

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar - FO's Office - FO Commander Sienna Verin - 0904)

(USS Illuminar - FO's Office - FO Commander Sienna Verin and SO, Ensign Alistar Belmont-0906)

(USS Magellan – Passenger Compartment - DCO Ensign James Shaw – 1020)

(USS Magellan - Passenger Deck - SO Ensign Celiste Winters & Engineering Cadet Rhyssa Williams - 1021)

(USS Magellan - Passenger Deck - 2O/CSec/Tac - Lt. Commander T'Mur - 1026)

(USS Magellan - Passenger Deck - 2O/CSec/Tac - Lt. Commander T'Mur - 1031)

(Asteroid - Citadel Entrance - SecO, CPO Steven Hammons - 1035)

(USS Magellan - Asteroid - Building 1 - EO Ensign Angus MacGuyver, DCO Ensign James Shaw - 1036)

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 1- 2O/CSec/Tac - Lt. Commander T'Mur - 1037)

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 1- Lt. Tavay - 1038)

(USS Magellan - Asteroid- Library - EO - Ensign Angus MacGuyver - 1039)

(USS Magellan - Asteroid- Library - DCO - Ensign James Shaw - 1040)

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 1- 2O/CSec/Tac - Lt. Commander T'Mur - 1041)

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 1- DCO Ensign James Shaw - 1042)

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 1- SecO, CPO Steven Hammons - 1043)

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 1- 2O/CSec/Tac - Lt. Commander T'Mur - 1044)

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Exterior of Building 1- Marine CO- Lt. Temerity - 1045)

(USS Io – Passenger Compartment - Ensign Torak, Operations – 1145)

(USS Io – Passenger Compartment - SPA - LT Ariel Trei - 1146)

(USS Io – Passenger Compartment - Ensign Torak, Operation - 1148)

(USS Io – Passenger Compartment SPA LT Ariel Trei - 1149)

(USS Io – Passenger Compartment - SecO, Lieutenant Galk - 1151)

(USS Io – Passenger Compartment – Ensign Torak, Operations – 1155)

(USS Io – Passenger Compartment – SecO, Lieutenant Galk – 1158)

(USS Io - Passenger Compartment - CSRD Lab - CSRD - Lt. Bohb - 1201)

(USS Io - Passenger Compartment - CEO - Lieutenant Jg Teqian Pex - 1203)

(USS Io – Flight Deck – Pilot Ensign Pihi ‘Kestrel’ Piripi – 1205)

(USS IO – Flight Deck – CMO Commander Quinna Solace -- 1206)

(USS IO – Flight Deck – SecO, Lieutenant Galk -- 1210)

(USS IO – Flight Deck - SPA - LT Ariel Trei - 1211)

(USS IO – Passenger Deck - CEO - Lieutenant Jg Tegian Pex - 1212)

(USS Io – Flight Deck – Ensign Torak, Operations – 1215)

(USS Io – Flight Deck - SPA - LT Ariel Trei - 1216)

(Ringworld – Ensign Torek, Operations – 1218)

(USS Io - Passenger Compartment - CSRD Lab - CSRD - Lt. Bohb - 1219)

(USS Illuminar – Deck 1 - Bridge - CSO, Lieutenant Commander Holis Gralen - 1220)

(USS Illuminar – Deck 3 – Dignitary Quarters – Civilian Scientist Dr. Teller – 1223)

(USS Illuminar – Deck 3 – Dignitary Quarters – Civilian Scientist Dr. Gaillus Penn – 1224)

(USS Illuminar – Deck 1 - Conference Room - CSO, Lieutenant Commander Holis Gralen - 1225)

(USS Illuminar – Deck 1 - Conference Room - SO Ensign Alistair Belmont - 1226)

(USS Illuminar – Deck 1 - Conference Room - CSO, Lieutenant Commander Holis Gralen - 1227)

(Ring Plant of Rephaim -- Structure -- base of stairs -- CMO Commander Quinna Solice 1228)

(Ring Plant of Rephaim - Structure - base of stairs - SPA - LT Ariel Trei - 1229)

(USS Io – Flight Deck – Pilot Ensign Pihi ‘Kestral’ Piripi – 1230)

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- the base of the stairs- Ensign Torak, Operations 1231)

(USS Io – Flight Deck – CEO - Lieutenant Jg Tegian Pex – 1232)

(Ring World -- CMO Commander Quinna Solice -- 1235)

(Ring World SPA LT Ariel Trei - 1237)

(Ring Plant of Rephaim -- Structure -- the base of the stairs- CMO Commader Quinna Solice 1238)

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- base of stairs SPA LT Ariel Trei - 1239)

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- base of stairs -- SecO, Lieutenant Galk - 1240)

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- Base of Stairs -- CMO Commander Quinna Solice --

1250)

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Near the stairs -- Security officers Koch and Philips -- 1251)

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- Base of Stairs -- SecO, Lieutenant Galk, Son of Jos -- 1254)

[illegible][illegible]

(USS Illuminar - FO's Office - FO Commander Sienna Verin - 0904)

"You wanted to see me Commander?"

Sienna watched the young man that entered her office. He had come aboard during the transition between the Raptor and the Illuminar and was a new graduate that Admiral Winters had hand-picked for the Illuminar.

On the Betazoid's desk was a large mug that some would call a pitcher. It was see through and contained a thick coffee coloured substance that looked more like a milkshake than an iced coffee. The rumor was that the FO ran off of chocolate, sugar and caffeine and her ever-present drink was referred to as the monstrosity.

"What is your preferred beverage, Ensign?" Sienna indicated her replicator then the seat across from her. Sienna's working office was still uncluttered after the shift between the ships, as she had not had much time to unpack.

<Reply>

After the ensign had taken a seat, Sienna spoke with a quiet authority, "I have reviewed your records from the Academy, and you have a great deal of potential. Admiral Winters had you selected for this ship after your final exams were posted. What are your goals? Ambitions? What areas of research are you interested in pursuing?"

<Reply>

Sienna stood up, short, curvy, the human in her seemed to highlight the Betazoid. "Are you familiar with the history of the Fleet, Ensign? During the Civil War that so many of our parents fought in, there was once a ship called the *Mystique*. It was a science and exploratory ship, but it had issues and was retired. Then the *USS Hades* was launched and it had teeth to back up the scientific and exploratory mission. The *Illuminar* was the brainchild of the son of the *Mystique's* FO who was also the Captain of the *Hades*. This ship's mission is to explore new

worlds, discover new cultures and to scout threats to the Federation, but the last is a secondary function. We've just finished one of those scouting missions with the space trials of the Raptor, which Admiral Winters is now returning to Base."

Sienna took a deep drink of her monstrosity to give herself a moment to focus, "Any questions?"

(reply Alistair, any)

(posted by Mel)

[illegible]

"What is your preferred beverage, Ensign?"

“No beverage sir, but thank you.” He said as he tried his best not to reply with something stupid like, ~My throat is operating at peak satiation.~

Sienna's eyes focused on the Ensign, "It was not a request. We will be speaking for a bit, you will need a drink. Get one and then sit down."

Alistair shrugged and just got a water. He didn't really need it, his throat really was operating at peak satiation, but orders are orders.

"I have reviewed your records from the Academy, and you have a great deal of potential. Admiral Winters had you selected for this ship after your final exams were posted. What are your goals? Ambitions? What areas of research are you interested in pursuing?"

~Ummm, Ummm, I just don't want to blow up the ship.~ He thought to himself. "My goals and ambitions sir are just to do my best and not rest on my laurels, as far as areas of research, I have a few ideas in my head, but I haven't had enough time to really put them to paper so to speak. Still don't even know which box my research notes are even in." He said placing his head down.

Sienna stood up, short, curvy, the human in her seemed to highlight the Betazoid. "Are you familiar with the history of the Fleet, Ensign? During the Civil War that so many of our parents fought in, there was once a ship called the *Mystique*. It was a science and exploratory ship, but it had issues and was retired. Then the *USS Hades* was launched and it had teeth to back up the scientific and exploratory mission. The *Illuminar* was the brain child of the son of the *Mystique's* FO who was also the Captain of the *Hades*. This ship's mission is to explore new worlds, discover new cultures and to scout threats to the Federation, but the last is a secondary function. We've just finished one of those scouting missions with the space trials of the *Raptor*, which Admiral Winters is now returning to Base."

Sienna took a deep drink of her monstrosity to give herself a moment to focus, "Any questions?"

"Not really sir, and I am not really familiar with the Civil War. My family is not a Starfleet one. We are traders, business people. And when the civil war started, they crossed into the Gamma

Quadrant and stayed there until it was over. They went where business was good and not covered in blood or death. My family did everything they could to stay out of the weapons trade. Honestly the first time I set foot on Earth, even though I'm human, was for Starfleet Academy orientation."

"I was the exact opposite. I had never set foot off of Earth until we were assigned to Mars Base's restoration. You said that you don't have a specific area of research that you are interested in? Are you looking to go into administration and run the department? If that is a desire, we can see about command courses." Sienna smiled brightly.

"No, I don't want to be in administration, sir, I just haven't had the opportunity to really do my own research. I'm glad that they thought I was worth being here, but I spent the last year on the USS Oklahoma City doing grunt research for the CSO. I am Xenoanthropologist, I care about discovery. Not sure I am special sir, but I will give you my all."

Sienna nodded as she listened. "All right. Ensign Skashe Winters is currently in charge of the department and will see to your orientation and further training. Ask him to arrange a meeting with Luma'lenai and Counselor Laredo. As an anthropologist, you can assist the Betazoid government in recording the history of the Lenai." Sienna's grin was almost predatory. Something about this young Ensign's meekness bothered her. Luma would sort it out. That was one of the things she was good at.

"I hope my answers haven't been disappointing." He said sheepishly.

"Not at all Ensign. You seem a bit unfocused, but you have potential and Admiral Winters will be the first to tell you that she is never wrong. She started her career as a Counselor and became a Captain, and she likes to encourage and develop that potential."

Alistair nodded.

"I would like you to take the next six months and really consider what you want out of your career. The Illuminar has several talented scientific minds aboard. One of the Captain's particular pet projects is that he wishes to improve the technology of the fleet. Lt. Bohb is in charge of our research division, and the eminent scientists Penn and Tellar are also creating havoc. If research is not your forte, and trust me, for all that I'm a botanist, and I spear headed the development of the trill vaccine, research is not my cup of tea."

"It's not that its not my cup of tea, sir, I'm such a meticulous note taker, ever since I was 12, that my family figured I'd be an accountant. Rather its..." he paused. "The CSO on the OKC wasn't necessarily the most focused CSO, he was an older guy around 50 who had basically loafed his way through the down decades of the fleet, and because of his seniority lucked into his position. We weren't the most focused place to work. He got sent on mandatory retirement, I got sent here. If I seem unfocused sir, its because I haven't had a reason to be focused for a year." ~Well that was direct. ~ Sienna's grin had disappeared as she listened to this young man dissect his previous experience. It wasn't as if there were not a lot of those sort of career officers, it was why command had changed to the Civil War Officers, and the young were being encouraged to step up and lead the fleet.

"Understand this, Ensign. Our Captain is a vulcan who insists on the proper deportment of his officers. Also understand that he is one of the most lenient and understanding Vulcans you will

deal with. You will respect your senior officers, and none of them will stifle you. In fact, you will do the opposite here.” Her predatory grin was returning.

“Currently we are in orbit of a ring-world, Ensign. Lt. Bohb and Ensign Celiste Winters are on away teams. One to the structure, the other to the asteroid. After you report in to Ensign Skashe Winters, you will report to the Bridge and take up sensors. I wish you to keep telemetry on the away team, and a particular transporter lock on Commander T’Mur’s team.” Sienna paused a moment, “Commander T’Mur is my bonded, and she is the second officer of this ship.” Sienna let that sink in to the young man.

"Yes sir, don't worry, sir. I may not know what my research goals are, but I can find a Timurian flea on the right buttocks of a Grendurian Baboon in a rainstorm as long as the sensors are working." He replied. ~Or to find which Grendurain Baboon ate your mother's wedding ring when it fell of her finger into a burberry bramble. And all this at the age of 10. But not that I am one to brag.~

Sienna frowned, "Ensign do you have any empathic ability? The Illuminar has the largest percentage of telepaths in the Fleet due to Luma'lenai. I'd like you to see Counselor Laredo for an evaluation. If you do have some ability, he can assist you in developing it."

He nodded. ~She may be giving me more credit than I deserve there, but orders are orders and I don't want to blow it off, in case its a test.~

"Is there anything else sir?"

Sienna wasn't entirely sure what to make of this Ensign, but she knew that he would sort out in time. She was thankful that his previous assignment had not ruined him. "No, Ensign. Remember to mind your manners, especially with the senior staff and most especially the Captain. Make friends with Luma." Sienna tapped a few keys on her holographic desk and nodded, "I've also assigned you your coursework for the next 3 months. I will see you then for your evaluation and welcome to the Illuminar. If you have no further questions, skedaddle." She nodded to the door.

He nodded and stood up. "Yes sir." he then made his way to the door and left to get his list of orders taken care of.

Sienna watched him go, and shook her head. She had been meaning to record a missive to her brother.

(reply none)

(posted by Will & Mel)

(USS Magellan – Passenger Compartment - DCO Ensign James Shaw – 1020)

James Shaw lounged, his eyes scanning the vibrant words of "Captain Proton and the Pyramids of Venus" on his PADD. The pulp fiction's daring escapades were the perfect distraction, a stark contrast to the calm before the storm of their mission.

Commander T'Mur's voice sliced through the hum of the shuttle, detailing their objectives with precision. James perked up at the mention of his name, setting the PADD aside.

“Ensigns. MacGyver, Shaw, your task is to penetrate one of those structures. We need access but proceed with caution. Security leads once we're in, be it myself or another. Expect anything from repairs to full-blown system overhauls,” Commander T'Mur instructed with a steely gaze.

James couldn't help but smirk, his mind already spinning tales of his own grand adventures. He saw an opportunity not just for heroics but for a bit of wit.

"Understood, Commander. But, if I may," Shaw interjected, his tone laced with a hint of mischief as he gestured towards Ensign MacGuyver, "shouldn't we, the intrepid engineers, do a little reconnaissance? I have a hunch the 'muscle squad'," he nodded towards the assembled Marines, "might not have an eye for the subtler dangers. Traps, ancient security systems, you know, the kind of thing that doesn't respond well to brute force."

He leaned back slightly, confidence etched in his smile. "Plus, activating the power or stabilizing the air could make everyone's job a lot easier. Assuming, of course, these places have been gathering dust and not tourists."

(Reply any)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

The shuttle had settled comfortably on the asteroid, with nary a bump that Celiste could feel. But her head was buried in the workstation that she had been quietly configuring for outside readings. She probed with ground penetrating radar, choosing low tech and low powered ways to initially scan. What she saw was confusing. There were voids in the ground, which might indicate underground bases by the regular geometric shapes. She knew that most humanoids chose square or rectangular shapes. Some chose round shapes that were connected via rectangles. These were bizarre. Three sided caverns. No squares rectangles or circles here. Everything seemed to be triangular based. Something pinged in the back of Celiste's head. Something about anthropology and the number of digits. Humanoids mostly went with base ten.

“I also want soil samples,” T'Mur turned to Winters. “We need to know if there has ever been any vegetation life on this asteroid. I also want you to stay as close to the security team as possible, Ms. Winters.”

"That doesn't seem to be a problem, Commander. Is there a particular security guard that you wish me to remain with?" She briefly wondered if it was because she was the daughter of an Admiral or because she was a greenie that the Commander was treating her with kid gloves. It didn't really matter, she was here to do a job and would do it well.

Several moments passed while Celiste continued to study the readings, making a map of the area that she was sending to the personal tricorders of the security and marines.

Celiste sealed her helmet and then checked on the very quiet engineering cadet who was near her. It was standard protocol to buddy check before entering a potentially dangerous environment. Celiste noticed who performed the checks and who did not almost automatically. Both of her parents had reinforced the concept of safety first into their children. They were highly trained, expensive investments by the Fleet, and it was their duty to not die stupidly.

"Ensign Winters, have you noticed anything unusual?" T'Mur asked.

A hint of a smile touched Celiste's lips, "Indeed, Commander. I was concentrating on using low powered sensors due to the potential for higher powered scans of triggering something latent. I had ascertained that there was no form of life currently, but that isn't meshing with some of the things that I'm seeing."

"I've been scanning and am detecting no sign of organic material." T'Mur said. "Even the ground we are walking on seems completely comprised of inorganic material. No insect life, not even bacteria or residual traces that anything had once been alive."

"That isn't unusual considering the spatial proximity and how long this place has been abandoned. I would like to go chisel a piece of the stone out and run it through a comprehensive analysis to ascertain a time frame but this place was abandoned at least a thousand years ago." Celiste paused a moment, "There have been many incidents of something called the crystalline entity that ravaged planets and left them in this state. However over time, those planets recovered if left alone. Whatever caused this destroyed everything organic and left the place to rust. What I am sure of is that these people did not use base 10. I think it was base3 as a basis for their numeral system. But, I'm not an anthropologist."

Next to her, Cadet Rhyssa Williams, the engineering cadet, spoke up, "I think that Ensign Winters is correct about going with low powered scans. This place feels asleep, technologically." Tiburonians were often called the psychics of engineering for their leaps of intuition. It was the reason the very crude and rough around the edges Cadet was with the team. "Like it is waiting for the key to wake it up. Sorry. Not very scientific but I can't tell much more without being in there."

The team approached the giant sized door and both young women stared up at it.

"That is something one doesn't see every day," MacGuyver said on greeting. "Not sure, exactly, how we opened the door, but it is open. Orders?"

"Proceed," T'Mur said, "with caution."

Rhyssa had opinions on how that door had opened but she wasn't going to state them. She was here to help, not lead. But her fingers itched to find some sort of control panel and play with it. This was the Tiburonian holy grail. Rhyssa split up from Celiste and headed over to MacGuyver.

"Orders Sir?" The Tiburonian cadets's eva suit was grey tinged with orange stripes to indicate that she was in training and her eva helmet was the color of a pumpkin to indicate that she was a danger to those around her due to inexperience in a hostile environment. Celiste was stuck in one as well and the orange was brighter than her flame-hair. Celiste switched to a larger, tablet style padd with an external sensor wand like the medical staff used. "I'm reading... well it's difficult. There is some sort of interference. It's a low level radiation source, which won't harm us as long as we stay in our EVA suits. Three levels down and two, no, four triangles to the north-west. I wasn't able to take in the sheer size of these triangular vaults from the outside sensor readings. It's like something wanted to deliberately obfuscate the readings."

(reply Magellan, any)
(posted by Mel)

(reply MacGuyver, Shaw and Tavay)
(posted by Al Muir)

“Alright ladies, it’s time to join expedition,” T’Mur said to the doctor and the science officer. “Now that they have safely secured access I will need all eyes inside.”

(reply Honeycutt, Winters)

"Lt. Corday," she called into the flight deck, "I need this ship ready for a quick dust off in case we meet resistance."

"Aye ma'am," Snoopy replied. "I'll just hang out here and play Tetris."

T'Mur raised a questioning eyebrow, uncertain what he was talking about and returned to her science team. She led them out of the shuttle and across the ground towards the building. She opened a comm channel.

“T’Mur to Lt. Temerity, my team has gained access to a building. Converge on that point. Nothing comes in from there. Defend that perimeter. Come running if we call you.”

(reply Temerity)

As she walked she began to note a peculiarity. Something was nagging at her brain. Pulling out her tricorder she began to scan. Then she adjusted her tricorder and moved the device around. She stopped and knelt down, picking up a sample of dirt. Scanning the dirt her brow furrowed. “Ensign Winters, have you noticed anything unusual?” she asked.

(reply Winters)

"I've been scanning and am detecting no sign of organic material," T'Mur said. "Even the ground we are walking on seems completely comprised of inorganic material. No inset life, not even bacteria or residual traces that anything had once been alive."

(reply Winters, Honeycutt)

She stood up and moved quickly to where the others were. As she approached she noted the enormity of the doorway. Her mind started to calculate what would need a building entrance that size. She nodded to Hammons, then moved over to the group of engineers.

"That is something one doesn't see every day," MacGyver said on greeting. "Not sure, exactly, how we opened the door, but it is open. Orders?"

"Proceed," T'Mur said, "with caution."

(reply Shaw, Tavay, MacGuyver, Hammons)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(Asteroid - Citadel Entrance - SecO, CPO Steven Hammons - 1035)

"Chief Hammons."

Steven half turned to see two of the team step forward, the scientist with a rapt look on his face as he gazed at an intricately adorned panel that Hammons concluded might be some sort of door. Steven nodded at the greeting. "Just call me Hammons, chief is what I call my commanding officer." He winked which might have been missed.

He stood aside watchfully as they studied the door. If truly a door then it was immense, high as the top of a regulation basketball goal and easily as wide. Way too tall and wide for a humanoid being, at least the normal ones.

After a moment they stepped forward and began caressing various designs, Steven hefted his sidearm and looked around nervously as they did so, if this was a door then whoever used to use it was nothing like they were familiar with.

It took them quite a while but eventually a set of designs lit up and the portal opened, Steven stepped around them to peer inside, into an antechamber of some sorts like a waiting room maybe. There were places to sit but a little climbing would be involved. The place had indeed woken up, the lighting was active and bright and somewhere machinery could be heard softly humming.

He shook his head and continued inside, across the chamber another door slid open as he approached. In the center of the far wall a circular pad was halfway inset with control panels vertical on the wall, most of the stuff on them was out of reach.

"Something interesting here chief."

(Reply: T'Mur, any)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(USS Magellan - Asteroid - Building 1 - EO Ensign Angus MacGuyver, DCO Ensign James Shaw - 1036)

"Proceed... with caution," T'Mur said.

The security team took the lead. As they stepped inside lights automatically illuminated. They weren't bright lights, but bright enough

Angus looked at the others and back into the dark emptiness that lay beyond the door. He heard a shuffle of feet coming up to him and realized that it was the engineering cadet, Rhyssa Williams. Initially he had objected to her coming on the away team. He felt it was no place for a young woman who barely knew her way around a warp core. But he had been reminded that if she were never given an opportunity to learn how would she do so. Besides, how often would this opportunity come along to explore something that they might never run into again. So he acquiesced to the logic and consented.

"Orders, sir?" her little voice squeaked in obvious excitement.

He wanted to say something pithy like, “Don’t die,” but thought that might be taken as a scare tactic, so finally said, “Take as many readings as you can, lassie, but... do NOT touch anything.”

(reply Williams)

Ensign James Shaw stepped across the threshold of the ancient building, his footsteps echoing in the vast, empty space that unfolded before him. The air was thick with the scent of age and mystery, and the dim light filtering through the cracks in the stone walls cast shadows that danced with the contours of forgotten architecture. He was not alone in this endeavor; alongside him were Ensign MacGuyver, a Scotsman with a keen eye for improvisation; Lieutenant Tavey, a

Romulan with a sharp intellect and a strategic mind; and Lieutenant Commander T'Mur, a Vulcan security officer whose calm demeanor and logical approach provided a stabilizing force for the group.

As they ventured deeper into the structure, their handheld lights revealed the intricate carvings and ancient scripts adorning the walls, speaking of civilizations and knowledge long since passed into oblivion. The air grew cooler as they progressed, and the silence was almost palpable, a stark contrast to the bustling life they had left behind on their starship.

Hammons voice came over the comm. =^=Something interesting over here Chief.=^=

(reply T'Mur)

Suddenly, the quiet was broken by a soft, humming sound that grew steadily in volume until it filled the chamber they had just entered. In the center of the room stood an object that seemed out of place amidst the ruin—a computer terminal, its design unfamiliar yet unmistakably advanced. As they approached, the screen flickered to life, and a voice, warm and welcoming, yet carrying the weight of eons, greeted them.

"Welcome, visitors," the computer began, "I am the guardian of this place, the keeper of knowledge that spans the ages. Your arrival has been long awaited."

The group exchanged glances, a mix of surprise and curiosity reflected in their eyes. Ensign Shaw stepped forward, acting as the spokesperson for the group. "We come in peace, seeking knowledge and understanding," he said, his voice steady yet filled with the awe of the moment.

The computer's response was immediate, its tone imbued with a hint of pleasure. "Your quest for knowledge honors us. You stand within the halls of history, where many have sought answers to the universe's greatest mysteries. Let us explore these ancient secrets together."

As the computer began to relay information, the data streams illuminating the room with light and color, Ensign Shaw and his companions knew they were on the cusp of discoveries that could change the course of history. With a Scotsman, a Romulan, a Vulcan, and the spirit of adventure binding them, they were ready to delve into the past, uncovering the secrets that lay hidden within the ancient building, guided by an intelligence that had watched over these halls for millennia.

(reply any)

(Posted by AI, and Tim)

[illegible]

As the group entered the chamber a set of low lights came on, casting a light glow on the engravings on the walls. T'Mur looked at them critically, wondering what they depicted. As they walked from one end of a corridor to the other the light seemed to follow them, turning as they entered a new section of the corridor, and turning off from the section they just left. It was as if someone were watching them. Suddenly a voice called to her,

=^=Something interesting here, chief.=^= Hammons called out.

T'Mur quickened her pace and caught up with the security team. "Mr. Hammons?"

She looked around at the array of panels that seemed to be coming to life. Lights flashed in a sequence, almost as if they were trying to communicate with them. The remainder of the team filed into the chamber as she pulled out her tricorder and began to scan.

"Fascinating," she said to herself. Then she heard the sound of machinery that seemed to be waking up, as if from a dormant state. Then there was voice. A calm and welcoming voice.

[Welcome, visitors. I am the guardian of this place, the keeper of knowledge that spans the ages. Your arrival has been long awaited.]

Shaw was the first to reply, "We come in peace, seeking knowledge and understanding," [Your quest for knowledge honors us. You stand within the halls of history, where many have sought answers to the universe's greatest mysteries. Let us explore these ancient secrets together.]

T'Mur raised an eyebrow and looked at the others. She took a deep breath and stepped forward.

"Guardian, I am Lt. Commander T'Mur of the starship Illuminar. We represent a Federation of United planets whose goal is to explore and meet new people in peaceful discourse."

[Welcome Lt. Commander T'Mur of the Federation of United Planets. We welcome your peaceful discourse. What do you wish to know?]

"Apologies Guardian," T'Mur said realizing the mistake in her introduction. "We represent the United Federation of Planets." There was a slight hum as if the computer acknowledged her correction. "Can you tell us who built this place?"

[Yes... I can tell you that.]

T'Mur sighed, now realizing her questions will need to be more exact. "Who built this place?"

[We were built by the creators.]

"And who are the Creators?" she asked.

[The Creators are those who created us, and this place.]

T'Mur sighed again. "Guardian, where are the creators?" she asked.

[They are... gone.]

"Gone?" T'Mur asked, tilting her head slightly to the right. "Gone where?"

There was a prolonged pause when the computer replied, [Just gone. Do you have further information that you care to request?]

Clearly, this line of questioning had come to an end. They were no closer to knowing who built this complex than they were when they entered, but at least they appeared to be intelligent and willing to share. She turned to look at the others as her Vulcan ears barely received a strange

There was a pause as sections of the wall lit up in a beautiful pattern. [The Creators have always been here, from my perspective. There is no place else.]

“Can you display a star map of the place your creators originated from?” Tavay tried to get more information from a different perspective.

Suddenly a holographic image of a star system appeared in the middle of the room. Slowly the image started to zoom in until it highlighted a particular region. Suddenly MacGuyver started to chuckle.

“That’s this system,” he said. “It’s incredibly detailed... and current. Look,” he pointed to a section, and as his finger touched it it zoomed in to show a ship moving towards the ringworld, “there’s the Illuminar.”

“Perhaps,” T’Mur said thoughtfully, “that whoever programed this system chose to not include the species history beyond the existence of this complex. Only since it was created.” Suddenly Angus had an idea. “Guardian, what was the name of creator who initialized your programming?”

[My program was initialized by @\$%^.]

The name given was more of a guttural sound. Angus made a strange face. "I like Cedrick. Let's just call him Cedrick."

[The name of the Initializer will now be Cedrick. Would you like me to use that reference and translate all future names with that reference point.]

Angus shrugged and looked at the others. Then nodded, "Why not. Affirmative."

A series of different colored lights ran through the room. When they stopped there was a moment of silence.

[All names will be translated based on @#\$%^ being Cedrick. What is your next query?]

(reply any)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(USS Magellan - Asteroid- Library - DCO - Ensign James Shaw - 1040)

As Ensign Shaw stood before the terminal, he couldn't help but mutter to himself, "Alright, Shaw, this is what you've been trained for. Time to make that training count." He scanned the terminal once more, his tricorder humming softly in the silence of the alien chamber.

While the others were busy talking to the machine, James wanted to see the technology behind the marvel. Kneeling down, he began looking for an access port.

Upon encountering the bio-metric lock, Shaw frowned, pondering his approach. "So, they've locked it with genetic keys... Clever. But there's always a workaround." Tapping on his tricorder, he mused aloud, "If I can't be one of them, I'll just have to convince the system I am."

As he attempted to bypass the bio-metric lock by emulating neural patterns, Shaw's focus was palpable. "Come on, come on... Yes!" he exclaimed as the terminal accepted his faux genetic signature. "Step one, complete. But I bet that was the easy part."

(posted by Tim)

T'Mur was paying attention to what Shaw was doing, appreciating his efforts. She then turned back to the map of the star system, which gave her a thought.

[Affirmative Lt. Commander T'Mur of the Federation of Planets.]

The star field shimmered and changed to a three dimensional display of the buildings in the colony. T'Mur was slightly surprised at how deep into the asteroid the complex went. It was at least ten levels deep. Some of the buildings were at least ten levels above the surface. It would take some time for them to investigate every level of every building. Time that they did not really have at this moment.

“Guardian, indicate where living quarters are on the map.” Several levels of the next building lit up. “Are you able to download this map to my device?”

T'Mur checked her PADD and was satisfied that she was able to follow the map to their next destination. She turned and looked at the group.

(reply Hammons, Williams, Shaw)

As they left she turned her head slightly as the scraping sound she heard earlier had returned. It left her with an odd sensation. It was odd that nobody else could hear it. But Vulcan ears did pick up sounds that many species missed.

(reply any in the group)

[illegible]

Shaw's eyes narrowed in focus as he scrutinized the enigmatic panel before him, its keys adorned with cryptic symbols that seemed to dance under the dim light. The wide spacing between the keys hinted at the creators' unusually large hands, a subtle reminder of the alien intellect that conceived this labyrinthine puzzle.

Commander T'Mur's voice cut through the tension, her orders clear. "Mr. Hammons, I need one man to stay with Ensign Shaw, for protection. I also would like you to stay with him, Cadet Williams to stay with him and help with his progress. Catch up to us when you can."

"Mr. Hammons, your vigilance is paramount. And Cadet, your curiosity, though valuable, must be tempered with restraint. Distance yourself from potential harm, and observe. Our success hinges on precision and careful thought."

His theory led him to ponder the nature of the code—odd, unpredictable, a reflection of the alien mind. Retrieving a sonic screwdriver from his kit, he discovered a fastener, a silent guardian of the secrets they sought to uncover.

This beam, a bridge between technology and the unknown, was not just an obstacle but a revelation. Shaw realized that this was no mere lock; it was a test, a measure of their resolve and their ability to think beyond the confines of their own understanding.

(reply all)

[illegible]

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 1- SecO, CPO Steven Hammons - 1043)

Had Steven knowledge of the Guardian of Forever he might have mused about some of the grandiose statements that the library computer made. But he didn't know anything about that entity, it was forbidden knowledge. The power to change or undo that the Guardian of Forever held was unrivaled and terrifying, therefore knowledge of its existence was guarded by complete and utter silence. Nor were any of them aware that Keung Lee had stumbled across the entity in the mirror universe and subtly changed history in the prime.

The Guardian had been created to give access for the advancement of knowledge, much like the library computer here but time; ah, time is a brutal taskmaster, jealous of its power and capable of the ultimate punishment when disturbed. Non- existence.

“Mr. Hammons, I need one man to stay with Ensign Shaw, for protection,” she ordered. “I also would like you to stay with him, Cadet Williams; to stay with him and help with his progress. Catch up to us when you can.”

Hammons jerked his thumb at Boyles. "You're it Boyles, stick with Ensign Shaw and keep him and Williams safe."

Boyles gave Hammons a look that he easily recognized, the one that said ", baby-sitting".

Steven didn't bat an eye but kept a bland face, they had orders, besides this was fun since he had known Jared was the last one to want the duty. Some times just aren't appropriate for fun and games though and this was one of them, he'd tease Boyles mercilessly later.

"Got 'em Hammons." Jared stepped aside to stand with his two charges as the Lieutenant Commander continued issuing instructions.

As they started out Hammons caught the look she gave, seeking about after something. It wasn't just curiosity but concern he saw at the edge of that look.

"What's wrong chief, is there something we should know about?" His hand had settled over his sidearm.

(Reply: T'Mur, any)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 1- 2O/CSec/Tac - Lt. Commander T'Mur - 1044)

"What's wrong chief?" Hammons asked, stepping over to T'Mur. "Is there something we should know about?"

T'Mur looked at the man and raised an eyebrow. For a human the man had a talent for recognizing distress in others. Perhaps being the spouse of a Betazoid counselor had its benefits.

"I am uncertain," she said. "I hear... something. Just in the periphery of my hearing. A scratching noise."

She held out her trisorder, but was finding nothing out of the ordinary on the readings. At least, nothing that would cause such a sound."

She kept walking, leading the group out of the library, wondering if splitting the team up was the best way to proceed. But there was much to observe, and this was simply the first stop. Glancing at the map she made her way to the edge of the chamber and saw, what appeared to be, a large metal box, open on the side. The map seemed to be leading them towards it, even though the exit of the chamber was several meters to the left.

Her own curiosity piqued, she headed towards it. Compared to the ornate decorations of everything else they'd seen, this box was quite plain. She wasn't sure if that gave it the look of something much newer, or something much older. Looking inside it seemed very simple. A plain, metallic container, with a small control panel on the outside wall.

“What do you make of this, Mr. MacGuyver?” she asked.

The engineer looked at the controls with his tricorder. They initially showed no signs that they were working. However, as soon as his tricorder began to scan, life seemed to pulse through it. Three circles lit up, and the panel began to hum. He touched the circles and was met by a slight electric shock, which felt much more like a tingle on his finger tips.

The readings on his tricorder were amazing. There was a quantum field building around the box indicating a connection to someplace else. Some kind of transportation device?

"It might be their form of transporter," MacGuyver said. "But I can't tell you where it's going to take us."

T'Mur stepped over to the controls and touched them. As her fingers traced the circles she could see numbers appear. Perhaps coordinates. She looked at her PADD again and pulled up the map. Then she accessed the data on the maps and dove into the data by level and grid coordinates. Finding the coordinates of the living quarters she maneuvered the virtual dials to show those numbers.

The security chief in her took over as she moved to the front of the box. There seemed to be a slight electromagnetic discharge as she looked into the box. Without a word she stepped into the box. To everyone else she suddenly disappeared. A moment later she reappeared. "It appears to be a spontaneous matter transporter," she said. "It did, indeed, take to living quarters, which are, unsurprisingly, vacant. Shall we go?"

As the group lined up in front of the box she sent a message to Shaw and Boyles, letting them know where they were and how they got there. Then, when everyone was ready she stepped forward, and the others followed. There was a slight tingle of electromagnetic energy and they were gone.

(reply any)
(posted by Al Muir)

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Exterior of Building 1- Marine CO- Lt. Temerity - 1045)

Temerity moved among his men as they maintained a perimeter of the open area in front of the building. ~Always a brides maid,~ he thought to himself. The others didn't complain. They wouldn't. Marines did as they were told. Their job was important, and they treated every aspect of it so.

As he moved around the compound he heard a strange scratching sound. It was soft, at first, but grew slightly louder, steadily. He hit his comm badge.

“Sit rep marines,” he barked. “Anyone else hear anything?”

One by one the marines checked in as everyone checked in nobody mentioned any sounds. Until check-in point four.

=^=Hang on L.T., I think I do hear something. A clicking. Low level. Getting louder. Sounds kinda like a chirp now.^=

“Squad move in to checkpoint 4,” Temerity ordered.

=^=Oh my God!^= came the next call. ^=They’re everywhere. They’re...^=

The communication stopped. Temerity began to run. What he saw... surprised him. There was no sign of the marine. What there was was a dark patch on the ground, and it was moving. It was moving towards him.

He unslung his phased rifle and began to fire into it. The black patch separated and then flowed back together, apparently unphased. He fired again with a similar response. He switched the setting to a high energy beam and cut a swath through the patch.

Moments later the rest of the squad appeared and started firing with him. The black patch split and separated into four sections. Each section headed towards a different marine.

It didn’t take long for whatever was being decimated to be replaced and now four separate patches were moving towards four separate marines. They continued to fire with little result.

As the patch got closer to him Temerity could make out black dots in the patch. On closer inspection they weren’t just dots. They were some kind of insect-like creature. A slight panic set in and the marine pulled out an explosive hand grenade and tossed it into the middle of the patch. The insects crawled over the metal device, ignoring it until it exploded.

Black spots of insect remains flew through the air, still moving. The remainder stayed focused on their quarry. Temerity looked up in time to see the patch by Henderson crawl up his legs. He screamed as his legs suddenly collapsed. He fell to the ground and was immediately engulfed by the patch. A moment later the screaming stopped.

As the insects got closer he could get a better view of individual ones. They were small but had extremely powerful looking mandibles and bright red eyes.

“Team retreat,” he called out but it was too late. The bugs were moving too fast.

Another marine was overtaken and disappeared in black covering, screaming. His rifle was not being effective as a rifle so tried to strike at the bugs with the butt of the gun. Some bugs were struck, but not killed. They crawled over the rifle, but did not consume it.

One of them jumped onto his gloved hand and immediately began to consume the organic parts of the suit. More joined it and all that was left were the metal rings of the joints. Once through the cloth they began to consume the flesh of his hand.

He tried to scream, but it was too overwhelming as he watched his hand get eaten as he looked on. First the flesh disappeared, then the muscle and finally the bone.

It was at that moment he was able to let a scream out. He looked down and watch as they consumed his legs. The two groups of bugs moved towards each other until his whole body was covered.

Finally he could feel them get into his lungs. He could no longer scream. He could no longer breathe. Finally, he was no longer alive. As the bugs moved on all that was left were his weapons and the non-organic parts of his EVA suit.

(reply none)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

Corday had been following the conversations with the away team until they entered the building. At that point contact with the team stopped. There was a distortion field around the building that had not been noticed before. In fact, it was almost hidden until he actually tried to penetrate it. As he looked at the field it meant that there would be no communication and no way to beam them out if necessary. That was, unless he found a way to penetrate it.

He tried to warn the marines, and perhaps they could go in and get them all out, even if T'Mur would do that. But even that point became moot as he watched as the marines were attacked and consumed by what appeared to be a big black blob. The scene reminded him of a video that he had seen with Penn and Teller called, oddly enough, the Blob. The marines seemed to literally dissolve as the blob rolled over them. By the time it was over there was nothing left but a pool of black and some metal that it did not consume.

Corday had seen his fair share of carnage in his young life, but this was something else. To watch men trained to kill be consumed the way they were, left him in shock and horror. It wasn't until later that he realized what the blob was. However, it became imperative that he contacted the team, since the blob had turned towards the building.

Arthur was a pilot, not an engineer or a scientist. But he did have work in developing systems so he had a general idea of where to look for the answer. He had to find a frequency and bandwidth that he would be able to transmit a signal through. He began to breathe heavily as he struggled with the task. Stress had caused sweat to form on his brow and down his neck. It took him time, and transferring a great deal of power to the comm system until he finally saw some progress.

"Magellan to Lt. Commander T'Mur, do you read me?"

He recorded the message and set it for continually playback until it received a reply, while he played with the frequency, bandwidth and strength of the signal.

(reply T'Mur)

(posted by Al Muir)

~~~~~

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 2, Level 3, Living Quarters - 2O/CSec/Tac - Lt. Commander T'Mur - 1046)

The transport was instantaneous. There was no effect. No temporal lag. No tingle. She stepped into the box and was stepping out of another box at the other end of the transport. Her map showed that they had been delivered over five hundred meters west and three levels up. The only reason that she knew that she'd gone through the transport was the slight electromagnetic tingle and raised hairs that T'Mur felt on arms and neck.

She stepped to the side and watched as the rest of the team exited the box. All of whom had the same expression of bewilderment and amusement. MacGuyver chuckled.

"That was great," he said in his thick brogue. "Can I do it again?"

“Perhaps later,” T’Mur assured him. “But for now we should explore this level. The first thing I noted when I went through earlier was that there was a clear absence of life. But it’s more than that.”

She scanned with her tricorder, and showed the results to Williams, the scientist, “There is no sign of anything organic. No matter how old this complex is, there should be some sign of organics. Even in a residue, or microscopic level. There’s nothing.”

(reply Williams)

She turned to Hammons, “I want you, Fredricks and Kisha all to stay with charges. We’ll cover the most territory if we split up. Do *not* move off this level without the rest of us. Open comms. If there is any sign of anything out of the ordinary... more out of the ordinary than we have seen, call out and make your way back here, ASAP. Clear?”

(reply Hammons, Fredricks, Kisha)

"Kisha, you are with Ensign MacGuyver," she said. "Kisha, you are with Tavay. Hammons, with Winters. I have Doctor Honeycutt. Any questions?"

(reply any)

"Then move out, and be careful," she ordered.

They were at a four way intersection so each team took a different corridor. T'Mur looked at Honeycutt as they walked. She'd learned that "small talk" help relieve stress in humans.

“So tell me Doctor,” the Vulcan said as she admired the wide hallway, “what do you think of your first away mission?”

(reply Honeycutt, anyone on the team)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 2, Level 3, Living Quarters - Dr. BJ Honeycutt -- 1047)

“So tell me Doctor,” the Vulcan said as she admired the wide hallway, “what do you think of your first away mission?”

BJ was taken aback for the Commander's question. 'Small talk' did not seem to be part of a Vulcan skill set, but anything can be possible.

"It is an educational experience. Everyone has to have a first time, correct." Bj replied. "How does this compare to your first mission?"

(reply T'Mur)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

(USS Magellan – Asteroid – Building 1 – DCO Ensign James Shaw – 1050)

Ensign James Shaw stood before an enigma wrapped in shadow, his mind racing as he faced the alien puzzle that lay dormant before him. His initial attempts had stirred the ancient machine to life, whispering secrets in a language of light and sound.

Peering into his tricorder, Shaw observed the light's unique signature – a wavelength of 405 nm and an intensity of 60 mW. Far from hazardous, yet it seemed to pulsate with an unspoken caution. He pondered the significance, realizing that if humans associated red with danger, these alien architects might perceive a warning in the ultraviolet spectrum.

With a spark of insight, Shaw retrieved a pair of adaptive glasses from his gear, fine-tuning them to mimic the hypothesized visual shift of the structure's creators. As the world before him transformed under the ultraviolet gaze, he couldn't help but exclaim, "Aha!" A smile broke across his face as he turned to his companion, "Cadet, the builders of this marvel saw the universe through the lens of ultraviolet. To them, this blue hue was a siren's call, a prelude to consequence, much like our own systems' alerts against folly."

Reaching for his communicator, Shaw relayed his breakthrough to Commander T'Mur, "These beings navigated a spectrum unseen by human eyes. Their warnings are cloaked in shades of ultraviolet."

Armed with this revelation, Shaw returned his attention to the challenge at hand. A once invisible keypad materialized under the ultraviolet light, its keys adorned with cryptic symbols, suggesting a numeric system alien to human comprehension. "Hexadecimal," Shaw muttered, the word hanging in the air with promise.

With careful deliberation, he pressed the keys. The first touch silent, the second mute, but as he continued, he wondered about the sequence that would unlock the secrets hidden within. Drawing from his Federation training, he hypothesized a 12-key sequence, a testament to the security protocols of an advanced civilization. Each press was accompanied by the soft hum of his tricorder, capturing the puzzle's response.

Upon the twelfth press, the silence shattered. A voice, both alien and mechanical, filled the chamber, "Cease your endeavors. This system is safeguarded. Violet level clearance is requisite for further access."

Shaw stepped back, his curiosity piqued further by the machine's cryptic message. "I am an engineer," he stated, hoping for leniency, "May I be granted violet level clearance?"

"Violet level clearance is sanctioned only by," the voice paused, the universal translator stumbling over the alien terminology, "Approval requires a ten-cycle review."

(reply any)  
(Posted by Tim)

Shaw's gaze was fixed intently on the tricorder's enigmatic display, his mind racing to decipher the alien technology laid before him. In a moment of inspiration, he likened the challenge to a cosmic game of Mastermind—each button press eliciting a unique response from the device, a cryptic dance of cause and effect. The task was daunting: to unravel a 12-character sequence that seemed to be the key, according to the cryptic hints whispered by the ancient library's archives.

Leaning back, Shaw pondered the clues he had gathered about the civilization that had once thrived here. Their physiology likely featured a unique adaptation of 16 digits, possibly spread across four 'hands'—a fascinating anthropological hypothesis. Their minds danced to the rhythm of hexadecimal, their vision attuned to a spectrum shifted towards the blue, a reflection of their advanced intellect and monumental achievements, including the construction of a Dyson ring that encircled their star—a testament to their technological prowess, or perhaps, a harbinger of their downfall.

What he discovered was a spectacle unlike any other—a kaleidoscope of colors dancing through optical channels, a symphony of data in visual form. The technology was beyond anything he had encountered; there were no isolinear chips, only a sophistication that defied imagination.

Through his adaptive glasses, Shaw noticed the room's ambiance flickering in ultraviolet patterns—an unequivocal warning. "You have been warned," echoed a voice, laden with an ominous tone that sent a shiver cascading down his spine, a stark reminder of the fine line between discovery and transgression in the uncharted territories of the cosmos.

(Reply any)  
(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

It had been such a long time since anyone had visited the library that the Guardian had been uncertain of the correct course of action. These strangers, who looked so odd, and spoke in a strange and almost ancient language appeared to be friendly enough. Although they did ask the oddest of questions to which the answers seemed so obvious.

When the majority of them left the library it was easy to pay attention to the three that remained. However, only one of them remained active. It had accessed a security panel that led to the inner workings of the Guardian's systems. This was clearly outside of what the library had been designed for. It was, after all, a repository of all the Creators knew. It did seem that this creature was looking for knowledge, so he let him look. Hopefully it would lead to some better understanding.

However, as a precaution he activated the early warning system that anyone could understand and realize that they were in a dangerous zone. It seemed unfathomable that they would ignore the warning beacon. This one continued to prove in places he should not be. The final warning would have to be one in a manner one would give a child... or an enemy.

[You have been warned.]

The security protocols were activated under self preservation. That would allow lethal measures to be taken. The measures were released and targets selected. The library would be protected.

(reply Shaw, Boyles, Williams)  
(posted by Al Muir)

(USS Magellan – Asteroid – Building 1 – SecO, PO1 Jared Boyles – 1059)

Shaw was keeping his thoughts to himself as he studied the tricorder so Boyles took a moment to look about the chamber, the ceiling was high in here, everything was high here as though to mock the humans and other species that were now walking its halls. How old was the civilization that had built it? How tall? How long ago?

Jared hefted his sidearm with a snort, there was so much mystery in the air that it was giving him the creeps.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw Shaws tricorder begin to strobe in warning. "Huh? What are you doing?" Immediately the tricorder began a warning pulse. "Hey Shaw, be careful over there, we have no clue what kind of security setup they had... have."

"You have been warned." The emotionless voice, an echo of a long vanished civilization rang out and Boyles jumped.

"Look Shaw, getting us killed isn't going to help things. It could vaporize us or pump in poisonous gas, hell it could transport us outside without our helmets on, ease up."

(Reply: Shaw)  
(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]



In the confines of the ancient structure, the tension between Shaw and his security officer, Boyles, crackled with an electric fervor, mirroring the unpredictable energy of the cosmos itself. “Look Shaw, getting us killed isn’t going to help things. It could vaporize us or pump in poison gas, hell it could transport us outside without our helmets on, ease up,” the security officer said.

Unmoved, Shaw's gaze was steely, his resolve forged from the very stars they sought to understand. "Mr. Boyles," he retorted with a commanding presence that seemed to draw strength from the very essence of exploration itself, "If the fear of the unknown grips you so tightly, then perhaps it's time to seek solace beneath your helmet. And you, cadet," he added, his voice a beacon of unwavering leadership, "remember the immortal words of Leonard Nimoy, 'That is the exploration that awaits you! Not mapping stars and studying nebula, but charting the unknown possibilities of existence.'"

As he returned his attention to the tricorder, its screen alive with the dance of quantum signatures, Shaw's heart raced. They stood on the precipice of the unknown, a quantum singularity within the system that promised knowledge far surpassing any federation database. "Inside this console, Boyles," Shaw said, pointing with a mixture of reverence and excitement, "lies the wisdom of an ancient civilization. The secrets it guards, the knowledge it offers—can you truly say the pursuit of such wonder is not worth the risk?"

Without waiting for a response, Shaw connected a second tricorder, initiating a delicate symphony of technology and ancient lore. As the devices began to communicate, he stood, a declaration of intent to the silent guardians of this place. "We are explorers, seeking to learn, to understand."

But then, an ominous symphony of metal grinding against metal filled the air, a prelude to danger. Shaw's eyes widened as he witnessed the emergence of small, menacing discs from the newly revealed apertures in the room's walls. They buzzed with a malevolent energy, surveying the intruders with an alien intelligence. "Defense protocols initiated," a disembodied voice announced, chilling them to the bone.

One disc, more daring than the rest, charged towards Shaw. Its surface split open to reveal a rod, shimmering with a spectrum of threatening colors. In that moment, the air was thick with the weight of impending doom, the line between discovery and destruction as thin as the veil separating life from the eternal darkness of space.

(reply any)

(posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 2, Level 3, Living Quarters - 2O/CSec/Tac - Lt. Commander T'Mur - 1105)

As they walked down the corridor there had been a number of open doors, but the rooms were mostly bare. Anything that may have been organic in nature was not to be found. T'Mur found that pattern to be a little disturbing.

"How does this compare to your first away mission?" Honeycutt asked.

T'Mur hadn't realized how difficult small talk would be. It was definitely a skill that she was going to have to work on.



didn't sound good. Boyles was normally as calm as Steven but something in his voice was off and that wasn't like him.

“Ok team, let’s reconvene at the main intersection we started with. Mr. Boyles, drag Ensign Shaw from that chamber if you need to. I want everyone here, now.”

That order was from Lieutenant Commander T'Mur and Hammons agreed whole-heartedly.

The next words were from Boyles: ^= Ladies and gentlemen we have a problem.=^=

(Reply: Any)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 2, Level 3, Living Quarters - Lt. Tavay -- 1108)

So where is Tavay in all this mess? She was quietly there with everyone the entire time. She was carefully studying her surroundings and content that no one seemed to remember she was there. Well, almost no one.

“Kisha, you are with Ensign MacGuyver,” she said. “Fredricks, you are with Tavay. Hammons, with Winters. I have Doctor Honeycutt. Any questions?”

Tavay had no questions for the commander but she did turn to Fredricks. "Fredricks, my dear, you better stay close."

The two headed off in their direction. She turned to Fredricks, "Is it me, or is it awfully quiet in here."

(Reply Fredricks)

“There is not any ambient noise. Not even the slight movement of air.” Basically to Tavay where they were going, it was not only quiet but it was too quiet.

She could hear T'Mur come over her commbadge =\= OK team, let's reconvene at the main intersection we started. =\= that was all Tavay needed.

“Looks like the others have success, time for us to go back,” Tavay said looking at Fredricks.

(Reply Fredricks)

"Let's go."

(Reply Fredricks, any)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 2, Level 3, Living Quarters - SecO, PO1 David Fredericks -- 1109)

Fredericks was tall and lanky, brown haired and hazel eyed, he was several years younger than Hammons and Boyles but had fallen in with those guys on Mars. The two were a handful all right and lots of fun at parties which the three had attended a number of times. Hammons had

almost got his butt canned there but while he had been out of control he hadn't overstepped his bounds. And fortunately so since assault charges would have been devastating had they stuck. And then he had hatched a masterful plan that netted several big fish.

And Boyles, egads Boyles! He could drink like a fish but despite his claims to the contrary could not sing worth a damn when he was drunk. Put those two together and you had instant entertainment. Except for now, but then again they were all being separated.

"Fredricks, my dear, you better stay close."

"No problem Lieutenant, lead the way."

They could cover more ground like this but would they find anything while doing so? This place was so sterile and dead that he had never seen the like. Every place he had ever been, even when empty gave you the impression of being lived in or used but this place almost seemed to be in a lonely dimension of its own, a pocket hell of emptiness.

"Is it me, or is it awfully quiet in here."

"It's not you Lieutenant, I've never imagined a place could be so dead. Strange doesn't begin to describe it. Whoever built this place is long, long gone."

“There is not any ambient noise. Not even the slight movement of air.”

=^= OK team, let's reconvene at the main intersection we started. ^=^=

"Looks like the others have success, time for us to go back."

=^= Ladies and gentlemen we have a problem.=^=

"Not success, a problem." Fredericks pulled his phaser. "Watch your step and if you spot something call out, I'll be watching our back trail."

"Let's go."

"After you." Something bad was going down and the sooner they got out of here the better in David's opinion.

(Reply: Tavay, any)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(USS Magellan- Asteroid - Building 2, Level 3, Living Quarters - 2O/CSec/Tac - Lt. Commander T'Mur - 1110)

Shaw, Boyles and Williams rejoined them looking more than a bit frazzled. Not long after that a signal cut through on T'Mur's comm system. It was faint and full of static, but she could make out the voice of their pilot, Arthur Corday.

=^=...ellan to ... T'Mur ... read... . Magel ... mander ... do... me.=^=

It wasn't clear be she caught the just of what was likely a looping message until Corday made contact. "Go ahead, Lt. Corday."

=^= ... Commander... I reached ... . Marines... gone. ^=^=

The communication was starting to clear up. T'Mur replied, "Gone? What do you mean they're gone."

The signal was still weak but it cleared up. =^=That's exactly what I mean. They're gone. They were... consumed by something.=^=

T'Mur looked at the others unable to hide the surprise they held. "Consumed?"

=^=Yes ma'am, you heard me right , consumed. By some kind of black mass.=^=

“Ok Lieutenant, we’re going to come back to you.” she said.

=^=Negative, that mass is between you and the shuttle. You'd never make it.=^=

"Can you transport us out?" T'Mur asked.

=^=Negative. It's taking all the power I can manage just to get this comm line going. The building is surrounded by some kind of scattering field.=^=

T'Mur pulled out her tricorder and began to scan. She could not locate a scattering field, but she also was unable to scan past the walls of the building. She looked over to her technical team.

“Hold your position, Lieutenant. We’ll figure something out,” she told Corday.

=^=Wait. The mass, it's... it's turning towards the shuttle. If it gets the shuttle we'll all be lost.^=

"Affirmative," T'Mur said. "I suggest that you get off the surface of the planet. Hover as low as it seems safe and wait for orders."

=^=I can't just leave, Commander.=^=

"You're not leaving us. But as you said, the shuttle is our escape, and it must be kept safe. You are ordered to leave the surface of the planet."

There was a long pause. Finally, the reluctant voice of Corday came back. =^=Yes ma'am. But I'm here the moment you figure out how I can get you.=^=

"Roger that Lieutenant. I'll keep the comm line open."

Corday did not respond to that. “Well now, we have a new problem to solve. Suggestions?”

(reply any)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

(USS Io – Passenger Compartment - Ensign Torak, Operations – 1145)

As Torak reclined, he let the calm wash over him, steeling his mind for the challenges that lay ahead. Amidst this tranquility, the voices of his crewmates floated to him: a debate between Galk, a security officer of Klingon heritage, and the Chief Engineer, a discussion laced with the fervor of honor and glory that often defined Klingon discourse.

Torak couldn't suppress a gentle shake of his head, a silent chuckle at the paradox of Klingon survival. Their obsession with honor and glory, often equated with a thirst for battle, seemed an oversimplification of such complex concepts. This very notion had driven his father to abandon the Klingon Defense Force in search of a more profound truth. From his father, Torak had learned martial arts, not as a means for combat, but as a method to achieve inner tranquility and self-discipline. His mother had introduced him to philosophies that taught valor not as conquest, but as the bravery to seek peace amidst turmoil and to prioritize healing over wounding.

With a deep breath, Torak opened his eyes, his gaze sweeping across the interior of the shuttle. His voice, barely a whisper amidst the hum of the ship's engines, carried the weight of his conviction. "The old ways of the Klingon Empire must evolve," he mused, more to himself than to anyone else. "The mysteries of the universe resist the simplicity of brute force. Every celestial body, every whisper of the cosmos, occupies its rightful place in a larger, intricate tapestry. True honor, true enlightenment, comes not from domination, but from a harmonious understanding of this vast design, from aligning our spirits with the rhythm of the universe."

His words hung in the air, an invitation to reflection for anyone who might listen, a beacon of his belief in a future where understanding and peace could flourish even among the stars.

(Reply any)

(Posted by Tim)

USS Io – Passenger Compartment SPA LT Ariel Trei - 1146)

Ariel heard the philosophical question posed by ENS Torak. Being a hybrid herself she leaned in closer to continue the conversation.

"As I understand it Mr. Torak, the pursuit of honor stems from the understanding of the universe. I would like to think that but there is so many conflicts to resolve that it would take a monumental event to harmonize the universe. Do you have any thought on that? I am also a hybrid Half Betazoid and half Klingon. Even though I am the head of a Klingon House I still have Betazoid philosophies too."

(Reply Torak)

(Posted by Edward)

(USS Io – Passenger Compartment - Ensign Torak, Operation - 1148)

"As I understand it Mr. Torak, the pursuit of honor stems from the understanding of the universe. I would like to think that but there is so many conflicts to resolve that it would take a monumental event to harmonize the universe. Do you have any thought on that? I am also a hybrid Half Betazoid and half Klingon. Even though I am the head of a Klingon House I still have Betazoid philosophies too."

Ensign Torek, nodded thoughtfully at the complex question. His eyes, reflecting a depth born of his dual heritage, considered the philosophical nuances before responding.

"Indeed, the pursuit of honor is deeply ingrained within the Klingon spirit, viewed as the essence of one's being and the ultimate expression of life's purpose. It is a concept that transcends mere personal glory, aligning one's actions with the greater good and the continuity of our traditions and values," Torek began, his voice carrying the subtle strength of conviction.

"However, the universe, in its infinite expanse, is a tapestry of countless civilizations, each with its unique values, beliefs, and conflicts. The idea of harmonizing such diversity under a single banner of understanding and honor is, as you've said, a monumental task. Yet, it is not beyond the realm of possibility. History, both Klingon and Federation, is replete with instances where monumental shifts in understanding have paved the way for peace and cooperation, often sparked by singular, transformative events or figures."

Torek paused, considering the personal implications of the question. "As someone of both Betazoid and Klingon heritage, you embody the potential for such harmony. Betazoid philosophies, with their emphasis on empathy, understanding, and peaceful coexistence, can complement the Klingon pursuit of honor, merging strength with compassion. This synthesis can guide us towards resolving conflicts not through conquest but through understanding and respect."

"Your unique perspective as a hybrid and a leader of a Klingon House positions you as a bridge between worlds. By embracing both aspects of your heritage, you can inspire others to see beyond their preconceptions and prejudices. It is through such individual transformations that we can begin to envision a universal harmony."

"In the end, the universe's harmonization may not occur in our lifetimes or even in the manner we expect. But each step towards understanding, each act of honor that seeks not just glory but the betterment of others, contributes to this monumental task. It is a journey worth undertaking, for it is in the journey that we grow and define our legacy."

(reply Trei, others)

(posted by Tim)

(USS Io – Passenger Compartment SPA LT Ariel Trei - 1149)

She thought about what Torak said and tried to make a logical response with her perspective. It is true that she has an unique position now that she is a head of a Klingon house and she is from a prominent Betazoid family. She didn't know how that will bring harmony to the universe but it is an interesting perspective.

Perhaps my unique position can bring harmony to the universe. It will take more than my unique position to accomplish the task. I am willing to use my position to achieve this. The Klingon council will have a different position on the matter. Perhaps when the council works with me and starfleet we can achieve this harmony."

(Reply Torak)  
(Posted by Edward)





(Reply any)  
(Posted by Tim)

"Together, with Starfleet and the Federation, we will navigate these turbulent waters, aiming for a future where harmony prevails. Let us then work as one, for the benefit of all."

(Reply: Trei, Korek)

"Aye sir."

(Reply: Any)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

Bohb had sat quietly for most of the trip. The idea of getting first hand experience with, let alone explore, a ringworld was mind boggling. He had, of course, done extensive research into the possibility of such an artificial system, but the reality was that with what they knew, and resources available, it was not possible for the Federation. He began to wonder who could possibly have created such a thing. What were they like? What were they capable of? Why had they not heard from them.

Granted, this ringworld was... out of the way. But still, why would anyone with that kind of the technical advances not have, at least, communicated with any of the known races in the Alpha or Beta Quadrants. It left one with a great deal to ponder.

He listened to the philosophical discourse between Ariel Trei and the new Operations officer, Torvak. They seemed to be having a bonding moment over them both being Klingon hybrids and the nature of the universe. Deep stuff indeed. Then Galk joined them. Bohb was slightly amused by the little Klingon conclave they were forming.

Dr. Quinna had said that he was the best scientist for the job. He had his doubts about that, but he was excited at the prospect of pulling apart some of the alien technology to see how it works. He wondered how he might be able to incorporate it into Federation tech. He promised to endeavor to do his best.

He looked at the EVA suit that he was wearing. It fit a bit tightly, hugging him in places he'd rather not be hugged, and riding up a little in his back end. It was far preferable that his body exploding from a sudden decompression from lack of air pressure, or suffocation for lack of breathable atmosphere, but it was still not comfortable. He shifted in his seat, trying to loosen the tug between his buttocks.

He looked over at Pex who appeared to be much calmer than he was. Perhaps his symbionte had already been through something like this.

"How are you doing, Tegian," Bohb asked. "What do you think of this ringworld?"

(reply Pex)

Moments later the pilot called for Solice and Pex and his friend disappeared to the fore section of the shuttle. Bohb sighed and sat back, being left to his own thoughts. Then he heard his name called out. He stood up and gave a tug at the trouser section of his EVA suit and moved to the front, squeezing in with Pex, and Solice.

"Yes ma'am," he said looking at Solice. "You called?"

Solice explained about the strange energy signatures from the surface of the ringworld, near where Piripi and chosen to land. "Let's get some atmospheric readings and make some suggestions before landing. That energy signature could be almost anything. Hopefully, it is not harmful."

Bohb nodded and stood over the science station of the shuttle. He began to scan the surface of the structure finding the energy that Piripi had found. She was correct, it was odd. The energy wasn't simply being given off. It seemed to be moving in a pattern. Then he recognized the pattern. He ran the numbers to be certain, but he was. It was a reverse fibonacci sequence. His eyes widened.

"Commander," he called to Solice.

(reply Solice)

"That energy signature," he said. "I believe it's an invitation. Look at this pattern, almost spiraling to that point. It's... guiding us. It must have picked up the energy from our subspace scans and activated some kind of automated system. I wouldn't be surprised if a set of tractor beams activated us and pulled us into a landing position."

(reply Solice, Pex, Piripi)

[illegible]

Tegian was busy watching the scans of the shuttle and trying to watch their destination when he heard Bohb's voice.

Tegian turned and grinned at him. "Absolutely, fascinating. I can't wait to get out and study it and figure out how they managed to do this. The engineering feat to move all this mass and get it into a stable orbit! I want to know how they did it. And why didn't they make contact with any of us. Unless this place is really, really old."

And then Tegian was leaving to answer Kestral's call.  
Some time later...

Tegian, looking at his own scans, chimed in. "Agreed, Lieutenant, Commander, Ensign. Not tractor beams like ours, but something along those lines. Ensign, something will guide you in. Bohb, looks more like it's a graviton based beam. I believe we should proceed."

(posted by Keith)

[illegible]

After voicing her concerns about the peculiar conditions below, the Doctor advised, " Ok. for right now, Keep us flying in an orbit, whatever that may be ."

Pihi's thoughts drifted to the tales of exploration and reverence for nature passed down by her grandfather, echoing the deep connection with her Maori roots. These stories fueled her dual identity as a daring pilot and a thoughtful explorer, guiding her interactions with the unknown.

While the team deliberated over their next move, Pihi delved deeper into the anomaly using the shuttle's sophisticated sensors. The data, seamlessly integrated into her VISOR's display,

revealed an underlying order within the electromagnetic storm, hinting at either an artificial construct or an uncharted natural phenomenon.

A revelation struck her as she meticulously adjusted the shuttle's controls. "There's a pattern in the tumult," she announced, her voice carrying a mix of excitement and discovery. "I believe we can land. There's an opening now, as if a door has been unveiled just for us."

Turning towards the command team, her hands hovered over the controls, ready to act. "May I proceed, Ma'am?" she inquired, seeking approval to navigate through the newly discovered passage.

Her proposal hung in the air, awaiting a response from the Doctor.

(Reply Solice, others)

(Post by Pippa)

[illegible]

Quinna watched and waited for some answers.

"There's a pattern in the tumult," Piripi announced, "I believe we can land. There's an opening now as if a door has been unveiled just for us."

"May I proceed, Ma'am?" she inquired, seeking approval to navigate through the newly discovered passage.

“Commander,” Bohb got Quinna’s attention as she was about to give the order to land.

“Yes?”

“That energy signature,” he said. “I believe it’s an invitation. Look at this pattern, almost spiraling to that point. It’s... guiding us. It must have picked up the energy from our subspace scans and activated some kind of automated system. I wouldn’t be surprised if a set of tractor beams activated us and pulled us into a landing position.”

Quinna wondered if this could be a trap. She thought for a moment. It was one of those moments that felt like it was much longer than an instant. The weight of the mission won out in Quinna's mind, "Let's take them up on their invitation." Quinna turned to the pilot, "Ms. Piripi, land us."

Quinna turned to Bohb, "Suit up." She followed this action by moving to the passenger deck of the shuttle. She stood in the doorway. "Alright, we are landing. Suit up, we are going to do some exploring. Meet up on the flight deck."

(Reply Trei, Torak, Galk, Pex)

Once everyone had gathered, Quinna addressed the ensemble, “OK, Mr. Bohb has concluded the energy pattern is more of a welcome sign, inviting us to visit. We are going to take them up on their invitation. Mr. Pex and Ms. Piripi, I want you two to stay on the shuttle. Be ready to go in case we need to make a hasty retreat.

(Reply Piripi, Pex)

“Everyone else, it is time to meet our host.” Quinna said as she completed her steps for exiting.” She exited the landed shuttle and pointed to the direction they were going. The Structure.

(Reply Trei, Torak, Galk, Bohb)  
(posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

Galk growled as he listened to Bohb and Commander Solice talking, an invitation did not automatically mean that the inhabitants were friendly.

“Alright, we are landing. Suit up, we are going to do some exploring. Meet up on the flight deck.”

The klingon was on his feet instantly and took a step to the bulkhead, opened the compartment and extracted the phaser rifle then moved to stand beside the hatch.

“OK, Mr. Bohb has concluded the energy pattern is more of a welcome sign, inviting us to visit. We are going to take them up on their invitation. Mr. Pex and Ms. Piripi, I want you two to stay on the shuttle. Be ready to go in case we need to make a hasty retreat. Everyone else, it is time to meet our host.”

The shuttle settled with a sudden bump then the engine cycled down. The other security members formed up behind him as he popped the hatch.

The outside was bright as well as arid. Galk stepped to the bottom of the ramp and looked around, they were surrounded by dunes of sand with rock outcroppings here and there in the distance. The pad they had landed on however, was clean as though it repelled the ever growing dunes, holding them at bay.

Very little of the structure was above the landscape, instead it was sunk into the surface with a staircase leading down into it.

One security officer behind him spoke up. "Scans show a breathable atmosphere with 2% higher oxygen level than we are used to. Expect a noticeable increase in personal energy levels."

Galk stopped and took off the helmet then sucked in a deep breath. "The air is certainly dry. What about life forms?"

"A couple of dozen about a kilometer away."

Galk walked to the structure recessed into the ground and saw a wide rampway that led down to an entrance. Once again it was as though some sort of active force field repelled the ever present sand and dust. The metal of the recessed building was the color of basalt.

(Reply: Quinna, any)  
(Posted by Charles Gatling)

Ariel heard the order to get in a EVA suit. She found that the EVA suit was really snug on her. Tight was not the right word to describe the feeling against her skin. Her movement was restricted but not hindering. She was able to get a suit that fit her somewhat comfortably. She placed her charged phaser on her belt and put her custom daggers in one of the suit pockets. She put a tricorder in the other suit pocket. She shared the caution with Galik even though the area was clear for about a kilometer. She exited the shuttle behind Galik and motioned for Torak to join her. They needed to continue the conversation while they explored.

She hoped Torak got the subtle signal that she wanted to explore the surface with him. If not she will move him in that direction.

[illegible]

"Mr. Pex and Ms. Piripi, I want you two to stay on the shuttle. Be ready to go in case we need to make a hasty retreat," ordered the Commander. Rationally, it made sense. Lieutenant Bohb was just as equipped to handle the engineering as he was. Still, it did sting a little. He nodded to the Commander, not betraying any of his feelings and Pex stayed motionless instead of him. "Of course, Commander."

(USS IO – Flight Deck - CEO - Lieutenant Jg Tegian Pex - 1220)

Reply Piripi, iyw)  
(posted by Keith)

Torak stood as a testament to the fusion of two formidable heritages. His journey, a solitary trek across the cultural cosmos of his dual lineage, had found unexpected camaraderie in Lieutenants Galk and Trei. Their shared discourse on the shuttle between traditions hinted at a

future where Torak might stand before the High Council on Qo'noS, advocating for a new synthesis of Klingon valor and Federation principles.

As the commander's voice cut through the anticipation, a ripple of readiness surged through the crew. Torak, embodying the dual disciplines of engineering prowess and the warrior's spirit, secured his mek'leth—a symbol of his Klingon heritage—alongside his Federation-issue engineering kit. With the meticulous care of a seasoned spacefarer, he performed a final inspection of his EVA suit. His declaration of readiness was not just an acknowledgment of his physical preparedness but a statement of his resolve to bridge worlds.

The planet's surface, a vast expanse of undulating dunes under the gaze of a distant sun, presented an enigma wrapped in sand. The presence of an architectural marvel, its form defiant against the barren landscape, posed a silent question to the stars. What civilization could have birthed such a paradox—a beacon of complexity amid the desolation?

Amidst the protective formation of the security team, Torak's gaze pierced the horizon, his mind alight with speculation. What secrets did this desert sentinel guard? What tales of cosmic endeavors lay etched within its walls?

Approaching the designated coordinates, the commander's voice once again guided their steps. The initial scans, void of life signatures, suggested an oasis of safety in the unknown. Yet, the true measure of security in the galaxy's uncharted corners was never just about the absence of life but the presence of the unforeseen.

With tricorder in hand, Torak began his examination of the threshold that lay before them. The panel, an invitation or a challenge, stood as the gatekeeper to the mysteries that lay within.

“Shall I proceed to attempt to gain access?” His inquiry to the commander, a blend of respect and eagerness, echoed the timeless quest of explorers and warriors alike—to venture beyond the known, to confront the doorways of possibility, and perhaps, in the process, discover something profound about the universe and themselves.

In this moment, Torak and his companions stood on the cusp of the unknown, their mission a testament to the enduring spirit of discovery that defines the heart of every being who looks to the stars and wonders what lies beyond.

(Reply any)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Io – Flight Deck SPA LT Ariel Trei - 1216)

Torak moved to access the panel . Ariel accompanied him to provide protection in case they encountered anything.

"I have your back. Do what you needed to do. I also have mett'laffs in a pocket of my suit. I am ready to use them if I have to. If you are not aware, I have passed the Rite of Ascension."

She didn't see anything around for about a kilometer but took a defensive stance nonetheless.

(Reply Torak)

(Posted by Edward)

[illegible]

Lieutenant Trei commented, "I have your back. Do what you need to do. I also have mett'laffs in the pocket of my suit. I am ready to use them if I have to. If you are not aware, I have passed the Rite of Ascension."

Torek, ever contemplative, acknowledged her preparedness, though his mind lingered on the multifaceted challenges that lay ahead. The dangers they faced were not just physical but also cerebral, hidden within the ancient algorithms and safeguarding systems designed by civilizations long vanished. The frontiers of space were littered with such enigmas, each a testament to the ingenuity and aspirations of its creators.

The Rite of Ascension, a crucible through which the spirit of a warrior was either forged or shattered, was a concept familiar to Torek. It was a rite of passage, mirroring the transformative journey from the innocence of youth to the seasoned wisdom of adulthood.

Across the cosmos, countless cultures celebrated this metamorphosis through trials of strength, intellect, and spirit. Torek respected Trei's passage through her culture's ancient trial, recognizing the universal quest for growth and self-discovery that defined sentient beings across the stars.

His journey aboard the SS Valkyrie had been a different kind of rite, one of knowledge and exploration, where the challenges were not only of the body but of the mind. "I will attempt to gain access to this edifice," Torek declared, his voice resonating with a determination born of countless hours at the engineering console and in the field. He carefully positioned his tool case, a collection of devices and instruments attuned to the mysteries of alien technology.

Commencing his analysis, Torek meticulously scanned the vicinity, his tricorder flickering with data streams that painted a complex picture of the ancient structure. The readings, however, were enigmatic, veiled in the cryptic language of quantum mechanics and alien engineering principles. "Mr. Bohb," Torek called out, seeking the insight of the Magellian engineer known for his unparalleled expertise in xenotechnology. "Your advice on these readings, please."

(reply Bohb, Trei, any)  
(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

Bohb was relieved to find a breathable atmosphere on the surface of the Ringworld, although the prospects of that only proved how advanced this technology was. The physics behind the external side to have it was staggering. He could hardly wait to get his hands on some of this technology. The things he was going to learn.

Solice said that they were going to explore the structure that was just meters away from them. He could feel the anticipation growing in him. She beckoned them to follow her across the surface.

The gravity was a little ... off, since the rotation of the inside was meant to simulate the gravitational forces to hold everything inside in place. But the sheer mass of the world was



enough to create an almost normal gravity of the Illuminar. They made their way across the dust covered world's exterior until they arrived at what was clearly an entry point to the interior. Bohb had pulled out his own tricorder and began to scan the tunnel entrance. Torek had moved the to doorway. Bohb marveled at the size of it, as he imagined the size of the entity that would need such a doorway. He was big, and Cal Dogan, the Brikarian security officer who had been promoted to the Hades, was even larger. They both would have easily fit through it.

"Mr. Bohb," Torek called out, "Your advice on these readings, please."

Bohb knelt beside the Klingon and connected their tricorers. He manipulated the reading slightly and nodded. "Interesting...", he said out loud to himself, "very interesting."

Then he looked up at the panels around him. “The creatures using this portal must be multi-limbed, as well as quite large. We will need to access this panel...” he pointed to a panel, “this one,” he pointed to another, “and this one, simultaneously.”

(reply Torek)

Bobh stood up and put his hand at two of the panels. Even with his arm span, it was a stretch. He looked over at Torek to see him get into place. He studied the panel as it came to life with his presence.

"I believe that if we touch the panels and turn counter clockwise, the doors will open. I believe."

(reply Torek, any)

(posted by Al Muir)

[illegible]

"Doctor Gralen?"

The question from the command chair was demanding in its own way and caused Holis to wonder why this Vulcan was so impatient when it came to sensor scans. And then it hit him, Sekal had two away teams in different parts of the system and while he might pretend he wasn't concerned the outward calm was a facade. Or so the betazoid believed.

"After Io entered the structure its signal was cut off. The density of the outer skin is 5.930 grams per cubic centimeter, a dense metal that's also extremely strong. Not the most advanced we've seen but very suited for this concept."

"Doctor Gralen, your fascination for the material involved is notable however I am more interested in the shuttle and its inhabitants."

"I'm aware of that captain, I'm still compiling data on the world and it will be available later. As for the lo... there is no current cause for concern and as soon as they have the booster set up we should be hearing from them."

Holis smiled slightly as he turned back to the board then suddenly noticed a blinking tell, initiating the text from the first officer he scanned it.

"Captain, may I leave the bridge for a short time?"

Holis signaled Skashe Winters to take his place on the bridge and was on his feet before activating his com. "Ensign Alistair Belmont to the deck one conference room immediately."

(USS Illuminar – Deck 1 - Conference Room - SO, Ensign Alistair Belmont - 1221)

"Make a thorough search of the database for any species known or suspected to have constructed a ring world. Dyson spheres are far more common and a simpler construct. Not only that but this one is on a far bigger scale than any I've seen theorized."

"That is all. Once we are there I hope we run into some clues about who built it and can compare notes with your search, otherwise we will have to build up our own anthropological database on this place. I'm hoping to go in with at least an idea."

"That is all, the captain is expecting me back at my station. Let me know what you run across. Dismissed and welcome to the department ensign."

(reply none)  
(posted by Will)

In the dim light of dawn, Dr. Teller navigated the cluttered space of their quarters, his movements swift, his mind still buzzing from the night's exhilarating exchange of ideas. The previous evening had transformed their living space into a vibrant symposium, where intellectuals from the Illuminar, capable of matching wits with Teller and Dr. Gaius Penn, had delved into the mysteries of the universe over an eclectic mix of spirits and sober beverages.

After a revitalizing shower, the Tamarian emerged, his energy renewed, swiftly restoring order to the remnants of their intellectual revelry. Despite the indulgence, Teller's unique physiology granted him immunity from the aftereffects of their spirited discussions, a trait he quietly appreciated.

Positioning himself behind their improvised bar, Teller initiated the sacred morning ritual of brewing coffee, its rich aroma promising rejuvenation for both him and Penn. Meanwhile, he concocted a morning tonic for himself, savoring the anticipation of the caffeine to come.

Settling into his beach chair, a relic amidst the technological surroundings, Teller activated his PADD, eager to catch up on the Illuminar's latest developments and the wider cosmos. A new addition to the crew caught his eye—a fresh mind to welcome into their fold. Teller, ever the strategist, pondered the newcomer's potential contributions, ultimately delegating the task of formal introductions to Penn, whose diplomatic finesse often smoothed the way.

His attention was then captured by the data streaming in from the ringworld they were investigating, Teller's excitement growing. The readings were nothing short of revolutionary, sparking comparisons to legendary collaborations and breakthroughs in human history. "Kirk and Spock on the Genesis Planet," he whispered in awe, the implications of their findings mirroring the epic explorations of Starfleet's finest. "Doc Brown and the flux capacitor," he mused, recognizing the potential for paradigm-shifting discoveries.

"Einstein and Oppenheimer, Feynman spiking the punch. Dancing with Hawkings under the stars," Teller declared, his voice echoing with jubilation through the quarters. Each name, each reference, encapsulated the magnitude of the discovery, a dance of intellect and imagination under the cosmos's watchful gaze.

With a sense of urgency, Teller scanned their shared space for Penn. They stood on the threshold of the unknown, their collaboration a beacon in the pursuit of knowledge. The day ahead promised a journey into uncharted scientific territories, and together, they were ready to embark on this monumental quest.

(Reply Penn)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar – Deck 3 – Dignitary Quarters – Civilian Scientist Dr. Gaillus Penn – 1224)

Penn stepped out of the bathroom and stretched. The Benzite stretched his long arms and gave a guttural sound as he attempted to focus his mind. The smell of the brewing coffee called to him, mezmorizingly. He was only wearing a green t-shirt and a pair of boxers. He walked towards the coffee brewer, scratching at his backside, trying to work off the effects of the previous nights academic discourse... and consumption of alcohol that went along with the game of finish the quantum mathematics problem, which didn't entirely rely on mathematical abilities, but also the ability to explain the universe around the math and how it is affected.

He looked over at Teller with an accusatory glare, wishing that he had the Tamarian's constitution. But at least it was better than Bohb's, who usually left their bathroom in need of... aeration. His colleague had become engrossed in what he was seeing on his PADD, so he poured him a mug of the coffee brew and put it on the small table beside his beach chair. Then he sat down in his own chair and took his first sip, feeling the caffeine and other nutrients from their special blend, coarse through his veins.

He could hear Teller muttering to himself. Each phrase was louder and louder until he was practically yelling in excitement with the references of great scientific breakthroughs. Penn looked at his partner and finally managed a smile.

(reply Teller)  
(posted by Al Muir)

(Reply Penn, any)  
(Posted by Tim)

Holis' gaze got even more intense. "I'll be quick then, your primary may be put to good use here, we have a structure of advanced age that I'm heavily into scanning. Once caught up on scans I intend on joining the team there, probably late tomorrow. Where I go on this survey, you go."

(Reply: Belmont)

Holis leaned against the table, his face sober. "Commander Verin is concerned about a lack of proper training at your previous posting, a concern that I share. While in my department there will be a concentrated course of training and assessment until I am satisfied that your work meets expectations. Until we get to that point however you will stick with me. Understood?"

(Reply: Belmont)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar – Deck 1 - Conference Room - SO Ensign Alistair Belmont - 1226)

"Have a seat, be comfortable. I don't have a lot of time but since we rendezvoused with your transport yesterday before making for this system I have been frantically busy."

"Yes sir." Alistair said as he sat down and readied himself for the meeting. He placed a PADD in front of him on the table to take notes.

"I'll be quick then, your primary may be put to good use here, we have a structure of advanced age that I'm heavily into scanning. Once caught up on scans I intend on joining the team there, probably late tomorrow. Where I go on this survey, you go."

Alistair nodded. "Yes sir."

. "Commander Verin is concerned about a lack of proper training at your previous posting, a concern that I share. While in my department there will be a concentrated course of training and assessment until I am satisfied that your work meets expectations. Until we get to that point however you will stick with me. Understood?"

"I understand sir." ~Seems I've gone from one extreme to another.~ Alistair thought to himself. ~From grunt work to homework. One of these days I will get a normal ship. As long as I can survive this one.~ "You'll get my 100% sir, I promise. Though I guess actions will speak louder than words."

(Reply Gralen)

"Is there anything else you need from me sir, or anything you'd like for me to prepare for the survey tomorrow?"

(reply Gralen)

(Reply Gralen)

(posted by Will)

[illegible]

(USS Illuminar – Deck 1 - Conference Room - CSO, Lieutenant Commander Holis Gralen - 1227)

"You'll get my 100% sir, I promise. Though I guess actions will speak louder than words."

"Absolutely though don't take this as an indictment of your skills or attitude,... " Holis gave him a small smile. "... the captain is a Vulcan, a former scientist and has high expectations for this

department which is why I was sent over." He shifted on his feet and reached up to adjust the angle of his glasses. "Science officers with experience and discipline are at a premium in the fleet."

"Is there anything else you need from me sir, or anything you'd like for me to prepare for the survey tomorrow?"

The betazoid nodded. "Make a thorough search of the database for any species known or suspected to have constructed a ring world. Dyson spheres are far more common and a simpler construct. Not only that but this one is on a far bigger scale than any I've seen theorized."

(Reply: Belmont)

"That is all. Once we are there I hope we run into some clues about who built it and can compare notes with your search, otherwise we will have to build up our own anthropological database on this place. I'm hoping to go in with at least an idea."

(Reply: Belmont)

Holis waved a hand. "That is all, the captain is expecting me back at my station. Let me know what you run across. Dismissed and welcome to the department ensign."

(Reply: Belmont)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(Ring Plant of Rephaim -- Structure -- base of stairs -- CMO Commander Quinna Solice 1228)

If one did not know better the team seemed like a group of adventurers in a realm of Dungeons and Dragons as opposed to a group of Starfleet officers. The steps were steep and Quinna already regretted the descent because ascending would be a beast for her. She wished she had not missed her pilates class for the last week.

They reached the bottom of the steps. “I think we should find an elevator or something when it is time to go back up,” Quinna commented. “Anyone has the key for the door?” Quinna asked as she moved to take scans.

Torek and Bohb made an effort to open the door.

"I believe that if we touch the panels and turn counterclockwise, the doors will open. I believe."

“Do it,” Quinna said. She watched with a slightly held breath. The door did not open.

(Reply Bohb, Galk, Trei, Torek)

“There is some specialized equipment on the shuttle. I will have Pex and Piripi bring it down.”

(Replies Bohb, Galk, Trei, Torek)

Quinna took a few steps back up. She then hit her Commbadge. “Solice to Pex and Piripi.”

(Reply Pex and Piripi)

(Rely Pex and Piripi)

(Replies Bohb, Galk, Trei, Torek)

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

"Do it," Commander Solice said.

Torak and Bohb, muscles straining and veins bulging, unleashed their formidable strength upon the stubborn door. Yet, it stood unyielding, a defiant titan refusing passage. The door was not merely a barrier; it was a challenge to their resolve, an adversary to be conquered.

The air crackled with anticipation as Commander Solice issued her next order, her voice a calm tempest. "Lieutenant Pex, retrieve box 23." The very mention of box 23 sent a ripple of unease through the crew. It was not just equipment; it was a behemoth lying in wait, capable of altering the very fabric of their mission.

He couldn't help but question, the weight of the decision heavy on his shoulders. "Ma'am, are we certain that invoking the might of box 23 is our only path? Its power is unparalleled, its consequences, undeniable."

(Reply Solice)

Torak's heart sank, yet a flicker of hope ignited within him. He and Bohb had not exhausted all avenues; their data, their analysis, could hold the key to a less destructive entry. He stepped back, his warrior's mind racing, scouring the sea of information for the missing piece, the overlooked detail that could spare them from unleashing box 23's wrath.

The Klingon's gaze hardened, his resolve steeling. There, amid the data, lay a sliver of insight, a beacon in the dark. It was more than a puzzle to solve; it was a testament to their ingenuity, a chance to prove that brute force was not their only ally.

(reply all)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

Tegian was studying the scans while also studying Pihi out of the corner of his eye. He enjoyed watching her. She was beautiful and she filled his thoughts in idle moments like these. He wanted to take her in his arms, but he knew they had to stay professional.

The com badge chirped ^= Solice to Pex and Piripi ^=  
She beat him to his comm badge. Those pilot reflexes. He grinned at her.

Tapping her badge, Pihi replied “Piripi here Commander.”

=^= We need Box 23, Alpha Charlie. Can you both carry it down to us please? ^=^=

Pihi looked at Pex and mouthed “Box 23? Sounds heavy.”

Tegian shrugged and grabbed a Padd to look at the manifest. "Yes Ma'am, be right there." Pihi replied to the commander.

"I guess our interlude is over," his lovely companion said to him. "You know what is in this box?"

He looked at the Padd. "Huh. Our Commander somehow got something onto the shuttle that isn't on the manifest. So, now, I don't have any idea."

He leaned over and kissed her, gently. "You, my dear, need to get finished suiting up if we're going to leave this shuttle. While you're doing that, I'm going to go find Box 23."



(Ring World -- CMO Commander Quinna Solice -- 1235 )

She assumed a defensive posture to deal with anything they will encounter. She placed a hand on the phaser just in case of a quick response and followed Quinna down into the dark staircase.

(Ring Plant of Rephaim -- Structure -- the base of the stairs- CMO Commader Quinna Solice 1238)

Quinna started a mental checklist for the 12 times since they had gotten down the stairs. She then felt Ariel by her side. Quinna felt that Ariel was ready to pounce. She leaned over a bit to Trei and whispered so the other could not hear her. “Relax, Ariel. There are no indications that there is anything hostile going to happen.”

(Reply Trei)

Just then she heard Torak address her. "Ma'am, are we certain that invoking the might of box 23 is our only path? Its power is unparalleled, its consequences, undeniable."

Quinna turned to Torek. She gave it that look that indicated she loved the sarcastic comedic comment. Her lips thinned as she was holding her mouth shut to keep from laughing out loud. She recovered quickly. "Yes, Ensign, Box 23. It has to be done. I'm sorry."

[illegible]

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- base of stairs SPA LT Ariel Trei - 1239)

Quinna whispered to he to relax. That was easier said than done. She has seen many times what can be behind a massive door like this. Maybe she has been exposed to combat too much lately and needed a mission to unwind for a while but she was here now. She played Dungeons and Dragons a bit and was probably better suited to play a barbarian but played mostly a wizard. The dice used in this situation would be the d20 followed up by the d6. The wizard would also use the d20 followed up by spells used. One of her favorite spells was fireball but it is unknown what is behind that door. A better tactical spell would be moveable block of fire to set up defenses around it. She has used this before. A wizard also has a familiar to aid the wizard in battle essentially giving the wizard an extra spell per turn in battle. She thought about this while the box is being brought in.

[illegible]

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- base of stairs -- SecO, Lieutenant Galk - 1240)

The air wasn't as hot, here at the sunken base of the complex and in the shade, not that such heat would reduce the klingon's vigor. Qo'nos had its own kind of heat which was more brutal owing to the clawing gasses and stifling humidity across much of its surface. The security team was keeping close tabs on the life forms that had been scanned earlier and which appeared to me moving steadily closer.

Galk was being kept closely informed on the local fauna, most of which were relatively small and in a self-supporting grouping which would be useful for defense, or attack.

"Pack hunters?"

"Possibly sir, most likely. There's nothing to graze in this area but they are circling. And that other one, it's big. The pack, if that's what they are are avoiding it. It makes sense that most of the large wildlife in a desert area like this would be predators."

"I agree. Increase your phaser settings to heavy stun."

He turned and watched the rest of the party cluster around what appeared to be a portal but an immense one, no beings he had seen approached the size that was being pointed out by the outline of the door. Could it have some ceremonial significance? Not if Bohb and Torek were correct.

“There is some specialized equipment on the shuttle. I will have Pex and Piripi bring it down.”

That piqued Galk's interest, what was on the shuttle that might succeed in opening a massive door? The commander promptly ordered a box be brought from the shuttle.

"Ma'am, are we certain that invoking the might of box 23 is our only path? Its power is unparalleled, its consequences, undeniable."

Galk gave a guttural chuckle at the sarcasm, Torek's voice was dripping with it. The commander appeared amused as well.

"Yes, Ensign, Box 23. It has to be done. I'm sorry."

He turned his head. "Koch and Philips to the shuttle, escort them here."

"Yes sir." The two made a move back to the curving ramp and began ascending quickly.

"Commander, it is not safe to move without a security escort, the local fauna may be hunting us. Pex and Piripi should remain with the shuttle until my officers arrive."

(Reply: Quinna)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- Base of Stairs -- CMO Commander Quinna Solice -- 1250)

Quinna looked up the stairs and noticed the shadow of two figures descending into the pit. She knew it had to be Piripi and Pex. She turned back to the groups that were basically in a waiting pattern. It can be frustrating when you have nothing to do but wait.

“Welcome to the pit,” Quinna said as Pex and Piripi joined them. She motioned for them to put the box down on the ground. The box was roughly the size of a 35-gallon travel tote.

Quinna squatted down to open the box and pulled out a long device. She then put her bag in the box. She shoved her commbadge, phaser, and tricorder into the box. "Alright ladies and gentlemen. I have a device that will emit a strong EM pulse that will reverse the magnetic polarity that is holding the door shut. The box is insulated so my suggestion you need to put all

your equipment in the box before we activate the device. Commbadges, phasers, tricorders, anything you think will be disabled by the device.”

(Reply Trei, Torak, Galk, Bohb, Piripi, Pex)

Quinna waited for the others to put their devices in the box, so they could finally get the door open.

(Reply Trei, Torak, Galk, Bohb, Piripi, Pex)

“Ensign, Piripi, that means your visor as well,” Quinna said knowing this would put the ensign at a disadvantage, however, it was only for a few moments. “The networks in your body will be protected as there is bio shielding to help keep from rejections.”

(Reply Piripi)

Quinna closed the box and sealed it shut. Their stuff would be solidly protected. Quinna then set off the device that was in the box and started to set it up. She then punched in the sequence to activate the pulse. Soon, a click and the sound of the relief of a vacuum was heard. "Try the door now."

(Reply Trei, Torak, Galk, Bohb, Piripi, Pex)

(Posted by Kris B)

[illegible]

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Near the stairs -- Security officers Koch and Philips -- 1251)

The shorter man with dark hair turned to Philips as Piripi and Pex vanished down the ramp, turned to give Philips a confused look then tapped his combadge.

"Lieutenant Galk, were they not notified we were to be their escort?"

=^=Negative. My suggestion went unheeded.=^=

"Roger that sir. They had already left the confines of the shuttle before we arrived."

=^=Acknowledged. How close are the life forms now?^=

A good question, Koch had forgotten to maintain eye-lock on the scans once the two had been sent for those in the conveyance.

Koch grabbed the tricorder where it hung at his side, not noticing Philips' face who had just snapped his gaze to magnetic northwest.

"Koch, we don't have time."

"What?" The smaller man found where Philips was looking and froze.

Rock outcroppings as noted before dotted the landscape, this one had obscured the approach of the jing'lo.

It didn't.

And then it charged.

Koch, freed from the spell of terror by its charge and Philip's scream, so abruptly cut off with a crunch tried to change the setting as he aimed the phaser but the Rex's whipping tail struck him in the arm and chest which shattered both, he was gurgling, drowning in his own blood as Philips was being consumed.

[illegible]

“Try the door now.”

"Shut it down!"

Kahne was right behind him as he hit the ramp at a run, there had been no time to grab a combadge.

The noises coming from above had all ceased, there had not been the sound of firing except for one brief instant and he knew in the pit of his warriors stomach that they were probably already dead.

The ramp was steep, the ramp was long and he was winded by the time they were high enough to see what had happened. The sand was soaked with blood in two places as were the jaws of something that might once have crossed his ancestral lineage.

A snarl rose from Galk's throat as the tyrant lizard turned its gaze upon him and he lifted the phaser rifle. This predator looked fast but it couldn't outrun the electrical signal controlling the finger poised above the firing stud or the energy that would be released. He would depress it for several seconds until it was on the ground and all motion had ceased. He sucked in a deep breath to stifle the panting remaining from the running climb just before he fired.

(Reply: Any)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible]

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- Base of Stairs SPA LT Ariel Trei - 12.55)

She saw Galik spring into action grabbing his phaser rifle but didn't have time in his haste to grab his COM Badge. Ariel followed behind grabbing her Com Badge knowing she had her Dett'leffs or Klingon daggers in a pocket of the EVA suit she was currently wearing. The tricorder she placed in the box along with her phaser. That will have to be retrieved later. She ran up the ramp to see a lizard like being getting hit by Galik's phaser rifle. She went into tactical defense mode to survey the area. It appeared that no other threats were in the immediate area. After the lizard being was hit sufficiently, she made sure it was dead with some spectacular cheetah moves slashing the chest of the threat with her Dett'leffs. She deftly made her way to Galik's position and asked him what he thought that threat was.

"What do you think that was?"

(Reply Galik, Any)

(Posted by Edward)

[illegible]

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- Base of Stairs-- Ensign Torak, Operations – 1256)

Torak's gaze remained locked on the alien edifice, his anticipation mounting as he awaited Commander Solice's revelation from within the enigmatic crate. The atmosphere was electric, charged with the unknown as the chief engineer, Lieutenant Pex, and the enigmatic new pilot, whose vision was not of the eyes but of the mind, approached with the crate that promised to breach the impenetrable.

"Alright ladies and gentlemen," Commander Solice announced with a confident flair, her voice cutting through the tense air. "I have a device that will emit a strong EM pulse that will reverse the magnetic polarity that is holding the door shut. The box is insulated so my suggestion you need to put all your equipment in the box before we activate the device. Commbadges, phasers, tricorders, anything you think will be disabled by the device."

Torak eyed the device with a blend of skepticism and intrigue. This technology was unfamiliar, a detail not covered in his extensive Academy training. A mental note was made—to delve deeper into the archives upon their return.

Heeding Solice's directive, he placed his electronics into the crate, his curiosity piqued by the commander's confident demeanor and the device's unknown origins.

The setup was meticulous, every adjustment by Solice watched by Torak with unabated interest. Just as the device was activated, a bloodcurdling scream pierced the silence from outside the entrance, instantly shifting the mission's dynamics.

Lieutenant Galk, their security chief, didn't hesitate. With practiced urgency, he retrieved his phaser rifle from the crate, a clear signal of the impending threat. Two more officers, including the steadfast Lieutenant Trei, sprinted towards the danger, phasers in hand.

Torak faced a dilemma—the safety of his team against the unknown threat outside. His decision was swift. "Mr. Bohb, we must breach this door," he declared, unsheathing his mek'leth with a warrior's grace. The blade, an extension of his will, found its way into the door's newfound fissure. As he exerted his strength, the crack widened, a testament to his determination and the mek'leth's unyielding edge. "qaStaHvIS," he grunted, a curse to express his frustration yet also his resolve, as the alien barrier began to give way under the combined might of technology and tenacity.

In this moment, the team was a microcosm of the Federation itself—diverse beings united by a common goal, facing the unknown with courage, innovation, and the unbreakable will to explore, to understand, to protect.

(Reply Bohb, Pex, Others)

(Posted by Tim)

[illegible]

(USS Io - Ringworld of Rephaim- Structure - CSRD Lab - CSRD - Lt. Bohb - 1257)

Bohb's had been watching with fascination as the device that Dr. Solace had brought came to life. However, it also seemed to bring something else to life. His eyes widened when a large reptile appeared and attacked the group. Galk was the first to jump into action, followed by Trei. He tensed his body, ready to launch himself onto the back of the... dinosaur... when something caught his attention.

"Mr. Bohb, we must breach this door." It was Torek.

Bobh looked back at the pair tearing at the reptile and decided that he'd just be in the way. He moved over to the door as the Klingon drove his blades into the jam and began to wedge it open. When the door had a large enough space he wedged his fingers in and drew a deep breath. His muscles tensed and he heaved with all of his might. The metal strained, and he could hear something in the mechanics of the door creak and groan.

Torek added his own strength to the effort and the door began to move further. Bohb could feel his muscles strain at the effort. ~I am really getting to old for this kind of effort.~ He closed his eyes and with renewed effort he planted his feet, bent his knees and pulled as hard as he could.

"That was fun," he said.

(posted by Al Muir)

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- Base of Stairs -- COM Commander Quinna Solice -- 12.59)

headed to the beast coming to them.

her, she could hear Torak and Bohb working on opening the door.

at their location.

(Reply Trei, Galk)

Mentally Quinna felt the true pains of being in command.

(Posted by Kris B)

(Ring World of Rephaim -- Structure -- SecO, Lieutenant Galk, Son of Jos- 1300)

head for a challenge, a vocalization that would never come.

resounding screech.

rage at vengeance that had come too late.

flesh of its chest before stepping back. "What was it?"

sent to their deaths unknowingly.



"Commander..." Galk nodded a greeting. "Two of my men are dead because I took the dangers of this place too lightly."

"I'll be damned!"

Galk looked toward Chyna. "What is it?"

(Reply Galk, Trei, any)

(Reply Galk, Trei, any)

"I have some preliminary calculations captain."

"As you can see, this shows a cutaway view of the interior of the ring as we have been able to ascertain through high powered scans. The ring itself as you are aware circles Beta Siris at .76 AU and is two thousand kilometers in diameter. At the interior halfway point you can see the liveable surface, below that point the soil and rock is honeycombed with shafts, cavernous expanses of rooms which could be maintenance, command and control or living/gathering quarters as well as aquifers, piping or conduit. From the surface and up to five hundred kilometers from the upper dome of the ring is the atmosphere of the habitable zone."

"The scale is far beyond anything formerly theorized I believe."

"Yes sir." Holis tapped another button and the view changed to that of the ship's view of the ring that it was holding station with and the portal the shuttle had entered through.

"The scale is nearly unimaginable. The amount of surface area within the ring is calculated at 7.587314 to the seventeenth power square kilometers and the mass of the ring is .78 percent of the total mass of this systems sun. Every shred of material within the interior solar system including moons, asteroids and comets had to have been broken down for their raw materials to create this."

"The water from those bodies would have been harvested for use within the ecosystem." Sekal mused.

"That is our theory. The same way the gasses from those bodies would have been added into its atmosphere. Arrays on the inner side of the ring are collecting solar radiation to power its mechanisms and heat or cool the interior."

"Fascinating. Have the department continue your investigation. What of the metal skin?"

"Its density is comparable to titanium but the structure and grain of the sample taken is far different from it, a highly advanced alloy of carbonex I believe."

"Thank you doctor, be certain that everything is entered in the formal report."

"Absolutely sir." Holis turned and deactivated the feed to the viewscreen then turned and motioned Skashe Winters over again.

"Take over while I get some coffee."

"Yes sir." Skashe stepped around him and dove into the data stream which was uncovering more and more shocking facts by the hour as Sekal stood to his feet and began walking about the bridge, his eyes wandering to the viewscreen at regular intervals, this was a monumental discovery.

(Reply: Any)

(Posted by Charles Gatling)

[illegible][illegible]

End Compile