

STAR TREK™
ADVENTURES

The Quadrupole Quandary

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INTRODUCTION

"The Quadrupole Quandary" is an adventure for *Star Trek Adventures*. This adventure is meant to be played by a Gamemaster (gamemaster) and 3-6 players, using the pre-generated characters provided.

To run this adventure, the gamemaster needs to be familiar with the adventure itself, the *Star Trek Adventures* playtest rules, and the pre-generated characters.

For this playtest, you will need:

- At least two 20-sided dice (d20) per player, and several d6s to serve as Challenge Dice
- A set of chips or tokens for Determination
- A set of chips or tokens for Threat
- A set of chips or tokens, or some other manner of marker, for group Momentum.
- The pre-generated character sheets, and your selected starship sheet
- The Star Trek Adventures playtest rules (version 1.36 of the core rules, version v1.1 of the Starship Operations rules)

Synopsis

The Players have just completed recording the quadrupole moments of a patch of rotating neutron stars located deep within the Sargon Region. During their explorations, the crew has noticed a difference in the dynamo activity seen in various suns in this sector and have been able to run a plethora of tests using the Applegate mechanism to test their theories. Strange magnetic fields generated by the stars in this area of the expanse have been wreaking havoc on the ship's sensors, distorting communications, and even causing nausea in some of the crew, starting with the empaths and telepaths.

With no other clues to go on, the captain decides to move the ship to another sector to survey. En route, the computers indicate that an external source is scanning the vessel. Efforts fail to determine who initiated the scan. Night comes. Most of the crew retire as per their norm. Upon waking up the next morning, the characters learn that fifteen percent of the crew is missing. Also, twenty-five percent of food stores are gone. (If the Player's vessel is *Intrepid*-class, twenty-five percent of the bio-neural gel packs have disappeared.)

The Players try to locate the crew and complement that mysteriously vanished in deep space. They soon realize that who or whatever scanned the vessel accessed the ship's database and downloaded all data on transporters, replicators, and the holodeck. Tensions deepen as more reports of nausea come in from crew members not previously affected, including some of the Player characters. This is when the medical team notes that the victims of nausea from the night before are now the individuals on the missing person list. As this revelation occurs, replicators and holodecks start malfunctioning. Soon, bioorganic components are generated from random replicators.

Eventually, the Players must enter the holodeck to put the puzzle pieces together. They discover that their travels in the new region of space awakened an advanced, energy-based, alien entity of multidimensional proportions whose form of enigmatic communication is incompatible with organic lifeforms. For the alien to make first contact, it creates a puzzle utilizing the Player vessel's energy/matter transfer technology. Will the crew be able to solve this puzzle and unlock the means to rescue their crew without upsetting a new, powerful lifeform?

The gamemaster begins this adventure with two points of Threat for every player character in the group.

Scene 1: Quadrupole Moments

When the players are ready to begin, read the following:

CAPTAINS LOG

"The last week aboard ship has been mostly uneventful with the exception of a bout of Tarkalean flu that swept through the crew. They are excited to have completed their survey of a stellar cluster located in the depths of the Sargon Region. Astrometrics has been recording the quadrupole moments of a patch of rotating neutron stars. Sensors detected a difference in the star field's dynamo activity and our science teams were able to run a plethora of tests using the Applegate mechanism to test their theories. Learning more about how stars generate their magnetic fields will go a long way to improving the Federation's exploratory missions helping us identify possibly habitable extrasolar planets for colonization."

The adventure begins with Players describing what their characters are doing. Characters in the sciences may be studying the complexity of quadrupole moments of rotating neutron stars from a science lab or astrometrics. Non-science characters might be performing routine ship duties or enjoying some down time in their quarters, mess hall, or the holodeck.

No matter the department, however, almost one hundred percent of the crew is excited about completing the mission and arriving back in Starbase 514 for two weeks of leave. Most everyone has made arrangements to reconnect with family, friends, or lovers. In addition, a few Player characters managed to snag much sought after tickets to a popular conference circulating around the Federation entitled "Applying Ferengi Business Skills to Managing Romantic Relationships".

Give the players a chance to talk about why their character is personally excited to get back to Starbase 514. Encourage them to make the meet-ups or appointment very important.

Gamemaster Guidance: *If the Player vessel is Intrepid-class, the Gamemaster should have one character involved with some sort of bio-neural gel pack maintenance. That will come in handy in later scenes. Bio-neural gel packs make up an organic computer system. The packs store more information and operate at faster speeds than isolar circuitry. This kind of organic circuitry allows computers to think in a similar way to living organisms. The Intrepid-class USS Voyager was one of the first starships that had this technology.*

Once the Players have settled into their roles, inform the Players that long-range sensors detect a spike in the magnetic fields being generated by the stellar cluster of neutron stars. Players need to perform a Sensor Sweep with a **Reason + Science** task with a Difficulty of 1, assisted by the ship's **Sensors + Science**. If the tasks generate Momentum, the characters can spend points to improve the results of the scan. The information gleaned is based on the amount of Momentum spent.

- **1 point of Momentum:** The magnetic fields are strongest along the route the Player vessel traveled after entering the stellar cluster.
- **2 points of Momentum:** Electron activity is especially high in this region of space and it is steadily increasing. The electron activity seems to interconnect the thousands of rapidly spinning neutron stars contained in this stellar cluster. This could be a natural phenomenon the ebbs and flows with time. There is not enough data to know for sure.
- **3 points of Momentum:** It becomes evident that communications and sensors will likely be disrupted if the vessel stays in the center of the stellar cluster for too long. The electron activity diminishes significantly on the edges of the cluster, though research will be hampered by one or two weeks if the vessel is positioned on the edge of the star field.

That is all the information available to the Players at this time. They are on a mission and have orders from Starfleet to complete it. They merely need to choose how long they want the mission to take. If the Players decide to stay in the middle of the cluster, inform them that all Sensor and Communication tasks will be set at a minimum Difficulty 3. If they move to the fringes of the star field, all Sensor and Communication tasks will be

set at a minimum Difficulty 1, though their mission will be extended a week, therefore missing the planned events at Starbase 514.

Gamemaster Guidance: *If the Players roll complications, feel free to toss a few sensor or communication complications at the characters. At the very least, some of the empaths or telepaths on board should start feeling nauseous, though this should be done very casually so as not to rouse suspicion from the Players.*

For example, if you have Players playing a Vulcan and a Betazoid, spend Threat to create a “Very Nauseous” complication on no more than one of the characters. Mention to the affected character that they start feeling nauseous, most likely the aftermath of the Tarkalean flu that afflicted the ship a few weeks back. They will not get better unless they return to sickbay, where they will need to stay throughout Scene 2. If none of the Player characters are empaths or telepaths, do not reveal until the next scene that sickbay has become inundated with empathic and telepathic crew members complaining of nausea.

Once the captain decides on how to position the Player vessel—be it inside or outside the star cluster—the scene ends.

Scene 2: Scanned

Once the ship is in position, read the following:

Science departments are brimming with enthusiasm. They pour over the new telemetry coming in from the ship’s sensors. They are learning more and more about the stellar cluster. The bridge is generally quiet as the officers perform routine systems diagnostics and exchange small talk over the steady hum of the idle engines. The scene outside the view screen is dramatic and breathtaking. Yellows, greens, reds, and blues of stellar formation splay the bridge with a rainbow of cosmic radiance. The captain, retired in their ready room, enjoys the peace space affords sipping their favorite beverage, perhaps listening to a cherished song.

The tranquility is abruptly interrupted when a wave of blue static electricity washes over every deck and through every crevice of the vessel. The static, though disconcerting, does not seem to cause harm to anyone.

The Players will want to figure out what just passed through the ship.

As Gamemaster, you are aware that a massively powerful alien entity comprised of electro-neural energy has scanned the Player’s vessel. However, Federation technology is not nearly advanced enough to detect its origins. The Player characters can only observe the symptoms of the scan. At this point in the adventure, they will be unable to discern whether the cause is natural, technological, or something altogether new. They may choose to raise shields, which is a minor task. This will not make a difference for the alien, though, since he is now interfacing with the ship’s computers on the quantum level. At this point, this is imperceptible to the crew.

SENSORS

The commanding officer should feel free to Rally their crew at this time with a **Presence + Command** action with a Difficulty of 0. Characters can roll a Sensor Sweep with a **Reason + Science** assisted by the ship’s **Sensors + Science** with a Difficulty of 1 if they are on the fringes of the star field or a Difficulty of 3 if they are in the stellar cluster. (Remember to take into account an Complications, if applicable.) A successful action will indicate an increase in the magnetic quadrupole of the rapidly rotating neutron stars but no other anomalies. Launching a probe into the stellar cluster will not offer any more information, as Federation technology is not advanced enough to assess the situation.

If Players did not spend enough momentum in Scene 1 to gather all of the information provided from the Obtain Information opportunities, they may do so now. The Gamemaster gives them any information of which they were not made aware. If that information is exhausted, other information is available.

- **1 point of Momentum:** The electron activity in the stellar cluster temporarily spiked in conjunction with the static surge. This could be a natural phenomenon.

- **2 points of Momentum:** The static surge that went through the ship did not cause damage to any major systems. Holodeck programs did freeze momentarily.
- **3 points of Momentum:** Food replicators all over the ship went offline for several seconds after the surge.

Security or tactical officers may want to perform an action with Internal Sensors rolling a **Reason + Security** assisted by the ship's **Sensors + Security** with a Difficulty of 1. This internal scan will net no information. They might also want to send a hail, which is a **Control + Engineering** action assisted with ship's **Communications + Engineering** with a Difficulty of 0. Any hails will not receive a response.

SICKBAY

Meanwhile in sickbay, the medical officer is starting to notice an upsurge in people coming in complaining of nausea. The medical officer can make an **Insight + Medicine** action assisted by **Computers + Medicine** with a Difficulty of 2. Success means they determine that this bout of nausea is not related to the Tarkalean flu outbreak. If no one is playing a medical officer, the Players can choose to spend a momentum to activate a Supporting Character. If the tasks generate Momentum, the characters can spend points to improve the results of the scan. The information gleaned is based on the amount of Momentum spent.

- **1 point of Momentum:** It is clear now that empaths and telepaths are the first crew members affected by the nausea.
- **2 points of Momentum:** The chemoreceptor trigger zone located in the medulla oblongata portion of the brain is overstimulated in all of the patients creating the feelings of nausea. A virus or bacteria does not seem to be the culprit. Afferent inputs going to the victims' central nervous systems are relaying the signals of emetic stimuli giving them the urge to vomit.
- **3 points of Momentum:** Due to the strange nature of the stellar cluster, the doctor pulls comparative data from the science department. They note a correlation between the overstimulation in the patients' brains and the quadrupole moments of the rotating neutron stars.

If no Players selected a medical character to play, read the following:

An incoming message from the doctor informs the commanding officer that several more patients have arrived in sickbay requesting medical help due to nausea. They have ran tests. None of the victims have the flu. The doctor provides a list of all those that have reported to sickbay and informs the commanding officer that they suspect a correlation to the proximity to the neutron stars.

The Commanding Officer can make an **Insight/Reason + Command** task with a Difficulty of 1 to realize that the crew listed are primarily crew members with enhanced mental abilities.

Whether a Player is playing the role of doctor or not, it is clear that the medical team must try to bring relief to the victims. The medical team discerns that the non-lethal symptoms will be relieved by administering an antiemetic agent to the patients via a hypospray. But normal medicine will not work since any inoculation needs to block patient synchronicity with the neutron stars. It is possible that another member of the crew with specialized focuses like Force Fields or Theoretical Physics might join the medical team to assist in solving this dilemma.

This is an **Extended Task** with 5 **Limited Attempts**.

- Difficulty: 2
- Magnitude 5
- Work 18
- Timed: 6 Intervals spread across scenes 2-4

The medical team can perform one attempt per scene in scenes 2-4 to come up with an antiemetic agent. Due to the advanced nature of this alien entity, success is improbable, though not impossible. The high Work track and Magnitude emphasize how strange and complex this situation is. A **Daring + Medicine** task assisted by the

ship's **Computers + Medicine** with a Difficulty of 2 is required for rolls done for this Extended Task. The Gamemaster should really heighten the tension as patients make consistent complaints and the clock ticks down. Players can be told that this issue is on the quantum level. Federation medicine has never seen a problem like this before.

Gamemaster Guidance: *The Limited Attempts signifies the alien entity realizing that the doctor is working against its efforts to establish communication with the crew. If the Limited Attempts are up before the doctor (and possible assistants) completes the extended task, they are struck with an electro-psychic wave and stunned. [See the Entity entry below.] Any attempts to bring them back to consciousness is Difficulty 5 as their central nervous systems have been shut down by the immense entity.*

Curiosity about the stellar cluster is really heightened now, especially among the science teams who have been making some seriously amazing astronomical discoveries. Some of their preliminary research has already surpassed current Federation knowledge by nearly a decade. If they are allowed to complete their research, they will be able to write astronomy papers for years to come and earn many honors from Starfleet's various science academies. Being able to double or even triple the rate of Class-M exoplanet location is too much of a boon for any seasoned explorer to pass up on account of a few minor cases of nausea.

Once the players settle down and realize there is nothing to do but wait, read the following:

Night comes. Most of the crew retire as per their norm. Gamma shift takes over the bridge as some of the more zealous science teams continue their research on the stellar cluster. The doctor has made the nauseous crew members as comfortable as possible and allowed them to return to their own quarters. Sickbay reports no further issues and will continue to develop an antiemetic inoculation.

Morning arrives and alpha shift is ready and refreshed for a new day. However, several crew members fail to report for the first shift of the day. Reports start trickling in of missing crew members. Soon, the trickle becomes a stream and the stream becomes a river. It doesn't take long for the officers to realize that roughly ten percent of the crew is missing. Strangely, twenty percent of food stores are also gone. [If the Player's vessel is *Intrepid*-class, twenty percent of the bio-neural gel packs have disappeared.]

Scene 3: Where Oh Where?

Gamemaster Guidance: *Don't forget that the medical team need to make two more attempts on the Extended Task in this scene. The Gamemaster can decide when it is appropriate to have them roll this, perhaps breaking it up to rotate the play between different departments, like cut scenes in a movie.*

External scans will prove fruitless as the entity has transported the crew and complement away through unknown means to an unknown location in a parallel dimension. The fact of the matter is that the entity's consciousness is in the computer core, though undetectable as it exists in the quantum level. However, certain effects are detectable by the crew. Security or tactical officers can perform an Internal Sensors action using **Reason + Security** assisted by the ship's **Sensors + Security** with a Difficulty of 1. Other officers can pull a Damage Report using **Insight + Command** assisted by the ship's **Communications + Engineering** with a Difficulty of 1. If the tasks generate Momentum, the characters can spend points to improve the results of the scan. The information gleaned is based on the amount of Momentum spent.

- **1 point of Momentum:** The computer core was accessed. Files detailing information about transporters, replicators, and the holodeck were downloaded. Who or what perpetrated this data theft is unknown.
- **2 points of Momentum:** The computer timestamped the security breach. It coincided with the time the crew members disappeared. The crew members who went missing were scattered all over the ship. Some were in their quarters. Others were working in their respective departments. Interestingly, the missing crew members are the same ones who reported suffering nausea.

- **3 points of Momentum:** All transporter rooms became active shortly after the computers were accessed. Interestingly, the ship expended no power to initiate the transports. Transport engineers make a thorough examination of the transporter rooms. They note that the phase transition coils or Heisenberg compensators were not utilized to initiate transport, though it is clear from the computer records that the transporters were definitely activated.

Tensions deepen as new reports of crew members experiencing nausea come pouring in from sickbay.

Gamemaster Guidance: *The Gamemaster should decide which crew members are affected as the Player characters need to stick around to play the game. However, if the Players are okay with it, whisk away their PCs and force them to use up their Supporting Crew points. That will heighten the tension as they will no doubt be eager to get back their normal PCs.*

If Players did not spend momentum before, the Gamemaster can let the Players know that the victims of nausea from the night before are now the individuals on the missing person list. This should make the new victims of nausea nervous thinking that they might be the next to disappear.

As this revelation occurs, replicators all over the ship begin self-generating odd bioorganic components of different shapes and sizes. They look and feel to have the consistency of something akin to greenish-brown sea coral. The shapes consist of orbs, elongated tubes bent in various manners, and various tetromino formations. In addition, the holodecks start malfunctioning. They are flickering on and off and can't maintain a program. Replicators, transporters, and holodecks are suddenly operating without costing the ship any power.

The medical team should be busy with the Extended Task, which will keep them from making an examination of the bioorganic components that are being replicated. Other characters with Medicine-related skills or Biology can attempt a **Reason + Medicine/Science** assisted by ship's **Computers + Medicine/Science** with a Difficulty of 2 to determine that the geometrically-shaped components have traces of DNA from the species that have been disappearing from the ship.

Some Players may try to make a **Daring/Reason + Engineering** task with a Difficulty of 1 to take individual replicators, transporters, or holodecks offline. This is an Opposed Task. The entity who will roll a **Reason + Engineering** action with a Difficulty of 1. Failure means that the Players attempting to shut down the systems are struck by an electro-psychic wave and stunned. [See the Entity entry below.] Any attempts to bring them back to consciousness is Difficulty 5 as their central nervous systems have been shut down by the immense entity. This should highlight to the Players that any attempts to stop the process of First Contact is potentially lethal.

Gamemaster Guidance: *The alien is composed of energy, hence, its very presence can fuel any ship systems that contain technology related to matter/energy transfer. The entity is attempting to communicate with the crew and needs these systems online to facilitate first contact.*

If the Players succeed, they will soon see their efforts are fruitless. One round after any system is taken offline, the entity reactivates it using its own power to do so. If the characters start dismantling systems, the entity will use any still-functioning systems to perform its actions.

Once the players decide on an initial course of action, read the following:

Another static shudder fills the ship. Crewman all over the ship are filled with horror as their fellow crewmen disappear in front of their very eyes. The victims are whisked away in an energy field similar to the ship's transporter effect. It isn't long after the disappearances occur that the replicators start generating more odd bioorganic components. The operations officer reports that another ten percent of the crew and twenty percent of the food stores have gone missing. At the current rate of occurrence, it won't be long before the entire crew is missing.

Gamemaster Guidance: *If the Player's vessel is Intrepid-class, ten percent more of the bio-neural gel packs have disappeared. This will start to have an effect on any task rolls that involve the computers. Increase the*

*difficulty of any actions involving the ship's computer by 1 each time the Players fail on the following **Scientific Method**.*

The Players have observed some maddening occurrences. It is clear that they are in a race against time as a new set of crew members experience nausea only to disappear from the Player vessel, more of the food stores vanish, bio-neural gel packs are transported to who-knows-where, and more bioorganic components are generated from random replicators.

But is this Engineering, Science, or Medicine-related problem? Any character with Disciplines from those categories may make this determination with a Difficulty of 1. They will discover that this is actually an Engineering problem.

Once this is determined, a character with a high skill level in the Engineering discipline should be appointed the **Research Lead**. Allow Players to throw out ideas on what might be happening. As Gamemaster, you are aware that the crew's travels in this region of space awakened an advanced, energy-based, alien entity of multidimensional proportions whose form of enigmatic communication is incompatible with organic lifeforms. For the alien to make first contact, it creates a puzzle utilizing the Player vessel's energy/matter transfer technology. Its language is puzzle-based mathematics. There are enough components being created that they would need to be in a storage bay or holodeck to store them all in one place.

Deducting the reason for the missing crew members could fall into various Focuses the Player character might possess like First Contact, Extraterrestrial Lifeforms, ESP, Exo-Linguistics, Puzzles, Games, Quantum Biodynamics, Geometry, Mathematics, or something similar. Gamemasters should get creative with choosing the '**Right Way**' in this circumstance since the nature of this problem is most strange. This research is Difficulty 2.

Every two intervals (each Task taking two intervals), ten percent more of the crew and twenty percent more of the food stores go missing. This is meant as a hook to increase the tension on the Players. If the Players do not seem to be doing well, feel free to have only three to five percent of crew and complement go missing every two intervals.

Once the '**Right Way**' is discovered, read the following:

It is clear to the research team that there is a super-intelligence behind the recent occurrences. The abundance of DNA-laced bioorganic components seemingly form pieces to something more. The intelligence has utilized all of the systems on the ship that deal with matter/energy transfer. The large amount of components keep them from being assembled anywhere except a large storage bay or a holodeck.

Interestingly, the holodecks continue to malfunction. Upon closer inspection the crew notices that small glands resembling layers of large cells are forming on the walls of holodeck one. They form a writhing lining on all surfaces.

Players can make a **Reason + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 1.

If successful, the task reveals that the lining is composed of an organic substance akin to realize the substance pulsates in synch with the neutron star field and the afflicted crew members' chemoreceptor trigger zones in their brains. A cross comparison of the bioorganic components and the substance lining the holodeck shows that they are genetically compatible.

Scene 4: Putting the Pieces Together

Gamemaster Guidance: *Don't forget that the medical team needs to make one more attempt on the Extended Task in this scene. The Gamemaster should have them roll this at the start of this round. Success by the medical team could keep any other crew members from being taken by the entity. The antiemetic agent can be given to all crew members.*

Eventually, the Players must enter the holodeck to put the puzzle pieces together. They must hurry to do this, as more and more crew go missing. The Gamemaster should space out the crew going missing so that there are at least three characters racing against the clock to solve this quadruple quandary.

Putting together the bioorganic puzzle is an Extended Task with the following conditions:

- Base Difficulty: 4
- Work Track: 12
- Magnitude 4
- Resistance: 0 (The alien entity wants to be contacted)

Once the Players are informed of the Extended Task, please read the following aloud:

This can be considered a Timed Challenge since more and more crew and complement are disappearing every round. It is possible that the medical team succeeded in their Extended Task. If that is the case, only complement like food stores and bio-neural gel packs are disappearing. This is still a dangerous situation since without food or bio-neural gel packs the crew will starve and the ship's computers will not be able to function. Your team must hurry to unlock the secret of this odd puzzle with the hopes that doing so will be the salvation of your missing crew members. Analyzing the bioorganic pieces and arranging them into the intended design is a **Reason/Insight + Engineering Task** with a Difficulty of 4. [The high difficulty is justified due to the extremely alien entity's origin.]

As the pieces begin to take shape and at least half of the Work track is complete, characters with Focuses like Astronavigation, Stellar Cartography, or Spatial Phenomena can roll a **Reason/Insight + Science Task** with a Difficulty of 2. If they succeed, they will notice that the formation of the bioorganic components are in a similar arrangement as the stellar cluster.

Another event that occurs once more than half of the Work track is complete: the substance lining the holodeck walls begins to reach out and attach to the bioorganic components. A **Reason + Medicine Task** assisted by the ship's **Computer + Medicine** with a Difficulty of 0 will indicate that the substance is somehow providing nutrients to the bioorganic components. More can be learned about this process based on the amount of Momentum spent.

- **1 point of Momentum:** The substance is composed of glucose, amino acids such as tryptophan, tyrosin and phenylalanine, Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids, B vitamins, vitamin E, calcium, iron and magnesium.
- **2 points of Momentum:** These elements are common to foods that feed the brain. The elements are of the exact composition of the food stuffs that have gone missing from the ship. They are being used to feed the bioorganic components which, coincidentally, have traces of the DNA of the missing crew.
- **3 points of Momentum:** As more of the component come together, it is clear that some sort of large neural network is being formed. In other words, a brain; a brain whose neurons are arranged in the same formation as the cluster of neutron stars. The creator of the puzzle is building a physical manifestation of itself on a much smaller scale.

The completion of the Extended Task means that the structure of the puzzle is clear to the team. However, it is missing many pieces, probably due to the fact that either A) the medical team kept some crew members from being taken or B) the transports continue but the team completed the Extended Task before the entity could take them all to complete its own puzzle.

Allow the Players to deduce a solution that can keep them from being taken. Completing the puzzle will be necessary to stop the transports. Perhaps they could replicate bioorganic components of their own from elements in sickbay or creative uses of tissue regenerators or laboratory stores. Creating the missing puzzle pieces will be **Gated Challenge** as such:

1. Players need to make a **Reason/Insight + Engineering/Medicine Task** assisted by ship's **Computers + Science/Medicine** with a Difficulty of 1 to isolate the missing pieces.

2. They then must make a **Reason + Medicine/Science Task** assisted by ship's **Computers + Medicine** with a Difficulty of 2 to replicate the needed bioorganic components.
3. The components must be moved to a transporter pad to facilitate transport to the holodeck. Players may decide to do a site to site transport that will add +1 Difficulty to the next action.
4. Due to the size and complexity of the geometric structure forming in the holodeck, the Players must utilize the ship's transporters to get the pieces into place. This is a **Control + Engineering Task** assisted by ship's **Sensors + Engineering** with a Difficulty of 3.

Once all the pieces are in place, move on to the final scene.

Scene 5: Who Is Contacting Whom?

Once the Players have completed constructing the form in holodeck, please read the following aloud:

The final puzzle piece is transported into place. The sound of buzzing electricity fills the holodeck as the bioorganic orbs begin to rapidly rotate and glow. Suddenly, everyone present feels like they have a tendril of heat pushing into their minds; hundreds of indistinct voices talking at once. But the voices are not in fear or pain; they are communicating as fast as thought itself, dialoging with something—no *someone* else. No words can describe the sheer immensity of the super-intelligence to which each individual member of the crew is now exposed. However, there is an understanding. A connection. An interchange.

Gamemaster Guidance: *The entity will ask each Player one question, which they must answer totally truthfully. The Gamemaster should take some time to formulate these questions focusing them on something a pan-dimensional, energy-based alien whose brain is the size of a stellar cluster would want to know about organic life-forms. This is the entity's first time meeting organics. Some interrogatories could be based on the following subjects:*

- *What it is like to digest food.*
- *What it is like to be sick.*
- *Why one character is secretly jealous of another, perhaps a secret admirer of a Player character.*
- *The meaning of guilt as a Player burns with regret over a past mistake or secret crime.*
- *Why a Player character is a member of Section 31 and what Section 31 is.*
- *What is love and why would a Player explore space leaving their loved one behind?*
- *What is the purpose of war? Money? Spirituality?*
- *What is insecurity and why is the captain or command officer so often filled with such feelings?*
- *What is a child and how are they conceived.*

You get the point. This could be a good chance to challenge Players' values and really get emotions stirred up. The gamemaster should not tell the Players whether or not the other Players and NPCs are made privy to how their PCs honestly answer the questions. That will add to the suspense.

In turn, each PC gets to ask a question to the entity, which the entity must answer truthfully. The entity can only answer questions of a more metaphysical nature since that is the sum of its existence. It does bear any great universal secrets though it can confirm the existence of multiple dimensions across infinite realities. It can also answer questions about what its current motives are and its plan.

This is its first encounter with organic beings and it could not fathom how to communicate. However, after scanning the ship it interacted with the computer core (or bio-neural network) and managed to form a quantum interface. It found the bridge between energy and matter and desired to make first contact with the

organic lifeforms. In doing so, it was necessary to transmute the organics (crew members) into energy where it could interface with them on the neuron level while they were in stasis. Each time it converted an organic into energy form it could learn from their collected life experiences. It soon was curious to see if it itself could exist in organic form. Hence, it tried (and succeeded) to reverse the process using the genetic material of the dematerialized crew members to enter the physical plane of existence through a series of bioorganic components. It looks forward to expanding its knowledge of organics through this process.

At this point, the Players will realize that the entity, though highly-intelligent, does not have a highly-developed conscience...yet. It will be a Persuasion Task to convince the alien entity that what it is doing is morally wrong according to the PCs code of conduct. A negotiation must take place in order to convince the entity to alter its current course of actions and restore the crew to their former forms. The Players will need to come up with a creative solution to make persuading the alien even possible. Once a plausible solution have been created, the Players will need a **Control/Presence + Command Task** with a Difficulty of 4 to convince the entity to restore the crew as they were. Negotiation requires the Players to sacrifice something also, perhaps sharing their secrets or something equally impactful.

The Entity

Traits: Curious; Unable to Communicate with Organic Lifeforms

Attributes

Control	Daring	Fitness	Insight	Presence	Reason
5	9	14	8	8	13

Disciplines

Command	Conn	Engineering	Security	Science	Medicine
0	0	5	3	5	0

Combat

Stress: 18 **Resistance:** 10

Weapons:

[Electro-psyhic Wave: 12CD; Intense; Non-Lethal]

Resolution

The Gamemaster can decide if persuading the entity is a Success at Cost or if the Players must try a different method to reverse the process and get rid of the entity. That could extend the game if the alien entity becomes a hostile. Gamemasters who want to have a more peaceful first contact resolution can choose the Success at Cost option, perhaps making the ship run out of food and have everyone on emergency rations until they get a starbase or find a planet with provisions.