

Star Trek Captain's Log Solo RPG

# U.S.S. OHLONE NCC-1975

SE01EP01: "Symbiotic Ambitions"



## Senior Staff [AI art credit: Midjourney art by DM\_Shroud]

**Top** (from L-R): Chief Engineer Lieutenant Tracy Nacu (Human female), Chief Security Officer Lieutenant Yan Shen (Human female), Captain Yuan Wu (Human male), Chief Medical Officer/First Officer Commander Glen Davenport (Human male), Helm Officer Ensign Matwon (Ardanan male), Communications Officer Ensign Paxton Griffin (Human male)

**Left:** Officer Exchange Program Operations Advisor and Second Officer Hitzrex (Ca

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## Overview

In order to play and write this mission I used the provided in both *Captain's Log Solo Roleplaying Game*, oracles in *Ironsworn: Starforged*, along with prompts put into ChatGPT.

## Initial Rolls

- **Mission Type:** Espionage
- **Espionage:** Infiltrate Criminal Gang or Organization (oh my)
- **Incident Theme:** Research Living Ship
- **Advantage:** Lucky Circumstances - An earlier failure has unintended side effects
- Let me add a few more details. For instance, what species is the criminal gang? I will ask the Yes/No Matrix if it is a single species or mixed species gang. Given this is TOS movie era, I will say it is **Probable** to be a single species. Is that so? (5) Yes.
- Let's roll the species. 1-10 will be from the *Enterprise* era. 11-20 will be the TOS era. (19) TOS. Rolling exact species: (18) **Trill**. Very interesting. Trill criminal gang.
- Let's figure out the gang's overall motivation. I want this to be an interesting criminal organization; it does not need to be strictly a common gang. NPC **Archetype** roll = (16) Scientist. NPC Upbringing but adapting for **criminal organization setting**. Roll = (13) Mining Colony. I am skipping to NPC **goals** chart. Roll = (5) Earn fame. **Tactics** = (13) Revealing secrets. That is enough about the organization at this point.
- I will wait to find out about the living ship (or maybe living mining colony) later. For now, I need to figure out what drew the *Ohlone* to this mission. It would seem the mission would have been first to investigate some scurrilous happenings at a mining colony. So I will generate a few more facts.
- First, I want to know about this sector of space. Notable Spatial Phenomena = (7), then rolling for Options A-E (ex. 1-4=A, 5-8=B, etc). (9). **Ember Star**. What is that? White dwarfs are the burned-out cores of collapsed stars that, like dying embers, slowly cool and fade away. They are the remnants of low mass stars, among the dimmest objects observable in the Universe. They are low to medium (less than ten solar mass) Main Sequence stars which have burned through their reservoirs of both hydrogen and helium, passed through the giant phase, were not hot enough to ignite their carbon, puffed off their outer layers to form colorful planetary nebula,

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and then collapsed and cooled into small glowing coals. So we are in a dying star system.

- Let's name this star system (CL p.316.) (1, 8, 3) **Alpha Theta**
- Number of planets in system = (16) 9 minus white dwarf modified; so, **4**. I am now going to rolling primary world (CL p. 297) 3 divided by 4 rounded up is 1. So the primary world is **Alpha Theta I**. (13) Class K (Adaptable)
- I will roll the next three Outer Worlds in this system. Alpha Theta II = (5) Class C (Icy Geoinactive); Alpha Theta III = (4) Class C also; Alpha Theta IV = (13) Class J (Gas Giant).
- On which world is the mining colony set up. Dividing up 4 worlds for D20 roll. (6) = **Alpha Theta II**.
- Since this is fun, let's use *Starforged* book (p. 311) to flesh out this Icy world. [Need to roll D100). Marginal atmosphere; one mining colony; vibrantly colored ice; massive snow drift. (I want to add a little more flavor so I will roll 2 more planetary features and if there is life.) Steaming hot springs (so there is geothermal activity. I like that). Preserved carcasses. Oh my. Life? Diverse. So creatures no doubt adapted to an icy world environment replete with hot springs.
- And what do they mine on this colony (CL p.314)? (9) Diboridium. (I will make up what it is used for.)
- That gives me enough to do an initial mission log.

## Act 1 Scene 1

### Captain's Log, Stardate 8095.1, October 1, 2280

*"The USS Ohlone has just entered the Alpha Theta system. We have been tasked with a highly sensitive mission—espionage. Intelligence reports suggest a criminal organization led by Trill scientists has exerted undue influence over a mining colony on Alpha Theta II. Our objectives are manifold: gather intelligence, assess the situation on the mining colony, and identify any potential threats to the Federation. The unique geology and vibrant colors of Alpha Theta II's icy world—ranging from massive snow drifts to steaming hot springs—present their own set of challenges and wonders. Adding to the gravity of our task, the colony primarily mines*

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*diboridium, a resource of significant strategic importance. With our specialized crew and my own upbringing in a bustling trade colony, we are as prepared as we can be for the diplomatic and investigative intricacies this mission will undoubtedly require."*

Captain Yuan Wu sat pensively in the captain's chair of the *USS Ohlone*, a *Sydney*-class starship that gleamed with technological prowess and a history yet to be written. It was a fine addition to Starfleet, equipped with cutting-edge surveillance and colony-support technology, making it a perfect match for their delicate mission.

The starfield displayed on the main viewer was punctuated by a fading light, a white dwarf star known as Alpha Theta. Four planets orbited the dying celestial body, each shrouded in mystery and scientific wonder. But for now, their mission was focused solely on the icy world of Alpha Theta II.

"Six hours and twenty-seven minutes until we reach the mining colony, Captain," Matwon, the Ardanan helm officer, announced. His fingers lightly touched the helm controls, almost as if he were playing a complex musical instrument.

"Thank you, Mr. Matwon," Captain Wu responded, shifting his gaze from the main viewer to his bridge crew.

The atmosphere on the bridge was a blend of anticipation and trepidation. Each officer was keenly aware of the gravity of their mission. Chief Security Officer Yan Shen, a stern-faced woman with piercing eyes, studied her console like a hawk watching its prey. Beside her was Ensign Paxton Griffin, the Communications Officer, who was busy with frequency scans, ensuring they were not intercepted. Also present was Hiztrex, their Caitian Operations Advisor, who was focused on a data stream that only he understood.

Turning to Matwon, the Captain asked, "What can you tell us about white dwarf star systems?"

Matwon, always enthusiastic to share his knowledge, began, "White dwarf systems are the remnants of stars that have exhausted their nuclear fuel. They're dense, hot, and their gravitational pull can significantly affect planetary orbits and atmospheres."

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## Fleshing out Yuan Wu

- Let's get a little background on these character's, especially Captain Wu. We can start with him asking Matwon what he knows about white dwarf star systems, then he will ask his chief security officer what she knows about the criminal organization run by Trills that may have taken over the mining colony.
- This is a good chance to talk about where Yuan Wu grew up. Busy Colony. Very cosmopolitan. Business and Trade upbringing. He can also expound on his career events with the characters who are on the bridge in the scene (only Chief Security Officer Yan Shen (Human), Helm Officer Matwon (Ardanan), Communications Officer Ensign Paxton Griffin (Human), and Officer Exchange Program Operations Advisor Hiztrex (Caitian) asking prompting questions. Yuan Wu's career experiences were a transporter accident and he was lauded by another culture. ChatGPT, you can get creative making up what happened with the transporter accident and lauded by another culture

"A far cry from the bustling trade colony where I was raised," Yuan Wu mused, "An environment that taught me about diplomacy and trade from a young age, lessons I've found invaluable in my Starfleet career."

Hiztrex raised an eyebrow, "You grew up in a trade colony, Captain?"

"Yes," Wu replied. "I was surrounded by a multitude of cultures and business activities. That experience shaped me in many ways."

Paxton chimed in, "Captain, if I may ask, there was a transporter accident earlier in your career, correct?"

Ah, the infamous transporter accident. A smile touched the corners of Wu's lips. "Indeed, Ensign. A malfunction sent me and my then-commanding officer to an alternate dimension."

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Our molecules were scattered across two realities. Thankfully, our engineers were able to bring us back."

"You make it sound like it was a normal Sunday afternoon, sir," Paxton commented with a shake of the head.

"I'll give you the full story some other time," the captain said.

"Starfleet certainly trains us for the unexpected," Matwon remarked.

"Indeed it does," Captain Wu agreed, before steering the conversation back to their mission. "Chief Shen, what do we know about this criminal organization led by Trill scientists?"

Yan Shen paused, looking up from her console. "We know they have a stranglehold on a mining colony and are led by scientists, but their motivations are unclear. They could be engaging in illegal scientific endeavors, possibly even weaponizing diboridum."

"I will remind everyone that we got this information from a trade vessel that departed the colony three weeks ago. It could just be a rumor." Yuan Wu nodded gravely, "We'll need to tread carefully. I was once lauded by the Zantherian culture for preventing a coup. Their society rarely trusts outsiders. This mission requires similar tact and diplomacy."

Everyone on the bridge wasn't sure if Captain Wu was informing or bragging. His confidence was oftentimes mistaken as arrogance.

Hiztrex nodded, "The Zantherians? Your experience will be invaluable, Captain."

"Let's hope so," Wu said, setting his jaw. "We'll use thrusters only as we approach Alpha Theta II, minimizing the risk of detection. All systems on standby."

Matwon cautioned, "Their orbital satellites could detect us once we get within one million kilometers of the planet."

"Understood," Captain Wu said. "We'll use this time to make our final preparations."

Yuan Wu returned his gaze to the starfield before him. As they drifted closer to the dying light of Alpha Theta and the enigmatic world of Alpha Theta II, he couldn't help but wonder

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what secrets lay buried beneath its icy surface, and what challenges awaited the young crew of the *USS Ohlone*. One thing was certain; they were on the precipice of a mission that could change the balance of power in the sector, if not the galaxy. And so, under the shadow of a fading star, the *USS Ohlone* glided silently through space.

For Captain Yuan Wu, the Ember Star whispered of challenges to come, and he welcomed them. It was, after all, why he had joined Starfleet.

- I want to bring Chief Medical Officer/First Officer Commander Glen Davenport (Human) onto the bridge in this scene. This is special because Captain Wu is a scientist at heart who ended up in command of this colony transport ship and Dr. Davenport is his first officer (XO) who also loves science. Let's say they know about this Trill criminal organization from Starfleet reports. We will call them the SymbioSect. Using advanced biotechnology, they could be altering the genetic makeup of symbionts to create "super symbionts" that can be placed into larger, more powerful lifeforms with enhanced capabilities or attributes, thus corrupting the natural symbiosis process.

"Reports from Starfleet Intelligence suggest the presence of a Trill criminal organization, the SymbioSect, operating in this sector. Their use of dark science to corrupt the natural Trill symbiosis process is disturbing and warrants further investigation," the captain reminded the bridge crew. He sat in his captain's chair, gazing at the star map in front of him. His finger traced the glowing outline of Alpha Theta II as it rotated serenely in a simulated space.

Just then, the turbolift doors whooshed open, admitting Commander Glen Davenport onto the bridge. The stocky man, who usually spent his time in Sickbay or pouring over medical journals, gave a warm smile to the crew as he walked over to the captain. "Captain," Davenport nodded, adjusting his science blue uniform tunic.

"Commander," Wu replied, gesturing to the vacant chair next to him. "I think you'll find our current situation rather... intriguing."

Davenport glanced at the planet in the viewscreen and raised an eyebrow. "Alpha Theta II? A mostly untamed wilderness with rich biodiversity, if I remember correctly. The perfect playground for scientists like us."

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Wu smiled. "Indeed, but there's a snag."

"Isn't there always?" Davenport sat down and activated the console before him, reviewing the incoming data streams.

"We've got an unauthorized signal emanating from the surface. It looks like we've been detected," Paxton said, his eyes narrowing.

Davenport's fingers flew across his console, pulling up the sensor readings. "That's not Starfleet tech. You don't think it could be the SymbioSect, do you?"

Wu nodded. "The modus operandi fits their profile. And given their interest in 'super symbionts,' this planet's diverse lifeforms would be an irresistible target."

Davenport looked concerned. "Their activities could destabilize not just Trill society but the entire quadrant. The Federation can't allow this dark science to proliferate."

"I agree," Wu said, standing up from his chair and pacing. "Which is why I want you on the away team, Commander. You have the medical and scientific expertise to assess the situation on the ground. Perhaps you can find a way to reverse or neutralize their biotechnological meddling."

Davenport nodded gravely. "This mission requires utmost caution; we have no idea what kind of altered lifeforms we might encounter down there, thanks to the SymbioSect."

Wu stopped his pacing and looked Davenport in the eyes. "If there's anyone who can handle this delicate situation, it's you, Glen."

"Thank you, Captain. I'll do my best."

The tension on the bridge was palpable as the crew prepared to make contact with a planet that held not just the promise of scientific discovery but also the threat of dark manipulations that could ripple across the cosmos.

Wu said, "Just the two of us will go first dressed as civilian traders scouting for trade goods. We can tell them the *Ohlone* is merely providing us transport to our colony on Beta Minor. That is not out of the norm."



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- Is the *Ohlone* detected by the colony or criminal organization as they get in orbit of Alpha Theta II? 50/50 = (6) Yes.
  - Will the crew of the *Ohlone* know they are detected? 50/50 = (2) Yes.
  - Let's create the colony leader. Their species is (7, 15) Tellarite. The leader's name is [rolling Name Generator Progression = (16) ADCB. **Me'ebe Videm**. Archetype: (15) Scholar. Upbringing: (11) Isolated Colony. Traits: (20) Unification [of trade networks perhaps]. Goals: (13) Make new friends [or business partners]. Tactics: (19) Tech upgrades. Federation Outlook: (5) Controlling.

The tension was still hanging thick in the air when the communications console buzzed to life.

"Incoming signal, Captain," said Ensign Paxton Griffin, the *Ohlone's* communications officer.

"On screen," Captain Wu ordered. Perhaps the idea of secretly infiltrating the colony was premature.

The main viewscreen flickered and then displayed the stout, bearded figure of a Tellarite. His eyes were sharp, intelligent, and filled with a cautious curiosity. "*Greetings, Sydney-class starship Ohlone,*" he said, enunciating each word carefully. "*I am Me'ebe Videm, leader of the Alpha Theta II colony. To what do we owe the pleasure?*"

Captain Wu stood, smiling diplomatically. "Greetings, Leader Videm. I am Captain Yuan Wu, and this is my First Officer, Commander Glen Davenport. We are here on a scientific mission. We also received some intelligence that there may be unauthorized activity on your planet."

Me'ebe Videm squinted, "*You mean the SymbioSect. We've suspected for some time that they have a hidden operation here. Their science could potentially tamper with the biodiversity we're studying, and we are not equipped to handle them.*"

Wu and Davenport exchanged glances. This was the confirmation they needed.

"Leader Videm," Davenport interjected, "we've been briefed on the SymbioSect. We know they're involved in altering symbionts to create 'super symbionts,' which is not only an

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ethical concern but could have unforeseeable consequences for the local ecosystem and beyond."

Videm's eyes widened. *"That's worse than we thought. We've just been working on unifying the trade networks in this sector, focusing on tech upgrades to make our operations more efficient. We don't have the firepower or the expertise to deal with this sort of thing."*

"That's where we come in," Wu assured him. "We can offer our assistance in handling the SymbioSect. But we'll need your help navigating the terrain and identifying any changes in the native fauna that might give us clues."

Videm looked visibly relieved. *"It's a deal, Captain. And perhaps afterward, we can discuss a more formal partnership? It's always good to make new—shall we say—business friends."*

"We would be honored, Leader Videm," Wu replied, appreciating the Tellarite's skill in turning even a crisis into an opportunity for collaboration. "We shall prepare an away team immediately."

As the viewscreen blinked off, Davenport turned to Wu. "Captain, I recommend we bring along our chief security officer. We don't know what we're going to find down there."

Wu nodded. "Agreed. And while you're down there, I'll liaise with Leader Videm to see what other intelligence we can gather about the SymbioSect's operations."

"Excellent," Davenport said, heading for the turbolift. "I'll assemble the team."

Wu watched as the doors closed behind his First Officer. If they played their cards right, they'd not only neutralize a potential galaxy-wide threat but also forge a new alliance that could benefit the Federation. But first, they had to deal with the dark science that awaited them on the surface of Alpha Theta II.

With a mixture of trepidation and determination, Captain Wu ordered, "Maintain standard orbit and prepare to beam down the away team. This mission just became a lot more complicated."

And as the *Ohlone* held her position in the sky above the mysterious planet, her crew set out to confront an enemy that threatened to corrupt the very essence of life itself.

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## Act 1, Scene 2

- The scene starts with them beaming into the colony where they are met by Me'ebe Videm, the leader of the Alpha Theta II colony, who confirmed the presence of the SymbioSect and welcomed Federation assistance.
- The away team includes Captain Yuan Wu, Commander Davenport, Lieutenant Nacu, and Chief Security Officer Yan Shen among others. They are preparing to beam down to the surface of Alpha Theta II.
- Videm will explain in detail his diboridium mining operations and how challenging it is on an ice planet with geothermal activity and hostile native fauna.
- I think I should roll at this point to see if Captain Wu detects anything strange right off the bat. I will make Wu's security rating 1 since he is primarily a scientist. This will be Insight (10) + Security (1) and I will assign him his first Focus of Colony Infrastructure. (2,8) so one momentum, which I will use immediately to roll on the Momentum tables. (1) Advanced Warning. (19) Intercept Transmission or code. So the Ohlone's communications officer picks up a SymbioSect transmission that indicates a trap laid for the Starfleet officers.
- The trap involved hostile local fauna. I will roll on Beasts of the Galaxy table to determine what kind. Life-Form Size (16) Very Big. Invertebrates (7) Cnidarian, an aquatic invertebrate animal of the phylum Cnidaria, which comprises the coelenterates. Structural Adaptation (let's make two). (8, 18) Gills, Venom Glands. Behavioral Adaptation (6) Diurnal.
- Give this big creature an alien name and have it attack the away team where they stand. The colony is built on the icy world filled with snow storms and thermal vents. So the creature might come out of a thermal vent or from beneath the colony to attack.

The transporter hum faded away, leaving Captain Yuan Wu and his away team standing on the cold, icy surface of Alpha Theta II. The snow was blowing harshly, but the Federation-issue thermal suits kept them warm. Me'ebe Videm, the colony's leader, stood in front of them with a welcoming smile.



*[Art from <https://avillanueva.artstation.com/>]*

The mining colony on Alpha Theta II was a sprawling labyrinth of interconnected modules, each specialized for different functions ranging from diboridium extraction to personnel living quarters. Operated primarily by Tellarites from the Mining Consortium, the colony had a uniquely utilitarian aesthetic, optimized for maximum efficiency and minimal waste. The buildings were sturdy, built with Tellarite precision to withstand the harsh icy conditions and frequent snow storms that swept across the planet's surface. Geothermal vents dotting the landscape were harnessed for both heat and energy, powering the sophisticated drilling mechanisms that dug deep beneath the surface for precious diboridium.

Sonic fences surround the colony's perimeter, designed to ward off the planet's hostile fauna with frequency modulations that were inaudible yet intolerable to the creatures. Inside, the atmosphere was one of constant activity; Tellarites moved briskly, engaged in heated debates or deeply immersed in their duties. Communication hubs, data analysis

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rooms, and operational centers were hives of ceaseless motion, where complex calculations and plans were hashed out in the pursuit of mining efficiency.

Despite the harsh environment and constant challenges, a sense of community prevailed among the inhabitants. The communal dining area served a combination of Tellarite and Federation cuisine, and a small recreation area offered some respite from the grueling work. While the primary focus was resource extraction, the Tellarites of Alpha Theta II had built a colony that was not just functional, but a home for those willing to brave the planet's challenges.

"Captain Wu, Commander Davenport, Lieutenant Nacu, Security Chief Yan Shen, welcome to Alpha Theta II," Me'ebe said, extending a gloved hand toward the captain. "Let me brief you on our operations here. We are mining diboridium, a resource you know is of significant importance. It's particularly challenging on this planet because of the constant geothermal activity beneath the surface and the icy weather conditions. Also, the local fauna are far from friendly. In fact, we've had to construct sonic fences to keep some of the more aggressive species away."

Just as Me'ebe mentioned the fauna, Captain Wu's tricorder buzzed discreetly in his pocket. As he fumbled for it, he looked up to see Ensign Griffin's face on his communicator.

*"Captain, I've intercepted a transmission. It's encoded, but I am 99% sure it's from the SymbioSect. They're planning to spring a trap using the local fauna."*

Wu nodded subtly, signaling his team to be on high alert. "Thank you, Ensign. Keep monitoring."

Before Wu could say another word, the ground beneath them rumbled. From a thermal vent nearby, a massive creature burst out, snow and ice flying in every direction. It was a huge cnidarian-like creature, an aquatic invertebrate, with elongated tentacles that seemed to have venom glands. It was diurnal, and its gills were flared, indicating that it was able to survive outside its aquatic habitat.

"Oh, no," Me'ebe yelled in terror. "The Korruga."

"Defensive positions!" Chief Yan Shen yelled, drawing her phaser. The Korruga lunged toward them, tentacles flailing wildly.

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- Time to roll for the crew's combat actions. I have the combat expertise of Yan Shen, the medical skills of Commander Davenport, and the engineering savvy of Lieutenant Nacu, which I will, if needed, use ship stats to roll their actions.
  - Let's give Chief Yan the lead to see if her warning might pay off. Captain Wu's Control (10) with Yan (ship) Security (2). (14, 16) Fail! Is she injured? Yes/No 50/50. (3) Yes!
  - Rolling to see if Wu is hit and injured by Korraga. Fitness (9) + Security (1). (5,10) Successful dodge with momentum.
  - Is Davenport injured? Yes/No 50/50. (18) no.
  - Is Nacu injured? Yes/No 50/50. (5) Yes.



[Art from [this site.](#)]

The sudden appearance of the Korruga threw the away team into a frenzy. The giant cnidarian-like creature's tentacles flailed wildly as it lunged at them. Chief Yan Shen was quick to react, drawing her phaser and shouting again, "Defensive positions!" But even her

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swift response wasn't enough. One of the venom-laden tentacles swept past her defenses, stinging her and throwing her off balance. She grunted in pain as the venom started to take effect.

Captain Wu dodged the tentacle aimed at him with agile reflexes, narrowly avoiding its grasp. His tricorder continued to buzz, but his attention was firmly on the immediate threat. "Commander Davenport, see to Chief Yan. Nacu, can we use any of these geothermal vents against it?"

Before Lieutenant Nacu could reply, another tentacle whipped through the air, striking her and knocking her down. Commander Davenport moved quickly to assess Yan and Nacu's injuries, grateful that he had avoided a direct hit himself.

"Chief Yan, your condition?" Captain Wu asked, trying to keep his voice steady as he circled the creature cautiously, phaser in hand.

"Venom... it's slowing me down, Captain," Yan grimaced, clutching her arm where she'd been stung.

Commander Davenport pulled a hypo from his medical kit and quickly administered an anti-venom to Yan Shen. "This should counteract the poison, but you'll need immediate medical attention back on the ship."

"Captain, we need to retreat and regroup!" Yan urged, feeling slightly better but knowing they were still in peril. "This thing isn't going to go down easily."

"Agreed," Captain Wu said, tapping his communicator. "*Ohlone*, emergency beam-out!" Wu cast a glance at Me'ebe, who was as horrified by the event as they were. The consequences of the intercepted transmission were now painfully clear, and their mission had just become far more complex and dangerous.

- Having Wu save momentum for that last turn.
- What is the probability that the intercepted transmission was a trap and that transporters have been jammed? I think it is Highly Probable. (5) Yes.
- Let's have Captain Yuan Wu fire at the Korruga. Control (10) + Security (1). (4,12). Success. 1 hit to Korruga.



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As Captain Wu tapped his communicator, calling for an emergency beam-out, he felt a momentary flicker of static. His eyes met Me'ebe's, and in that instant, they both understood: the transporters had been jammed. The intercepted transmission wasn't just a warning—it was part of a larger trap.

"We've been jammed!" Wu barked, gripping his phaser tighter. With no time to ponder the implications, he aimed at one of the Korraga's venomous tentacles and fired. A bright bolt of energy lanced out, striking the limb. The creature roared in pain and retracted the injured tentacle, but it was still very much a threat.

"Wu to *Ohlone*, we need a workaround on these jammers, now!" Wu shouted into his communicator, desperately trying to establish a connection with his ship.

"*Working on it, Captain,*" came the strained voice of Ensign Griffin, the *Ohlone's* communications officer. "*It might take a minute.*"

"A minute might be too long," Wu replied, his eyes scanning the treacherous icy field and the thermal vents that seemed to be the Korraga's lair.

"Captain, can we attempt to use the geothermal vents against the creature?" Lieutenant Nacu said, wincing as she pushed herself up from the ground. "If I can recalibrate one of our phasers to ignite the gas, we might be able to scare it off or even injure it."

"Do it, and quickly!" Wu ordered.

- Let's roll to see if Lieutenant Nacu is successful in her attempt to recalibrate a phaser. Wu's Presence (10) + Ship Engineering (2). (5,15). Success. Another hit on the Korraga.
- Is the venom negatively affecting Lieutenant Nacu and Yan Shen? I think this is Probable. (8). Yes. They should be ineffective going forward.
- Can Dr. Davenport at least stabilize them? I think this is Somewhat Probable. (5) yes.
- Does igniting the gas in the thermal vent catch other structures on fire? I will say 50/50. (12) no.
- Can Captain Wu locate a structure to hide in, having himself and Davenport carry Nacu and Shen to safety? Reason (7) + Command (4) with Colony Infrastructure

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focus. (15, 19). Fail. Spend Momentum for rerolling one dice. 19. Fail. They are cornered by Korrage.

As the situation unfolded, Captain Wu's pulse quickened, fully aware that the crew's margin for error was rapidly shrinking. Lieutenant Nacu, wincing from the venom's effect, managed to recalibrate her phaser. With a focused burst, she ignited the gas emanating from a nearby geothermal vent. The resulting explosion roared towards the Korrage, singeing another of its tentacles.

The creature let out a furious bellow and recoiled, but it did not retreat.

Wu's communicator buzzed with static. "*Captain, we're close to breaking through the jamming,*" Ensign Griffin's voice sputtered through.

"Fast as you can, Ensign," Wu replied, his eyes darting around, looking for an escape route or some form of cover. But the icy, barren landscape offered little in the way of refuge. They were cornered.

Dr. Davenport managed to stabilize Nacu and Yan Shen, but the venom was still coursing through their veins, leaving them incapacitated and weakening fast.

Wu glanced at Me'ebe, who looked equally cornered and horrified. The Korrage, still enraged and injured, lunged forward again, its remaining tentacles flailing wildly.

It was a dire moment, their options running out as quickly as their time.

"Get us out of here, man," Wu yelled at Me'ebe. "You must know an escape route and a place we can get out of harm's way."

- Is Me'ebe secretly being coerced by the SymbioSect? I think this is probable. (11) Yes.
- Will Wu notice that the Korrage is only targeting him and his fellow officers and not any of the Tellarites? Insight (10) + Command (4). (1, 15) Yes. Spending momentum to roll Advantage. Historic Precedent.
- As stated before, Yuan Wu grew up on a busy colony, Narrate how he recognizes a similar building type constructed and distributed by Colony Structures, Inc., a Federation developer. This building normally contains a protected attic space. Make up the sci-fi reason why the colony needs that. In this scene, Yuan recognized that

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Me'ebe is going to be no help at all and he and Davenport must find a secure location to defend against the Korruga.

In the midst of chaos, Captain Wu's analytical mind started piecing things together. He couldn't help but notice that the Korruga's attacks were strangely specific—targeting only him and his crew, while leaving the Tellarites unscathed. It was as if the creature was purposefully avoiding them. This wasn't mere coincidence; it had to be calculated. And that's when his eyes narrowed at Me'ebe, who seemed inexplicably passive despite the ongoing threat. Could he be coerced or controlled by the SymbioSect?

These thoughts swirled in Wu's mind as he frantically scanned the terrain for any signs of sanctuary. And that's when he saw it—a structure that was unmistakably familiar. It was a building type often constructed by Colony Structures, Inc., a Federation developer. The building was designed with a secure attic space, a feature incorporated to act as an emergency pressure chamber for colonies susceptible to violent atmospheric fluctuations. The attic was constructed with reinforced polymers and had its own independent life support system to maintain pressure during storms or other atmospheric crises.

"We're not going to get any help from Me'ebe," Wu whispered to Dr. Davenport, nodding subtly toward the building in the distance. "We need to get to that structure; its attic space could serve as a defensible position."

Without waiting for a reply, Wu grabbed the phaser he had set for heavy stun and fired it towards the Korruga, just enough to momentarily disorient the beast. It was the break they needed.

"Go! Go! Go!" Wu yelled, leading the charge toward the building. Dr. Davenport, carrying his medical kit, followed, doing his best to support the stumbling and weakened Nacu and Yan Shen.

As they reached the building, Wu tapped on the door's access pad. Thankfully, the door hissed open, and they quickly moved inside, making their way to the attic.

Wu sealed the door behind them, activating the attic's emergency protocols. "This will have to do for now. At least we're out of that creature's immediate reach." His eyes met Dr.

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Davenport's. "Get them stabilized, Doctor. We don't know how much time we have, but for now, we're as safe as we can be."

And so, as they prepared to fend off whatever was coming next, Wu couldn't shake the sinking feeling that they had only seen the tip of the iceberg. The Korrage, the SymbioSect, Me'ebe's strange behavior—these were merely symptoms of a deeper, more insidious threat that was yet to reveal itself. But whatever it was, Wu vowed to get to the bottom of it. For now, though, they had a brief respite, and in this dangerous game, every second counted.

- This could be a good time to evoke the **Advantage: Lucky Circumstances** - An earlier failure has unintended side effects.
- Time to introduce a Trill that is on the planet that can get them out of this situation. Is it **Somewhat Probable** that the Trill character has access to a transporter than can cut past the transporter interference? (4). Yes.
- Hmm. What kind of location will they be transported to. Using *Starforged* book>Sanctum Feature>(69) Sealed containers of inscrutable purpose>Santum Opportunity>(53) Device or artifact reveals its purpose
- Chief Engineer Lieutenant Tracy Nacu (Human and poisoned by Korrage venom), Chief Security Officer Lieutenant Yan Shen (Human and poisoned by Korrage venom), Captain Yuan Wu (Human), and Chief Medical Officer/First Officer Commander Glen Davenport (Human) have been transported into an unknown location.
- ChatGPT needs to describe the area that might or might not be a secure room in the mine that has some computers that control mining equipment, a lab of sorts, and Sealed containers of inscrutable purpose. A Trill female is present. Describe her in detail.

## Act 1, Scene 3

As Captain Wu and his crew hunkered down in the makeshift refuge, there was a sudden, disorienting sensation—a momentary loss of equilibrium and then a flash of light. The next thing they knew, they were no longer in the attic space. It was as if reality itself had been

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momentarily warped, and when it snapped back into focus, they found themselves in a completely different environment.

"We've been transported," Lieutenant Nacu said, her face beginning to show signs of swelling, the venom running through her system.

They were in what appeared to be a subterranean chamber, an amalgamation of a lab, control center, and what looked like an antiquities storage room. High-tech computer interfaces controlling mining equipment were juxtaposed against a rustic ambiance—wooden workbenches, and even a few arcane trinkets that seemed out of place. Most intriguingly, though, were a series of sealed containers placed carefully on one of the tables. Each container emitted a low hum and was marked with inscrutable symbols neither Federation Standard nor any known language. It gave the impression that they held something far more significant than their nondescript appearance suggested.

Standing in the room was a Trill woman, appearing to be in her mid-thirties but with an aura that suggested a depth of experience beyond her years. She had the characteristic Trill spots running down each side of her face and neck. She wore a mixture of civilian and scientific attire, and there was an emblem on her coat that resembled neither Starfleet nor any known planetary insignia. Her eyes, a penetrating brown, looked at them with a mix of relief and serious evaluation.



"Ah, you made it. I wasn't certain if the mine's emergency transporter would work through the interference," she said, moving to shut down the machine she was working on. "I'm Verena, and you can thank your lucky stars you moved away from those geothermal vents. The vents masked your exact location until you moved into the structure. I was able to bypass the colony's transport jam from this interior junction and get a lock on you."

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Wu glanced at his team, all equally baffled and relieved. "Lucky circumstances," Wu muttered to himself before stepping forward. "I'm Captain Yuan Wu, and this is my crew. We owe you our thanks, Verena. But I have to ask, what is this place, and what are those containers?"

Verena hesitated briefly before answering, "You're in a secret part of a mining facility that we—my associates and I—have repurposed for our research. As for these," she gestured at the sealed containers, "they are the reason I'm here. But their purpose—well, that would take some time to explain."

- I need to integrate the original **Incident Theme**: Research Living Ship but I want to change this to Research Living Dirobi
- I need to roll up more about Verena. She is a scientist but what is her upbringing? (3) Busy Colony. Interesting, just like Captain Wu. They must know each other. Perhaps that is why Wu was selected for this mission. Let's make it that Captain Wu was close to Verena's brother. ChatGPT can make up the brother. Let's roll Verena's cultural trait. (3) Art. Hm. She is an artist and scientist. What is her goal? (4) Defeat a rival. Perhaps a scientific rival. She is working against the SybmioSect. She must be the insider who warned Starfleet about the illegal experiments. I am rolling her Tactic. (17) Stealing. Okay. So she stole the sealed container, no doubt to keep the SymbioSect from abusing what must be components of the living diboridium mine for their dark purposes.
- Time to roll up the life form type. I can't decide if it is an Exotic-Based or Incorporeal Life Form. So I will make it a 50/50 roll. (6) Exotic-Based. (7) Electromagnetic life-form. I want to now roll on the Mental Capacity/Awareness. (12) Patient.
- ChatGPT should make up the science of how the creature in the living mine helps the SymbioSect with their dark experiments. In addition, Verena explains that the Koragga is actually one of the symbiotes that gave up its Trill host for the Koragga body—one of the earlier experiments that worked out.
- CHatGPT, here is some information on Trills: Trill symbionts are one of the lifeforms native to the planet Trill and comprise part of the combined consciousness of a joined Trill. The symbiont does not have any extrasensory perception and

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communication between symbionts or symbiont and host happen via electrical impulses. The symbiont appears worm-like in shape, although larger than most common Earth worms. It can live in pools on Trill (see Caves of Mak'ala) or within a Trill humanoid host—and now it seems like the SymbioSect have successfully gotten a symbiote to take to another host body.

Captain Wu found himself caught in the swirl of Verena's words, momentarily disoriented by the complexity of the situation they had stumbled upon. But then, another layer of surprise unfurled: "Wait, Verena? From Upsilon IV? Your brother and I were close friends during my time there."

A fleeting but warm smile passed over Verena's face. "Yes, my brother Zefren spoke highly of you. He would be relieved to know you're the one Starfleet sent. I warned them about the illegal experiments the SymbioSect were conducting, but I didn't know who they would send to investigate."

Wu found it difficult to reconcile the artist and scientist before him with the young girl who'd once painted the landscapes of their shared colony world. "You've come a long way from our busy little colony, Verena. From art to cutting-edge science, and apparently espionage?"

"You could say that art is my respite, but science—science is my battlefield. I've been working to defeat a rival group—the SymbioSect. They've been abusing a natural phenomenon of this planet, a living dirobidium mine, for lack of a better term." Verena's face tightened as she continued, "I had to steal these containers; they're part of the mine's essence, a symbiotic electromagnetic life-form. In its natural state, it's patient and non-hostile, but they've been distorting its properties for dark experiments."

Her words fell heavily in the room. Wu processed what she was saying as she moved to a computer interface and called up some data. Diagrams and schematics of bizarre-looking molecules and compounds appeared on the screen.

"The SymbioSect discovered that this life-form, which I've termed the Dirobi, possesses an electromagnetic resonance that can amplify and mutate symbiont capabilities," the Trill female said. "They've been fusing it with Trill symbionts to create... aberrations. Your encounter with the Korraga? That creature was once a symbiont—fused with the Dirobi and

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introduced into a predatory host native to this planet as an experiment. The symbionts give up their Trill host bodies willingly, lured by the promise of a more powerful existence."

Wu felt a chill go down his spine. "You're saying the Korraga attacked us under the influence of this SymbioSect? And that the sybiote was 'piloting' the Korraga?"

"Exactly. The experiment twisted its impulses, made it more aggressive, territorial. It was only protecting the SymbioSect's interests," Verena said, her voice tinged with sorrow.

Captain Wu turned to his officers, "We need to put a stop to this, not just for us, but for everyone. The implications of this research are horrifying." He then looked back at Verena, "Are you able to help us further? We need to heal my team and find a way to dismantle whatever facility the SymbioSect has built here."

Verena's eyes met Wu's. "I can show your doctor the way to the medical bay located in this mining station."

Wu looked at Dr. Davenport and his two injured officers, Shen and Nacu. They were looking worse for wear. "What do you think, Doctor?"

"Without the ability to get to the *Ohlone*, I could use all the help I could get. If the Korraga is a native creature, I would think that any medical facility might have an antidote to its venom," Davenport stated.

- I think this is **Probable**. (11) Yes.

"Yes," Verena said. She tapped on a computer and brought up schematic of the mining facility. "Here is the way to the medical facility. You should go now. The venom is most potent. They could be dead within the hour."

Wu gave Davenport a nod. "Let's head there."

"Wait." Verena took the captain by the arm. "Time is of the essence. While he helps them, we can focus on the SymbioSect problem. These containers hold the essence of the Dirobi life-form. I've been researching a way to use its electromagnetic properties to counteract the mutations."



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The captain checked with the doctor. The doctor nodded and took the two women who could manage to walk toward the exit. "Doctor, stabilize them The minute you get a chance head back to the *Ohlone*." He turned to Verena. "Let's get to work," Wu said, steeling himself for the challenge ahead as his fellow officers left the area.

Verena pointed to a map of the mining facility. "Now that the SymbioSect knows you are here, we need to move fast. We need to move through these corridors to arrive at the research facility that they have been leasing from the Tellarite Mining Consortium."

"Leasing?" Wu asked.

"Yes. The SymbioSect pay a pretty sum for privacy to continue their research. I am sure we can find their research into the electromagnetic life-form. I am thinking that your Starfleet science expertise could come in handy."

- Adding **Xenobiology** focus to Captain Wu.

"Before I was a captain, I was a chief science officer on research vessel. I only took my own command at the request of Starfleet after quite the interdimensional incident. Anyways, xenobiology is a speciality of mine. If you get me that research, I am sure we can manufacture a way to stop the SymbioSects experimentation. Have you determined if the life-form is sentient?"

- There is a 50/50 chance of the creature being sentient. (9). Yes.

"I tend to believe it is," she responded.

"What proof do you have?"

"I have been able to isolate the creature's specific electromagnetic resonance. As you will note in this data map I constructed, the main form is moving through the diboridium veins. Notice how its movements correspond with the SymbioSects mining operations."

Wu examined the data. "Even animals know how to flee from predators. What makes you think that the creature has the capacity for feelings or cognitive ability?"

- I prompted ChatGPT to make up an explanation.

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Verena scrolled through the interface until she reached another set of data visualizations. "Look at this sequence of electromagnetic pulses emitted by the Dirobi. They follow a pattern far too complex to be random or instinctual. I've been analyzing it for weeks now, and I'm convinced it's a rudimentary form of language. Furthermore, the creature seems to change its 'tune,' so to speak, when interacting with different materials and organisms."

Captain Wu scrutinized the data. The waveform complexity did hint at a structure that reminded him of coded messages. "It's like Morse code but much more intricate."

"Exactly. It's a form of communication, and it adjusts its pulses when I've introduced various stimuli via the mining facility's subterranean scanning equipment. It's as if it's learning or, at the very least, adapting its behavior in a way that indicates understanding and decision-making."

Wu nodded, impressed and a bit alarmed. "We're dealing with a sentient being, then. And it's been exploited by the SymbioSect for their dark experiments."

"Yes, and we have the expertise to put an end to this. The data I've stolen, combined with your background in xenobiology, could help us find a way to communicate with the Dirobi. Perhaps we could negotiate a symbiosis that benefits everyone and doesn't involve exploitation."

Wu clenched his fists. "Then we've no time to waste. Let's go put a stop to this nightmare and save a sentient life-form while we're at it."

The captain kept one concern to himself. He noted how Verena spoke of negotiating a symbiosis. That statement revealed a lot to him. Though she was interested in stopping the SybioSect's experiments that was harming a sentient creature she was still open to the idea of the symbiotes merging with more than just Trill. He made a mental note.

- Using **Starforged** to decide the Settement Access then Research type. Rolling Access Area (49) Corridor; Feature (39) Leaking Pipes; Peril (79) Path is Trapped; Opportunity (70) Opening to outmaneuver or escape a threat or foe.
- **Instructions to ChatGPT:** describe how Captain Wu and Verena proceed to the first area on their way to the research lab. Have the two converse about their

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backgrounds and what got them into science then Generate a story based on these random rolls Access Area (49) Corridor; Feature (39) Leaking Pipes; Peril (79) Path is Trapped; Opportunity (70) Opening to outmaneuver or escape a threat or foe. Perhaps the threat can be a monstrous mutated creature, a failed experiment that got loose.

## Act 1, Scene 4

- **Instructions to ChatGPT:** Now, write a scene that takes place on the USS Ohlone in orbit of the planet. The scene should include Helm Officer Ensign Matwon (Ardanan), Communications Officer Ensign Paxton Griffin (Human), and Officer Exchange Program Operations Advisor and Second Officer Hiztrex (Caitian) who is now in command of Ohlone since the captain and doctor are trapped on the surface. They have lost communication with the away team composed of Chief Engineer Lieutenant Tracy Nacu (Human), Chief Security Officer Lieutenant Yan Shen (Human), Captain Yuan Wu (Human), Chief Medical Officer/First Officer Commander Glen Davenport (Human), and transporters don't work. The colony will not respond to hails. ChatGPT, write what the conversation might look like on the bridge at this point.

On the bridge of the *USS Ohlone*, tension was palpable. Officer Exchange Program Operations Advisor and Second Officer Hiztrex sat in the captain's chair, his feline eyes narrowing as he studied the information scrolling across his console. Helm Officer Ensign Matwon and Communications Officer Ensign Paxton Griffin exchanged worried glances.

"Any word from the away team?" Hiztrex finally asked, his Caitian accent giving his words an exotic timbre.

Griffin shook his head. "Still no signal, sir. It's like they've disappeared off the face of the planet. And I can't get a hold of the colony either; it's like they're deliberately ignoring our hails."

Hiztrex tapped his claws against the arm of the chair, deep in thought. "We need to consider our options. Ensign Matwon, how stable is our orbit?"

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Matwon, an Ardanian with the usual air of scientific curiosity, checked the navigation data. "Orbit is stable, sir, but I'm detecting unusual electromagnetic fluctuations from the planet's surface. They could interfere with our systems if they intensify."

"That might explain our communication issues," Griffin interjected.

"Indeed," Hitzrex mused. "Could those fluctuations also be affecting the transporters?"

"It's very likely, sir," Matwon replied.

Hitzrex sighed. "We have a crew down there in potential danger, a colony that's not responding, and we're sitting here unable to do anything. This isn't ideal."

Griffin looked up. "Should we consider sending another away team, sir?"

Hitzrex hesitated. Sending more crew down might just complicate the situation, but they needed to do something. "I'm hesitant to risk more personnel without knowing what we're dealing with. Ensign Griffin, try boosting the signal for one last attempt at hailing both the colony and our away team."

"Understood, sir," Griffin said, fingers flying over his controls.

As he worked, Hitzrex turned to Matwon. "Prepare a probe with communication relays. If we can't establish contact soon, we'll launch it into a high-altitude orbit over the colony. Maybe that will help us break through whatever is jamming our signals."

Matwon nodded, immediately setting the computer to prepare the probe.

The tension on the bridge reached a fever pitch as Griffin attempted the enhanced hail. After a few moments that felt like an eternity, he looked up, disappointment clear on his face. "Still no response, sir."

Hitzrex let out a sigh, his whiskers twitching in frustration. "Alright, launch the probe. Let's hope it gives us the connection we need. And keep trying to establish contact. I want hourly updates. We won't abandon our people down there."

Griffin and Matwon nodded, their faces set in grim determination. Whatever was happening on the planet below, the crew of the *USS Ohlone* wasn't giving up on their own.

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- Rolling Sensors (9) + Security (2). (3,6) Momentum generated.
  - Is it possible that with the probe ejected, their sensor resolution is improved and now they can get a transporter lock on at least the doctor and Nacu and Shen? I think so. I will make that a Momentum spend for an Advantage. Let's make this sensors (9) + conn (4) with the Advanced Transporters focus. (3, 7). Success and another momentum, which I will SAVE.
  - **Saved momentum**
  - But we will say Captain Wu is too deep inside the mine now for them to get a lock. He is on his own for now.

With the probe successfully launched and beginning its high-altitude orbit over the colony, the bridge crew waited with bated breath. Ensign Matwon analyzed the incoming data, his eyes widening with realization. "Sir, the probe's relays have enhanced our sensor resolution. I think we may be able to get a transporter lock on Doctor Davenport, Lieutenant Nacu, and Lieutenant Shen!"

Hiztrex's eyes brightened. "Do it, Ensign. Transport them directly to sickbay."

"Understood, sir. Initiating transport sequence now," Matwon said, activating the controls with deft fingers.

Paxton Griffin, keeping an eye on the communication channels, suddenly perked up.

"Transport successful, sir. They're aboard."

"Good work, both of you. I'm heading down to sickbay to assess the situation. Keep trying to reestablish contact with Captain Wu and the colony. And keep an eye on those electromagnetic fluctuations," Hiztrex ordered, rising from the captain's chair.

## **Act 1, Scene 5**

Hiztrex entered sickbay to find a scene of controlled chaos. Medical personnel were tending to Lieutenant Nacu and Lieutenant Shen, who were laid out on bio-beds, while Doctor Davenport was in conversation with a nurse. Upon seeing Hiztrex, Davenport broke away and approached him.

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"Commander, good to see you," Davenport said, looking weary but relieved. "I didn't think we'd make it back."

Hiztrex extended a clawed hand, shaking Davenport's. "We've been working hard to reestablish contact. What happened down there? We lost all communication with you."

Davenport began to fill him in on the horrifying details—the illegal experiments, the predatory Korraga creature they'd encountered, the venom affecting his crew, and their meeting with Verena.

Hiztrex listened attentively, his eyes narrowing further with each revelation. "This is deeply troubling, Doctor. I'm concerned about Captain Wu; we couldn't get a lock on him for transport."

Davenport nodded. "He's deep inside a mining facility, trying to put an end to the SymbioSect's experiments. They've been abusing a sentient life-form, Commander. Wu stayed behind to help Verena stop them."

"Sentient?" Hiztrex's ears flicked in disbelief and concern. "That's a game-changer. We have a moral duty to protect such life-forms."

"I agree," said Davenport. "But first, I need to treat Shen and Nacu. The venom from that creature is potent."

"Of course, Doctor. Do what you must. We'll keep trying to establish contact with Captain Wu. For now, let's save our crew and hope the Captain can save that life-form."

With a nod, Davenport returned to his medical duties, and Hiztrex exited sickbay, his mind racing with concerns but also a glimmer of hope. Their situation was dire, but they were Starfleet; they'd faced worse odds before. And they had something the SymbioSect didn't—each other.

## **Act 2, Scene 1**

### **Captain's Log, Supplemental.**

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*"We've uncovered a situation on Alpha Theta II that's far more complex and perilous than initial intelligence suggested. While my crew aboard the USS Ohlone is no doubt working tirelessly to reestablish contact with the away team, I find myself isolated deep inside a mining facility, wrestling with ethical quandaries that stretch the limits of our mission parameters.*

*"The situation has escalated far beyond diboridium mining. We are dealing with a sentient life-form dubbed the Dirobi, whose existence is being manipulated for dangerous experiments. These unethical acts are led by a Trill organization, the SymbioSect, and it appears they have some level of coercion over the colony leader, Me'ebe Videm. The creature we encountered, the Korruga, is a direct result of these experiments—a mutated Trill symbiont.*

*"I've always believed that diplomacy and understanding can avert most crises. But here, on a frigid, remote mining colony, it's clear that we've moved beyond that point. It's not just the lives of my crew at stake but an entire sentient species. Our responsibilities as Starfleet officers have never been more apparent. We have a moral imperative to protect the Dirobi and to stop these experiments."*

Captain Wu and Verena had exited her hidden lab and headed down a dimly lit corridor. The walls were lined with exposed wires and pipes, one of which was leaking a mysterious fluid onto the floor. As they walked briskly, Captain Wu glanced at the pipe and then at Verena.

"Engineering doesn't seem to be a priority here," he had remarked, avoiding a puddle of the leaking fluid.

"Resources are mostly allocated to research. The Tellarite Mining Consortium isn't much concerned with aesthetics or maintenance," Verena replied, navigating the corridor with familiarity.

They reached a fork in the pathway and paused. Wu looked at Verena, who consulted a handheld device for directions.

"This way," she pointed to the left.

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As they proceeded, Wu found himself thinking about how both of their lives had been so deeply entangled with science. "So what drew you into the sciences? I can't imagine it was always about defeating rogue sects."

Verena gave a small laugh. "I've always had a love for discovery, for understanding the world around me. But, I also had a knack for art. The colony where we grew up had a vivid natural beauty that inspired me to paint. It wasn't until I moved away that I realized I could combine my passion for science and art in a unique way."

"That sounds a lot like my own path. Growing up, I was fascinated by biology, particularly of non-humanoid species. Xenobiology seemed like a natural fit when I joined Starfleet."

Their conversation was cut short when they came upon a section of the floor that looked different—slick and darker than the rest. Verena held out her arm, stopping Wu.

"Wait. I don't like the look of that. It might be trapped," she warned.

"It?" Captain Wu asked as he put a hand on his phaser.

Before they could discuss it further, a growl echoed down the corridor.

A monstrous creature, another failed experiment by the look of it, emerged from the shadows. Its eyes glowed a menacing red as it fixed its gaze on them. They were trapped between the creature and the suspicious floor patch.

Verena's eyes darted toward the ceiling, then back to the creature, her expression fraught with urgency. "Up there! We can escape through that hatch."

Wu glanced at his standard Starfleet issue equipment: a phaser, a communicator, and a tricorder. His eyes moved to a stack of abandoned mining equipment nearby — lengths of cable, a few metal rods, and what looked like a disassembled pneumatic drill.

"Cover me," Wu ordered, setting his phaser to stun. He intended to jury-rig a solution to escape.

- Wu will try to Jury-Rig a solution. Adding **Jury-Rig** as a Focus.
- Rolling Wu's Daring (10) + Engineering (3). (4,8) Success. Still has saved momentum.



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Verena took out a small disruptor weapon of her own while Wu lunged for the stack of equipment. His fingers closed around a metal rod, and he jammed it into the drill assembly, twisting it tight. The creature advanced, its eyes glowing a fiery red. Its form was a horrendous patchwork of mutation, muscle and sinew stretched over asymmetrical limbs. Parts of its body pulsed abnormally, as though tumors were fighting for space with vital organs. It growled again, a sound tinged with both aggression and a palpable, mournful pain. Verena fired her weapon.

- She is more of a scientist instead of a warrior. He hitting this monster is Somewhat Improbable. (6) Yes. She fails.
- Let's make it 50/50 who takes the hit from the creature. Verena or Wu? (6) Verena takes the hit.

Verena aimed carefully and pulled the trigger. The disruptor's beam shot toward the creature, but the mutated beast moved with an unsettling agility, dodging the shot. In a flash, it lunged at them. Its clawed appendage struck out, slashing through the air.

Verena cried out as the claws raked across her arm, tearing through her clothing and leaving a set of bleeding gashes. She stumbled back, clutching her injured arm, her face contorted with pain and shock.

Wu's phaser was up in an instant, set to stun.

- Rolling Wu's Control (10) + Security (2). (7,8). Using Momentum to score two hits on the monster.
- Rolling one more hit to take it out. Control (10) + Security (2). (1,11) one more shot to take the mutate out.
- We still have SAVED MOMENTUM.
- But I have to ask, can this mutated creature really be stunned? I am going to say it is Somewhat Probable. (19) No! Why not! Energy setting is too low so the creature is still up and getting angrier, probably charged by the low energy setting.
- Is the creature still slowed enough for Wu to complete his jury-rigging? I will say 50/50. (9) Yes. Narrate Wu getting Verena and escaping up the hatch.

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Wu's phaser beam hit the creature, its blue light pulsating against the grotesque, mutated form. He hit a second time, then a third. For a moment, the beast wavered, its red eyes flickering, but then it shook off the effects of the stun setting, growling louder. The stun had done nothing but enrage it further, perhaps even energizing it due to its bizarre physiology. Yet, the brief moment was enough.

Working quickly with a sense of urgency, Wu housed his phaser and put the final touches on his jury-rigged assembly. Utilizing the metal rod as a makeshift winch and a length of cable, he created a pulley system. Then, he attached it to the protruding beam near the service hatch on the ceiling.

- The successful jury-rig was rolled before.

"Verena, grab on!" he shouted, gesturing toward the looped end of the cable.

Despite the pain in her arm, Verena reached up and grabbed the cable, wincing. Wu hit a makeshift switch on the pneumatic drill, and the pulley system engaged, lifting Verena off the ground.

- Did Wu move fast enough? Fitness (9) + Engineering (3) with Jury-Rigging focus. (5,11). Still have a SAVED MOMENTUM

She ascended, her feet barely clearing the creature as it lunged again, missing her by inches.

Once Verena was through the hatch, Wu grabbed the cable himself. With a swift pull of another makeshift switch, he initiated his own rapid ascent.

- Fitness (9) + Engineering (3) with Jury-Rigging focus. (18, 19). Fail! Using Momentum for re-roll of one dice. (8). Success!

The creature roared in frustration, its many eyes glaring upwards as if understanding it had been outsmarted, but unable to do anything about it.

Wu's head cleared the opening and Verena, despite her injury, helped pull him into the crawlspace. They quickly sealed the hatch, and for a moment, both were silent, catching their breath, listening to the muffled roars and growls below them.

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"We need to get you medical attention," Wu finally broke the silence, looking at Verena's injured arm with concern.

"I'll manage, but we need to stop what's happening here. Those creatures... it's not just unethical; it's an abomination."

"Was that thing another symbiote?" Wu asked, trying to get a better understanding of what they were up against. His eyes never left Verena's injured arm.

"No, it wasn't," Verena said, pausing to catch her breath. "It was something else, something far more sinister. Those were the results of radical genetic engineering, not a natural symbiotic relationship, early testing. From what I've gathered, they're combining DNA from different species, splicing them together without any concern for biological integrity or ethical boundaries."

"How can you be so sure?"

"Because I've seen the research notes. I've hacked into their mainframe," Verena revealed, her voice tinged with both anger and regret. "I hoped I was wrong, but seeing that creature now confirms it. They're not just mining this planet for the Durobi's energy; they're using it as a testing ground for forbidden genetic experiments. If we don't stop this, who knows what kind of horrors they'll unleash on the galaxy."

Wu nodded, his face grim. "Then we've got our work cut out for us. But first, we need to get that arm looked at."

Verena glanced at her arm. "I'll be fine for now, but thank you. We need to focus on shutting this operation down."

Wu agreed. "We can't let them continue. But we need more information. Can we get to the main control room from here?"

Verena activated her handheld device again, scanning through a set of blueprints she had downloaded earlier. "It should be two levels up from here, but we'll have to bypass some security measures."

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Wu looked at his standard-issue Starfleet equipment, then back at Verena. "I think we've proven we're up for the challenge. Let's go."

With renewed determination, the two ventured further into the labyrinthine complex, ready to put an end to the unethical horrors they had uncovered.

The air in the access tunnel was thick with a musty, metallic scent, intensified by the confined space. Harsh, artificial lighting fixtures bolted to the walls cast stark shadows, flickering occasionally as if struggling to maintain their illumination. The walls themselves were an uneven mesh of solidified rock and crudely implemented metal reinforcements. Mineral deposits sparkled in the dim light, juxtaposing the industrial bleakness with glimmers of natural beauty.

Captain Wu led the way, his compact frame slightly hunched as he crawled through the narrow tunnel. Years of operating in similarly uncomfortable environments on a starship had given him a certain grace in maneuvering through tight spaces. His uniform bore the evidence of their passage—dust and streaks of some unidentifiable mineral grime. He moved cautiously, aware that any mistake in such an environment could trigger anything from a minor cave-in to a catastrophic collapse.

Behind him, Verena followed with her scientific scanner clutched tightly in one hand. Though she was familiar with the underground lab's layout, the tunnel system was unpredictable. Her attire was functional and more adapted to this environment, but even she couldn't entirely escape the tunnel's oppressive nature. Her eyes constantly checked the scanner, ensuring they were still on a safe path.

Every sound was amplified—the scraping of their boots against the rocky floor, the distant drip of water filtering through layers of stone, their own breaths made audible by the silence enveloping them. The air was stale, laced with a tinge of something chemical—an off-note that served as a constant reminder of the unnatural experiments happening somewhere within this labyrinthine network.

Captain Wu could not stop mulling over the details in his mind. "Verena, are you telling me that the Karroga is actually a symbiote? Did you know the Trill who hosted the symbiote

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before? Who were they? What made them willing to go along with the symbiote's desire to upgrade, shall we say?

- ChatGPT, have Verena respond to Wu with a tale about how the symbiote, and others like him, influenced their hosts to travel to the mining colony and engage in the fringe experiments. Captain Wu should wonder how Verena knows so much. Is she a spy who infiltrated the SymbioSect to exact justice or does she have other motives? He will not accuse her but he is collecting facts.

"Ah, the Karroga," Verena said, her voice tinged with both fascination and horror. "It's the product of a symbiote that has been artificially evolved, if you can even call it that. The Trill who hosted the symbiote before this grotesque transformation was named Vela. She was a brilliant geneticist but very unorthodox—obsessed with transcending biological limitations. The symbiote was called Roga, and it too had a history of pushing ethical boundaries across multiple host lifetimes."

- Oh. So cool to think that a Trill once known as Vela Roga would now be named Vela Korroga.

Verena paused for a moment to check her handheld scanner, ensuring they were still on the safest path. "You asked about consent? Well, it appears that the Roga symbiote and Vela were in eerie harmony regarding the direction of their research. It seems that some of these symbionts have been specifically influencing their hosts towards these fringe experiments for some time now. The hosts arrive here enthusiastic, ready to push the boundaries of science without the interference of regulations or ethics. They're lured by the promise of making revolutionary scientific discoveries. In reality, they become part of an operation that is ethically, biologically, and, in the case of the Dirobi, culturally destructive."

Captain Wu moved cautiously forward, but his mind was racing. How did Verena know all this? Could she be an undercover agent sent to investigate the SymbioSect's activities? Or did she have another agenda altogether? His instinct told him to trust her for now; her help had been invaluable, after all. But he couldn't ignore the questions that were piling up.

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He cleared his throat. "You seem to know a lot about these experiments and the SymbioSect. Your knowledge goes beyond that of a mere scientist or a concerned citizen. How did you come across all this information?"

Verena sighed, a hint of hesitation clouding her expression for a moment. "I was part of a research team in the Federation that stumbled upon some of the SymbioSect's early work. At first, it seemed revolutionary. But the deeper we dug, the clearer the ethical transgressions became. We reported our findings, but it was... suppressed. They have connections in high places, it seems. Frustrated and alarmed, I decided to take matters into my own hands. I came here under the guise of a scientist eager to push boundaries, hoping to uncover enough evidence to stop them."

"So you're not affiliated with them?" Wu's eyes sought Verena's, looking for signs of deception.

"No," she affirmed. "I'm here to expose them, but it's proven more challenging than I initially thought. Their reach is far, their methods secretive, and their allies powerful."

Wu nodded, feeling a mix of relief and newfound respect for Verena. "We have a shared goal, then. Together, we can gather the evidence needed to put an end to these horrors. Starfleet, the Federation Council—they'll have to act when presented with undeniable proof."

"Yes," Verena said, looking hopeful for the first time. "For the sake of everyone involved—the Dirobi, the exploited Trill symbionts, and even the hosts who don't fully understand the consequences of their actions—we must stop this."

With that shared understanding, Captain Wu and Verena continued crawling through the claustrophobic access tunnel.

## **Act 2, Scene 2**

- I need to figure out if this SymbioSect has the means to attack the Ohlone in orbit. Rolling on the 50/50. (15) No.

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- Given that Ohlone is going into a hostile situation, will they take the risk of sending an away team down to look for the captain? I think that this is Somewhat Improbable. (8) No. Hixtrex is opposed.
  - Do the other crew members [Chief Medical Officer/First Officer Commander Glen Davenport (Human), Helm Officer Ensign Matwon (Ardanan), Communications Officer Ensign Paxton Griffin (Human)] that are brought into a conference meeting in the conference room aboard Ohlone with Hixtrex think that he is being overly cautious? I think this is Probable. (18). No. Dr. Davenport agrees with Hixtrex. Matwon and Griffin disagree. They want to save their captain. Obviously, Hixtrex has been brought onto the ship due to his advanced tactical and diplomatic skills. He was a master commander of the Caitian fleet and the officer exchange program is meant to train Captain Wu's crew, since Wu and his first officer Doctor Davenport are more science focused. Hixtrex has the final call and will go with the more cautious approach.
  - Will they alert Starfleet of the situation to get some advice on what to do? Probable. (14) yes.
  - ChatGPT, based on the information above, generate more narrative showing the discussion in the conference room.

### **Conference Room, *USS Ohlone***

Commander Hixtrex had sat at the head of the conference table, his Caitian eyes having reflected a mixture of focus and concern. "We still had no contact with Captain Wu," he had begun. "Given the increasing risk factors, my recommendation is to refrain from sending another team down."

Dr. Glen Davenport, who had been the Chief Medical Officer and technically the First Officer but had allowed Hixtrex to serve as acting first officer while he tended to injured crew members, nodded. "I agree with Commander Hixtrex. We can't jeopardize the ship or another away team without knowing exactly what we are up against."

Ensign Matwon, the Ardanan Helm Officer, frowned. "With all due respect, we can't just abandon the Captain. It's unlike Starfleet to leave people behind."

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Ensign Paxton Griffin, the Communications Officer, had chimed in, "I have to agree with Matwon. Our Captain is down there, facing unknown dangers. We should do something to get him back."

Hiztrex raised his paw, silencing the room. "I understood the emotional implications here. Believe me, if it was totally up to me, I would beam down there myself by now. But we have a ship and a crew to consider. There is too much at stake to act impulsively."

Davenport intervened, "Not to mention, we've received instructions from Admiral Chen advising against direct engagement. We have our orders."

Matwon sighed, "Orders that are easier to follow when you don't have friends on the line." The Ardanan male was known to be a good friend of Captain Wu, the two having met when Wu served on the *U.S.S. Amanda Gorman*.

Hiztrex looked toward the main communication screen, where the Starfleet insignia was displayed from their previous communication with Admiral Chen. "I initiated contact with Starfleet, and they recommend caution. We are to maintain orbit and collect intel. Rest assured, Starfleet takes the Captain's situation as seriously as we do. They are assessing the situation and will send specialized support if needed."

Ensign Griffin leaned forward, visibly frustrated. "So, we wait? Is that it?"

"We prepare," Hiztrex had corrected. "We reinforce our shields, and we run drills. We will be ready for any situation that arises."

As the room fell silent, each officer seemed lost in their own thoughts—weighing duty against loyalty, caution against urgency.

Finally, Davenport broke the silence. "Our feelings are understandable, but the best way to help the Captain is to follow protocol and stay prepared. It is what Captain Wu would expect of us."

Hiztrex nodded, "Meeting adjourned. All departments, begin preparations immediately."

The senior officers exited the conference room, leaving the Caitian with his thoughts.



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Commander Hiztrex had been born on Cait, a planet known for its intelligent, feline-like humanoids. He had grown up in a small community surrounded by highlands and rivers, where the virtues of strategy and diplomacy had been instilled in him from an early age. Hiztrex had quickly climbed the ranks within the Caitian fleet, showing promise not only in tactical acumen but also in diplomatic relations. He had achieved the rank of Master Commander in the Caitian fleet and had been at the helm of several successful missions that were as much about avoiding conflict as they were about winning it. On the *USS Ohlone*, Hiztrex had quickly gained the respect of the crew. His tactical drills had been rigorous but fair, and he had introduced various Caitian tactical formations to the crew, broadening their understanding and capabilities.

Once alone in the conference room, Hiztrex activated his personal log. "Commander's Log, supplemental. The decision to hold position was not made lightly, but it is the best course of action given our current limitations and lack of information."

Closing the log, Hiztrex looked at the gleaming Starfleet insignia on his desk, then out of the viewport at the distant, icy world of Alpha Theta II. He hoped that his caution would ultimately prove to be the best form of action, even as he pondered the ethical complexities that seemed to be growing by the minute.

In the corridor outside the conference room, Ensign Matwon and Ensign Paxton Griffin exchanged uneasy glances as they walked away from the meeting.

"I can't believe this," Matwon grumbled, his Ardanan accent thickening with emotion. "We're just going to orbit like a helpless satellite while the Captain might be in trouble."

Griffin sighed. "I know, Matwon. It's hard, but you heard Hiztrex. We have orders, and—"

"Orders," Matwon interrupted, nearly spitting out the word. "Since when do orders trump doing what's right? What happened to the Starfleet I joined, the one that never leaves anyone behind?"

Griffin paused before answering, choosing his words carefully. "I get it. I really do. But insubordination won't help the Captain."

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Matwon stopped and turned toward Griffin. "You know, there's a shuttle bay full of perfectly good shuttles. I could just take one and—"

"Don't even think about it," Griffin cautioned. "If you disobey orders, you risk not only your career but also the mission and everyone on board."

Matwon leaned against the wall, visibly wrestling with himself. "I owe Captain Wu my life, you know. We were on a science mission on Anteros IV. The terrain was unstable, and the ground gave way beneath me. Wu didn't hesitate; he grabbed me and activated his emergency transporter. Had it been a second later, I would have plunged into a pool of corrosive acid. He saved my life, Paxton."

Griffin looked into his friend's eyes. "I understand that you have a personal debt, but Wu would never want you to compromise the mission or the crew. He'd want us to follow orders, collect information, and act sensibly."

"But what if—"

"What if you get caught and confined to the brig during the most critical moments? What if you make things worse down there? What if your insubordination causes even more hesitation among the higher-ups about sending a specialized team?"

Matwon's eyes narrowed as he considered the weight of Griffin's words. "I hate it, but you're right. Disobeying orders would only escalate the situation."

Griffin clapped a hand on Matwon's shoulder. "We're all frustrated, but we're part of a system that's bigger than any one of us, even bigger than the Captain. The best thing we can do is prepare for whatever comes next, just like Hitztrex said."

Matwon sighed deeply, nodding. "Alright, let's head to the shuttle bay then, run some maintenance checks. If a rescue mission does get the green light, those shuttles better be in top condition."

"Agreed," Griffin said, feeling a mixture of relief and lingering concern as they resumed their walk down the corridor. They both understood that being lower in rank meant having

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less control over the bigger picture. But what they could control was their preparedness, and they were going to make damn sure they were ready for whatever came next.

## Act 2, Scene 3

- On Verena and Wu's way to the research lab we will encounter (17) corpses of intruders, which I will change to corpses of failed experiments, dead animals who failed to be good hosts for the symbiotes.
- They will also encounter (58) Pooled liquid (79) with signs of a lurking foe but also (42) an intriguing artifact. Finally, they will run into (73) surfaces covered with slime or fungus that will (48) cause suspicion to take hold but (36) control or terminal or a symbiote who can be made compliant to the captain's input. Perhaps it is a symbiote that did not like the outcome of the host they were paired with, maybe an undesirable animal body, which ChatGPT can make up.

The atmosphere in the tunnel became progressively more stifling as Captain Wu and Verena advanced. It wasn't just the close, almost suffocating quarters, or the increasingly pungent smell that had started to fill the air. No, it was something far more unsettling.

They dropped from the overhead access hatch and landed in a dim corridor. As they turned a corner, they found the first corpse. A mangled form, more a collection of unidentifiable tissues than an organism, lay sprawled on the tunnel floor. Verena gestured to her scanner. "That was an experiment, not an intruder. See, the bio-signatures are similar to the creatures we encountered."

Wu nodded, his eyes narrowing. "They're experimenting right here in the tunnels?"

"It appears so. Easier to hide the failures, perhaps. Dispose of them where they're least likely to be found," Verena surmised.

As they pushed forward, they found more bodies. Each one was an abomination, a grotesque testament to the depths of unethical science they were dealing with. Some bore traces of multiple species, their genetics in chaotic disarray. Others had clearly been dead for some time, their decomposing forms leaving a haunting aroma that made even the thick, stale air of the tunnel seem clean by comparison.

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By the time they had passed the seventeenth such corpse, the weight of what they were witnessing was almost too much to bear. Wu took a moment to compose himself, his eyes closing briefly as he took a steadying breath.

- I need to roll to see if Wu is overcome by the horror in any way. Presence (10) + Command (4). 17,19. Fail. Okay. He is shaken up.

Verena looked at him sympathetically. "This is a graveyard of ethical boundaries, Captain. Each of these failed experiments is a cry for help that was never answered."

Wu looked at her, his eyes filled with terror. "Then let's make sure their cries aren't in vain." He tried to sound brave, but he was shaken to the core.

Pressing on, they reached what appeared to be the end of the tunnel, which expanded into a larger, more open space. A hatch on the far end seemed to be their point of entry into the research lab.

Verena activated her handheld scanner one more time. "It's likely that there will be security measures in place. Are you ready?"

Wu looked at his phaser, then back at Verena. "As ready as I'll ever be. After what we've seen, failure isn't an option."

Verena nodded solemnly. "Then let's do this—for all those who couldn't speak for themselves."

- Does Wu suspect that it is a little too convenient that Verena knows so much about what is going on and also seems to have resistance-free access to this lab? I would say Somewhat Probable but I am dropping that to 50/50 since he is terrified and not thinking completely straight. (18) No. He is walking into a trap! He trusts Verana out of fear right now.
- ChatGPT, narrate the depths of Captain Wu's feelings based on the above information.

Captain Wu felt a complex web of emotions as he stared at the hatch leading into the research lab. On one hand, his military training told him to be constantly vigilant, to

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question everything in unfamiliar and potentially hostile environments. Yet, the horror of what he had just witnessed clouded his judgment, weighing on him like a physical burden. It was as if a dense fog had settled over his mind, making it difficult to think clearly or trust his instincts.

He looked at Verena, who had been guiding him through this nightmarish maze. Her competence and apparent knowledge of the situation had been a beacon in the dark, offering a semblance of control in a world that had spiraled into chaos. For a moment, he pondered how she seemed to know so much about the experiments, about the creatures, and the layout of this underground complex. But then he shook the thought away, attributing his suspicion to the overwhelming dread that filled the tunnel. At this point, the comfort of a familiar ally, even a relatively new one, felt like the last shred of normality he could cling to.

His gaze fell back on his phaser, gripped tightly in his trembling hand. The weapon suddenly seemed woefully inadequate, an absurdly primitive tool to bring to bear against the abominations they had discovered. Fear had wormed its way into the very core of his being, diluting his usual cautious nature and professional skepticism. He looked at Verena once more, desperately wanting to trust her, needing to trust her. The alternative—that she might be involved in this horror—was almost too much to bear on top of everything else.

Verena had spoken eloquently about the ethical graveyard they had traversed, and Wu wanted to believe her sincerity. He wanted to believe that they were united in purpose, that their mission was righteous, and that they would make those responsible for these horrors answer for their crimes. He convinced himself that his trepidation was merely a byproduct of the nightmarish reality he was struggling to come to terms with.

So he nodded, steeling himself for what lay ahead, allowing his trust in Verena to anchor him. For better or worse, he was committed to this path, driven by a horrifying blend of terror, revulsion, and a diminishing, flickering sense of duty that fought to shine through the fog of his emotions.

"Let's do this," he whispered, more to himself than to Verena, as if trying to imprint the mission onto his soul, desperate for a foothold of certainty in a world that had become monstrously uncertain.

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- Now insert details about the research lab we are trying to get to: (59) Lab; Feature (23) Bones or Fossils; Peril (63) signs of broken containment (experiments that got away and are roaming); Opportunity (61) Unique prototype, which would be the altered symbiote genetic template.
  - Does Wu comprehend what went on in this lab? He is a scientist. I will let him roll and Insight (10) + Science (4). (6,9) Yes. He can tell that something nefarious and illegal was heard based on grisly clues he spies out. ChatGPT, expound on that those clues could be.
  - Wu generated a Momentum, which I will save.
  - It is becoming clear that Verana brought Wu here and orchestrated the entire affair. She needs something from him; something to do with his past; the fact that in the past his molecules were scattered across two realities. Thankfully, Starfleet engineers were able to bring him back but something happened to the quantum state of his body that Verana suspects will help her stabilize her dark experiments.
  - Rolling on Story Complication table from StarForged. I think I will roll 3 just for fun. (52) Something Important Goes Missing. I think I will make that Wu loses his phaser to Verana; (39) Old enemy resurfaces—let's make this a bunch of symbiotes that have taken over different animal bodies. They enter the area to surround Wu; (31); Needed item or resource unavailable—let's make it that the creatures take away Captain Wu's Starfleet-issued communicator and tricorder.
  - End the scene with Wu being angry but basically helpless against an overwhelming force, Verana and the SybioSect.
  - ChatGPT, continue narration of this story based on the information provided above...

As Captain Wu and Verana approached the hatch leading to the research lab, his senses heightened despite the fog of emotions clouding his judgment. Once inside, even in his compromised state, he couldn't help but pick up on a host of disturbing clues that spoke to the nature of the experiments conducted here.

Jars of unidentifiable tissues floating in preservative fluids were systematically lined up on shelves. The air held a strange electric charge, the kind often associated with certain types of advanced biogenetic equipment. More unnerving were the fragments of bones and

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fossils integrated into some of the lab's machinery—humanoid and non-humanoid alike—as if the very tools of science had been constructed from the remains of its subjects.

But what caught his eye the most were the signs of broken containment: shattered glass, disrupted force fields, and alarmingly empty stasis chambers. Evidently, some experiments had gone horribly wrong, escaping to god knows where. Tying it all together was an interface showing a unique prototype: an altered symbiote genetic template. The realization struck him with the force of a sledgehammer: whoever was running this lab had been involved in grotesque, illegal manipulations of life itself, twisting the very fabric of biology for dark, inscrutable purposes.

Just as he was about to turn and question Verena, he felt a sharp pain in his hand. Looking down, he realized his phaser was gone. Before he could react, Verena aimed it at him.

"Sorry, Captain, I need you for something far more important than a rescue mission. Your unique quantum state offers a stabilizing element my experiments desperately need."

Wu felt the bitterness of betrayal slice through the haze of his emotions. But before he could say anything, a horrifying noise echoed through the lab—the skittering of many legs. From the dark corners of the lab emerged a parade of monstrosities—symbiotes that had taken over the bodies of various animals. Each creature was a nightmarish fusion, a biological aberration reflecting the worst of what they had seen in the tunnels.

Emerging from the dark corner, a grotesque parody of a centaur stepped into the flickering light of the lab. Its four lower legs were as thick as tree trunks, covered in scales that shimmered an oily black. The upper torso should have been human, but it was instead a fleshy mass of tentacles and eyeballs, each staring in different directions. The creature's movements were jerky, as if each of its legs had a mind of its own. It emitted an echoing, metallic whinny that reverberated off the walls, sending shivers down Captain Wu's spine.

Before Wu could take another breath, another monstrosity shuffled into view. This one was a terrifying amalgam of a dinosaur and an elephant. Its hide was thick and leathery, the color of rusted metal, adorned with bony spikes that jutted out menacingly. The trunk was elongated and ended in a set of ferocious teeth, while its tail seemed to have

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morphed into a stegosaurus-like set of blades. Its lumbering gait left deep indentations on the floor, as its eyes glowed a sinister red.

Just when Wu thought his terror had peaked, a hulking, monstrous mammal lunged into the light. Covered in bristling, steel-gray fur, it had a snout filled with razor-sharp teeth that could easily shear through metal. But most horrifying were its arms—six of them, each ending in clawed hands that seemed to twitch in anticipation. Its gait was a skittering crawl that was shockingly fast for its size, making it clear this beast was a predator of the most terrifying kind.

From another shadowy recess, a nightmarish crustacean-like creature scuttled forward. It had multiple layers of exoskeleton, each a different shade of green, giving it a camouflage effect. Its underbelly was lined with rows of tiny, writhing mouths that chattered incessantly, a cacophony of maddening whispers. Large pincers snapped in the air, capable of crushing bone, as it moved sideways in a jittery, unpredictable manner.

Finally, a serpent-like creature slithered into view. This wasn't an ordinary snake; it was adorned with what looked like wings made of spiked vines, each dripping with a phosphorescent venom that left a glowing trail behind it. Its eyes were large and milky white, lacking pupils, giving off an otherworldly light. It undulated in a rhythm that was almost hypnotic, yet every movement seemed designed to coil and strike with horrifying speed.

Each creature was an affront to nature, a testament to the dark, unbounded experiments that had taken place in this lab. Captain Wu felt the walls close in as the abominations drew nearer, his heart pounding in his chest as he realized the gravity of the situation he was in.



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What was most terrifying of all—in addition to the half a dozen other creatures that slinked out of the darkness—was to think that these were all symbioses in new, more menacing, mutated bodies.

They approached menacingly, and the crustacean-like creature leapt, snatching Wu's Starfleet-issued communicator and tricorder with terrifying precision. "You will not be needing those," it said.

Wu was disarmed and outnumbered, his trust shattered, and his equipment gone.

Verena looked at the assembled creatures, her face emotionless. "Meet the SymbioSect, Captain. You're going to help us perfect them."

Anger flared within Wu, hot and incandescent, cutting through his fear and betrayal. But as he looked around—surrounded by the products of dark science, his weapons taken, and facing an overwhelming force—he felt a crushing sense of helplessness. The SymbioSect circled him, almost as if they were mocking his impotence.

He had walked into a nightmare, guided by someone he had trusted, and now found himself trapped in an ethical and literal labyrinth from which there seemed to be no escape. All he had left was his anger and his dwindling, flickering sense of duty—feeble lights in an overwhelming darkness.

- ChatGPT, continue the above narrative with a long dialog between Verena and Captain Yuan Wu as she describes how she knew about Wu's backstory wherein in the past his molecules were scattered across two realities. Thankfully, Starfleet engineers were able to bring him back but something happened to the quantum state of his body that Verena suspects will help her stabilize Verena's dark experiments. Create technobabble to explain how Zefren, her brother who is friends with Yuan, told her enough about how the captain's molecules were stabilized and how that connects to the SymbioSect's experiments to upgrade their host bodies.

Verena gestured for the SymbioSect to hold their positions and then turned her attention back to Captain Wu. "You must be wondering how I know so much about your personal history, Captain."

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"Enlighten me," Wu said, his voice tinged with both anger and curiosity. He was at a tactical and emotional disadvantage, but he could at least try to understand what was going on.

"My brother Zefren is quite close to you, isn't he? He mentioned your miraculous return after your molecules were scattered across two realities."

Wu's eyes narrowed. "Zefren would never condone what you're doing here."

Verena smiled coldly. "He doesn't know. All he did was talk about his friend, Captain Yuan Wu, the living anomaly. He mentioned how Starfleet engineers applied a mixture of quantum resonance technology and controlled tachyon bursts to reassemble your molecules and stabilize them into a single coherent reality."

Wu clenched his fists. "That was classified information."

"Classification never stopped the curious minds, Captain. The stabilization they achieved created a unique quantum anchor within your cellular structure. You exist in a state of constant quantum flux stabilization—what Starfleet engineers coined as 'Quantum Symbiosis.' It's a unique state where your cells have become adaptive at the quantum level. Am I correct so far?"

- **Adding Focus of Quantum Physics to Wu**

Despite his anger and his position, Wu couldn't help but marvel at Verena's understanding of an incredibly complicated, classified medical procedure. "You're correct. So what does that have to do with your abominations?" he gestured disdainfully towards the SybioSect.

"That's where it gets fascinating," Verena said, her eyes alight with a zealot's fervor. "The SybioSect are also an experiment in quantum adaptability. We've been trying to create a host body that can accept symbiotic creatures from multiple biological domains. A universal host, if you will. But there's a problem of biological noise. Genetic variance from one host creature to another creates an unstable environment for the symbiotes, much like your molecules scattering across realities."

"And you think I'm the solution?" Wu felt both violated and intrigued, his scientific mind battling with his sense of morality.

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"Exactly," Verena beamed. "Your unique Quantum Symbiosis allows your body to naturally adapt and stabilize at a cellular level. I believe that by studying your cells, I can find a way to induce a similar state in our SymbioSect, turning them into stable, universal hosts."

Wu shook his head, disgusted. "You're playing god, Verena. And the cost is unspeakable. You've seen it yourself, in those tunnels."

Verena shrugged. "Progress demands sacrifice."

Wu felt a sinking feeling in his stomach. He had pieced it together, the horror and the promise, the ethical boundaries shattered and the disturbing ambition laid bare. And the worst part? She had used his own unique condition against him, turning him into the final piece of a dark and twisted puzzle.

"So," Verena said, breaking the heavy silence. "Shall we begin?"

- I end this act with 1 momentum still in the bank. I just don't want to use it yet since this is act 2 and tension should be escalating.

## Act 2, Scene 4

- Let's cut back to the ship. Rolling 1D20 to determine how many hours Captain Wu has been out of contact. (12). 12 hours.
- In this scene is Chief Engineer Lieutenant Tracy Nacu (She is a Human and back from sickbay), Chief Security Officer Lieutenant Yan Shen (she is a Human and back from sickbay), Chief Medical Officer/First Officer Commander Glen Davenport (Human who now takes control of the ship since he is first officer), Helm Officer Ensign Matwon (Ardanan), Communications Officer Ensign Paxton Griffin (Human), and Officer Exchange Program Operations Advisor and Second Officer Hitztrex (Caitian).
- A part of the scene should be Davenport taking control.
- Things are getting very tense. **Me'ebe Videm**, the Tellarite leader of the colony, was refusing to respond to the Ohlone. The Ohlone detects that the mining colony has pretty advanced tech from other Federation species.
- Let's roll on that scan: Sensors (9) + Science (2). (10,16). Success!

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- Can Paxton Griffin hack a way to force the colony to turn on its comms to force a conversation with Videm? Comms (9) + Engineering (2). (13, 17) No. Paxton is not that good. Still a novice ensign.
  - At this point, Davenport (against Hixtrex advice) will decide to take a shuttle to the planet. (The shuttle is called the *Awawas*.) He will take Griffin and Helm Officer Ensign Matwon with him.
  - Looking at shuttle stats in STA CRB (p.235). Engines (5) + Conn (1). (5,7). Despite being threatened by Videm via comm-link to not land at colony, Davenport does it anyways.
  - Videm will say he was forced to work with the SymbioSect. He asks for 48 hours to resolve the matter himself.
  - However, it is Highly Probable that he is merely buying time because that is the amount of time Verena needs into order to complete her experiment on Captain Wu. (18) Yes.
  - Will Davenport perceive that **Me'ebe Videm** is stalling? Computers (7, because they ran tactical simulations) + Security (2). (8,14) Yes.
  - Will Davenport threaten Videm with violent action if the Tellarite does not cooperate? Probable. (2) Yes.

The atmosphere aboard the *USS Ohlone* was fraught with tension. Twelve hours with no contact from Captain Wu had put the entire crew on edge. Commander Glen Davenport entered the bridge, flanked by Lieutenant Tracy Nacu, the Chief Engineer, and Lieutenant Yan Shen, the Chief Security Officer. Both women had just been cleared from sickbay after recovering from venom poisoning and were eager to get back to their duties.

Davenport moved decisively to the Captain's chair. "Report," he commanded.

Hixtrex, the Caitian Second Officer who had been temporarily in charge, relinquished the seat. "Sir, there's been no word from Captain Wu, and the mining colony under Me'ebe Videm has not responded to our hails."

"Understood. You've done well, Hixtrex, but I'll take it from here," Davenport said as he sat down.

"As you wish, Commander," Hixtrex nodded, stepping aside.

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Nacu and Shen took their respective positions at their stations.

Davenport activated the comm system. "This is the *Ohlone* hailing Me'ebe Videm. Respond, or else."

Ensign Paxton Griffin shook his head. "No response, sir."

"Did the scans show anything?" Davenport asked, turning to Lieutenant Nacu.

"Indeed, sir. The colony is equipped with some pretty advanced technology, some of which seems to be from other Federation species," Nacu reported.

Yan Shen interjected, "That's unsettling, sir. What's our next move?"

Davenport glanced at his Communications Officer. "Griffin, can you bypass their comms? I want to force them into a dialogue."

"I tried, sir, but their encryption is too advanced for me," Griffin admitted, a note of regret in his voice.

Davenport weighed his options for a moment. "We're not getting anywhere from up here. Prep the *Awawas*. I'm going down there with Ensigns Griffin and Matwon to get some answers."

Hiztrex's eyes widened at Davenport's decision. "Commander, if I may strongly advise against this course of action?"

Davenport swiveled around to face him. "I'm listening, but make it quick."

"Commander, while I have no doubts about your leadership abilities, I feel I must point out that my background in tactical operations makes me better suited to handle this situation. I am a tactical genius, trained in high-stress negotiation and conflict resolution. No offense, but you're a medical officer, not a diplomat or a soldier."

Davenport's eyes met Hiztrex's, unyielding. "I appreciate your concern, and your skills are noted, but the Captain is missing, and the colony isn't cooperating. I have a duty to get to the bottom of this. Time is of the essence."

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Hiztrex leaned in closer. "If something goes wrong down there, we may exacerbate an already volatile situation, especially given your lack of negotiation experience. I propose sending a team under my command instead."

Davenport took a deep breath. "Hiztrex, I value your expertise. I really do. But right now, what we need is a direct approach. Sometimes diplomacy needs to take a back seat to decisive action. I have the rank, and I'm going to pull it. Prep the *Awawas*, that's an order."

The tension between them was palpable, but Hiztrex knew when to yield. "Very well, Commander. I'll ensure the shuttle is prepared for immediate departure. But remember, if this goes south, it's your call."

Davenport nodded. "Understood, and acknowledged. Let's hope it doesn't come to that."

The crew around them went into motion, and the atmosphere on the bridge became even more charged, if that was possible. Davenport could feel the weight of his decision but pushed forward, determined to bring his Captain home and get to the bottom of the mysterious activities on the colony.

"Ensign Griffin, Ensign Matwon, meet me in the shuttle bay. We're departing immediately," Davenport said as he left the bridge, hoping that his gamble would pay off for the sake of his missing Captain and the safety of the Federation.

As the shuttle *Awawas* exited the Ohlone's shuttlebay and descended toward the colony, a gruff voice crackled through the comms. "*This is Me'ebe Videm. I strongly recommend that you do not land, Commander Davenport.*"

"Too late, Videm. We're landing, and you're going to talk whether you like it or not," Davenport shot back.

"*Commander, your insistence on landing against my warning will not bode well for future relations,*" Videm's gruff voice came through again, tinged with annoyance.

Davenport gripped the armrests of his seat as the shuttle descended. "Listen, Videm. Let me make this perfectly clear: If any hostile action is taken against our shuttle, I will ensure

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that the *Ohlone* releases an EMP so targeted and so precise that your mining colony will never operate again. Ever. Are we understood?"

There was a pause, long enough to make everyone in the shuttle glance at each other uneasily. Finally, Videm responded, "*You make a persuasive argument, Commander. Fine. You may land, but I must insist on one thing. Give us 48 hours to resolve this matter ourselves.*"

Davenport looked over at Griffin and Matwon. Both of them were listening intently. "48 hours? Why so specific?"

"*It's all the time we need to sort out our issues internally,*" Videm replied, sounding just a bit too casual.

Davenport narrowed his eyes. "You wouldn't be stalling for time, would you, Videm?"

Another pause. "*Why would I do such a thing, Commander?*"

Davenport shook his head. "Alright, you have your 48 hours, but know this: if I find out that you're merely buying time for some nefarious purpose, you'll regret it. I assure you, the consequences will be severe."

"*As you say, Commander,*" Videm's voice was inscrutable. "*Welcome to our colony. We will meet shortly.*"

## **Act 2, Scene 5**

The shuttle *Awaswas* touched down on the colony's landing pad. Davenport, Griffin, and Matwon disembarked and were soon met by Videm and a small retinue of security personnel.

"Commander, if you would follow me," Videm gestured.

"Fine, but this better be good," Davenport replied tersely as they were led to a secure conference room.

Videm cleared his throat before beginning. "I understand the situation looks dubious, but let me explain. We are under a complex, risk-weighted, and highly leveraged contract with

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SymbioSect. It's a pro-cyclical agreement that involves performance covenants and contingent convertible clauses."

Davenport raised an eyebrow. "Explain, in layman's terms, please."

Videm sighed. "In essence, I'm trapped in a contract where SymbioSect invested in our mining operation under conditions that, if not met, would not only require us to forfeit assets but would also involve structured settlements that would bankrupt us and every member of this colony."

"Performance covenants? Convertible clauses?" Ensign Griffin asked.

Videm looked at Griffin. "Yes. Performance covenants are contractual obligations to maintain certain financial metrics, like EBITDA or liquidity ratios."

"EBITDA?" Davenport asked.

"Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization. It is one of the most widely used measures of a company's financial health and ability to generate cash," Matwon answered. He saw the look of surprise on his superior officer's face and felt he had to offer an explanation. "My father ran a financial investment company on Ardana. I know money stuff."

"The ensign is correct," Videm said. "Fail to meet these covenants, and the agreement triggers clauses that convert debt into equity, meaning SymbioSect would essentially own us."

Davenport looked skeptical. "And you agreed to this contract, why?"

Videm's face turned ashen. "At the time, it was our only way to sustain the colony. The financial entanglements were... not fully disclosed. They used obfuscated legalese and financial jargon to veil the predatory nature of their terms. By the time we understood the true extent, it was too late."

Matwon broke in, "So you're saying that you're not just stalling but actually trying to find a way to meet these crippling conditions?"



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"Exactly," Videm nodded. "I asked for 48 hours because that's the deadline for our next covenant test. Fail it, and the trap springs shut."

Davenport sighed. "Alright, we'll need to verify this. Matwon, go through the contract. Get on the line with the *Ohlone*; see if we can get some legal experts from the Federation to review it. I want to know if we have a way to break it."

While Matwon went to work, Davenport stepped aside and contacted the *Ohlone*. "Hiztrex, prepare for a high-priority subspace communication to Federation Legal. We may need to exercise some extrajudicial options to save this colony and find Captain Wu."

As they waited for the verification, Davenport couldn't shake off a feeling of unease. If Videm's story checked out, they were not only racing against time to find their missing Captain but also against a financial time-bomb ready to explode. It was a complex web they found themselves in, and time was running out.

## Act 3, Scene 1

### Checking In

- This is where I like to check in and make sure I am hitting all the points from my initial rolls.
- **Mission Type:** Espionage ✓
- **Espionage:** Infiltrate Criminal Gang or Organization (oh my) ✓
- **Incident Theme:** Research Living Ship ✓ (we now know this to be the Diboni and I changed "Living Ship" to "Living Mining Colony")
- **Advantage:** Lucky Circumstances - An earlier failure has unintended side effects X. I still need to utilize this.
- Let's roll the species. 1-10 will be from the *Enterprise* era. 11-20 will be the TOS era. (19) TOS. Rolling exact species: (18) **Trill**. Very interesting. Trill criminal gang. ✓
- Let's figure out the gang's overall motivation. I want this to be an interesting criminal organization; it does not need to be strictly a common gang. NPC **Archetype** roll = (16) Scientist. ✓ NPC Upbringing but adapting for **criminal organization setting**. Roll = (13) Mining Colony. ✓ I am skipping to NPC **goals** chart. Roll = (5) Earn fame.

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✓ (as the first Trill to create super-hosts. **Tactics** = (13) Revealing secrets. ✓ The captain's top secret genetic origin post other-reality jaunt.

## **First Officer's Log, Commander Glen Davenport**

*"As the acting First Officer under Captain Wu, my first priority has always been the safety and well-being of the USS Ohlone and its crew. Our recent series of challenges have stretched the resolve and unity of our team.*

*"After losing contact with Captain Wu, Commander Hiztrex, who was acting as First Officer in my absence, faced a difficult choice. While the senior staff suggested a cautious approach, aligning with Starfleet protocol, some debated those very regulations, driven by their loyalty to Captain Wu. Hiztrex, showing commendable restraint and tactical insight, ultimately decided to hold our position.*

*"Upon my return to the bridge, the tension was palpable. Without word from Captain Wu and facing an unresponsive mining colony, I chose to take a more direct approach, despite Hiztrex's objections. Our landing on the colony unearthed disturbing details; Videm's residents are entangled in a financially precarious contract with a company called SymbioSect. This puts the colony on the brink of economic collapse, adding another layer of urgency to our mission. I've tasked the crew with verifying this contractual entanglement, and have initiated steps to engage Federation legal expertise. We now find ourselves not just racing against time to find our missing Captain, but also facing a ticking financial time-bomb.*

*"Our loyalties are being tested, our skills are being stretched, and the complexities of our mission continue to escalate. But I have faith that Captain Wu has it all figured out on his end..."*

### **1 Momentum Saved**

The underground lab seemed like a collision between a mad artist's dream and the epitome of scientific abomination. Juxtaposed against the dark, earthy walls of the underground chamber were glowing panels of luminescent bio-screens, each pulsating with shifting schematics of cellular structures, genetic sequences, and quantum matrices. High above, lumigrid lights flickered erratically, casting a surreal glow that seemed to make the flesh-crawling details of the lab's menagerie even more horrifying.

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In the center of the room stood a medical table unlike any Captain Wu had ever seen, even in Starfleet's most advanced medical bays. It was a swirling mass of anti-gravitational beams and localized containment fields, holographic emitters built into its sides. It was replete with biometric sequencers, subspace field generators, and quantum resonators designed to probe and analyze matter at the most infinitesimal levels. A set of articulated armatures hovered around the table, each equipped with a suite of sensors, nanoscale extractors, and transphasic injectors for manipulating matter across multiple phases of reality.

As Wu was strapped onto the table, his wrists and ankles secured by tactile force fields that solidified at Verena's command, he glanced toward the SymbioSect. They were not merely standing guard; they were actively engaged at various workstations. The centaur-like creature manipulated a holographic interface with its tentacle arms, its eyes—each fixated on a different screen—demonstrating a grotesque form of multitasking. The dinosaur-elephant hybrid used its elongated trunk to key in a sequence of commands on a bio-synth panel, its bony spikes rhythmically lighting up in some sort of bioluminescent feedback. Others among the abominations were similarly engaged, operating equipment with an efficiency that belied their nightmarish forms.

Verena, standing near a holo-terminal that floated just beside Wu's table, initiated a sequence. "I imagine this is quite hard for you to process, Captain. Trust is such a fickle thing, isn't it?"

"Trust has nothing to do with it," Wu replied, fighting to keep his voice steady. "You're violating every ethical norm—Trill, human, or otherwise."

She laughed. "Ethics? That's always been the shield of the unimaginative. No one remembers the ethical quandaries once you've broken scientific ground. We're on the verge of a new frontier, Captain. And with your help, we'll do something that no Trill—no being in the galaxy—has done before."

Verena gestured toward the table's holo-terminal, and a schematic popped up: a complex model of DNA, but unlike any standard depiction. It was entangled with a mess of quantum strings, shifting and vibrating in an entrancing yet unnerving dance. "Your quantum-encoded DNA. It's a masterpiece, a symbiosis between your cellular structure and

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the very fabric of reality. By extracting it, I can apply the principles to our SymbioSect hosts, creating the most adaptable, universally-compatible hosts for symbionts."

"And what if this kills me?" Wu's voice was tinged with bitterness.

"A trivial sacrifice in the grand scope," Verena replied coldly.

The articulated armatures whirred to life, nanoscale extractors at their tips glowing with subspace energies. A feeling of dread filled Wu, made all the more intense by the mechanical whine of the quantum resonators as they powered up. The air filled with a tachyon-induced hum as the table's systems initiated the extraction sequence.

Just as the first armature descended toward him, there was a sudden whirl of alarms from one of the workstations. The crustacean-like creature clacked its pincers in irritation and uttered something in an unintelligible language.

"What is it?" Verena snapped.

"There's a sudden quantum variance in the localized subspace field," the crustacean-like SymbioSect spoke in a dissonant tone, its many mouths moving asynchronously. "It's causing destabilization in the extraction sequence."

Verena frowned, her eyes darting through the screens of data. "That's impossible, unless—"

"The quantum anchor within him is resonating," interrupted the centaur-like creature, its tentacles rapidly shifting through multiple screens. "It's as if it's resisting the extraction process."

- Now using the **Advantage** (Lucky Circumstances - An earlier failure has unintended side effects) that I had rolled up at the beginning of the game.

Wu felt an odd sensation, almost as if his cells were buzzing, oscillating with a strange form of energy he couldn't quite understand. Was his body's unique quantum state fighting back?

"Disengage the sequence!" Verena ordered, but it was too late. The quantum resonators emitted a high-pitched shriek, and the air around Wu shimmered with a blinding light.

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When the light faded, he found himself still strapped to the table, but the bindings had weakened. His quantum cells had done something to the tactile force fields.

- Can Wu break free of the weakened bonds? Fitness (9) + Security (2) = (2, 6) Yes! I still have a Saved momentum that I will use now to Roll on the Starforged>Location Theme: Fortified>Opportunity table. (47) Opening to outmaneuver or escape enemies! Wow!
- **Momentum Spent**
- I am also going to roll what type of Area Wu escapes to. Starforged>Derelict: Access>Area table. (27) Corridor. And what will come after the corridor? Rolling again (52). Stairs.

Summoning every ounce of his Starfleet training and tapping into an adrenaline surge, Captain Wu launched himself from the table. The weakened force fields disintegrated at his touch, a fortuitous turn of events he couldn't waste time pondering. His eyes locked onto Verena's, a brief flash of astonishment and then fury reflecting in hers.

Wu's shoulder rammed into Verena, knocking her off balance and sending her stumbling into the holo-terminal, which flickered erratically. He seized this split-second opportunity to dash toward the exit.

"Stop him! STOP HIM!" Verena's voice thundered through the underground lab. Her abominable crew— the SymbioSect— surged into action.

The centaur-like creature lunged at him, its tentacle arms stretching out like whips. Wu narrowly dodged the appendages, their tips grazing his uniform as he twisted out of reach. The near-miss caused a shelf laden with peculiar scientific instruments to crash onto the floor, scattering glass and metal.

He sprinted into the corridor, his boots pounding on the ground. The dinosaur-elephant hybrid let out a bellow and charged after him, its bony spikes lighting up in eerie bioluminescence. Wu veered around a corner, skidding slightly but managing to keep his footing. The creature's elongated trunk swung toward him like a whip, missing by mere inches and smashing into a wall panel instead. Sparks flew, briefly lighting up the dark passageway.

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He reached the corridor's end and, without pausing, took the stairs two at a time. The crustacean-like SymbioSect scuttled ferociously behind him, its many legs clicking against the steps in a grotesque rhythm. Wu's lungs burned, but he forced himself to accelerate.

As he neared the top, he felt a pincer lock around his ankle. Reacting on pure instinct, he kicked hard, dislodging the creature's grip. It let out a high-pitched cry of frustration, tumbling down a few steps before righting itself. Wu didn't look back.

Bursting through a door at the top of the stairs, he found himself in another corridor. This one was dimly lit and filled with the haunting echoes of his pursuers. But the fortunate events that had unfolded hinted at an inexplicable stroke of luck, as if the very fabric of the universe had briefly tilted in his favor.

"He's heading toward the main access!" Verena's voice reverberated through some sort of communication system, filling the corridor. "Seal it off!"

- Can Wu move fast enough to get under a falling door? Daring (10) + Security (2). 7, 17. He does!
- Where does the other side of the door lead to? I will first roll on Access Area then Engineering. Access (34) more corridor that leads to Engineering (45) Life Support Area.
- ChatGPT, based on the above details, write Wu diving under a falling emergency door, running down a darkened corridor, and ending up in an area dedicated to maintaining life support for the subterranean mines of this icy world. Describe in technobabble detail what kind of equipment is present that the Tellarite Mining Consortium would have stored there and include Captain Yuan Wu's inner thoughts about being hunted by Verenan and the SymbioSect minions.

Wu reached the main access door just as the first hint of its descent triggered in the corner of his eye. The heavy bulkhead was lowering, driven by high-torque linear actuators designed to withstand the extreme conditions of this icy world. The door was inches away from sealing shut, but time seemed to slow for a heartbeat as his reflexes kicked in. In a desperate lunge, Wu threw himself forward and rolled under the door just as it slammed shut behind him.

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He sprang to his feet, not pausing to revel in the near-miss, and broke into a sprint down another corridor. The walls here were plain, utility-grade alloy, lacking the eerie bio-screens and aberrant beauty of Verena's lab. The pathway twisted and turned, disorienting in its uniformity. Wu's Starfleet composure barely kept his rising panic in check.

Verena and her SymbioSect had gone beyond breaking Federation laws; they were violating fundamental ethical codes across multiple species and cultures. The thought of what her 'new frontier' could unleash into the galaxy was chilling even by the icy standards of this planet.

Bursting through another set of doors, Wu found himself in an area distinctly different from the labyrinthine passageways he had been navigating. Large tanks labeled with intricate Tellarite glyphs occupied one side of the room. Rows of cryogenic condensers, thermoregulation units, and high-efficiency particle scrubbers filled the other side, monitored by digital readouts and control interfaces.

This was clearly a life support area, designed to maintain a breathable atmosphere and moderate temperature for the subterranean mines. Wu noted the heavy-duty oxycyclers and CO2 scrubbers, equipment you'd expect from a Tellarite Mining Consortium interested in long-term sustainable operations. There were modular deep-geothermal heat exchangers capable of harnessing thermal energy from the planet's core, and large tanks of synthesized alkanes serving as reserve chemical energy. It was an engineer's haven, sophisticated yet rugged, built to withstand the volatile mix of icy terrain and intense mining activity.

He paused for a moment to catch his breath, his mind racing. The equipment around him wasn't just designed for life support; it was over-engineered to deal with contingencies—perhaps even sabotage. Could he use that to his advantage to keep his pursuers at bay? Disabling life support wasn't an option; despite his desperate circumstances, Wu wasn't willing to go to that dark place. But perhaps he could rig some of the systems to create a temporary barrier, or at least a diversion.

The distant howls and mechanical chatter of the SymbioSect reached his ears, growing louder. They were catching up, and whatever he planned to do, he had to do it now. Time was running out, and the chase was far from over.

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With a newfound sense of purpose, Wu approached the control terminal, his fingers flying over the interface as he set his plan into motion. The game was still afoot, but at least now he had a pawn to play.

## Act 3, Scene 2

- Let's see how Chief Medical Officer/First Officer Commander Glen Davenport (Human male), Helm Officer Ensign Matwon (Ardanan male), Communications Officer Ensign Paxton Griffin (Human male) are doing. I want to see if they have figured out a legal way to get Videm out from under this contract with some Starfleet legalese. I think this will be a Computers (7) + Command (2). (6,16). Yes.
- ChatGPT have Ensign Matwon come into a scene where Videm, Davenport, and Griffin are talking. Matwon has found a clause in the contract between Verena's science group and Videm's mining group. Use extremely technical legal terms to explain why the contract is forfeit based on ethical disparities for which the Federation would never allow a contract to be enforced and even more legalese regarding a Tellarite Mining Consortium/Federation agreement (make up some legal numbering system) that allows the USS Ohlone to take temporary governance of the facility until such time a new contract can be established with a legal entity.

Commander Glen Davenport, Ensign Matwon, and Ensign Paxton Griffin were in a race against time to rescue their missing Captain and defuse a financial time-bomb that threatened to bankrupt the entire mining colony. Matwon had been tasked with reviewing a convoluted contract between Videm's mining group and the SymbioSect, while Davenport and Griffin attempted to mobilize Federation legal support to find a way out of the entanglement.

Davenport, Griffin, and Videm were deep in conversation, discussing possible strategies for a rescue mission, when the door hissed open. Matwon strode in, databoard in hand, his face a mixture of determination and relief.

"Commander, I've found something. It's in the contract, hidden in the footnotes under a jumble of legalese," Matwon began, without even a greeting.

"Well, spit it out," Davenport urged.



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"Section 97, Subclause 4.4, codicil gamma of the contract between Videm's consortium and SymbioSect contains a Reputational Risk Contingency clause. It mentions that either party may declare the contract null and void if activities that are fundamentally inconsistent with Federation Ethical Statute 67-B/13 are found to be conducted by the other party."

Videm blinked. "That's a loophole?"

"It's more than that," Matwon said, his voice gaining confidence. "Given what we've observed, SymbioSects 'experiments' are a direct violation of this Federation statute, which makes any contract advocating or supporting such activities unenforceable."

Griffin grinned, "Starfleet legalese to the rescue."

"That's not all," Matwon continued. "According to Tellarite Mining Consortium Agreement 9-221/X, ratified under Federation Council Resolution 784-C, any facility under financial duress related to illegitimate contracts can be placed under temporary Starfleet governance. Essentially, the *USS Ohlone* can take control of this facility until a new, legal agreement can be established."

Davenport looked at Videm. "It means we can put a halt to SymbioSect's operations and protect your people, all without breaching any laws."

Videm's eyes filled with restrained emotion, a mixture of relief and newfound hope. "I can't thank you enough. Truly, I can't."

"We're not out of the woods yet," Davenport cautioned. "We still need to find Captain Wu and Verena, and who knows what else the SymbioSect has in store. But at least, for now, the odds are back in our favor."

Davenport flipped open his communicator. "Hiztrex, patch through to Federation Legal. Let them know we've found a legal exigency to take control of the mining facility. Also, pack every shuttle we have with security teams and get them down here on the double. We have a search and rescue mission to perform."

*"Aye, aye, sir."*

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"Now, we just need to figure out where Captain Wu is in this massive facility," Davenport said. "Videm, give me every single schematic you have on this place. We need to figure out how the SymbioSect is jamming our transport signals. Tell every employee you have to be on the lookout for our captain and his captors."

- ChatGPT continue this story wherein Videm now reveals that Verena was a scientist with the SymbioSect. He didn't think of it until Davenport mentioned her by name, as being with Captain Wu. But now Videm can warn Davenport that if Captain Wu is with Verena it might be too late.

Davenport's communicator beeped with an acknowledgment from the *Ohlone* just as Videm started transferring the facility's schematics to a databoard.

"You mentioned Verena with Captain Wu," Videm said, his expression clouding. "I didn't make the connection earlier, but Verena was a scientist with SymbioSect. If she is with your captain..."

Davenport cut him off. "What are you saying?"

Videm took a deep breath. "Verena specializes in experimental neurobiology. She was working on something very secretive just before you arrived. If your captain is with her, there's a good chance he's more than just a captive; he could be a test subject. And given her field, time is of the essence."

Davenport felt a cold shiver run down his spine. "Is she capable of causing permanent harm?"

"Without ethical constraints, who knows what she might do," Videm answered, his voice tinged with regret.

Davenport's communicator chirped again. It was Hiztrex from the *Ohlone*.

*"Commander, the security teams are ready for deployment. Also, Federation Legal confirms the validity of the contract loophole. You have authorization to assume temporary governance of the facility."*

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"Understood, Hixtrex. Deploy the security teams immediately. Our mission just became a lot more urgent," Davenport replied.

*"Aye, sir. Teams are on their way."*

Davenport handed the databoard with the facility's schematics to Griffin. "Scan for any areas where high-tech scientific equipment would be located. That's likely where we'll find Verena and Captain Wu. Matwon, alert the inbound security teams. Tell them to use extreme caution and be prepared for anything," Davenport ordered, his voice thick with urgency.

"Aye, Commander," Matwon acknowledged, sending out the instructions.

Davenport looked at Videm. "You're coming with us. If Verena is involved in something as dangerous as you say, we may need your knowledge to counteract it."

Videm nodded, a determined look on his face. "If it helps put a stop to whatever she's doing and saves your captain, I'm in."

## **Act 3, Scene 3**

- ChatGPT, provides a 100-word summation of what happened above then continues with the story as Captain Yuan Wu tries to hack the mining facilities life support systems.
- Can Wu get into the system? Reason (7) + Engineering (2). (4,6) So, he gets into the controls and 1 Momentum generated. I am going to spend this now and roll on the Advantage table. (11) ooh! Change of Heart! Is it possible that one of the creature is not satisfied with their transformation? Are they hanging back as Verena and the SymbioSect pursue Captain Wu. Has this member of the SymbioSect-trapped in some sort of insectoid, horrifying body—regretting his symbiosis?
- ChatGPT, write an entire scene where the insectoid is thinking to themselves. Have the symbiote who is hosted in the strange body a Trill with six past lives. Details what each of those lives were, a mix of male and female, a mix of various professions and backgrounds. The symbiote is called Rexa, but feel free to name the Trill hosts as you describe. Then, have their thoughts come back to the present and how the

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horrifying things insectoid-Rexa witnessed in Verena's lab slowly broke down their soul, leaving them contemplating morality in all of its forms. insectoid-Rexa's heart is breaking when it thinks of its loss and its refusal to exist as a monster.

Insectoid-Rexa was concealed in the shadows, its multiple eyes darting nervously, watching as the members of the SymbioSect hastened after Captain Wu. As the monstrous forms of its peers receded into the distance, it could hear the echoes of their hurried steps and guttural commands. It could have joined them but chose not to, for it was trapped in a body that was the epitome of the perversion of symbiosis.

Hidden in darkness, Rexa, the Trill symbiont within the insectoid form, began to sift through its past lives as a coping mechanism against the inhumanity it had witnessed. Rexa had seen so much of the galaxy and had been a part of so many different stories.

First, there was Zolin, a male poet on Trill, who penned verses that touched souls. His was a life of beauty and expression, capturing the essence of existence through words.

Then, Eren, a female diplomat, had tried to navigate the precarious waters of interplanetary relations, striving for peace in a universe where conflict often seemed inevitable.

Third in line was Jeth, a shipwright, male, passionate about creating vessels that would defy the laws of physics and explore unknown realms. He held a deep-seated belief that technological advancement could be harmonized with moral progress.

The fourth host, Gira, was a female botanist whose research led to the development of sustainable agricultural techniques that saved thousands from famine.

Quint was Toren, a male archeologist, whose quest for knowledge led him to uncharted worlds. He was passionate about piecing together the narratives of bygone civilizations, believing that understanding the past was key to shaping a better future.

And lastly, Melis, a female doctor who had worked in emergency rooms, war zones, and even in remote colonies. She was dedicated to the sanctity of life and had an undying belief in the resilience of the spirit.

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Each of these lives had shaped Rexa, molding it into a being of depth, compassion, and ethical fortitude. Each life had struggled with the complexities of morality but had always chosen to walk the path of decency and integrity.

Now, there was this life.

A life encapsulated in an insectoid abomination.

An existence that was an affront to all that symbiosis stood for.

The lab's experiments, the forced transformations, and the nightmarish creations—each horrifying spectacle gnawed at Rexa's collective conscience. Verena's work had blurred all ethical lines, challenging the core principles that had anchored Rexa through its many lives. Verena, who had convinced Melis to assist with the SymbioSect's unethical work with false promises of “science that would redefine existence in a better way for all Trills”.

Rexa felt its soul crumbling. It had been a poet, a diplomat, a shipwright, a botanist, an archeologist, a doctor—all lives founded on creativity, discovery, and, above all, the affirmation of life's value. Now, it was part of something that debased life, that toyed with the sacred bonds of existence. It felt like an abomination, a grotesque distortion of everything it had ever stood for. The work in Verena's lab was a symphony of ethical degradation, and Rexa, in its current form, was a reluctant instrument in that orchestra of horrors.

The internal conflict was overwhelming, a philosophical and emotional turmoil that spanned the experiences of seven lifetimes. Morality was not a fixed equation, but there were bounds of decency that Rexa felt had been egregiously transgressed. What did it mean to be part of this? Could one truly separate one's actions from the collective endeavor of which they were a part?

As the distant sounds of the chase continued, a conclusion crystallized within the depths of Rexa's ancient consciousness: it could not continue to exist as a monster, as a symbol of the debasement of the very ideals of symbiosis. It had to make a stand, however futile, to try to reclaim its soul. If Captain Wu was fleeing for the sanctity of life, then so would it—in spirit if not in form.

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Rexa felt its insectoid heart break, as much as an insectoid heart could. It grieved not just for itself but for all its hosts, for the lineage of dignity and exploration that had been so twisted.

Solemnly, Rexa made a choice. A choice not just for itself, but for Zolin, for Eren, for Jeth, for Gira, for Toren, and for Melis. A choice to reject the nightmare it had been pulled into. What that choice would entail, Rexa was yet unsure, but it knew it could not—would not—remain a silent accomplice in Verena's twisted vision for the galaxy.

Torn between its abominable existence and the sanctity of its many past lives, Rexa knew its next actions would not just be a struggle for survival, but a struggle for its very soul.

- Wow! All that rolled from Advantage>Change of Heart!!!

## Act 3, Scene 4

- Ok. Back to this. At the top of the last scene the following happened, which spawned the previous scene:
- ChatGPT, provides a 100-word summation of what happened above then continues with the story as Captain Yuan Wu tries to hack the mining facilities life support systems.
- Can Wu get into the system? Reason (7) + Engineering (2). (4,6) So, he gets into the controls and 1 Momentum generated. (We already know what I did with that Momentum so now I will write the outcome of his successful engineering roll.

Captain Yuan Wu found himself in the mine's life control center set not too far from the underground lab run by Verena, the rogue scientist pursuing unethical experiments with her grotesque crew, the SymbioSect. Wu had been strapped to a high-tech table for DNA extraction when a sudden quantum variance halted the process. Seizing the opportunity, Wu escaped from the lab, evaded his pursuers through the mine's labyrinthine tunnels. He ended up in a life support area and began to hack the system to fend off his pursuers. As he gained access, he faced a moral dilemma about how to use the facility's controls to his advantage.

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Captain Wu's fingers danced over the control terminal's holographic interface, lines of Tellarite script and schematics filling the display. His eyes scanned through flowcharts and diagrams, making snap judgments based on his understanding of life support systems and Tellarite engineering principles.

"Let's see, isolating gas flows, rerouting thermal regulators, and... yes, there it is," Wu muttered, finding the controls for the high-efficiency particle scrubbers. With a few well-placed commands, he could theoretically release a non-toxic aerosol that would obscure vision and disorient his pursuers. But to do so, he would have to tamper with systems critical to the life support of the entire facility. There were thousands of workers here, mostly Tellarites. Any mistake could have catastrophic consequences.

His fingers hesitated over the final command. The distant cacophony of the SymbioSect grew closer; Verena's abominable menagerie was closing in. He thought about the repercussions of his actions. Could he safely isolate the effects to the sector he was in? And even if he could, should he?

"Decisions, decisions," he mumbled. Verena and her crew were trampling over every ethical line in the book. And yet, if he executed his plan without precision, he would be crossing a line too, endangering innocent lives.

As he stood there, locked in his ethical dilemma, he couldn't help but think: Could he pull this off without causing harm? Or would he have to make a devastating choice that affected everyone in the mine, plunging him into an ethical abyss he had vowed never to enter?

The seconds ticked away, each moment pulling him closer to a decision he wasn't sure he was ready to make.

- Will Captain Wu decide to run instead of messing with life support? I think this is Improbable. (3) Yes. He decided to run. This must be because he is still in a panic after seeing all these monsters and his fear gets the best of him. He will run looking for another way out.
- Does the SymbioSect enter the life support area at this time? I think it is 50/50. (13) No. So Wu gets a headstart. However, the facility goes into alert with red warning lights and lockdown announcement. Let's roll on the Starforged Derelict Zones table

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to see where his escape route leads to. (32) Living Area. (55) Living Quarters; Feature (32) Half-Eaten Food. Is there a Peril or Opportunity. 50/50. (3) Peril. (51) Recorded Message reveals a threat or complication. Hmm.

- Is it possible that there is/are a few Tellarite's who are in collusion with the SymbioSect so they will help capture Wu. I think this is Somewhat Probable. (18) no. Whew. But Wu still worries about that, especially since there is Half-Eaten food. Whoever was there must have evacuated the area.
- The recorded message must be a lockdown that keeps Wu from going any further as all doors are locked. Wu is cornered. This means the SymbioSect catches up. End this scene with Wu cornered.

Despite standing in front of the intricate web of life-support systems, Captain Yuan Wu found himself paralyzed by the rising tide of panic within him. Will he stay to sabotage the system, or should he run? Though improbable, given his engineering skills, Wu chose to run. His panicked mind overwhelmed his logic. He couldn't stop picturing those monstrous beings — the SymbioSect — descending upon him.

Sweat dripped from Wu's forehead as he hurried past rows of thermophilic dehumidifiers and quantum-fiber filters, each piece of equipment optimized to scrub toxins and adjust temperatures to highly specific parameters. He was well-versed in engineering, but some of the Tellarite systems were so sophisticated they could almost qualify as 'alien technology.' The sheer intricacy of the equipment seemed to reflect a collective paranoia about ensuring that all life-sustaining systems were indestructible.

However, that momentary thought of marveling at the machinery faded as a wave of fear washed over him. Wu realized that he was in an extraordinary situation, fleeing from a nightmarish assemblage of creatures. His heart was pounding not just from the physical exertion but from the sheer psychological terror.

The facility suddenly went into high alert, with red warning lights flashing and an automated announcement declaring a lockdown. All entryways to other sections started sealing off. *"All personnel, remain calm. The facility is in lockdown mode. Please follow emergency procedures."*



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Shaking off his initial impulse to fiddle with the life support controls, Wu continued to run, driven by a primal urge for self-preservation. His senses on high alert, he barely noticed the hyperbaric atmo-tanks and the isothermal calibrators as he sprinted past them. His eyes were scanning for an escape route, any sign of a way out.

He found himself in a living area—more specifically, living quarters. There was evidence of hurried evacuation: half-eaten food lay scattered on tables, a chair was overturned, and clothes were strewn around. Wu's mind immediately jumped to the worst-case scenario: had the Tellarites evacuated because they were in collusion with Verena and her monstrous SymbioSect? A quick scan of the room allayed those fears, but new ones immediately cropped up.

A recorded message began playing over the intercom, *"Warning! Due to a breach in security protocols, all living quarters are sealed until further notice. Any attempt to override the lockdown will result in immediate detainment."*

Wu felt a sinking feeling. He was cornered. He had reached a dead end, and there was no way out. Just as he was processing this grim reality, the mechanical chittering and dissonant vocalizations of the SymbioSect filled the air. They had caught up.

For Captain Wu, every possible route of escape had just narrowed down to a singular, horrifying reality: he was trapped, with nowhere to run.

- Wu has jury-rigging. Let's see if he can whip up some sort of weapon with stuff laying about in the living quarters of these Tellarite miners. Daring (10) + (3). (8,9).
- **1 Momentum**
- Rolling on the Advantage table: (19) Power Surge. Hence, the kit-bashed weapon must be some sort of mining tool left in the quarters that can create some sort of electrical bypass to the door to the living quarters that will allow Captain Wu to continue running. His running will lead to [rolling on Access table] (33) Corridor that will lead to [Settlement>Living (62): Communal Quarters>Feature (54): ransacked belongings.
- **Momentum Spent**

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- Captain Wu can hear the SymbioSect getting closer and his mind is giving him terrifying images of what they will do to him.
  - Do the SymbioSect catch up to him? Probable (13) Yes.
  - ChatGPT, write this chase scene in great detail ending with the SymbioSect cornering Wu in the communal quarters. Things look bad. Verena will be irritated, but gloat, especially when she brags that she has control of the entire facility. "Those simpleton Tellarites could never hope to outsmart me," she will say. And she says that the Starfleet forces are walking into a trap. She will slay them all before they can stop her experiments.

Captain Wu's heart hammered in his chest, not just from the physical exertion of running but from the sheer psychological terror of what he was facing. He was cornered in a locked living area, with no weapons and no way out, as the monstrous SymbioSect closed in on him. But then his eyes darted across the room, quickly assessing the items strewn about in the hasty evacuation. He noticed a peculiar device—Tellarite mining equipment. Could it be? Yes, it was a plasmatic discharger, commonly used in mining operations to break apart rock formations.

Seizing the opportunity, Wu grabbed the discharger and frantically began to jury-rig it, connecting its power node to a series of metallic plates he found lying around. A flash of inspiration hit him; he could use the device's power surge to create an electrical bypass to the door lock. His fingers, skilled from years of engineering work, flew across the discharger's controls. Moments later, the door's lock fizzled and popped, briefly revealing a digital panel that flickered from "LOCKED" to "UNLOCKED." Wu grabbed the discharger as a makeshift weapon and bolted through the door.

He sprinted down a corridor that led to a communal living area. His boots thudded against the metallic floor, reverberating through the narrow halls. He had to put as much distance between himself and the SymbioSect as he could. As he burst into the communal quarters, he found himself in a nightmarish setting. The room was filled with ransacked belongings: personal items scattered, lockers torn open, evidence of chaos and perhaps resistance. Were the Tellarites trying to fight back, or were they merely victims in Verena's cruel games?

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Suddenly, a mechanical screech filled the air, echoing off the walls in a haunting symphony. The SymbioSect had caught up to him. Emerging from the corridor, their grotesque forms filled the doorway. Unnaturally elongated limbs, eyes that glowed with a malevolent light, and fanged maws that seemed to grin sadistically. There was nowhere left to run.

Just then, a female Trill figure emerged from behind the nightmarish entourage. Verena, her eyes filled with malevolent satisfaction, stepped into the communal quarters. "Ah, Captain Wu, there's nowhere left to go," she sneered. "Did you really think you could escape? Those simpleton Tellarites could never hope to outsmart me. I control this entire facility."

Wu, panting and sweating, still clutched the jury-rigged discharger. His eyes met Verena's. "You won't get away with this," he spat out, defiant even in the face of despair.

"Oh, but I already have," Verena said, drawing closer. "Your Starfleet forces are walking right into a trap. I'll slay them all before they can even dream of stopping my experiments."

As she gloated, the SymbioSect closed in from all sides, their menacing forms casting long, horrific shadows in the flickering light of the communal quarters. Captain Yuan Wu was cornered, surrounded by the malevolent eyes of both Verena and her monstrous SymbioSect. With each passing second, the reality sunk in deeper: he was trapped, and things were looking very, very bad.

Verena's eyes glinted with a mad light as she paced the room, seemingly energized by the horror and despair reflected in Captain Wu's eyes. Her every word dripped with a venomous delight, a perverse pleasure in sharing her diabolical vision.

"You see, Captain Wu, you're not just another Starfleet officer to me. You're not just another ethical obstacle in my path. No, you're so much more. You are the missing piece in my grand design," she began, her voice low and almost hypnotic.

"Your quantum-enhanced physiology, combined with your unique genetic markers, will be the final stabilizing element in my SymbioSect experiments. Do you have any idea what that means? It means endless possibilities. It means a revolution, a new dawn in the biological sciences, the likes of which this galaxy has never seen!"

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She paused for a moment, as if to let the weight of her words sink in, before continuing, her voice rising with excitement. "But it doesn't stop there. Oh no, this is only the beginning. Once I've perfected the SymbioSect, stabilized their genetic matrix, I will have created the perfect soldiers—beings of unparalleled strength, intelligence, and adaptability."

Her eyes seemed to blaze with a fanatic intensity now. "Then, the Trill will spread across the stars, consuming and adapting, becoming ever more powerful with each victory, each conquered race. We'll sweep through the galaxy, toppling empires and civilizations like a divine wind. The Federation, with its frail ideals of democracy and freedom? Overrun. The Klingons, with their brutish force and antiquated honor? Annihilated. The Romulans, with their secrecy and duplicity? Unraveled from within."

Verena circled Captain Wu, who stood cornered and disarmed, yet still defiant. "And each time we conquer, each time we subsume another species, we will grow stronger, incorporating the best of their biological and cultural traits, discarding the rest. A gestalt of the galaxy's most powerful features, evolving in real-time."

She stopped right in front of Wu, her face inches from his, her eyes locked onto his. "Imagine it, Captain. A singular, unified force, led by me, unstoppable and ever-evolving. Galactic conflicts will be but whispers in the annals of history, dwarfed by the cosmic symphony that I will conduct. I will be both composer and conductor, and the universe will dance to my tune. A tune of progress, of perfection, of supreme, unchallengeable power!"

Her breath was hot and quick, her eyes wide and almost glowing in the dim light of the room. "So, Captain Wu, are you ready to be a small but crucial note in my magnum opus? To be subsumed into a grander vision, where the Trill are not just a species, but the species—the very epitome of evolutionary triumph?"

The room seemed to vibrate with the force of Verena's monologue, her dream of cosmic domination hanging heavy in the air, suffocating in its audacity and its horror. Captain Wu realized that he wasn't just fighting for his life, or even for the Federation. He was fighting for the very future of the galaxy itself.

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- Time to invoke that “Change of Heart”. Rexa should make her move now. Provide an explanation how Rexa uses the life support controls that Captain Wu had hacked into to create a gas that floods the mining colony but only affects the genetic structure of Trill SymbioSect members (but not Verena since she is still a basic Trill.) However, the story should not reveal it is Rexa since she is not in the room.

Just as Verena's chilling vision hung in the air, a sudden, disorienting change overtook the room. A gentle hiss emanated from the ventilation system, almost drowned out by the sounds of the SymbioSect's restless movements. A new compound flooded the atmosphere, a precisely engineered pheromonic gas with an amalgam of isomorphic enzymes and nano-agents—so specific in its targeting that it could pass for air.

The reaction was almost immediate, and horrifying to witness. The SymbioSect members in the room began to writhe in agony. Their bodies convulsed, twisted, and bubbled as if boiling from within. Tumorous growths sprang forth and then collapsed, limbs elongated and then snapped, eyes bulged and then sunk into cavities of melting flesh. It was as if the very fabric of their genetic structure was unraveling, breaking apart at the seams. It was a destabilization so rapid and so complete that within moments, the monstrous forms had collapsed into amorphous piles of organic matter.

Verena, who had been so wrapped up in her own megalomania, looked around in disbelief. Her would-be army of evolutionary wonders was disintegrating before her very eyes, their bodies decomposing into unspeakable heaps of gore and fluids. Her face turned from one of disbelief to one of incandescent rage.

"What—what have you done?!" she screamed, her eyes finally meeting Captain Wu's.

The atmosphere had cleared almost as quickly as it had filled, the advanced filtration system purging the air of the mysterious compound. But Verena's SymbioSect had already suffered irreversible damage; they were gone, leaving only her in her 'basic' Trill form, suddenly isolated and diminished.

Captain Wu couldn't help but feel a sliver of relief cut through the dread and desperation of the moment. He didn't know what had just happened, who had intervened or how, but the playing field had changed dramatically. Now it was just him and Verena, with her dark

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vision for the galaxy shattered into pieces as gruesome as the remnants of her SymbioSect minions.

And in that moment, Wu realized that for all her intelligence and twisted ingenuity, Verena had just discovered a fundamental law of existence: there are always forces in the universe beyond one's control, and dreams of dominion can turn to dust in the blink of an eye.

- Verena is going to try to stun Wu with her weapon claiming that she can always abduct him and resume her experiments elsewhere. Can Wu dodge her attack? Fitness (9) + Security (2). (6,9) Advantage! Wu tackles Verena and uses the Momentum to disarm her.
- Can he grapple her into submission? Daring (10) + Security (2). (2,16). Yes. He is able to lock her in a hold. He says something amazingly heroic informing her that she will face Starfleet justice.

Realization dawning on her face, Verena pulled out her weapon, a modified Tellarite phaser with settings calibrated for stunning to lethal. "If I can't have you as my test subject here, I'll just take you with me. My work will continue, Captain, one way or another."

Her finger tightened on the trigger, but Wu was faster. His years of Starfleet training kicked in instinctively. Anticipating her move, he lunged forward just as the phaser emitted its pulse of energy. The bolt sizzled past him, harmlessly striking the wall. Using his momentum, Wu tackled Verena to the ground, wrenching the weapon from her grasp and tossing it aside.

Wasting no time, Wu shifted his weight and applied a specialized grapple, leveraging his arms and legs to lock Verena into a submissive hold. She struggled and squirmed but couldn't break free.

Looking straight into Verena's eyes, Wu spoke, his voice steady and unyielding. "Your reign of terror ends here, Verena. You sought to be a god, but now you'll have to answer to the laws and justice that govern mere mortals. Starfleet will see to it that you pay for your crimes against humanity and against nature itself."

The words hung heavy in the air. Verena's dreams of galactic domination had crumbled to ashes, her SymbioSect abominations reduced to biological refuse. And she, once so

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confident and so sure of her own invincibility, was now physically and metaphorically restrained, held accountable for the horrors she had unleashed. It was over.

## **Act 3, Scene 5**

### **Captain Wu's Supplementary Mission Log**

*“As I record this log, my thoughts are a whirlpool of emotions—relief, horror, and a grim satisfaction that justice will be served. I have successfully apprehended Verena, the scientist behind the gruesome and morally abhorrent SymbioSect experiments. Her vision of a universe subjected to her twisted will has been thwarted, and she will now face the full extent of Starfleet justice for her crimes against sentient life.*

*“I should begin by noting a revelation that came to light after Verena's arrest—Insectoid-Rexa, a Trill symbiont trapped in a monstrous form, who has been an unwilling participant in these experiments. I later learned that it was Rexa who used the life support controls to flood the mining colony with a highly specialized gas, targeting and destabilizing the genetic structure of the SymbioSect members, ultimately leading to their disintegration. The substance—let's call it a "geno-specific destabilizer"—was as effective as it was horrifying, leaving only Verena and me standing in that gruesome scene.*

*“It's difficult to articulate my feelings about Rexa. The symbiont has lived through numerous hosts, each contributing to a rich tapestry of life experiences that range from poetry to diplomacy to medical science. It is a creature of depth, compassion, and ethical fortitude; virtues which clashed tragically with the monstrosity it had been turned into by Verena's experiments. I feel a great sorrow for Rexa; its struggle represents the heartbreaking essence of this entire ordeal—a corruption of the principles of symbiosis, and by extension, the principles that govern all forms of life and coexistence. Rexa has agreed to testify against Verena, though it's evident that the symbiont is grappling with deep mental and emotional trauma.*

*“Shortly after Verena was subdued, Dr. Davenport led a security team from the Ohlone to our location. They assisted in formally arresting Verena and securing the facility. I must commend my first officer and the security team for their efficiency and urgency. The equipment and data relating to the SymbioSect have been confiscated and will undoubtedly serve as damning evidence against Verena and any who collaborated with her.*

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*"As we prepare to leave this forsaken place, I can't help but think about the abominations that were created here, and the lives that were twisted and destroyed. I will never forget what I saw, and I'm left to wonder how many other Verenas might be out there, toying with the fabric of life for their own twisted purposes."*

The atmosphere on the bridge of the *Ohlone* was heavy with reflection as the senior officers stood at their stations, their gazes converging on the viewscreen. Displayed before them was the planet Alpha Theta II, the site of unspeakable horrors, but also a world with a unique life-form—the Dirobi—worthy of ethical scientific study.

"Starfleet Science is assembling a team to study the Dirobi lifeform," Commander Davenport announced, breaking the silence. "It's a chance for us to understand how electromagnetic resonance can affect symbiotic capabilities, and perhaps, find a way to heal those who have been affected. The proper channels for first contact are being established."

Lieutenant Nacu nodded, her face a picture of solemnity. "Hopefully, future studies will be conducted within the ethical guidelines that Verena so recklessly violated."

Lieutenant Shen added, "Security measures will be tenfold this time. Nothing like the SymbioSect should ever happen again."

Ensign Griffin, the Communications Officer, looked up from his console. "Incoming message from Starfleet Command, sir. They are praising the *Ohlone's* efforts in neutralizing the threat and securing the colony."

Captain Wu listened intently to each of his officers, his face etched with a gravity that belied his years. Finally, he spoke, his voice tinged with both resolve and introspection.

"While it's a relief that this chapter is closed, let it serve as a somber reminder. Our quest for knowledge, our exploration of new worlds comes with an inherent duty—a duty to defend the sanctity of life in all its myriad forms. [Add this as a new Value] What transpired on Alpha Theta II will forever remain a dark chapter in my career and our collective experience. But it will not deter us. Rather, it reinforces our commitment to uphold the very



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values that define Starfleet: the pursuit of knowledge, the respect for all sentient beings, and above all, a commitment to justice."

The bridge crew nodded in unison, the weight of the Captain's words settling over them like a mantle of collective responsibility.

Second Officer Hiztrex spoke, his feline eyes glowing softly, "We move forward, together, learning from the past to build a future that honors those values."

Ensign Matwon, who was manning the helm, looked at Captain Wu for the order that would take them away from Alpha Theta II, from the shadows of its recent past and towards new frontiers.

Captain Wu looked around the bridge, at the faces of the men and women who had stood by him, sharing in both the successes and the horrors. With a final glance at the viewscreen, he issued the command that symbolized their collective resolve to forge ahead.

"Helm, set course for our next mission. Warp Factor 2."

Ensign Matwon's fingers danced across the helm controls. "Course set, Captain. Warp Factor 2, engaged."

As the *USS Ohlone* leapt into warp, leaving behind the azure globe of Alpha Theta II, each individual on the bridge felt the shared commitment to their mission fill the room. They were explorers, healers, warriors, but above all, they were guardians—guardians of the principles that bound the vast tapestry of life in the cosmos. And so, they moved forward, into the great unknown.