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REYNOLDS

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SO, CAPTAIN WALKER.
WE KNOW YOU'RE COMPETENT
ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND WHEN
YOUR SITUATION IS *HOPELESS*. YOU'RE
VASTLY OUTGUNNED AND YOUR
TECHNOLOGY IS STONE AGE WHEN
COMPARED TO THAT OF
PANTHEON.



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YOU SHOULD
SUBMIT, OR BE
DESTROYED.

WELL, ADMIRAL.
YOU MUST HAVE FORGOTTEN
HOW STUBBORN WE HUMANS ARE,
ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES
TO HOPELESS
SITUATIONS.

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ACCESS 659 003 A X

WHAT YOU'RE
PROPOSING, JOINING OUR
CREW INTO YOUR COLLECTIVE,
YOU CAN PROMISE SAFE
CONDUCT?

OF COURSE,
THE CREW WILL NOT
BE HARMED.

WATCH YOU'RE

AUTOMATIC
CAUTION
DOOR



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WE WILL CONSIDER
YOUR OFFER, ALL I CAN ASK
IS FOR A FEW HOURS TO
MAKE THE CASE TO THE
CREW.

YOUR
REQUEST IS
GRANTED.

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A FEW...

NO!

**ONE
HOUR...**

WILL BE
ACCEPTABLE.

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CLOSE
COMMS.

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FIRST DAY IN
THE CAPTAIN'S CHAIR...
AND ALL BECAUSE WE LOST
THE ADMIRAL. I'M NOT
READY FOR
THIS.

TOM, WHERE'S
YOUR BELLY FULL OF
FIRE NOW? YOU WERE
BORN READY.

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IT SURE AS HELL
DOESN'T FEEL LIKE IT,
SASKIA. NONE OF THIS
MAKES ANY SENSE
TO ME.





COMMANDER
CYPHER?

YES,
CAPTAIN?

WHY WOULD THEY
RETURN TO US SO QUICKLY
AFTER TAKING THE ADMIRAL? SURELY
WITH THE KNOWLEDGE IN HIS
HEAD, THEY WOULD HEAD TO
EARTH DIRECTLY.


IN MY OPINION, HEADING
ON A NON-STOP BEARING TO EARTH
WOULD BE OPTIMAL STRATEGY FOR
A TRULY HOSTILE RACE.

WHICH
IMPLIES...



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THE PANTHEON
COLLECTIVE ARE NOW NOT
COMPLETELY HOSTILE UNDER
THE COMMAND OF ADMIRAL
DUMONT.

YOU'RE SAYING
THE ADMIRAL IS STILL
IN THERE, SOME-
WHERE?

PRECISELY. PERHAPS
HE HAS MADE ALTERED THEIR
STRATEGY TO OVERCOME EACH
ALLIANCE CRAFT INDIVIDUALLY, IN
ORDER TO BEST ENSURE
CONTINUED VICTORY.

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THEN HE COULD
HAVE THEM BRING HIM TO
US. FOR WHAT END? IF HE
WANTS US TO FREE HIM,
HOW?


WE'RE STARING DOWN
THE BARREL OF WEAPONS THAT
COULD HIT US AT EVERY SHIELD
FREQUENCY AT ONCE. I'VE
NOTED THEIR FIREPOWER,
CYPHER.

NOTICE THE ADMIRAL
ONLY HIGHLIGHTED THE
NOTABLE FIREPOWER AND
ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY
OF THE PANTHEON
SHIP.



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THE SHIP'S
EMPTY?

THEY HAVE US
OUTGUNNED, YES. ALTHOUGH,
IN THEIR EXTREME TECHNOLOGICAL
ADVANCEMENT, THE PANTHEON HAVE
MANAGED TO ELIMINATE THE
NEED FOR A CREW.

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NOT EMPTY,
SIR. THE ADMIRAL IS
PRESENT SOMEWHERE
ABOARD.

ASIDE FROM
THE ADMIRAL, THEIR
SHIP IS EMPTY?

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I CAN ONLY POSIT
THAT THEIR BATTLE STRATEGY
IS TO RELY ON WEAPONRY AND
AUTOMATION. OR PERHAPS THEY
HAVE EVOLVED PAST THE NEED
FOR TANGIBLE, PHYSICAL,
FORMS.

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O'BRIAN,
HOW OFTEN ARE
THEY CYCLING THEIR
SHIELD FREQ-
UENCY?

SIR?



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SIMPLE
QUESTION,
COUNS-
ELOR.

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SIMPLE
ANSWER,
SIR.

THEY
AREN'T.



THEY AREN'T
CYCLING THEIR
SHIELD FREQ-
UENCY?

BUT THAT
LEAVES THEM OPEN TO
A TRANSMITTER CONNECTION,
HELL THEY COULD EVEN
BE BOARDED...

WHY WOULD
ANYONE VOLUNTARILY
BOARD A PANTHEON
VESSEL?



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A character with dark, wavy hair and light-colored eyes is shown in profile, looking towards the right. They are wearing a blue uniform with a dark collar and a zipper. In the background, there is a dark, textured wall and a screen displaying a blue and yellow interface. A speech bubble is positioned to the right of the character's head.

I DON'T BELIEVE
THE PANTHEON VALUE DEFENSE
AS A TACTIC. THEIR WEAPONRY
AND STYLE ARE PURELY
AGGRESSIVE.

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ADMIRAL,
WHAT ARE YOU
TRYING TO TELL
US..?



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WHAT AM I
MISSING?

WATCH YOUR STEP

CAUTION

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WAIT. WAIT!
THAT'S IT!

WE'RE
OUTGUNNED, BUT HE
NEVER SAID WE'RE
OUTMANNED!

SIR?



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COMMANDER CYPHER,
I WANT A FULL DIAGNOSTIC
OF AUTOMATED *INTERNAL*
DEFENSE SYSTEMS ABOARD
THE PANTHEON
VESSEL.

THEN, I NEED
YOURSELF AND LIEUTENANT
DORN TO REPORT TO ENSIGN
DUNE IN TRANS-
MISSION.



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AFFIRMATIVE,
CAPTAIN.

THE REST,
I SHALL LEAVE
UP TO YOU.

ONE HOUR LATER.

CAPTAIN, WE'RE
RECEIVING A HAILING
FREQUENCY FROM THE
PANTHEON VESSEL.

SO, IT
BEGINS.



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WE HOPE THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO MAKE THE OPTIMAL DECISION, CAPTAIN.

WE WOULD HATE TO HAVE TO BLAST MY--

ONSCREEN.



I MEAN
YOUR SHIP, OF
COURSE.

ADMIRAL DUMONT,
I HAVE CONSIDERED YOUR
PROPOSAL, AND I WOULD LIKE
TO REQUEST AN EXTENSION
TO ALLOW US TO DEFINE
TERMS.

I'VE SENT A
COMMUNIQUE TO ALLIANCE
HIGH COMMAND FOR PROPER
DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO
OPEN, AND AN ENVOY IS
EN-ROUTE.

CAPTAIN,
WE WILL HAVE
NO STALLING.

BUT SIR,
FOLLOWING PROPER
PROCEDURE WOULD REQUIRE
HOURS OF TECHNICAL
AND BUREAUCRATIC
DEBATES.

THESE COULD
LAST DAYS, EVEN
WEEKS.

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THAT WOULD
BE PROPER
PROTOCOL.



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***NO! WE
SHOULD DESTROY
THEM, NOW!***



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**WE SHOULD
ASSIMILATE!**

**NO, LAUNCH
LANDING
PARTY!**



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FOLLOWING
PROPER PROTOCOL
REQUIRES ME
TO...



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*AH! TOO
MANY VOICES...
IN MY HEAD!*



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COMMANDER
CYPHER. YOU ARE
SUGGESTED TO
MAKE THIS
QUICK.



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READY,
CAPTAIN.



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IF WE TUNE
TRANSMISSION TO THE
EXACT FREQUENCY
OF THEIR
SHIELDS...

RETURNING THE
ADMIRAL BECOMES
INEVITABLE.

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CAPTAIN
WALKER, WE
HAVE DECIDED THAT
PROTOCOL MUST BE
FOLLOWED.



I DIDN'T
THINK YOU'D HAVE
IT ANY OTHER WAY,
ADMIRAL.





PERHAPS ANOTHER
DELAY IS IN ORDER, TO
ALLOW CALMER HEADS
TO PREVAIL...

SOMETHING
TELLS ME THAT WON'T
BE NECESSARY.

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WHAT?

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O'BRIAN!
MAXIMUM HYPER
SPEED THE SECOND
THEY TOUCH
DOWN.

ACCESS 659 003 A X

CAUTION

WATCH YOU'RE STEP

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CAPTAIN,
WE'RE BACK.



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GO! ENGAGE!



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WE'RE OUT
OF THERE.

WE'RE OUT
OF THERE?



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SECURITY TEAM
TO TRANSMISSION
ROOM.

ADMIRAL DUMONT
IS TO BE PLACED IN A
RAY SHIELD CELL WITH NO
CONNECTION TO INTERNAL
SHIP FUNCTIONS.



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OPERATIONS STAFF,
CHART A COURSE THROUGH
NEUTRAL SPACE, WITH A JUMP
DELAY OF NO LONGER THAN
ONE SECOND.

WE'RE NOT
LETTING THEM
TOUCH HIM
AGAIN.

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A character with short, light-colored hair is shown in profile, facing right. They are wearing a dark, ribbed, long-sleeved garment. The background is dark and industrial, with some metallic structures and a keyboard visible in the lower right. A speech bubble is positioned to the right of the character's head.

INCREASE
ALERT LEVEL TO
BLACK.

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MEDICAL TEAMS
ON STANDBY, AND CYPHER'S
SCIENCE WING ON IMMEDIATE
SOLUTIONS PREP.

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I WANT ADMIRAL
DUMONT BACK IN HIS
ORIGINAL BODY
NOW.

AND I WANT
SOLUTIONS,
PEOPLE.

ANYONE WITH
RESERVATIONS NEEDS
TO EXCUSE THEM-
SELVES NOW.

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GET TO IT!

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SHE'S NOT RESPONDING TO ANY ELECTRONIC STIMULUS, SIR.

NONE AT ALL?

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EVERYTHING WE
HAVE ATTEMPTED HAS
THUS FAR RESULTED IN
NO CHANGE TO HER
CONDITION.

HE IS A HE,
CYPHER. THIS
IS ADMIRAL
DUMONT.

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APOLOGIES, CAPTAIN,
BUT BIOLOGICALLY, ADMIRAL
DUMONT IS NOW A FULLY
FEMALE ORGANISM.

I THOUGHT
THE PREFIX CHANGE
WAS APPROPRIATE.

THIS SITUATION
HAS NEVER HAPPENED
BEFORE.

WE HAVE NO
IDEA WHAT'S
APPROPRIATE.



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OH, *BOYS*...



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I'VE BEEN
THROUGH
HELL TO GET
HERE.



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DO YOU
REALLY THINK
YOU CAN BEAT
THAT?

