used to...”

“But did you morph?”

“No,” Pasa admitted.

“Sounds to me like you didn’t do everything you could. Most of your team was on the ground, engaged in hand to hand combat. While you sat on the ship and watched it all happen on the viewer. I don’t know what SPD’s protocols are on this, nor do I care. While I am in charge of Time Force, no Xybrian will serve. Your memories of this event will be suppressed, and you will be allowed to return to your duties, Lieutenant,” Alex told him.

Pascal stood up. “Yes, please do. I want nothing to do with any organization that segregates other races the way Time Force obviously does. Can you imagine how the world would be if alien races traveled here and held *all* humans responsible for World War One? Or World War Two? Or the Gulf War? For coming within inches of a nuclear holocaust?” he snapped.

“That was a long time ago. What the Xybrians did, that's recent.”

“Even so, judging our entire race on the actions of a few is wrong. As a matter of fact, this is Time Force. Your whole deal is that you're from the future and you know future events, right? Then what happened isn't recent for you, its recent for me. That's a flimsy excuse to use to pull a ranger out of a fight, but again, I want nothing to do with an agency that could be so... so crude. I thought Time Force would have improved on the mistakes of SPD, not adopted older mishaps,” he turned towards the door. “Is that the way out of here? I'm done with this,” he said, doing his best to make it to the door.

“At ease, Lieutenant,” Alex said firmly.

“I don't take orders from you.”

The doors slid open, and Pascal found himself face to face with Alex. Confused, he turned back, only to discover Alex was no longer behind him.

“I said at ease.”

“And I said...”

“Pascal, I want to thank you for your honesty and integrity. Its honestly quite refreshing. Our intention was never to exclude you from Time Force. Unfortunately, our machine isn't calibrated for the cerebral cortex of an Xybrian, so we had to test you using more... *conventional* means,” he said.

“Test?”

“Everyone who is recruited to Time Force is tested, to see the type of person they are and if they are able to expand their minds. I needed to see what kind of officer you were, and now I know,” he extended his hand to him again. “Welcome to Time Force, Lieutenant.”

Pascal was still hesitant. “If you were there for all of it, the armada, the Vorhsoth, why didn't you step in? Why didn't you help? You had knowledge of the future that could have saved lives. We lost Serenity, we lost dozens of other officers that day. How could you willingly stand by and watch SPD take such a loss?” he asked.

“We don't play God here, Lieutenant. Events need to unfold as needed, otherwise the human race would not progress. We only step in when there is interference. Think about it, in 2001 we allowed the red and quantum rangers to keep their morphers. It was years ahead of anything they had, but leaving it there allowed SPD to reverse engineer it into the morphers you use to this day. Some tragedies have meaning, purpose. The Vorthsoth armada led to countless races

signing the treaty, bringing in a new era of peace for not just Earth, but the galaxy. Would you rather we had stopped that?" Alex asked him.

"No," he sighed.

"In Time Force, we look at the big picture. In time, you will learn to do the same," he paused. "If you're interested," he said, his hand still extended to him.

Pascal glanced back at his friends still unconscious on examining tables, then back at Alex, who Pascal noted had not once changed his facial expression. "I'll do it," he said, obliging Alex' hand.