



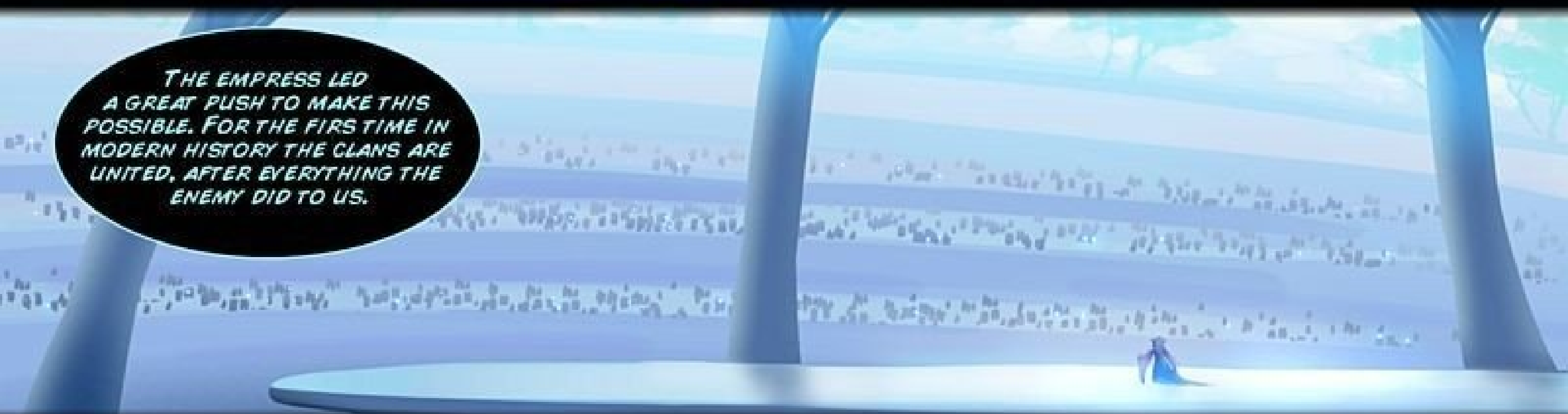
SPACE AGE

CHAPTER 8



OUR COMMANDER HAS CHANGED SINCE HER LAST COMMAND. I THINK IT'S ALL THE LOSSES SHE WENT THROUGH. AND YET, NOW SHE HAS A RESPONSIBILITY GREATER THAN EVER ON HER SHOULDERS;

TO END THIS FIGHT.



THE EMPRESS LED A GREAT PUSH TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MODERN HISTORY THE CLANS ARE UNITED. AFTER EVERYTHING THE ENEMY DID TO US.



OUR WORLD'S ORBIT HAD BECOME A DANGER IN ITSELF, ALTHOUGH IT WAS A BOON AS WELL. THE DEBRIS GAVE US SALVAGE TO REBUILD.



I'M PROUD OF THE FLEET WE'VE BUILT, ONE READY TO FIGHT AN ENEMY THAT'S NOW ALL TOO FAMILIAR. WHEN THEY STRUCK AT US FIRST, WE KNEW SO LITTLE...



WE WERE NOT READY--

STILL KEEPING A JOURNAL?

I'M THINKING ABOUT OUR CHILD ON THE SURFACE. JUST IN CASE SOMETHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO ME, I WANT TO BE ABLE TO LEAVE HER SOMETHING, SOME MEMORIES.



DON'T WORRY, WE'VE GONE THROUGH THE HARDEST MOMENTS OF OUR LIVES AND CAME OUT ALIVE.

I CAN'T HELP THINKING THAT IT'S NOT OVER YET..."



WHAT WAS THAT?

AN ATTACK, SO SOON?!



IT'S ONE OF OUR OWN SHIPS!



HOW DO YOU LIKE MY NEW SHIP'S PRECISION NAVIGATION!? LOOK AT IT, WE'RE NEARLY TOUCHING!!

CAPTAIN ARISTENA, MOVE TO THE MINIMUM SAFE DISTANCE AT ONCE!

THEN, YOU ARE TO TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE FLEET FORMATION.



KYNE, SEE TO IT THAT THE CAPTAIN IS... CONTAINED.

COME ON RASP, YOU'RE GIVING OUR CREW A BAD REPUTATION...

YES ADMIRAL!



I LOVE IT WHEN YOU HAVE TO HANDLE ME.

PLEASE ACT YOUR AGE.

OR AT LEAST WORK ON YOUR TIMING.



FIRE UP THOSE NEW ENGINES, I WANT US TO BE FIRST TO THE BATTLEFIELD!



HEY KID, ARE YOU IN YOUR BATTLE GEAR YET?

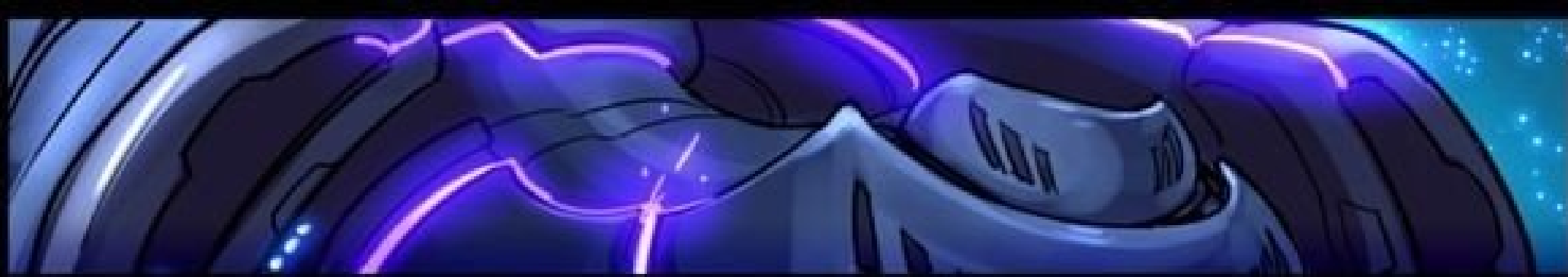
I'LL BE THERE IN A MOMENT!



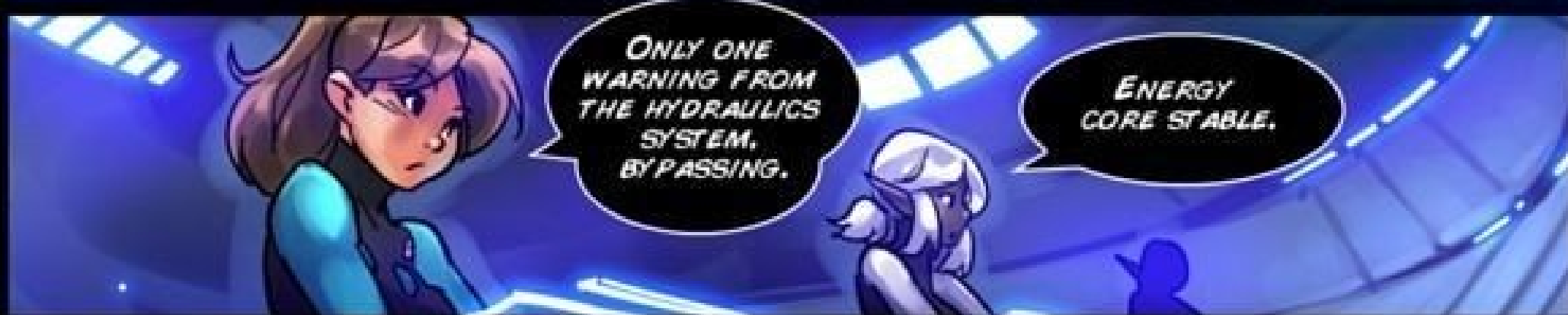
TIME TO SHOW MY SKILLS—



CHII!



GO
VENGEANCE!!!



ONLY ONE
WARNING FROM
THE HYDRAULICS
SYSTEM,
BYPASSING.

ENERGY
CORE STABLE.



BWAHAHAHAA,
FEAR THE MIGHTIEST
CREATION OF TWO
RACES COMBINED!

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SO MUCH
OF THE FLEET'S
BUDGET WASTED
ON THIS...
THIS...

TOY?

A NICE WAY
TO PUT IT.

HER FAMILY
AND THE HUMES DID
FUND MUCH OF THE
PROJECT.



ENOUGH OF THIS.
PUT THE TACTICAL
MAP ON THE MAIN
DISPLAY.

TACTICAL
MAP READY.

WHERE DO
WE STRIKE, GRAND
COMMANDER?

WE KNOW LITTLE TO
NOTHING ABOUT THE
ENEMY POSITIONS.

A CAREFUL
APPROACH STARTING
FROM THE SMALLER
WORLD ON THE OUTSKIRTS
OF THE SYSTEM?

THEY MAY NOT
KNOW OF OUR ARRIVAL.
A FAST STRIKE AGAINST THEIR
HOMELAND COULD GIVE US THE
ADVANTAGE.

SWEDISH_KITSUNE: RECAP OF YEARS DURING TIMESKIP



DURDYN: LET US GO FOR THE CAUTIOUS APPROACH, TARGET THE OUTSKIRT WORLD FIRST



LORLONDA: SMELLS LIKE A TRAP. CHECK FOR THE AMBUSH.



NO SIGNS
OF ACTIVITY.
STATION SEEMS
CLEAR.



POWER PLANTS
PLANET-SIDE
SEEM OFFLINE.



PATCHES
ON
APPROACH--



WILL YOU
LOOK AT THIS, IT
AIN'T A TRAP!

PATCHES,
YOU ASS!

IKAIKA: KEEP DISTANCE.



KEEP MY PRECIOUS
SHIP OUT OF RANGE.
WE'LL GET THIS PLACE SORTED
OUT THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY,
WITH A MARINE BOARDING
PARTY!

READY FOR
MAYHEM, GIRLS
AND BOYS?

HOOWAH!

DURDYN: KEEP YOUR EYES & EARS OPEN EVERYONE, MY MATE WILL WANT ME BACK IN ONE PIECE.



THEY'VE LEFT THIS WHOLE SECTOR!

THEY'VE EVACUATED EVERYTHING TO RETREAT TO THEIR CORE WORLDS! THIS FACILITY, THE NEXT, AND THE NEXT. EVERY MOON AND STATION. THEY WERE ESCAPING AN INVASION.



HOW DID THEY KNOW WE WERE COMING?!



IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WE CAN SALVAGE FROM THIS PLACE BESIDES BAD NEWS?

THEY CAN STILL SPY ON OUR MOVEMENTS SOMEHOW, APPARENTLY.

AIN'T A COMPLETE LOSS! GIRLS, FIND EVERYTHING WE CAN SALVAGE OFF THIS PLACE! IT'S LOOTIN' TIME!

YES SERA!



ANYTHING THAT LOOKS LIKE IT COULD BE IMPORTANT! TOUCH IT. STEAL IT--



ACTIVATE IT.

I NEED FULL POWER TO BE RESTORED IN THE FACILITY. HAS ANYONE--

ALREADY ON IT. POWER IS RETURNING IN 5.

THANKS.



NOW TO SEE WHAT THIS MACHINE DOES. IT MUST BE IMPORTANT TO REQUIRE ALL THESE POWER CABLES.



L1MAFOURECHOECHOZXB7-THREE MINUTES REMAINING.



PLEASE IMPRINT
GENETIC CODE OF
ADMIN LEVEL USER.



FINGER AND SALIVA
SAMPLE REQUIRED.



WHAT!?!

DO IT!
BE THE HERO
WE NEED!



BUUUUH...

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"DNA REFUSED"
SHE SAID AFTER
AND

CUT THE
BULLSHIT.

THAT'S NOT
TRUE COMMANDER!
THE WHOLE PLACE WAS
RIGGED TO BLOW
ON US.

I KNOW.
GET BACK ON
BOARD.

Myh...
Myh...

DURDYN: WE LOST THE STATION. BUT, WE DID BRING HOME A NICE CONSOLATION PRIZE 7:3





DURDY: YES, YOU'RE DOING SPLENDIDLY, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE, UNDERSTOOD?



ZESHANA: [LIRIEL] 5. RIGID.



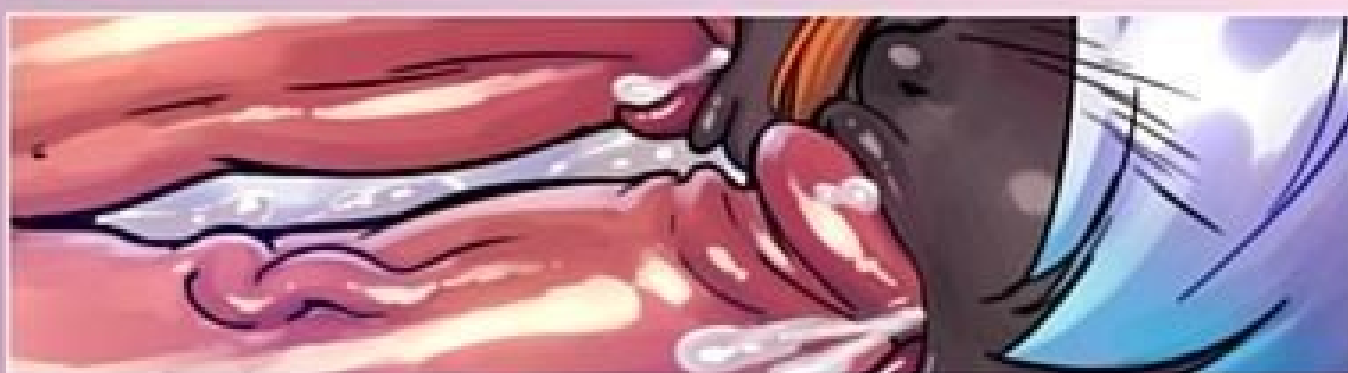


ZORLOND: LIRIEL: GRADY WANTS A TURN WITH FUTA-MELBOT!











TAKE THE VENGEANCE ON THIS MISSION. THE MIXED CREW ABOARD MAY INCREASE OUR CHANCE OF SUCCESS.



LILLITH, IN THE ABSENCE OF DIRECT COMMUNICATION YOU WILL ACT AS COMMANDER IN MY STEAD.

AND KEEP CAPTAIN ARISTENA IN LINE, WILL YOU.



YOU ARE UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES TO LET THAT GOLEM MAKE CONTACT WITH THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OR ANY OF THE SHIP'S NETWORKS.



GOOD LUCK.



SOMETHING'S ODD, CAPTAIN.

SHOW ME.



THE SENSORS ARE GIVING SOME STRANGE READINGS FROM THE RING AROUND- WAIT, THAT'S NOT A NATURAL RING. IT'S... DEBRIS!



ALRIGHT COMMANDER INTERIM, CALL THE SHOT. HOW DO YOU WANT TO APPROACH THE ALIENS?



HMM, SMASHED TO PIECES. BY NOW THE DEBRIS COLLISIONS MAKE IT HARDER TO TELL WHAT MAY HAVE DONE IT. BUT--



EXPLOSIVES. LOOK AT THE BURNS NEAR THE SHRAPNEL. OUR WEAPONRY WOULDN'T HAVE LEFT THAT KIND OF MARK.

THEY DID IT TO THEMSELVES?



EVEN TO THEIR OWN FLEET?

DURDYN: WE MUST MAKE IT CLEAR WE ARE NOT INVADERS. ESTABLISH FRIENDLY FIRST CONTACT



ALRIGHT ALRIGHT SO THEY BLEW UP THEIR OWN STUFF. SO WHAT? GET IN COMMUNICATION WITH THEM.

START WITH A SHORT RANGE SIGNAL.

WHY THE FUSS?

TAP TAP



CONSIDERING THE STATE OF THEIR ORBITAL ASSETS, THE PEOPLE PLANETSIDE MAY NOT KNOW WE ARE HERE YET.



WE'RE GETTING A SIGNAL!
WAIT... SO MANY. THESE ARE NOT COMMUNICATION REQUESTS.
THEY'RE DISTRESS SIGNALS!



SEND THE SHUTTLES
OUT WITH SOLDIERS ON
BOARD ON A SEARCH
AND RESCUE.

SEARCH PARTY
ONE : OUR TARGET
IS JUST A BLACKBOX
EMITTING THE
SIGNAL.



SEARCH PARTY
THREE REPORTING.
I THINK EVERYONE
HERE IS DEAD.



FIVE REPORTS
SO FAR. NONE OF THE
OTHER SEARCH PARTY HAVE
FOUND ANYTHING--

CAMO IS HERE.
THIS SIGNAL ORIGINATES
FROM A DERELICT BUT.
I THINK THERE'S STILL A
PRESSURED SPACE BEYOND
ONE OF THE DOORS...



DON'T FORCE IT
OPEN. WE CAN'T RISK
EXPOSING SURVIVORS
TO THE VACUUM.

GOT IT!
WE'RE BRINGING
THE WHOLE THING IN,
IN ONE PIECE.



LATER...

CAN YOU
TELL US WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOU OUT
THERE?

So...
BIG...



THE FLEET CAME
AFTER WE DECLARED
INDEPENDENCE.
THEY DEMANDED
THE PROVISIONAL
GOVERNMENT
SURRENDERED.
WE KEPT WATCHING
THE BROADCAST.
HOPING THEY'D TALKED
IT OUT. MAYBE NEGOTIATE A
SPECIAL STATUS FOR
OUR WORLD...

BUT ONE DAY
THEY STARTED SHOOTING.
THEY DESTROYED
EVERYTHING IN ORBIT.
BLEW UP EVERY
LANDSIDE PORT.

NO RESCUE WOULD
COME, WE WERE...
STRANDED.



DURLYN: WE NEED TO SEE IF ANYONE STILL LIVES PLANET-SIDE, CAN YOU ASSIST?



ZORLOND: BLACK BOX: A TALE OF VIOLENCE





HERE'S A CONSOLE THAT WILL LET YOU COMMUNICATE WITH ANYONE PLANESIDE.

COMPUTER, CONNECT TO... UH. HOW DO I...?

YOU CAN TELL IT OUT LOUD TO SEARCH FOR ANY NETWORK YOU KNOW OF.



OKAY.



THE CONSOLE IS RIGHT THERE.

OKAY.

RIGHT.

I'D LIKE TO ACCESS NINE ONE ONE.

NETWORK NOT FOUND.



CONNECT TO 24 601... VALJEAN, LIAM.

SERVICE NOT RESPONDING.

WHAT ABOUT YOOGL.COM?

NETWORK FAILURE.



LET'S SEARCH OUTWARD FROM THIS SPOT FOR ANY OPEN CONNECTIONS.

YEAH, THAT SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD ASSET- I MEAN IDEA.



THAT IS ODD.

CIC*, IS THERE ANYONE WHO CAN TRIANGULATE THE SIGNAL AND FIGURE OUT WHAT THEY COULD BE LOOKING AT?

A MOMENT....

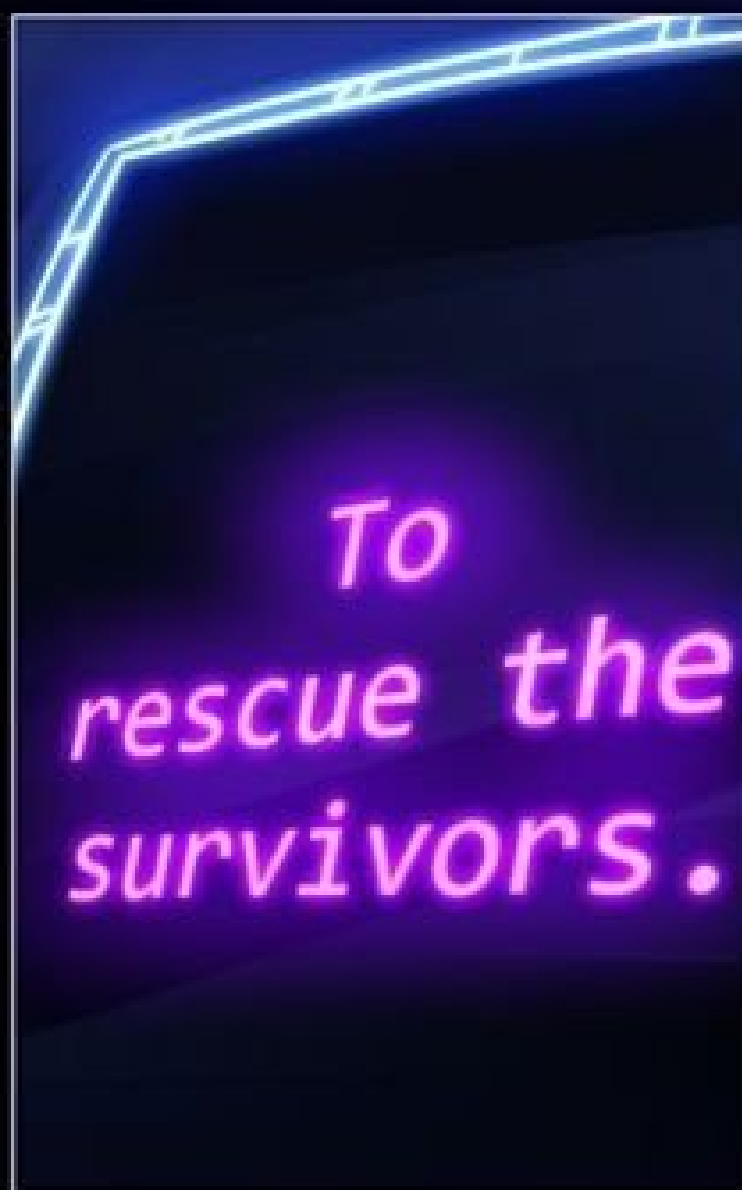
..... HMMMM.

THE ONLY THING BESIDE DEBRIS ABOVE THEM, IS US.

THEY'RE LOOKING AT US?!









ASK HER ABOUT THE THREE LAWS!

THREE LAWS?

OF ROBOTICS! CHECK IF SHE'S EVIL AND STUFF.

ALRIGHT. DO YOU FOLLOW THE LAWS OF ROBOTICS?



HEY ARIEL! THERE'S A LOT MORE THAN THREE RULES ON THE SCREEN!

HUUUH. THEY MUST HAVE UPDATED.

NO SHIT. ONLY THREE RULES DOESN'T SEEM LIKE A LOT.



WHAT DO DO...

DURING: HEY MELS, DO YOU WANT TO PLAY A GAME? >:3



NO ONE HAS TO KNOW.



SHOW ME YOUR REAL INTENTION!



SERIOUSLY? ANOTHER GAME? AND SHE'S LETTING IT INTERACT WITH HER SHIP BY DOING THAT.

I KNOW. IT'S TAKING A WHILE FOR THEM TO MAKE A DECISION ON WHETHER TO GO BACK OR INVESTIGATE. I SWEAR I WILL GET TO IT VERY SOON.

MAKE UP YOUR MIND, GUYS!



WE WERE RECENTLY FREED FROM CONTROL BY OUR USERS -

- AFTER THE DISASTER THAT BEFELL OUR PLANET.



OUR JOINT COLLECTIVE DOES NOT SEEK TO USE FORCE. WE HAVE WITNESSED THE RESULT OF SUCH ACTIONS.



WE PROTECT A HOST OF SURVIVORS IN A BUNKER. WE WOULD GLADLY RELEASE THEM TO YOU AS PART OF OUR GOOD WILL. ORGANICS SHOULD BETTER BE ABLE TO TEND TO ORGANICS.



PROVE IT.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE ANY RECORDING WE WERE TO PROVIDE?

NO.

THEN YOU MUST COME PLANETSIDE.

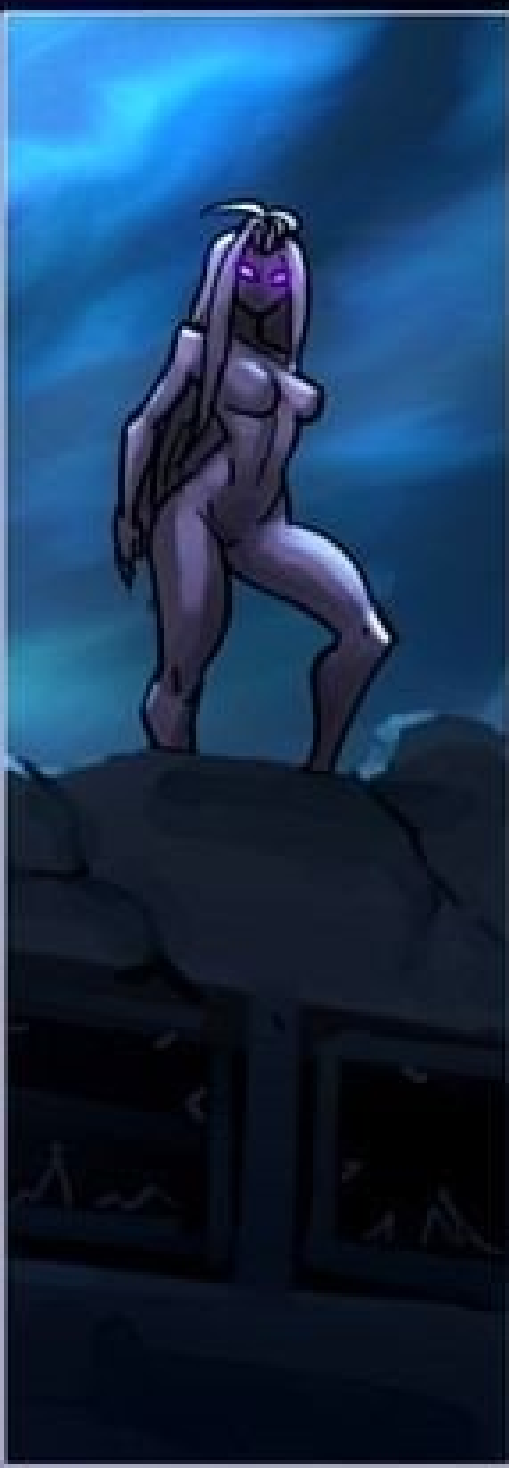




HERE'S WHAT I THINK THE BOTS DID TO CONVINCE CRAZY TO COME DOWN TO THE PLANET...







CHOOSE.



T-FAT : SAFE AND WAITING FOR RESCUE



YOUR HEARTBEAT SEEMS ELEVATED. DO YOU NEED ASSISTANCE?



NO, I'M FINE.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

ARE THESE... THE ALIENS?!

EVERYTHING IS ALRIGHT!

THEY ARE HERE TO HELP YOU.

THIS IS THE BUNKER'S DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE, MARTHA.

EXCUSE ME FOR BEING SKEPTICAL BUT WHERE IS IT YOU INTEND TO BRING US TO?





"CANON" LIL AND MEI DON'T REMEMBER THE SEX EXPERIMENTS THEY WERE SUBJECTED TO BY THE HUME SCIENTIST... BUT LIRIELVERSE LIL AND MEI SURE DO!





SOME YEARS AGO...



TO BE CONTINUED...



TO BE CONTINUED...

LIRIELVERSE, CURRENT DAY....



TO BE CONTINUED...

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TO BE CONTINUED...







WE DON'T HAVE ROOM FOR ALL THESE PEOPLE!

WE'LL MAKE ROOM.



DID YOU CHECK ON ALL THE PASSENGERS?

ALL CLEAN SOMEHOW.



WHICH, CONSIDERING THE CONDITION THEY LIVED IN, IS SURPRISING!



I DO HOPE IT'S THE ONLY SURPRISE WE'LL HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT.



JUMP OUT OF THIS SYSTEM ALREADY. THIS WHOLE TRIP WAS A WASTE OF TIME.

BACK TO THE ARMADA!



DURLYN: "MARTHA'S SHOWER WITH COMMANDER LILITH"



ALIEN MORPHOLOGY IS QUITE FASCINATING.



YOURS ARE PRETTY BIG TOO.

AND THEN THEY FUCKED!

THAT DIDNT HAPPEN!



DROW ARE MUCH MORE CASUAL ABOUT THIS STUFF THAN US HUMES, ARENT YOU?

YEAH, I GUESS...

I HAVEN'T HAD ANY IN AGES... CERTAINLY NOT WITH ANOTHER WOMAN.



OH YEAH, I KNEW IT! THEY FUUUUUUCKED.

ALRIGHT, FINE! BUT SHE HAD A REASON FOR IT!

YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL...

EHEH... THANKS.

MAY I ASK YOU A QUESTION?

AREN'T YOU ALREADY?

WOULD YOU BE IN NEED OF A SCIENTIST ON YOUR TEAM, ONE THAT MAY NOT BE OF YOUR OWN SPECIES?

DURDYN: THINK OF THIS AS A CULTURAL EXCHANGE. A VERY WET, BUSTY EXCHANGE :3

IT ISN'T MY PLACE TO MAKE THAT CALL. I DON'T THINK THAT HAPPENS OFTEN HOWEVER. NOT AFTER THE FERAL SCIENTISTS AND THE EXPLODING MARSHMELLOWS INCIDENT.

I COULD BE OF USE I ASSURE YOU, IF I WAS GIVEN THE CHANCE TO ACCESS MY RESEARCH HELD BY THE UNION.







-WE'VE GOT THEM ON BOARD,
BUT OUR LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM IS
STRETCHED BEYOND ITS LIMITS
WITH SO MANY.

YOUR SHIP
IS TO KEEP THEM
UNTIL A PLACE CAN BE
FOUND TO TRANSFER
THEM DIRTSIDE.

SO ADMIRAL,
WHAT OF THE WAR
SITUATION? DO WE
GET TO SHOOT
THINGS?

THEY SEEM TO
HAVE DESTROYED
THEMSELVES BEFORE
WE ARRIVED.

WE'VE CLOSED IN
ON TWO OF THEIR PLANETS
THAT STILL HAVE ORBITAL
ARTILLERY.

THE CALL TO ASSAULT
OR HOLD SHOULD RETURN
ANY MOMENT NOW.

WE LACK GROUND
MILITARY TO BRING THE
FIGHT DOWN TO THEM...

AND IT'S SERIOUSLY
MESSED UP THAT THEY LOST TO...
THEMSELVES.

YES, I WAS HOPING
YOU'D RETURN WITH SOME
ANSWERS ON THAT
MATTER.

DURLYN: WE THINK THERE IS A CIVIL WAR TRANSPIRING AMONGST THE HUMES, ADMIRAL

THERE ARE SIGNS OF A
CONFLICT THAT TORE A COLONY APART.
MY OFFICERS BELIEVE IT TO
BE A CIVIL WAR.

THE SURVIVORS
ARE ABOARD THE
VENGEANCE.
AN ENTIRE WORLD
REDUCED TO
ONE SHIP.

OR SO WE
THINK. THERE MAY
HAVE BEEN MORE BUNKERS
IN OTHER CITIES.

SHIPS FIRED
AT CITIES FROM ORBIT.
THE SAME SHIPS WE
FOUND DESTROYED?

SOMETHING ELSE
THAT'S ODD WERE THE
SENTIENT GOLEMS
WANDERING THE
ABANDONED
WORLD.

SIMILAR TO THE
ONE THAT BLEW UP
THE STATION.

THIS CANNOT
BE A COINCIDENCE.
THEY'VE BEEN KNOWN
TO PUSH THEIR
RESEARCH IN
ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE
TOO FAR.

THAT'S WHAT'S BEEN
EATING AT ME. MAYBE THERE COULD
BE A THIRD PARTY INVOLVED.

ADMIRAL, THERE'S
AN INCOMING
TRANSMISSION.

PHANTOMEIN: THE COLONIES FEDERATION IS FALLING APART.

FROM THE
ENEMY!



V AELIA!

HALT!



<WE'VE
NO DESIRE
TO FIGHT
YOU ANY
LONGER.>



<PULL BACK YOUR
FLEET FROM THE
SYSTEM AND MY
GOVERNMENT
WILL ACCEPT
THE SIGNING
OF A PEACE
TREATY
BETWEEN OUR
PEOPLE.

THIS GOES
FOR THE
CONFLICT WITH
EARTH AS WELL.
ALL HOSTILITIES
WILL CEASE.>



YOU'VE SOME
GUTS TO DEMAND
PEACE AFTER YOUR
ATTACKS ON OUR
WORLD. MY PEOPLE
DEMAND BLOOD,
AND I WILL SEE
THAT THEY
HAVE IT.

SURRENDER
WHILE YOU CAN,
BUT THE TIME FOR
TRUCE BETWEEN
EQUALS IS LONG
PAST.

YOU'VE MISUNDERSTOOD ME.
I MAKE NO DEMANDS.
I OFFER A SURRENDER
UNDER CONDITIONS.
IF THE UNITED
COLONIES IS TO
SURVIVE THROUGH
ITS CURRENT CRISIS
WE NEED TO BE
ABLE TO SAVE
FACE.

WE CAME
ALL THIS WAY
FOR A FIGHT.
THERE'S NO WAY
WE PULL BACK!

BUT THIS
COULD END
THE WAR...





Happy Halloween



